

Power discourse: reflecting Shah Abbas I's political thoughts on Safavid architecture and urban development (Isfahan's Baghshahr Utopia)

Abstract

The Safavid era is one of the golden eras of Iranian architecture and art influenced by Shiite and Iranian thought, especially during the 42-year reign of Shah Abbas I, in which thinking, ideology and economics grew because of the silk trade. As a result of the centralized consolidation of power and economics following the political formations, the state sought its ideas in the field of art and architecture. Historical analysis of what has happened in the structure of cities and in different periods is the effect of the power of the ruling class on their structure. Isfahan, as the first garden city, is no exception. The Persian Garden has been the utopia of its creators since it was rooted in their beliefs and therefore the Safavid Garden is the manifestation of two heavenly beliefs centered on the four-garden principle of the shadow of paradise in the present world. School of Isfahan, based on Shiite and ancient Iran thought, had established its Architecture and Urban design in an exemplary and imaginative form. Using these ideological foundations, Shah Abbas sought to construct his utopia in order to have an immortal and perpetual influence on all arts, as the Isfahan school was indebted to his thoughts. Isfahan's Baghshahr, first chosen by Shah Abbas I for political influence, was the capital to serve as a venue for the king's power and utopia. Safavid political discourse is based on the interplay of the components of Sufism, Shi'ism, Islamic tradition and caliphate and the Divine glory. In this article, with an analytical and descriptive perspective, we try to prove the influence of politics on the art of the Safavid period, so that this hegemony is also abundant in the religious ideology of that period.

The questions we face here are: What strategies did the Safavids use to form their own political government?

Do political factors influence Safavid art and architecture? And how does it appear and occur?

Finally, sixteen political factors were identified in the process of city structure, not only in politics, but also in geography, economics, and religion, all of which influenced the design of the Safavid garden city alongside the political model.

Keywords: Shahabbas, Safavid, political discourse, Baghshahr, Isfahan

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Shaham Asadi

University of Zanjan, Iran

Correspondence: Shaham Asadi, Master of Architecture, Teacher of Architectural Drawing, Education of East Azerbaijan Province, Iran, Tel 091 44268265, Email shahamasad@gmail.com

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Introduction

The Safavids were among the survivors of Sheikh Safi al-Din (744-850) who followed the Safavid way in the city of Ardabil. The Safavid Empire was a religious one and the lineage of Ismail and his successors reached Ali ibn Abi Talib (AS) and they claimed the guardianship of the Shiite Imams. The description of Shah Ismail's childhood and his emergence as the secular and spiritual leader of the Safavid dynasty includes events that are of particular importance in the early history of the Safavid state. In the same years, one can search for the sources of Ismail's interest and therefore the clues to Safavid art and architecture.¹ The Shiite religion, which in previous times had scattered bases in Iran, was declared the official religion of the Safavid government, and from now on Iran, by separating from its Sunni neighbors, found a kind of national identity that has continued to this day.

The Safavid Empire largely lost control of the major Shiite shrines in Najaf and Karbala in Iraq in the 1530, leaving them to their Sunni Ottoman rivals, and in 1589 ceding the Mashhad shrine in Khorasan to Sunni Shaybanids. A decade later, by reclaiming it, he did not remove the stigma of defeat from the Safavids, until Shah Abbas I rebuilt the Mashhad shrine after complete domination and allocated endowments

to it in the winter of 1601. The transfer of the capital from Qazvin to Isfahan was another of Shah Abbas' political and security strategies.

