

Gardens versus Citadels: The Territorial Context of Early Mughal Gardens

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Contextual interpretation has the dual aim of understanding the realms of a culture through its gardens, and understanding gardens through the arenas in which they operate. Although it is readily acknowledged that gardens take shape within complex landscapes of social action and provide a rich commentary on their surroundings, these contextual relationships tend to be informally dealt with as background or simply as asserted as explanations for various aspects of garden form, function, and meaning. They are rarely formulated as the central theoretical or methodological issues of garden interpretation.

The growing interest in contextual interpretations of gardens flows within a broader current of concerns in the humanities and social sciences today. It is not very clear, however, what contextual interpretations of any sort actually involve. Contextualism suggests so many things that as an interpretive strategy it remains frustratingly vague. Basic questions have yet to be addressed. What are the most relevant contexts for garden research, how are they discovered, and how are they circumscribed? What are the varieties, implications, and pitfalls of contextual investigation?

These questions are explored here through a case study of gardens built by the first Mughal ruler (*padishali*) in central and southern Asia during the early sixteenth century.¹ The meanings, functions, and terminology of gardens acquired a distinct config-

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The term *Mughal* is the source of some confusion because it refers, on the one hand, to a political dynasty that arose in western Turkistan, established itself in India during the early 16th century, and built gardens in many of the regions it occupied: I. Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi, 1982. The word *Mughal* also refers to a nomadic society from eastern Turkistan (ethnic Mughals) who shared few cultural traits with the dynastic Mughals. See N. Elias' discussion in *The Tarikh-i Rashidi of Mirza Muhammad Haider*,

uration during the onset of Mughal rule—a configuration distinguished by its markedly *territorial* agenda and context. Territoriality involves “a strategy whereby an individual or group attempts to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area.”² It will be shown here that during the early sixteenth century gardens played an important role in the conquest of foreign citadels. They were the primary locus of Mughal political affairs and the signature of Mughal territorial authority.

But the first task of this paper is to lay out several general propositions about contextual approaches in garden research and to show how the Mughal case study fits within this broader array of concerns. The second section of the paper describes a set of gardens built by the first Mughal nobles at Agra and Lahore. These gardens embodied thirty years of experience in Central Asia and were, at the same time, the first truly Mughal places. Built on riverbanks opposite a conquered citadel, early Mughal gardens spatially transformed their surroundings. They reflected the ambivalence of the first Mughal ruler toward the conquered Indian landscape:

Hindustan is a country of few charms. Its people have no good looks; of social intercourse, paying and receiving visits there is none; genius and capacity none; of manners none; in handicraft and work there is no form or symmetry, method, or quality; there are no good horses, no good dogs, no grapes, musk melons or first rate fruits, no ice or cold water, no good bread or cooked food in the bazars, no Hot baths. . . .

Pleasant things of Hindustan are that it is a large country and has masses of gold and silver. Its air in the rains is very fine.³

The third through fifth sections develop an interpretation of the opposition between the new gardens and their urban surroundings by retracing the historical geography of garden design in Ferghana (modern Uzbekistan, U.S.S.R.), Samarqand, Kabul, and Herat. Was the opposition between garden and citadels a temporary repetitive process associated with all conquests, a long-standing Central Asian pattern, an evolutionary stage in the development of Mughal garden design, or unique to the special circumstances of Agra? To what extent does the changing territorial context of garden design help us answer this question? The final section of the paper seeks to answer this

Dughlat. Lahore, n.d., 72-99. The dynastic Mughals were descended from Timur, the 14th-century Central Asian Turkish conqueror, and Chinghiz Khan the 12th-century Mongol leader. During the early 16th century, the “Mughal” dynasty was still more “Timurid” than “Mughal.” On the Timurid connection, see T. W. Lentz and G. D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the 15th Century*, Los Angeles, 198g; and W. M. Thackston, *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art*. Cambridge, Mass., 1989.

²R. Sack, *Human Territoriality*, Cambridge, 1986, 19. Territory ranges in scale from single plots of land to entire kingdoms. Mughal historical texts do not have single words for territory or territoriality, but these words effectively subsume many of the central concerns of these texts. Cf. R. I. Crane, ed., *Regions and Regionalism in South Asian Studies*, Duke University Monograph 5, Durham, N.C. 1966. Even the closest treatments of dynastic politics during the early 16th century fail to develop the territorial dimension, e.g., Maria Eva Subtelny, “Babur’s Rival Relations: A Study in Kinship and Conflict in 15th-16th Century Central Asia,” unpublished ms., Columbus, Ohio O984).

³Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur, *The Babumama*, trans. Annette S. Beveridge, 192); reprinted New Delhi, 1970, 518.

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last question and to assess its implications for further research on the context of garden development.

I. CONTEXTUALISM IN GARDEN RESEARCH

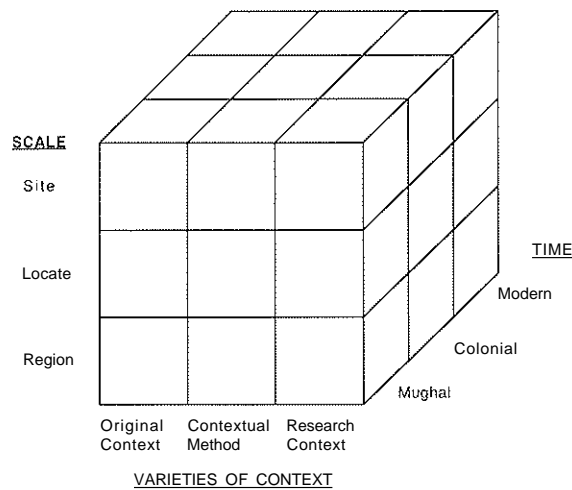
It is hard to imagine a case in which examining the interactions between gardens and their surroundings would not bear fruit. But some garden traditions necessitate a contextual approach: either because the most interesting questions involve relationships between gardens and their milieux, or because the available garden evidence is largely contextual. The most compelling combination of circumstances exists when gardens serve as the primary centers of social action in a region; when garden development constitutes a strong reaction or adjustment to the landscape; and when the surviving evidence about gardens is limited. In such cases there is both a strong justification for focusing on the context of garden development and a practical necessity for doing so.

Interestingly, these conditions tend to coincide during the formative period of a garden tradition. Early gardens require an unusual commitment of energy and creativity. They stand *opposed* to earlier gardens and other places.¹ They are more likely to interact forcefully with their surroundings than the internally elaborated gardens that follow. Finally, documentary evidence for the earliest gardens of a tradition tends to be meager. In the Mughal case there are no plans, no extant sites, no contemporary graphic evidence, and only a scattering of textual references. Research on the origins of any cultural phenomenon—whether cities, gardens, or agriculture—faces enormous problems of sparse evidence and indeed questions about what constitutes a “garden.”⁵ During the early stages of Mughal culture, places referred to as gardens intergraded with orchards, farms, courtyards, meadows, and earlier Timurid gardens. The term *garden* was used figuratively to refer to a city, country, or person. Thus, one way to examine the crystallization of a garden tradition is to retrace the threads of interaction between its earliest gardens and their geographical context.

Context is an expanding concern in garden research; but part of the concern is that it expands in all directions. What is not part of the contextual universe in which a garden takes shape? The scope of contextual investigation can easily get out of hand. It is useful, therefore, to distinguish among three aspects of context in garden research (Fig. i). There is the original context of garden development, which includes the geographical surroundings, historical events, and social and cultural contingencies that envelop a garden—as experienced by those who constructed it. In research on the original scene, a garden is interpreted as an *opposition* to certain aspects of its context and as a *consequence* of others. But the original context is neither wholly “outside” nor wholly “deter-

■ This section draws heavily upon Hayden White's, “Formalist, and Contextualist. Strategies in Historical Explanation,” paper presented at the University of Chicago, (7 April 198g); which builds upon White's earlier discussion of contextualism in *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in 19th Century Europe*, Baltimore, 1972; and *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore, 1978. Contextual investigations in Islamic art history have been oriented more toward substantive issues than general theory, e.g., P. P. Sotceck, *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, University Park, 1988; and O. Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*, 2nd ed., New Haven, 1987.

¹ Grabar, *Formation of Islamic Art*, chaps. 1-2.



i. Contextualism in garden research (all illustrations by the author, except for Figs. 6, g, and to)

initiative” of the places which are built.⁶ Relations between a garden and its context are instead like those between a part and its immediate whole: dialectical, interactive, and mutually transforming.

Context, in the second sense of the term, is *methodological*—a way to imagine gardens and to represent them to others. For the scholar, context means a perspective on the garden, a way of interpreting the garden from a distance. Reconstructing the original context is an illusory goal of scholarship—illusory because the vantage point and interests of scholarship are fundamentally different from those of the original scene. Even the broadest contextual investigations can focus on only a few dimensions of garden development: historic or geographic; ideological or material; elite or popular; macroscopic or microscopic. They offer a specific perspective, the narrative of which provides a line of access for the reader, rather than a complete portrait of the original scene. A geographical perspective, for example, provides an “external” vantage point on the garden: inside the garden looking out; outside the garden looking in; or above the garden surveying its interactions with other places. Starting from one or more of these vantage points, the geographer constructs a partial picture of the garden, framed in terms of its interactions with other places, the processes that extend beyond its walls, and its place within a larger nest of landscapes.

What distinguishes this limited methodological version of contextualism from other approaches? Some scholars contrast “contextualism” with “formalism.”⁷ They construe context as the “particular times and places” of a phenomenon, and contextualism as an interpretive understanding of those particulars. Formal analysis, by contrast, is concerned with generalization: rules, laws, structures, and processes. Hayden White has discussed the pitfalls of contrasting contextualist and formalist strategies in historical interpretation. He persuasively concludes that the figurative character of all interpre-

⁶J. L. Wescoal, Jr., “Picturing an Early Mughal Garden,” *Asian Art*, 11,4 (Fall 198g), 59-79.

⁷Hayden White cogently criticizes the argument that context explains an object (the genetic fallacy) and that context lies “outside” the object (the referential fallacy) in “Formalist and Contextualist Strategies.”