The transfer of the capital from the insecure borders of the country to its center was one of the basic Actions to strengthen Safavid political and religious power and the growth and expansion of state capitalism, which made the Safavids of Iran one of the world powers and diplomatic power of that time.² In fact, the Safavid dynasty was able to play a significant role in the "conscious revival of Iranian nationalism" after many years of foreign domination. Although few influences from other countries have been recognized in the art of this period, but these influences in art have been absorbed in Safavid art in a way that has reached a new expression.³ Safavids in gardening and design in pavilions and beautiful landscapes, examples of which we see in Chehelston, Hasht Behesht, Aali Qapoy Isfahan, Cheshmeh Emarat and Kushk and Abbasabad Garden in Behshahr, have been inspired by Sassanid art landscaping.⁴ In the book of Isfahan school¹, the concept of city-power has been used in describing Safavid cities and it is pointed out that the cities of this period were formed and developed under the influence of the power of this family.⁵ It has also been said that the formation of a powerful central government and political-ideological domination in the Safavid era, has caused

¹Maktab

this government to look at the city as a symbol, embodiment and embodiment of the ideological-spatial ideological-political-cultural and economic-social concepts.⁶ The use of the Iranian garden model in the city of Isfahan in the Safavid era in order to define a new identity for the city has been Baghshahr (garden on a city scale). Therefore, in the garden city of Isfahan, the order of plants, land and water, as seen in Iranian gardening and is in “natural-existing”, is man-made on two levels and two scales are Macro (whole city) and Micro (Gardens as elements Forming the new fabric of the city) have been used.⁷ It seems that in the Safavid belief, the city is a place to embody ideals and ideas; It is a place for the presence and manifestation of symbols (bazaar, garden, axis, square, etc.) that represent the power of the ruling government and give identity to the city. The preservation and stability of these symbols, of which gardens and vegetation are the most important, have been of special importance, so the Safavids have provided the necessary infrastructure for the stability of gardens and vegetation. The Safavid government in the development of the city and the creation of a new city with full identification of the place has used potential local natural and artificial factors, the most important of which are the Zayande-Rood River and its tributaries and put the new city in full compliance with the natural environment and river is. Therefore, the necessary water is provided for gardens and trees throughout the city, which has led to the stability (permanence) of the landscape and the new identity of the city, ie Baghshahr. Therefore, long after the extinction of the Safavids, due to the lack of previous care and financial and human support and change of use of many gardens, trees and local vegetation in the new parts of the city remain.

Research background

The scientific study and interpretation of the structure and shape of cities has a long history and rich history. Each of the researches in this field has looked at it from a different perspective. Meanwhile, a group of researchers have studied the city from the perspective of power structures. They believe that the city as an artificial environment can become a tool to achieve, consolidate or emphasize the political and social hegemony of the power group.⁸⁻¹⁵

Separate studies have been done on the current research and each researcher has examined different goals which are mentioned in the table below, but no article has examined the political thoughts and utopia of Shah Abbas in compiling and designing the new capital and only Baghshahr Isfahan has been mentioned, therefore this article can be seen as an interdisciplinary article. For this reason, the relevance of this article to history has been used in the travelogues of Kaempfer, Pietro Della Valle, Chardin and Tavernier, because in many cases they describe Chaharbagh Street and the surrounding gardens. Dr. Haghighatbin's articles and the book “Golden Age of Iranian Art” by Sheila Canby and the book “Islamic Art and Architecture” by Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom and Mr. Mahjoor's article on “Characteristics of urban planning in Safavid cities” are very useful in this regard and have fully expressed the garden of Isfahan (Table 1).¹⁶⁻²⁰

Table 1 Research Background of the present article

1	David Talbot Rice	Politics causes cities to be built, as Mansour ordered the construction of Baghdad in 763. ¹⁶
2	Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom	Much of Shah Abbas' urban planning in his new capital was the relocation of the city's commercial, religious, and political center from south, southwest to the Zayandeh River. ²
3	Ernest Kuhnel	Architecture is the result of the emphasis on showing the vastness of places as the architecture of huge buildings, the decoration becomes more flexible and the visual element is formed in its Islamic form (Kuhnel, 2008: 73). And such a definition is a display of power in politics and a reflection of the behavior of activists.
4	Abolfazl Bayhaqi	No ruler in any time and place has been as involved in construction as Massoud Ghaznavi. He built with knowledge of geometry and calligraphy with his noble hand and of all the things that made building easy, his geometry was amazing. Its chief architect was Abdolmalek, a painter-engineer. ¹⁷
5	Mehdi Haghighatbin	Permanent establishment and creation of a special physical and spatial identity for the capital of the Safavid Empire are the political and governmental goals that the Safavids pursued in using the idea of Baghshahr. ¹⁸
6	Donald Wilber	In the time of Shahrokh, the main center of politics and art was transferred from Samarkand to Herat (Wilber, 2008: 70) and the gardens of Samarkand and Herat had a great influence on the art of gardening in other regions as well as in later periods (Wilber, 2008: 71). And since Shah Abbas was a child in Herat, the influence of Timurid gardening in the city of Isfahan is very evident.

Source: Authors.

Research methods

In this article, with an analytical-descriptive view, referring to historical works and documents and writings left from the Safavid era, an attempt has been made to take a serious look at the effects of the regime on architecture and urban planning and examine it from a political perspective. Fortunately, many articles and travelogues have been written about the gardens of this period, which give us a lot of insights. In the present article, with a historical-political approach that has a new look at the ruling class, an attempt is made to prove a political hegemony in the design of Safavid architecture and art, so that most of the interventions of the ruling class can be seen both in ideology and design. Finally, in this article we have tried; the formation of new structures in Isfahan during the reign of Shah Abbas is examined under the influence of the principles of the ruling power.

Power discourse

Discourse has various meaning that according to the scientific context in which it is used; discourse theory pays attention to the significant role of actions and thoughts in the lives of societies. It seems that by evaluating discourses, we can realize human understanding of its special role in historical periods and various social (cultural, political and artistic) aspects.²¹ Foucault defines discourse as follows: “If we call a set of discourse propositions that belong to a discourse formation (formulation). A discourse consists of a limited number of propositions that can be defined as a set of conditions necessary to create it. Discourse is from the beginning to the end of history; it is a part of history that imposes its own special divisions of time”.²²

The discourse of power in Michel Foucault's thought is subject to the theory of “knowledge, power, and the regime of truth.” On the

one hand, his inquiring thought makes it difficult to think, and on the other hand, it gives the researcher the pleasure of thinking. His role is to show people that they are freer than they think.²³ That is why Foucault considers the awareness of the people of modern slavery as a requirement of freedom. He is one of the important theorists in the field of power discourse. In his genealogy, he considers power as an axis that leads to the emergence of social sciences and knowledge, in other words, he considers knowledge as the source of power. In other words, the discourse of political sociology is fluid and moving and does not belong to one ruler or government, but exists in all human beings, and this Foucault theory is a threat to the history of philosophy. Through the concept of genealogy, Foucault seeks to show how human beings govern themselves and others by establishing truth regime. The difference is that Foucault's conception of truth contradicts the ideas of Kant and Hegel, and truth is what arises in the nuclei of power. In this regard, Laclau and Mouffe, under the influence of Foucault's genealogical and Archaeological theories, considered discourse as both linguistic and non-linguistic elements. Of course, their theories are based on structuralism, which uses different tools to examine discourse: 1. signified, 2. restlessness, 3. equivalence logic.

In Safavid rule, the king is the central signifier of discourse, which affirms and rejects those meanings and signs associated with the signifier. The concept of hegemony is another tool in discourse theory that is extremely important for the analysis of political and social phenomena.²⁴ On this basis, it can be said that national identity, as the main signifier of Safavid Shiite discourse, tried to use nationality in establishing the theory of the coexistence of religion and politics (Ibid: 169). One can never imagine a society independent of power. Thus, in socio-political conflicts, a discourse wins that has more power to hegemonize.²⁵ This power in Iran in the ninth to twelfth centuries AH was based on national identity and the person of the Shah, especially during the reign of Shah Abbas Safavid. This discourse used the personal support of the Sultan and Shiite scholars to establish its hegemony.