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ration undermines the notion that contextualism is distinguished by its concern for particulars.⁸

It seems more straightforward and useful, therefore, to regard contextualism as any interpretive strategy that calls for greater emphasis on the “times” and “places” of a subject, or for a thematic shift in interpretation. Seen in this light, contextualism becomes a *relative* category of research, contingent upon earlier approaches, critical of them, and generally claiming to “expand” beyond them.

The third aspect of contextual research is the *context of scholarship*. Scholars are limited by the evidence available and their access to it. They are obliged to lift evidence out of context to develop a contextual account. In doing this, moreover, they are guided by the interests of their community and audience—interests that influence the methods employed, the picture constructed, and the style of presentation. It is not an accident that garden research is flowering precisely when disciplinary boundaries in the humanities and social sciences are actively being crossed, redefined, and in some cases demolished. All of these trends favor multidisciplinary and contextual research on subjects that lend themselves to such approaches. Nor is it surprising to observe thematic parallels between modern interpretations of gardens and other cultural phenomena.

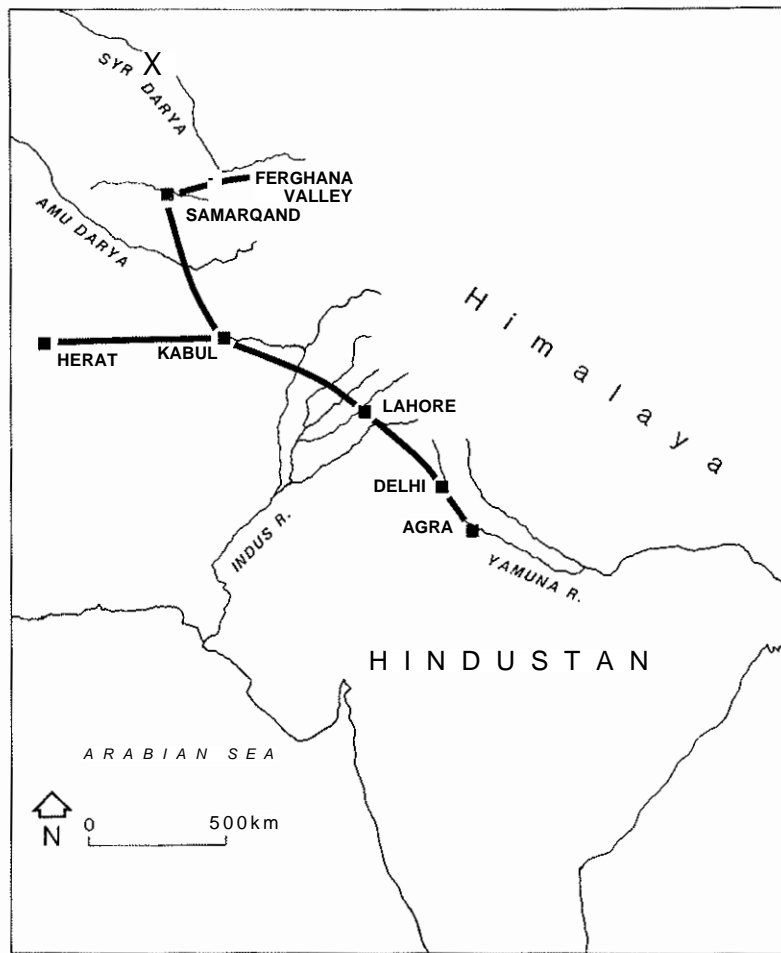
Context, in the broadest sense of the term, encompasses the entire matrix of vantage points, interpretive methods, and themes mentioned above. But specific investigations necessarily slice through the matrix in various ways, yielding partial pictures of the original garden scene, a particular of mode of access for the reader, and a limited historiographical perspective on the interpreter. This study of early Mughal gardens focuses on their territorial context, an emphasis justified by the evidence but highly circumscribed compared with the original scene. In addition to the territorial agenda of the Mughal princes, I would have liked to discuss their broader social impact, but the lack of evidence precluded it. Other modern readers may be disappointed to learn that the religious context of early Mughal gardens (e.g., evocative allusions to the four rivers of paradise, Sufi poetry, and eschatological imagery of the *Qur'an*) was of limited significance.

The case study is circumscribed by its emphasis on a particular contextual method, which although broadly geographical, is more precisely the territorial interpretation of a single Mughal text. It systematically examines the words and passages that refer to gardens in that text. Despite the limited scope and application of the method, the aim of the case study is “expansive.” By establishing the connections between gardens and territorial control in the autobiography of the first Mughal ruler, I hope to shed light on the original context of early sixteenth-century gardens, to “expand” the methodological scope of garden research, and to reflect upon how this type of investigation fits within the modern context of garden research.

II. Garden versus Citadel during the Early Mughal Period

Mughal gardens are regarded today as one of the most exquisite fruits of Mughal urbanism—as monumental ornaments of royal capitals at Agra, Delhi, Fatehpur Sikri,

⁸See White, “Formalist and Contextualist Strategies,” on the four modalities of figuration (metaphor, metonym, synecdoche, and irony), *ig*.



2. Early Mughal territories

and Lahore. And indeed, by the middle of the seventeenth century, gardens such as the Taj Mahal (Agra, 1643), the Red Fort gardens (Delhi, 1648), and Shalamar (Lahore, 1642) did grace each of the Mughal capitals in South Asia.

But during the early sixteenth century, gardens had fundamentally different relationships with the citadels of Central and Southern Asia (Fig. 2). They served as the main vantage point for urban conquest and control, and they replaced the citadels as centers of royal power. The first Mughal ruler, Zahir ud-Din Muhammad Babur, based himself in gardens outside the fortified towns he conquered in Southern and Central Asia. The description of gardens in his autobiography are couched within a narrative of his political endeavors.

As centralized urban authority broke down in Central Asia, many of the great citadels were conquered. Suburban gardens became headquarters of military control. Gardens lay spatially outside and politically opposed to the conquered forts. Military operations, ritual celebrations, entertainment, and justice all took place within gardens—rather than fortified citadels.⁹ Conquered forts were functional places, occupied

⁹Tension between citadels and garden suburbs had partial antecedents in medieval Timurid, Gujarati, Persian, and Sindhi provinces. These cases stand in contrast, however, with Machiavelli's comment at about the same time that European citadels were most valuable when a ruler feared his own people more than outsiders. *The Prince*, London, 1981, 118.

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when necessary but warily and with little enthusiasm. Increasingly, gardens became an alternative to the citadel, with a full complement of architectural functions and meanings.

Babur's military campaigns usually began in an existing garden built by a Timurid noble. As an heir to the Timurid legacy, he would reconstruct the old gardens in ways that reflected his evolving interest in the region, and he would encourage his nobles to follow suit. This dynastic pattern of activity appears to have been repeated point by point in Samarqand, Kabul, and Agra. A closer reading of Babur's autobiography reveals, however, that garden incidents were contingent upon the historical and geographical circumstances of the Mughal elite. As circumstances changed, so did the meaning and function of garden events. Even when the internal form of a garden remained constant, changes in its context seem to have driven changes in garden meaning. These processes took place on many spatial and historical levels, but they were especially pronounced in the local opposition between gardens and citadels.

To understand these local spatial patterns, we have to consider the antecedent meanings and functions of gardens. Was the opposition between gardens and citadels a stable Central Asian pattern, a temporary phenomenon associated with conquest, or an evolutionary stage in Mughal garden design? The functional side of this question can be elaborated as follows: was the opposition between gardens and forts a repetitive process that facilitated regional conquest but ultimately gave way to other patterns of territorial control; was it a static relationship that remained intact for administrative and different purposes after conquest; or did it evolve dynamically during the course of early Mughal state formation?¹⁰ The territorial meaning of gardens can be framed in parallel terms: did Babur appropriate a stock set of late Timurid garden meanings and diffuse them unchanged into new territories; did he repetitively draw upon and adjust the stock of Timurid garden meanings to suit his changing circumstances; or did he fundamentally rework the territorial meaning of gardens during the course of his conquests? The answers to these questions will indicate how gardens were shaped by their territorial context, how they articulated the changing meaning of territoriality, and whether these processes entailed any fundamental shift from a "Timurid" to a distinctively "Mughal" garden culture.

When we turn to Babur's final garden projects in Agra for insight, we encounter a second problem. The opposition between gardens and citadels was extremely pronounced at Agra and Lahore. Was this a uniquely hostile reaction to a foreign landscape, different in kind from previous patterns of garden development in Central Asia; was it simply an exaggerated repetition of the old pattern; or was it the dynamic conclusion of a longer progression of events? Answering the question for Agra provides an answer to the broader set of questions posed, so I begin with garden events at Agra in 1526-30 and then retrace the events leading up to them.

¹⁰For broad reviews of the literature on repetition, stagnation, and state formation in Indo-Muslim polities, see B. Turner, *Marx and the End of Orientalism*, Boston, 1978; and S. H. Rudolph, "State Formation in Asia: Prolegomenon to a Comparative Study," *Journal of Asian Studies* 46 (1987), 731-46; and J. F. Richards, ed., *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, Madison, Wis., 1978. The political geography of early Mughal rule has received scant attention in this literature.

The Conquest Gardens of Agra and Lahore

Pressured on his northern and western borders by Uzbek rivals and sensing an opportunity for expansion into South Asia, Babur marched out of Kabul in 1526, crossed the Punjab, defeated the head of the Lodi dynasty at Panipat, and established himself at the Lodi capital of Agra. Agra was a relatively young city by Indian standards. Its growth as a capital city occurred after 1505 when Sikander Lodi traveled down stream from Delhi by boat to select the site for a new fortified capital. No gardens are mentioned in the Lodi histories."

Arriving in Agra twenty years later, Babur bitterly complained about the heat, the dust, and the winds. He criticized India severely, citing the absence of gardens, running water, social manners, and politeness. "The towns and country of Hindustan are greatly wanting in charm. Its towns and lands are all of one sort; there are no walls to the orchards (*bhagai*), and most places are on the dead level plain."¹² The prospects for fine gardens were poor, . . . we crossed the Jun-water to look at garden-grounds a few days after entering Agra. Those ground were so bad and unattractive that we traversed them with a hundred disgusts and repulsions."¹³ Babur wrote of dissension in his army over his decision to remain in India. Animosity persisted between the local people and the Mughal army, indicating a difficult transition from conquest to settlement.

The response to these environmental, political, and social problems was swift and bold. One of Babur's first actions after arriving in Agra was to build gardens on the left bank of the River Yamuna, opposite the Lodi fortress. He ordered the construction of baths, wells, private gardens, a reception hall, and residences for himself and his court. He encouraged his nobles to do likewise, noting that fine residences came to line the east bank of the Yamuna River. Local residents referred to the riverfront gardens as "Kabul": a highly significant statement that will be discussed toward the end of the essay.

A similar process took place in the provincial capital of Lahore, where the opposite side of the river was called Shahdara (royal gateway) (Fig. 3).¹¹ The Shahdara gardens were built by Babur's son Kamran and other nobles. After Babur's death, the riverfront gardens of Agra and Lahore served as the principal encampments of the Mughal princes.

To understand what happened to Agra and Lahore, it is necessary to examine the broader territorial context of garden development in Babur's previous capitals:

1. Ferghana (1494-1503)
2. Samarqand (1497, 1500, 1511)

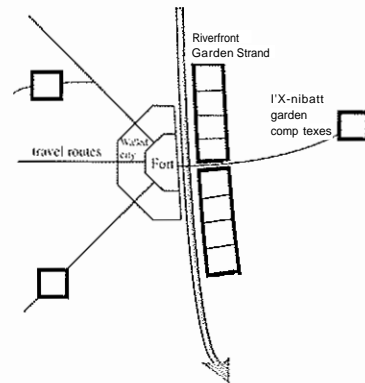
¹¹ Historical evidence for Sultanate Agra is briefly summarized in S. M. Latif, *Agra, Historical and Descriptive*, Lahore, 1981; and M. Husain, "Agra Before the Mughals," *Journal of the United Provinces Historical Society* 15 (1942), 80—88; "Tarikh-i Khan Jahan Lodi", in *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, V, ed. H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson, Allahabad, 1964, 98, 101, 103. For equally sketchy accounts of pre Mughal Lahore, see S. M. Latif, *Lahore: Its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities*, Lahore, 1892; B. S. Nijjar, *Punjab under the Sultans (1000-1526)*, Lahore, 1979; and F. Singh, ed., *History of the Punjab (AD 1000-1526)*. Patiala, India, 1972.

¹² *Baburnama*, 486-87.

¹³ *Baburnama*, 531.

¹¹ See G. Begam, *Humayun-nama*, trans. A. S. Beveridge, Delhi, 1902, 144. The "Shahdara" located across the Yamuna River at Delhi is a later place name. Mughal projects were initiated at Delhi after Babur's death and were all located on the right bank of the river.

3. Schematic diagram of the landscapes of Agra and Lahore



3. Kabul (1504-26)

4. Babur's visit to Herat (1506).

By broader territorial context, I mean the next hierarchy of regions (i.e., towns, districts, provinces, and countries) governed from gardens, citadels, and other nodes of power. What I call the opposition between citadels and gardens is thus a figurative expression for the relations between gardens and the larger territorial units that the citadel represented.

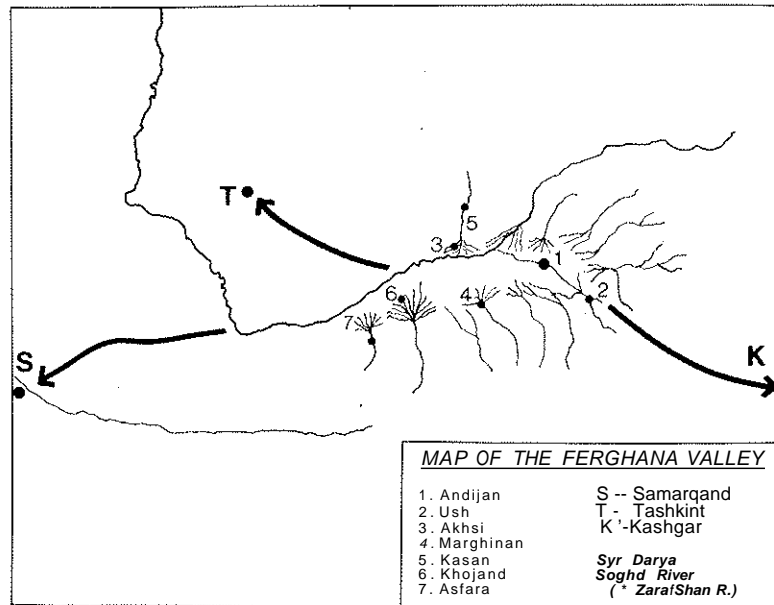
Methods and Evidence

Babur's memoirs are the primary source of evidence of early sixteenth-century garden activity. The *Baburnama*'- was compiled in Agra toward the end of Babur's reign. It consists of an autobiographical narrative punctuated by five brief geographical introductions to each of the regions Babur governed. The geographical passages indicate how Babur understood the larger structure and important features of the region. A historical narrative followed each geographical vignette, revealing how landscape experience was related to garden design. When examined chronologically and geographically, the narrative sheds light on the evolving relations between landscape aesthetics, symbolism, and function.

Unfortunately, the *Baburnama* has serious limitations as a source of garden evidence. The historical narrative breaks off in several key periods; many sites receive only the briefest mention; explanations are few; and descriptions of cities are exceedingly sparse. Aside from Babur's memoirs, primary landscape evidence is limited. His grand son Akbar commissioned illustrated translations of the *Baburnama*, but their paintings were based upon the text rather than on firsthand observation.¹⁶ A few contemporary

¹⁵ M. Waldman, "Baburnama in the Context of Islamicate Biographical Writing," unpublished ms., Columbus, Ohio (1984).

¹⁶ For detailed studies of the illustrated *Babumamas*, see Ellen Smart, "Yet Another Illustrated Akbari *Baburnama* Manuscript," in *Facets of Indian Art*, Robert Skelton et al., eds., London, 1986, 105-15; idem, "Six Folios from a Dispersed Manuscript of the *Baburnama*," in *Indian Painting*, London, 1978; idem, *Paintings from the Baburnama: A Study of 16th Century Mughal Historical Manuscript Illustration*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1977; and Wescoat, "Picturing an Early Mughal Garden."



4. Map of the Ferghana Valley

texts help corroborate, elaborate, or correct points in Babur's account, but none of them approaches the depth of geographical description in the *Baburnama*. None of Babur's suburban gardens has survived.¹⁷

Nevertheless, the *Baburnama* can shed light on some important aspects of early sixteenth-century gardens. Textual and cartographic analysis are employed in this paper to reconstruct the times and places that culminated with the Mughal conquest of Agra and Lahore. The textual analysis focuses on the geographical terminology and historical references to gardens. Textual references are then condensed into cartographic representations of garden context—beginning in the Ferghana valley.

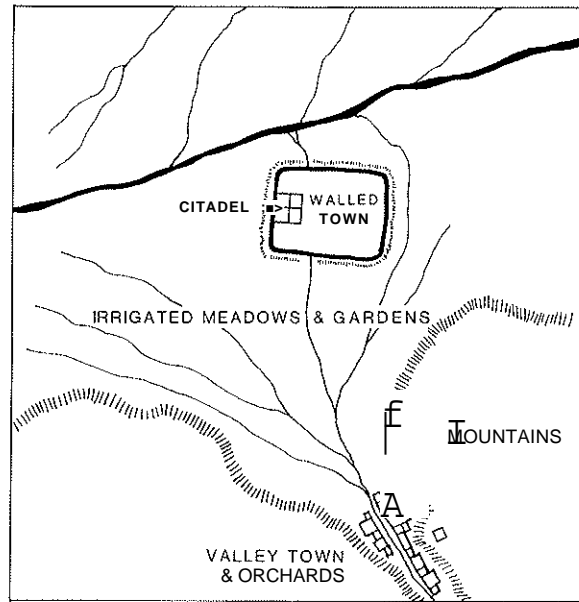
III. From Andijan to Samarqand: The Devolution of Timurid Urbanism

Ferghana

Babur's home province of Ferghana lay on the eastern border of the Timurid empire and contained, on a small scale, many of the essential features of the Timurid cultural landscape (Fig. 4).¹⁸ Enclosed by mountains of the Tian Shan range on the north, east, and south, and drained by the Jaxartes River, the valley of Ferghana marked the margin of cultivation and permanent settlement. It was the most important medie-

¹⁷The two extant gardens are in rural areas near Kaida Kahar, Pakistan and Dholpur, India. E. Moynihan, "The Lotus Garden Palace of Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur," *Muqarnas* 5 (1988), 134-52.

¹⁸The geography of Samarqand and Ferghana is discussed in W. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, trans. T. Minorsky, Karachi, 1981; G. LeStrange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate: Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia from the Moslem Conquest to the Time of Timur*, Cambridge, 1905; A. Mukhtarov, "Inscriptions with Babur's Name in the Upper Reaches of the Zarafshan," *Afghanistan* (1972-73), 49-56; N. G. Gorbunova, *The Culture of Ancient Ferghana*, trans. A. P. Andryushkin, BAR International Series 281, Oxford, 1986; W. Barthold, "Farghana," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, II (1964), 790-93; V. Minorsky, *Hudud al-'Alam*, Karachi, 1980; I. Golombek and D. Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan*, 2 vols., Princeton, N.J., 1988.



5. The Ferghana landscape and its elements

val trade route from Samarqand to Kashgar, and hence from Central Asia to China. Springs and torrents issued from its mountain slopes, collecting into narrow streams lined with orchards and gardens. These horticultural plots were fed by short, swift, simple canals (*arigs*). Streams and canals splayed out over alluvial fans at the base of the mountains, supporting the larger orchards, meadows, and settlements of the valley. The poorly drained valley floor was vulnerable to military campaigns and hence had a relatively dispersed pattern of settlement: Babur estimated that the entire province could support only 3,000 to 4,000 fighting men.

Babur's geographical description of Ferghana focused on seven "townships" (*qasaba*), the largest of which was Andijan, the provincial capital (*taytakht*) at the eastern end of the valley, followed by Akhsi, a former provincial capital north of the Jaxartes River. Babur claimed that the citadel of Andijan was the third largest fort (*gorghan*) in Transoxiana after Samarqand and Kish. Samarqand was the fourteenth-century capital of Timur's expanding empire. Kish was located close to Timur's birthplace and was his initial capital. Actually, Bukhara had a far larger citadel than Andijan, so by claiming the third position for Andijan, Babur revealed his early pretensions to the dynastic legacy of Timur.

The main topographic elements of towns like Andijan were: (1) a town (*qasaba*), surrounded by a wall, ditch, and road; (2) citadel (*arq*) located either along or near the walled town; (3) suburbs (*mahallat*) of irrigated meadows and valleys surrounding the town; and (4) pastures extending up into the hills (Fig. 5).¹⁹ Water channels ran through suburban gardens (*bagh*), orchards (*bagh*), meadows (*dicing*), and dependent villages (*tabf*) before entering the town. The suburbs were extensive. At Akhsi, they stretched two miles beyond the walls, making them comparable in scale with those of Agra and Lahore at that time.²⁰

¹⁹ *Baburnama*, 4-8; and Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 155-65.

²⁰ Field survey of Sultanate sites in Lahore, 1988; and I. P. Gupta, *Urban Glimpses of Mughal India: Agra the Imperial Capital (16th and 17th centuries)*, Delhi, 1986.

Babur personally favored the smaller upslope towns like Osh and Kasan, over larger piedmont settlements like Andijan and Akhsi.

Orchards lie along its banks; all the Aush gardens (*baghlar*) overlook it; their violets are very fine; they have running waters and in spring are most beautiful with the blossoming of many tulips and roses. . . . Kasan has excellent air and beautiful little gardens (*baqhcha*). As these gardens all lie along the bed of the torrent (*sai*), people call them the "fine front of the coat." Between Kasanis and Aushis there is rivalry about the beauty and climate of their townships.²¹

Rugged, colorful valleys enhanced by plantings and water channels were the aesthetic and strategic ideal. The citadels in these valleys were more the symbolic seats of wealth and authority than the operative centers of landscape enjoyment.

From Babur's twelfth year onward, gardens served as an important locus of events. He was the governor of Andijan when his father died in Akhsi, an event marking the beginning of his struggle for independent territorial control (1494). He was camped in a *chahar-bagh* (four gardens) outside the town of Andijan, and the first question that arose was whether the town would protect or betray him to his dynastic rivals. Babur's guardians took him up into the hills until they felt confident the city was safe. The security of a town was determined more by the loyalty of its political leaders than the thickness of its walls. Moreover, gardens could be approached and occupied with less risk of entrapment than forts, where the jails were generally located.

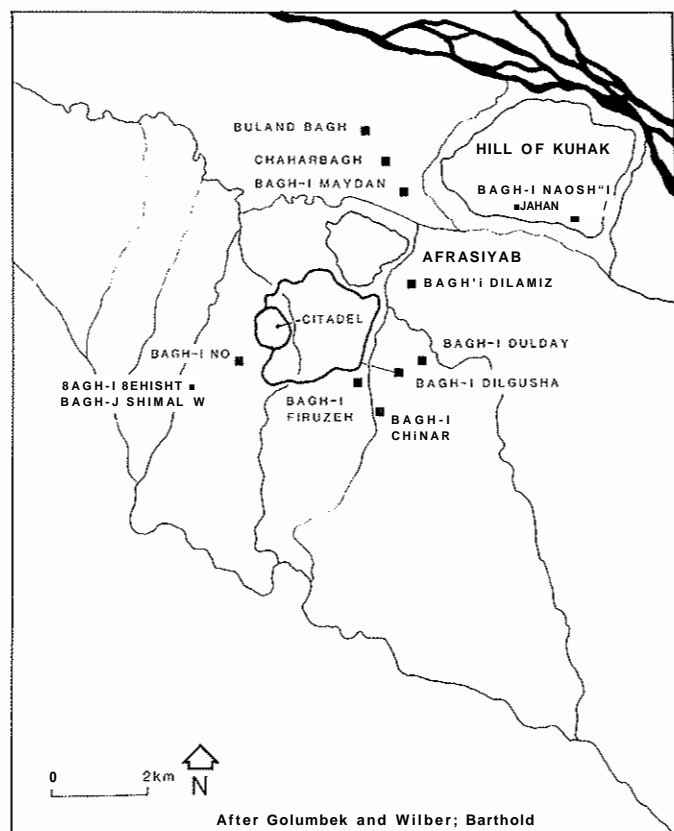
Gardens could be dangerous, however, as was demonstrated when Baisunghur Mirza was captured in the New Garden outside Samarqand in 1495 and when Sultan Husain Mirza was defeated by the Uzbeks in the Raven's Garden outside Herat in 1500/1. The lesson of these incidents was not lost on Babur.

Despite his limited interest in citadels, Babur came from an urban (and urbane) cultural background. His initial power was provincial, but his tastes and ambitions were not. He followed in the footsteps of Timur, who had reconstructed Samarqand and revived artistic patronage in the city. As a child Babur visited Samarqand, where his uncle was governor (his father was the governor of Ferghana). The arts flourished in late fifteenth-century Timurid cities, in the midst of political decentralization and instability.²² Art, poetry, and garden design spread into provinces like Ferghana and thrived, albeit on a smaller scale than in Samarqand.

Babur never secured full control over Ferghana, despite his title as governor. His fragmented discussion of citadels and gardens reflected the weak political organization in the region at that time. He said little about how the towns and gardens of Ferghana fit within the broader territorial subdivisions of Transoxiana. Instead, he quickly focused his attention on taking the regional capital of Samarqand. Disintegration of political authority there during this period had led many petty rulers like Babur to campaign for the city, often without the resources to win the city or to maintain command over it when successful.

²¹ *liaburnama*, g, 10.

²² M. E. Subtelny, "Scenes from the Literary Life of Timurid Herat," in *Logos Islamikos: Studio Islamica in Honorem Georgii Mic/iaeolis Wickens*, ed. R. M. Savory and D. A. Agius. *Papers in Mediaeval Studies* 6 (1984), 137—55; ^{an} d M. E. Subtelny, "Socioeconomic Bases of Cultural Patronage Under the Later Timurids," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 20 (1988), 479—505.



6. Samarqand in 1501 (redrawn after Golumbek and Wilber, 1988; V. V. Barthold, *Sochineniia*, X, map 7, Moscow, 1963-77)

Samarqand

Babur's description of Samarqand once again emphasized its regional characteristics over the walled city. He praised Samarqand as the most pleasant city of the "habitable world" (*ma'nmra*), capital of the land between the Oxus and Jaxartes rivers (*Mawara'un-nahr*), and hub of trade routes leading east toward Ferghana, west toward Bukhara and Khwarazm, north toward Tashkent (Shash) and Shahrukhia, and south to Balkh and Tirmuz (Fig. 6).²³ The political greatness of Samarqand was amplified by Babur's comment that it "must" have been founded by Alexander the Great.

The country (*vilayat*) of Samarqand consisted of six districts (also *vilayat*). Foremost in economic and cultural significance was Bukhara, followed by Kish, the onetime capital of Timur. Timur had renamed Kish Shahr-i Sabz (Green Town) for its verdure in spring when it was at least temporarily a city of gardens. In Babur's time, only a few of the architectural monuments of Shahr-i Sabz remained, for after a brief attempt to develop it, Timur had shifted his capital to Samarqand.

Locally, Samarqand exercised control over a ring of administrative units known as *tumans*, some of which were metaphorically described as gardens. The most important *tuman* was Soghd, which stretched along the river between Samarqand and Bukhara. Irrigated orchards and villages carpeted its fertile valley. Timur had referred to this one hundred fifty-mile long river corridor as his "garden," a regional metaphor that would

²³Interestingly, Babur did not mention Herat, which was the most stable center of Timurid culture at the time.

be echoed by the third Mughal *padishah* Akbar who referred to Kashmir as his own private garden.²⁴

After describing the country of Samarqand, Babur gave careful attention to its immediate surroundings. Samarqand lay on the south bank of the Kohik River, encircled by meadows and hills to the south and a broad plain across the river on the north. The river ran swiftly past the city, feeding a network of canals and irrigated orchards from Samarqand to Bukhara. The irrigation system was so extensive that, although the river was large, the water failed to reach Bukhara for several months each year. According to Babur, the river was “just right” for the scale of its dwellings and culture, despite the deficit at Bukhara. Two important channels entered Samarqand from the east: a canal called the Dar-i gham and an improved stream called the Qara-su (Black Water) or Ab-i rehmat (Water of Mercy), which paralleled the Kohik River on the south. These two channels and their tributaries fed many of the sites around Samarqand.

Samarqand had gardens both within and outside its walls. During the late fifteenth century, however, gardens within the walled town fared dismally compared with those of the suburbs. Babur described Samarqand as a “Protected Town” (*Baldat-i mahfuza*), implying that it had never been completely sacked, but its gardens had suffered extensive damage during the Mongol invasion of 121g, and in clashes during the late fifteenth century as well. It is unlikely Babur ever saw Samarqand as it was described in the tenth century when, “every house in both city and suburb had its garden, so that, viewing Samarqand from the fortress height it appeared as one mass of trees.”²⁵ During the brutal siege of 1501, inhabitants of the walled city had to feed their animals leaves, bark, and wood—which naturally took a heavy toll on gardens within the city. Babur noted that some places outside the walls like the World’s Picture garden had also gone to ruin, but the difference was that other suburban gardens had replaced them.

With Timur’s rise to power in the late fourteenth century, the region regained its earlier status as a center of territorial control and garden design. Timur built extensive walls, gardens, suburbs, and a citadel south of the pre-Mongol city.²⁶ Babur attributed the following projects to Timur:

1. Within the citadel (*arq*)
 - a. Guk Serai (a four-storey kiosk)
2. Within the walled city (*gorghan*)
 - a. A Friday mosque near the Iron Gate
 - b. A tomb in a *madrassah* near the exit of the city
3. Linking the walled city with the suburbs
 - a. An avenue of poplars to the Turquoise Gate
4. In the suburbs (*mahallai*)
 - a. Buland Bagh
 - b. Bagh-i Dilkusha
 - c. Naqsh-i Jahan garden (ruined in Babur’s times)

²⁴ *Babiirnama*, 84.

²⁵ Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 464; see also, 460-63.

²⁶ The Spanish ambassador Clavijo left an eyewitness account of Timur’s gardens within and outside the city walls. See G. Le Strange. *Clavijo: Embassy to Tamerlane, 1403—1406*. London, 1928.

EARLY MUGHAL GARDENS

- d. Bagh-i Chenar
- e. Bagh-i Shaval
- f. Bagh-i Bihisht.

It is significant that all of the gardens mentioned in Babur's account lay outside the walled city.²⁷ Timur's grandson Ulugh Beg was credited with a similar pattern of projects, including a domed monastery, hot bath, and mosque within the city—and gardens outside.²⁸ Some of the surviving Timurid gardens were architecturally elaborate. The Bagh-i-Maidan, for example, had stone buildings, stone columns, and turrets like minarets (the Chihil Situn). Others had an impressive yet transient architectural character, framed by massive tents and textile enclosures.

Although governor of Samarqand for many years, Ulugh Beg's brief succession to the Timurid throne ushered in a period of intense garden design and political turmoil. With rulers passing in quick succession, gardens would never have flourished unless they were places of power. They proliferated under the *soyurghal* system of land grants to powerful military, political, and religious leaders. Land grants may have contributed to decentralized local territorial control, and hence to diffusion of artistic and architectural patronage.²⁹ Babur's uncle Sultan Ahmad Mirza and his nobles laid out many short-lived gardens in the suburbs of Samarqand. Gardens tended to be located on piedmont sites and the upper river terraces. These elevated sites offered sloping terrain, beautiful prospects, and rushing water. They were also strategic locations for reconnaissance of urban military activity.

Meadows served many of the same social functions as gardens, the key difference being that gardens were sometimes built within walled towns, while meadows were exclusively suburban. Princes launched military campaigns from gardens or meadows; their armies camped in meadows. Gardens tended to be smaller, more richly vegetated, and more formally laid out than meadows; but in fact there was a continuum between the two types of places. Babur mentioned five meadows around Samarqand. They were pleasant, irrigated places; reserved for the princes when they were in residence, but accessible to the populace at other times.

It would be a mistake to associate these meadows with the nomadism of central Asian pastoral societies. The "nomadism" of Timurid rulers was a military rather than a herding phenomenon. Timurid military bands had a literate, urbane character, in contrast to the rustic militarism of ethnic Mughals in eastern Turkistan.

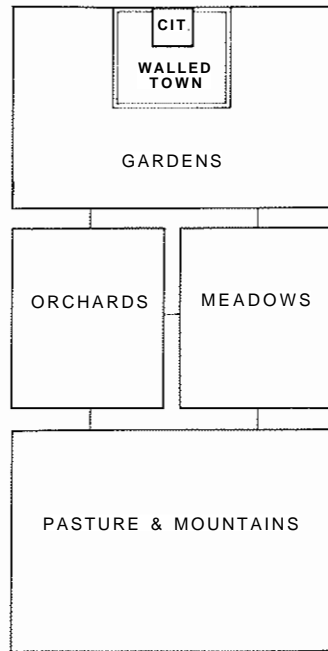
Orchards also resembled and sometimes doubled as gardens. They had similar scale, vegetation, and degree of enclosure as gardens, but they lacked some of the functions of gardens and meadows. A prince might find refuge in an orchard, but he would never organize a large-scale military or ceremonial function in one.

Gardens were thus a type of middle landscape—a synthesis of meadow and orchard, which interacted harmoniously or antagonistically with the walled towns of central Asia (Fig. 7).

²⁷ *Baburnama*, 78.

²⁸ Whereas Timur and Ulugh Beg commissioned large religious structures in Samarqand, Babur had a weak record of religious architectural patronage. See H. Crane, "The Patronage of Zahir al-Din Babur and the Origins of Mughal Architecture," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 1 (1987), 95-110.

"Subtelny, "Socioeconomic Bases."



7. Late Timurid landscape elements

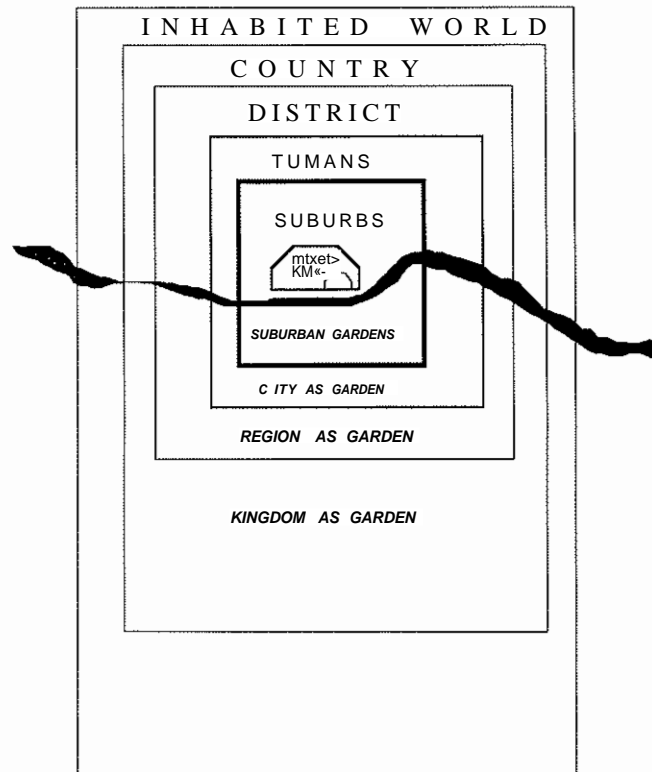
As for the walled town of Samarqand, Babur praised a few of its monuments but said little about its character or functions. He repeated the centuries-old reputation of Samarqand for paper, velvet, bakers, and cooks. He measured the circumference of the outer walls as nine miles, which would have made it far larger than any of the later Mughal capitals at Kabul, Agra, Lahore, and Shahjahanabad (Mughal Delhi). Three of the city's six main gates were mentioned, along with a curious place adjoining one wall called Lover's Cave. But his only significant geographical remark was that: "Samarqand is a wonderfully beautified town. One of its specialities, perhaps found in few other places, is that the different trades are not mixed up together in it but each has its own bazar—a good sort of plan."³⁰ Segregation of trades was not as uncommon as Babur suggested, but his comment revealed his growing preference for functional separation of land uses, a preference that found its sharpest expression at Agra.

When Babur referred to the "gardens of Samarqand," he spoke on a regional, urban, and local level (Fig. 8). The word *Samarqand* referred to a country, a district surrounded by *tumans*, a ring of suburbs, a walled town, and a citadel. The word *garden* also referred to a region, a city, and individual garden sites. A garden could be an improved meadow; a formal enclosure with tents, waterworks, buildings, and walls; or an orchard.³¹ Such sites collectively produced a suburban garden landscape, an irrigated district, and, figuratively speaking, a regional garden empire. In Babur's usage, however, the words *Samarqand* and *garden* referred primarily to the suburbs surrounding the walled town.

The ideal Timurid city had gardens and garden-like qualities at every level. The ideal landscape was a garden landscape. The situation at Samarqand in Babur's times, however, was far from ideal. The city was frequently under siege. Fighting amongst rival claimants for the Timurid capital wore the city down, and for this Babur himself

³⁰ *Babwnama*, 81.

³¹ See general articles on "Bag," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, London, III (1981), 392-98; and "Bustan," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, I (1960), 1345-48.



8. The language of gardens

had substantial responsibility. His first unsuccessful siege directed from the Khan Yurti meadow lasted three months. Victory came after a second seven-month siege in 1496-7. The besieging army established itself in the Qulba meadow near the Bagh-i Maidan (garden of the plain) southeast of Samarqand. As would occur many times, Babur took the position of the invader—looking from a garden or meadow towards the walled city. This process was repeated each time a campaign was launched. It was by no means an exclusively Mughal tactic. Shaibani Khan, Babur's most bitter Uzbek rival, defeated Samarqand from a camp in the Bagh-i Maidan, the same garden Babur had used to take the city.

Fighting also took place among the suburban gardens of Ferghana and Samarqand. Babur lost a crucial battle in the New Garden outside Samarqand, after which he found himself besieged within the city. Whereas the besieging army maintained a comfortable lifestyle of plunder and appropriation in the suburbs:

The long siege caused great privation to the townspeople; it went so far that the poor and destitute began to eat the flesh of dogs and asses and, as there was little grain for the horses, people fed them on leaves. Experience shewed that the leaves best suiting were those of the mulberry and elm. Some people scraped dry wood and gave the shavings, damped, to their horses.³²

Food and supplies were exhausted during such sieges, leaving the walled town in a miserable condition.

³² *Baburnama*, 144-

Gardens did not always represent a position of strength. Babur noted the vulnerability of Herat when its rulers resided in the suburbs. Gardens also became hiding places for retreating rulers. The dual role of the garden as a vantage point for taking cities, and as a refuge from attack or political intrigue recurred throughout the *Babumama*. Babur knew the terrors of military defeat firsthand. After losing Samarqand and Ferghana, he faced a bitter, desparate, “throneless” period. He hid in orchards and abandoned gardens, and once when discovered, he said:

my state of mind was miserable indeed, for well is it understood that nothing in the world is worse than the fear for one’s life. . . . I knew the helplessness of my position. I rose and went to a corner of the garden, saying to myself, “If a man live a hundred years or a thousand years, at the last, nothing. . . ,”³³

Babur had not built a single garden when he was driven out of the region; nor had he refurbished any existing gardens. Given his circumstances, it is remarkable that he even mentioned gardens. Indeed, he had few thoughts about garden design until he secured a stable territorial base at Kabul.

IV. The Advent of Mughal Garden Design in Kabul

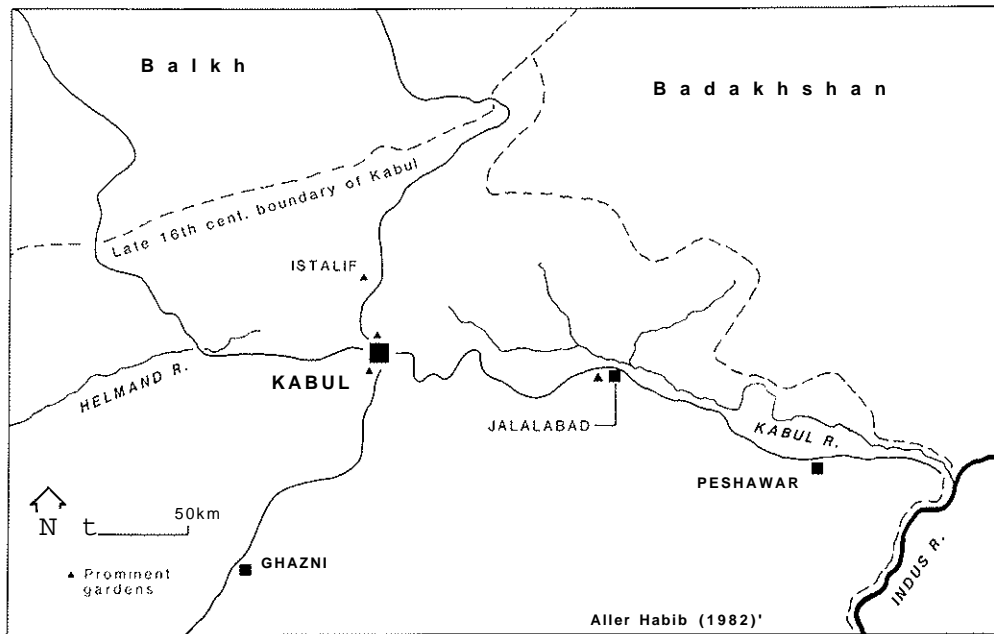
In events reminiscent of Samarqand, the advance on Kabul was directed from meadows and gardens outside the city. The city was surrendered without a battle in 1504, and along with its walled town, Babur acquired the dependencies of Kabul and Ghazni (*mulk ul-vilayal*)(Fig. 9). He spent more than twenty years in Kabul, in contrast with periods of a year or less in Samarqand and Ferghana. His reign at Kabul was punctuated by numerous military campaigns, but Kabul remained the center of administrative activity. This sustained period of occupancy enabled him to design gardens for the first time and to develop a distinctive mode of garden life.

Babur’s geographical account of Kabul followed the same general format as for Samarqand and Ferghana, but his emphases were different. Flora and fauna received more attention, as did administrative units and routes. This dual emphasis on nature and politics would be consolidated in his garden projects. Like Qandahar, Kabul lay on the crossroads between the Indian subcontinent and Khurasan, with Peshawar to the east, Farmul and Bannu to the south, Ghur to the west and Qunduz and Andar-ab to the north. Kabul was also connected with the Timurid centers of central Asia and Khurasan by trade and history.

The province of Kabul had an ideal combination of places. It was “mountain, river, city, and lowland in one.”³⁴ Mild winters and cool summers made it superior to Samarqand, Delhi, and Agra. Even in the heats, the elevated citadel received cool breezes flowing down the Kabul River drainage, channeled by the snow-capped mountains that flanked the river. Babur wrote little about the water courses of the area except to note

^w *Babumama*, 182.

Babumama, 202. For details about the topography around Kabul, see H. G. Raverty, *Notes on Afghanistan and Part of Baluchistan, Geographical, Ethnographical, and Historical*, London, 1888; C. Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan and the Panjab*, 3 vols., London, 1842; and M. Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*, I, London, 1842; and C. E. Bosworth, “Kabul,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, IV (1974)> 356-57-



g. The country of Kabul (redrawn after Habib, 1982)

those that fed a garden or pleasure resort. Kabul lacked the major irrigation economy of the Samarqand-Bukhara region. Only one canal, built during the time of Ulugh Beg bin Abu Said, was mentioned in the *Baburnama*³⁵

Equally important was his silence about the walled town of Kabul, even after twenty-two years of living there. The town was simply a well-situated place for waiting out a siege, quartering in winter, and venturing out to more enjoyable places. It was a weakly symbolic and functional center. Babur praised its air, its views over the valleys of irrigated orchards and gardens, and its contribution to harmonizing mountain, river, city, and lowland. The walled town was connected to an old royal residence on the top of a nearby mountain. Sufi shrines had been built at the headwaters of springs which watered gardens around the town. A canal built during Ulugh Beg's time terminated in a small pool and pleasure ground known as Kul-Kina, "where much debauchery went on." Ulugh Beg had also built gardens around Kabul, establishing it as a Timurid place; but unlike Samarqand, there were no references to architectural patronage or gardens construction within the walled town. The disjunction between suburban gardens and the walled town was more pronounced in Kabul than Samarqand.

As in his former territories, gardens and orchards lined the river valleys, streams, and moister hillslopes. Meadows complemented the gardens and orchards of Kabul. Microclimatic diversity made it possible to produce a wide range of cold weather and subtropical fruits. East of Kabul the hills had a rich cover of bunch grasses, and one hillslope had a dramatic display of several dozen varieties of naturalized tulips. Although largely concerned with natural resources—firewood, fishing, and birding—exotic plants and animals captured Babur's imagination for the first time in Kabul. "In Ningnihar another world came to view—other grasses, other trees, other animals, other birds, and other manners and customs of clan and horde. We were amazed, and

³⁵ Not to be confused with Ulugh Beg bin Shah Rukh, the famous Timurid ruler of Samarqand.

truly there was ground for amazement.”³⁶ It would become a distinctive trait of the Mughal rulers to observe, count, and extoll the unusual plants and animals of a region. Fascination with natural wonders tended to offset the ruler’s negative judgments about an area. If the conquered land was disappointing in some respects, its oddities offered some compensation.

Babur took pains to describe the local routes and mountain passes that linked Kabul with surrounding territories. In comparison with Samarqand, Kabul was much smaller and less politically significant. It consisted of *tumans* rather than large quasi-independent districts, but Babur described the administrative units surrounding Kabul far more systematically than in any other region. Despite its ethnic and linguistic complexity, Kabul was the region Babur knew best.

Kabul, Ghazni, and Nangahar were the only *tumans* with major gardens and towns. After the conquest of Kabul, its dependencies were allocated to various nobles, but Babur kept the *tuman* of Kabul for himself. Kabul included the villages of Istalif and Astargach, which were formative places in the history of early Mughal garden design. Istalif had beautiful vineyards and orchards watered by ice-cold streams. Ulugh Beg’s garden at Istalif established a Timurid foundation for Babur’s improvements at the site and a model for his projects in other suburban areas. Babur distinguished himself from Ulugh Beg, however, by claiming that he purchased the garden that Ulugh Beg had simply confiscated. Clearly, gardens were supposed to be places of justice and legitimation, as well as of beauty. Babur’s improvements at Istalif were minimal: he straightened out a stream that had zigzagged through the garden, built a small pool, and had some seats erected in another garden nearby. While he crowed proudly about the formal symmetry of his gardens at Agra, his gardens at Kabul were relatively informal places.

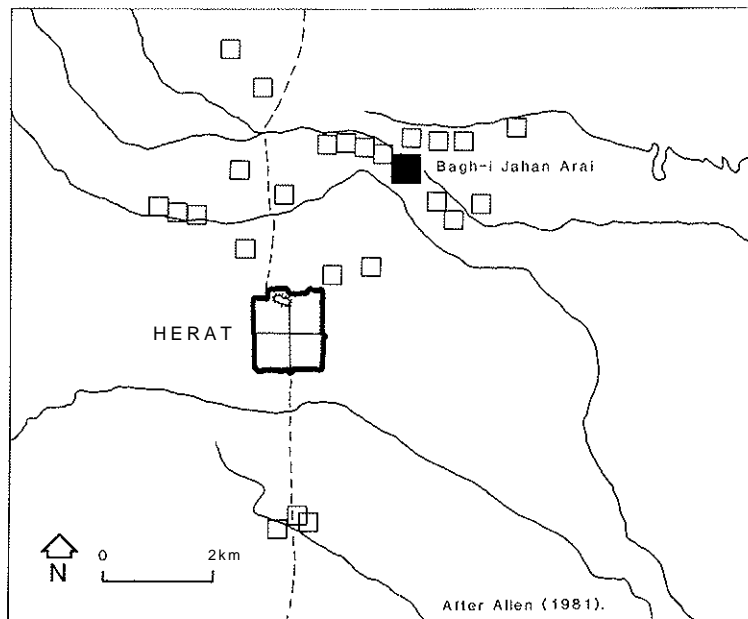
During his first two years of rule, Babur built no gardens of his own. The only garden incident of this period occurred when his mother Qutluq-nigar Khanim died. She was buried in the New Garden on the Koh Damen where Ulugh Beg had previously built a house. It does not seem to have been a formal tomb garden. In contrast with later Mughal practice, the first gardens were places of action rather than dynastic memory. Tomb gardens did not become an important Mughal garden type until the mid-sixteenth century, long after Babur’s death. By the fourth generation of Mughal rule, the process of converting residential gardens into tomb gardens had transformed “Shahdara” and “Kabul” into funerary landscapes.

One of the few references to gardens before 1506 involved a mishap. After entering the citadel for the evening, a thief stole Babur’s horse out of the suburban *chahar-bagh*. This event reinforced Babur’s earlier experiences in Ferghana and Samarqand. The city was an unlucky, unreliable place. Herat was the only late Timurid city where the elite had full control of the citadel yet chose to operate full-time in the garden suburbs.

Herat: A Visit to the Khurasan Court

In the fall of 1506, Babur traveled to Herat to give military assistance to the Timurid princes against the Uzbek rivals. No military action occurred, but Babur’s landscape sensibilities were immeasurably altered. Courtly life at Herat was centered in sub-

³⁶ *Babumama*, 22g.



to. Herat, in 1507 (after Allen, 1981)

urban gardens. It was elaborate, urbane, and aesthetically exquisite; with sophisticated rituals for meeting, serving food, and entertainment. The primary royal residence was located in the massive World Adorning Garden (Bagh-i Jahan'arai) to the north of the city.

Babur listed sixty places that he visited during his forty-day stay in Herat. Most of these places were in the suburbs, although he also mentioned city gates, roads, bazaars, and the citadel (Fig. 10). He said nothing about the rectangular town plan of Herat, which coincidentally resembled the ground plan of a Timurid garden. Babur's sightseeing list makes it clear that royal life had shifted into the suburbs.³⁷

Years later, Babur discussed how his relatives lost Herat to the Uzbeks. He saw the indulgent courtly garden life as the source of Herat's vulnerability. "The Mirzas [of Khurasan] were good enough as company and in social matters, in conversation and parties, but they were strangers to war, strategy, equipment, bold fight and encounter."³⁸ Upon returning to Kabul, he forged a creative response to this tension between power and pleasure in the garden. Large amounts of time would be spent in garden drinking parties. It was in the gardens of Herat that he first broke the religious laws against drinking wine. This lapse in the gardens of Herat led to a long succession of drinking parties in Kabul. Yet Babur took heed of the political vulnerability he saw in Khurasan garden life. He continued to use gardens as places for expanding his political alliances and territorial control. By combining the sophisticated aesthetic of garden life with attentiveness to political affairs, Babur established the first, distinctively Mughal pattern of garden life—a pattern devised in Kabul, adapted from Samarqand and Herat, and later transformed in Agra and Lahore.

³⁷ See T. Allen, *A Catalogue of the Toponyms and Monuments of Timurid Herat*, Cambridge, Mass., 1981; W. Ball, "The Remains of a Monumental Timurid Garden Outside Herat," *East and West* 32 (1981), 79-82; and *Archaeological Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, Paris, 1982; O' Bernard Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, Costa Mesa, Calif., 1987; and Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 16-43.

³⁸ *Baburnama*, 300.

Beauty and Power in the Gardens of Kabul

Towards the end of his arduous winter journey from Herat, Babur received news of Kabul's rebellion. As in earlier episodes, gardens provided the vantage point for military action. The rebellion was quickly quelled and Babur's control reestablished, but it was clear that cities could never be fully trusted.

Some of the most poetic landscape passages in the *Baburnama* deal with the Kabul countryside after the trip to Herat. Tulips covered the hillslopes, swift freshets ran, and nobles engaged in shooting and hawking. Babur stated that, "Kabul in Spring is an Eden of verdure and blossom"³⁹ (once again, the word *Kabul* meant the suburbs and countryside around the city, not the walled city).

From birth to death, all important rituals took place in a garden. Although Babur's son Humayun was born in the citadel of Kabul in 1508, Humayun's celebratory feast took place in the suburban Chahar-Bagh.⁴⁰ Periods of festivity and relaxation did not last long, however, for in 1508 internal rebellion again struck Kabul. Babur learned of the revolt while in his Chahar-Bagh and repeated the familiar pattern of suppression. The famous Garden of Fidelity (Bagh-i Wafa) was built after the suppression of this rebellion to entertain the officers who had remained faithful.

The Bagh-i Wafa garden in Nangahar marked a crucial stage in Mughal garden history. Nangahar had been governed from the ancient fort of Adinapur.⁴¹ The garden was located across the Surkh-rud from Adinapur. This was the riverfront pattern that would develop on a grand scale at Agra and Lahore. Babur claimed that the area had been inhabited by brigands until he had it settled and built up. Constructing a garden across the river from the old town was the first step in this process.

In 1511/2 Babur took Samarqand and was promptly driven out again. Did he ever give up hope of shifting his capital back to the Timurid heartland of Samarqand? The text does not answer this question, but towards the end of his life in India, he wept with nostalgia for Kabul. No comparable emotion was displayed for Samarqand.

Babur's memoirs for the year 1519 survive between two lapses in the text and have particular importance for understanding Mughal garden experience. The citadel of Kabul was mentioned only twice. In the first case, Babur simply noted that he entered the citadel by a back route (i.e., an unceremonial entry); while in the second, he stated that a drinking party had taken place in the citadel. Far more prominent in the text were events in gardens outside the citadel. Returning to Kabul from a campaign across the Indus, the royal entourage staged numerous drinking parties in the Bagh-i Wafa, the Qara-tu Garden, the Violet Garden, the Char-Bagh, the Plane-tree Garden, the Talar Garden, Haidar Taqi's Garden, and a garden near Kul-Kina; all of which surrounded Kabul. Some of these parties were poetic occasions, while others got out of hand with stunts and arguments. On one occasion, a servant swam around the edge of a pool in the Plane-tree Garden one hundred times, and on another, a heated argument raged among advocates of different intoxicants.

³⁹ *Baburnama*, 320-21.

⁴⁰ This scene of feasting and dancing is depicted in a miniature painting in the British Museum *Baburnama*, ms. or. 3714, fol. 295a.

⁴¹ *Baburnama*, 346; Annette Beveridge states that Adinapur was derived from Udayanapura, meaning "Garden Town," *Baburnama*, 207, note 5.

EARLY MUGHAL GARDENS

Even on trips to the beautiful gardens of Istalif and Khwaja Sey-aram, drinking preoccupied the Mughal court. The only relief from this otherwise obsessional pattern of events came in brief references to the beauty of an apple tree or a harvest. The Baghi Wafa fruit trees delighted the court. Babur praised the pomegranates and the “trefoil lawns” that carpeted the garden. In an emulation of Persian tradition, poetry and wine flowed from a common source in the gardens around Kabul.

At first glance, minor accounts of this sort do not reveal much about Mughal citadels or gardens; but two observations help draw together the fragmentary evidence of remarks and silences. The first point concerns the political tension between garden and city. The gardens of Kabul provided a meeting place for a core group of faithful nobles. Kabul city had on at least two occasions yielded to rebelling factions during Babur’s absence. Only once was Babur welcomed back to Kabul after a campaign. Gardens provided a prospect from which to retake the city when urban political affairs disintegrated. Viewed from a regional perspective, gardens established a network of territorial control that was formerly centered in the citadel of Kabul.

The drinking parties call for a reinterpretation of what the term *paradise garden* meant during the early sixteenth century. Drinking parties nurtured solidarity among Babur’s trusted military leaders. Suburban gardens limited the exposure of this behavior to public and religious scrutiny. Babur started drinking in Herat in part because he felt free of the conservative strictures of his home territory and in part to emulate Timurid poetic and courtly traditions associated with drinking. Gardens provided the necessary privacy for lapses of religious obedience by otherwise faithful Muslim rulers. Drinking parties may also have contributed to a shift in orientation toward the internal articulation of gardens.

One of the first instances of Mughal garden design was at the garden of Khwaja Sih-yaran (three friends), where Babur enclosed a beautiful natural spring in a stone-lined reservoir, ten yards long by ten yards wide.⁴² Platforms were constructed to overlook a field of Judas trees, holm oaks, and plane trees. In a place near Sih-yaran, Babur built a large seat with willow plantings that overlooked another scenic hillside. These gardens established a formula that would later be repeated at rural places like Kaida Kahar (located in the Salt Range in Pakistan). Babur would come upon a beautiful landscape scene overlooking a valley or some beautiful trees. This vantage point lay near a natural spring or brook. He would impound the stream in a small reservoir, construct seats or pavilions, and extend the plantings and watercourses of the area. Gardens were built in the choicest spots, never in a desolate waste or dull setting. Gardens modified and miniaturized the landscape, creating an ideal setting from which to experience, enjoy, and control the landscape. Such interpretations must remain speculative because the *Baburnama* did not dwell upon changes in garden life. It is not certain, for example, that garden drinking parties were conducted discreetly, for the reasons discussed above. Special caution is warranted for interpretations related to Kabul, for much of the narrative is lost.

The gardens of Kabul were small in scale; delightful in prospect; with few formal elements. They were rapidly constructed and visited for very short periods of time,

⁴²This scene is imaginatively reconstructed in the British Museum *Baburnama*, ms. or. 3714, fols. 180b, 181b.

often just by small companies of military men. They served more as stopping places and markers of landscape beauty than as elaborate courtly gardens, paradise gardens, or palace gardens. Agra lacked the natural landscape features and settings that might have permitted a replication of the Kabul garden type. Instead, it gave rise to a larger pattern of administrative and residential gardens where the entire Mughal court and family lived year-round.

V. Agra Reconsidered

There was no Timurid garden tradition on which to build in Agra. According to Babur, there were no gardens at all. He justified his military campaign by referring to Timur's sack of Delhi; and he built gardens to establish the Timurid presence in the region. The spatial opposition between Babur's gardens and the citadel of Agra was discussed at the start of this essay, so now the task is to bring together the various explanations for it.

In Agra, as in earlier territories, garden design was influenced by Babur's larger geographical perspective. His description of Hindustan was four times as long as those of Samarqand and Ferghana and fifty percent longer than that of Kabul.¹³ He described Hindustan as a huge territory of kingdoms (*mamalik*) rather than *Lumans* or districts (*parganali*). Whereas in previous territories Babur simply mentioned the positive and negative aspects of the region in passing, in India he compiled long lists of advantages and defects. The positive aspects of the country were its revenues, curiosities, and huge labor force. Wealth, power, and curiosity drove the move from Kabul to Agra. Although the "pull" of India's landscape curiosities was by no means as enticing as its resources and territory, they played an important role in offsetting the perceived defects of the country. India's defects were its physical environment, towns, and social customs. Agra was as remote from the landscape ideal of mountain springs, rushing irrigation channels, and cold-season fruits as could be imagined. Regarding towns, Babur stated:

The towns and country of Hindustan are greatly wanting in charm. Its towns and lands are all of one sort; there are no walls to the orchards (*bhaghat*), and most places are on the dead level plain. . . . In Hindustan hamlets and villages, towns indeed, are depopulated and set up in a moment. If the people of a large town, one inhabited for years even, flee from it they do it in such a way that not a sign or trace of them remains in a day or a day and a half. On the other hand, if they fix their eyes on a place in which to settle, they need not dig water-courses or construct dams because their crops are all rain-grown, and as the population of Hindustan is unlimited, it swarms in.'***

In addition to their lack of order and permanence, Indian towns had such unfamiliar customs as to underscore Babur's sense of foreignness in the conquered territory. He

¹³Because Babur's geographical account of Hindustan reflected his experience after the initial construction of gardens at Agra, it is not discussed here to the same degree as his descriptions of Ferghana, Samarqand and Kabul.

¹¹*Baburnama*, 477-78- Babur's complaint about impermanence is ironic in view of his own pattern of transient encampments.

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complained that local people sought, to distance themselves from his army, though his own building projects contributed to the separation.

The opposition between gardens and the walled cities was a relationship as well as a disjunction—and the relationship was one of conquest and domination. When the local inhabitants of Agra referred to the opposite side of the river as “Kabul,” Babur was pleased for several reasons: aesthetically, he had adapted a successful Central Asian design scheme to the new environment; politically, he had established an impressive symbolic presence at the capital of India; and socially, he had achieved the solidarity necessary to pursue the course of Mughal hegemony over India. By reproducing Kabul at Agra, he resolved the tensions between attraction and repulsion, at least for the immediate purpose of securing the conquered domain. Once established, a more complex fabric of spatial interaction could develop, but the riverfront garden projects achieved the immediate goal of recentering his own band of followers in India.

The opposition between cities and gardens was not unique to Agra and Lahore. It was the logical extension of a trend that developed in Central Asia. From Ferghana onward, gardens were increasingly seen as places of security and beauty in the face of untrustworthy and unattractive cities. Events at Agra confirmed these suspicions very clearly, for Babur was poisoned soon after arriving. Rebellions incubated readily. Although unfortified, gardens had always been more socially secure than citadels.

Babur’s career displayed a remarkable adaptability to new contexts that was not widely shared among his contemporaries. Ethnic “Mughals,” for example, despised the cultivated regions they conquered. After taking Kashmir in 1533, Muhammad Haidar Dughlat was pressured by his “Mughal” troops to leave the mountain paradise and return to the steppes. They hold him:

The natural solace and joy of the Mughal Ulus is the desert, in which there is no cultivation. The screeching of the owl in the wilderness is sweeter, to our ear, than the song of the nightingale in the grove. We have never made a cultivated land our home. Our favorite haunts and our most agreeable dwellings have been the caves in the mountain tops; our clothing the skins of dogs and wild animals, our food the flesh of birds and wild beasts. How can men of our race be associated with this besotted band of infidels of Kashmir, which is the garden of Aram—nay more, a specimen of Paradise?¹⁵

Haidar Dughlat departed Kashmir with lasting regret. Babur, by contrast, created a local environment that made it possible to remain in the conquered land.

Developing gardens along the riverbanks of Agra and Lahore made sense in many ways. It was the only open land near the city. It had the amenities of the river—its breezes, running waters, and views. The only problem with this functional explanation is that open land existed on the riverbank because it was an active floodplain. Babur had a keen geographical eye, and he surely noticed the lower elevations of the riverbank opposite the citadel. At Lahore, annual flooding was compounded by river channel migration toward the Shahdara side. Even if these natural processes were not initially recognized and accepted as the price of an open location, they would certainly have been recognized within a short time.

¹⁵■ *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, 439-40.

The initial spatial pattern of gardens was a rapid synthesis of Babur's aesthetic, political, and functional aims. Although a logical extension of earlier practices, the spatial pattern at Agra and Lahore was inherently unstable. Almost immediately, the separation between Mughals and Indians gave way to more complex processes of social interaction and stratification—articulated through garden patterns.⁴⁶ Babur quickly ordered his army to move across the river from the gardens, demanding that people ask permission to come across by boat. This was a practical decision, necessary for control of the city; but it also marked a distinction between those who belonged on the royal side and those who belonged on the city side. Mughal tank pavilions led to even more elaborate spatial devices for access to the ruler. Construction of pavilions in the center of a tank was a centuries-old practice in South Asia. Within a year of arriving in Agra, Babur had constructed tanks at Sikri and Dholpur. On several occasions he also camped on islands in the middle of the Yamuna River while the rest of the army was ordered to camp upon the shore. The main difference between riverfront and island gardens was that the former were places of military strength and power, while the later served as royal retreats. The landscape of India occasionally loomed so large, that these retreats became places of haunting alienation, as when Babur wept with nostalgia for Kabul.

Conclusion

Early Mughal gardens were fashioned from remnants of Central Asian meadows, pastures, orchards, and towns. Babur was a product of places and times when citadels and gardens operated as poles of conflict. Although two centuries earlier the Timurid gardens had radiated out from the citadel through the suburbs, this unified landscape ideal had entirely disintegrated. The territorial context of gardens had changed. Garden design reflected those changes: it was shaped by them, it expressed them, and it helped create them.

To what extent, then, were Babur's gardens a Central Asian tradition, a temporary repetitive phenomenon, or an evolutionary process? There was both repetition and continuity in the separation between gardens and walled cities during Babur's reign. Suburban gardens played an important role in the occupancy of each new place. They facilitated conquest and contributed to the diffusion of Timurid culture, more or less intact, into new regions. They remained centers of control after the initial conquest, well into periods of administrative governance in a region.

Yet in each place, there were adjustments to the specific circumstances of that region. Local adjustments were contingent upon specific historical processes, modulating with the seasons, years, and regions. New types of plantings were possible at Kabul. Agra's formidable topographic constraints required new types of water systems. The territorial context of gardens also shaped their form and meaning. The scale and strangeness of India, for example, led to renewed emphasis on the formal qualities of Timurid garden design.

Finally, an evolutionary direction is evident in Babur's garden activities. He transformed the landscapes he encountered and was himself transformed in the process.

⁴⁶A similar point is made in Iftikar Hussain Siddiqui, *Mughal Relations with the Indian Ruling Elite*, New Delhi, 1983.

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The progression of early Mughal garden development can be summarized as follows. Starting out in the highly localized but fractured landscape of Andijan, Babur began to grasp how gardens operated within a larger territorial context. In Samarqand, he began to link the domination of a great “city” and its hinterland with military control in the garden suburbs. This was a late Timurid reality, which Babur perfected, but which stood in marked contrast with the early Timurid ideal of a unified urban landscape. In Kabul, the opposition between citadel and suburb escalated further. Babur completely abandoned the early Timurid landscape ideal. He developed for the first time, however, a systematic administrative grasp of the conquered territory, using gardens as a spatial network of control. Once secure in Kabul, he fused the garden culture of late Timurid Herat with highly pragmatic political action. This progression culminated in Agra and Lahore where suburban gardens operated as vehicles of cultural as well as political domination.

The initial pattern of gardens at Agra and Lahore did not last long. Babur quickly drew upon experience at Gwalior and Ayodhya to incorporate his Agra gardens within the Indian landscape. As he began to consolidate the territorial landscape of northern India, the opposition between garden and city lessened somewhat, and it was altogether reversed by his grandson Akbar’s reign in the late sixteenth century. Akbar rebuilt the Agra and Lahore Forts in ways that hearkened back to Samarqand, with gardens inside and outside the walls. Gardens became extensions of the Mughal palace-fortress. But even as ornamental extensions, the later Mughal gardens echoed the older tension between the citadel and suburbs—conqueror and conquered—and the extraordinary conjunction of territorial ambition and insecurity that shaped garden design in the early sixteenth century.

The implications of this case study for future garden research can be summarized as follows. First, many of the presumed categories, ideal-types, and archetypes of gardens need to be reexamined. Terms like *the Mughal garden* and *the Islamic garden*, as used in modern Western literature, are highly problematic. With respect to design, Babur’s earliest gardens were small-scale, semi-formal imitations of late Timurid garden ideals, adapted to local circumstances. The term *Mughal garden* becomes justified, however, when one views Babur’s garden projects within a territorial context: as part of an unusually militant opposition between gardens and citadels; as places employed to catalyze political solidarity, as well as the more established aims of legitimation; as the primary centers of territorial control; and as vehicles of conquest. This overall combination of territorial functions and meanings distinguished the early Mughal garden from other Central Asian and Indian garden types.

Second, contextual approaches provide promising avenues for re-examining garden typologies and interpretations. But to date, these approaches have been loosely formulated, impressionistic, and unselfcritical. There is a need for further exploration of all three aspects of context laid out in the introduction to this paper: original context, contextual methods, and the scholarly context of garden research.

Third, geography offers an especially wide range of untapped contextual perspectives on garden development, not the least of which are territorial perspectives. This case-study demonstrates the dual aims of contextual investigation: territoriality helps

us understand Mughal garden development; and gardens help us understand Mughal territories and territoriality. But many issues require further attention. Can the terminology of the *Baburnama* yield deeper insights, for example, about the *dynamics* of territoriality in the early sixteenth century?⁴⁷ What are the precise aesthetic, symbolic, and functional links between early and late Timurid garden traditions? The early Mughal case has many possible extensions and geographical comparisons as well. Is it typical or unique among “early” garden traditions? What happens during the transition from conquest to empire and the vicissitudes of imperial expansion and administration?

Finally, garden writings have tended to stress the “noble interiors” of gardens—that is, their beauty, order, and iconography—over their “violent exteriors.” These are loaded terms, but appropriate. Early Mughal gardens were vehicles of military, personal, and cultural aggression. Later Mughal gardens had less immediate ties to the conquest of a particular place, but I suspect that they, and many other garden traditions, rose upon foundations that have yet to be encompassed within the context of garden research.

⁴⁷Further research is needed, for example, to establish the more general functions and characteristics of territoriality in Mughal state formation. See R. Sack, *Human Territoriality*, Cambridge, 1986.

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