Policy concept

Politics in the general sense means to seize and hold, which is a kind of political sovereignty. "Politics in this sense is the act of making decisions and implementing them over society as a whole. So, in action politics, the agent and the subject of the action are important. The factor is the action of government policy and other decision-making institutions subordinated to the government in political and civil society. The subject of action is the groups, individuals and different sections of the people to whom power is exercised".²⁶ Historically, different theories have been given about politics, and people have dealt with it based on the circumstances of the time. Sovereignty hegemony has had many effects on it. Aristotle said that man is a creature living in the city government (police). Later in antiquity it was interpreted that man is a political animal. But Aquinas says that man is a political and social animal.²⁷ And this means that one cannot have a healthy, calm and desirable life without society.²⁸ For Aristotle, the existence of proper government is a relative matter, because the rulers are always looking to exploit the people.

Farabi was also a political philosopher and we should consider him as the founder of political philosophy in Islam. In this regard, he was mostly a follower of Plato, who calls himself the Imam of philosophy, and became acquainted with his political philosophy through commentaries on the books of the Republic and Nawamis (Honors) by an anonymous commentator.²⁹ In it, Farabi sought to reconcile Plato's views on the republic with those of the monotheistic

prophets, and to create a utopia based on their views, in which the city of heavenly honor would rule over the world.

For this reason, the rule of politics, whether democratic or totalitarian, must seek to establish itself and facilitate the rule of the people, and art will be used as a tool to explain the utopian ideas of the rulers. And so Bertrand Russell sees politics as a power that produces the desired results of government.³⁰ Harold Laswell, one of the leading thinkers of political science, wrote in a definition of politics in: "Politics is who achieves what, what, when and how".³¹ Man should never assume complete agreement and harmony between the prevailing political ideology and the prevailing political and social conditions, it is not necessary for an ideology to be an accurate reflection of the social environment in which it is formed. In that case, if art is dependent on politics, it will create legitimacy for a political regime and provide the possibility of dominating different sections of society, and in a way make the ideologies emanating from property logical and in many cases sacred. And it causes utopia ideals to fade into ugliness, or, as Jean-Paul Dele puts it, "ugliness is not an illusion, but a real rape." But the fact that the design of Isfahan Baghshahr is existentially and physically beautiful and that it offers us a utopian concept is perhaps due to the reliance on Islamic ideas, which has made its structure glorious and has not allowed political discourse to overshadow it; But discourse theory offers us relative truth, and it is the effects of power that freeze thought. Thus, the architects had no choice but to express the language of the ruling ideas symbolically and the concept of political art takes on a real form. Isfahan Garden Design is a political art to show the power of Safavid kings, especially Shah Abbas.

Art and architecture in the shadow of politics: "Art for art's sake" or "Art for politics' sake"

In the history of conventional art, architects were referred to as puppets of authoritarian governments and those who were tools of the rulers to achieve the political goals of the government. While the CIAM Assembly of rational architects, for them in the heart of the large family of international forums, claimed to create flexibility in the free direction and free from religious beliefs.³² Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, one of the art critics, considers art to be an interconnected set of concepts that, as a media, seek to convey meaning in a beautiful way.³³ Art that highlights bravery and military prowess, such as memorials erected in memory of war victims and a symbol of war in many countries; This political art is defined with the aim of serving the governments or the government in question. Such as Triumphant Arc and memorial inscriptions or epic poems and texts describing kings such as Mohaqeq Karki, who at the beginning of the book "Nafhat al-Lahut fi La'n al-Jabat" and "al-Taghut" considered his purpose in writing this treatise to serve the Safavid government.³⁴ Works of art can be considered as elements that over time are in harmony with the nature around them and appear as a symbol and memorial of their time. That is why politicians and rulers have always sought to create lasting and immortal works in order to show their power to everyone.

The architects believed that distancing oneself from government and art minus politics would give modern architects the potential for political power. Art would take its rightful place. And the reasons for this can be found in the pages of history, where architects appear in the role of creator to somehow spread the thoughts of kings on earth. In most monuments, the designer seldom had independence and always had a complex eclecticism with sovereignty. It seems that architecture needs a strong supporter of ideology and political ideals in order to grow and develop, as we have seen in modern architecture. Hans

Meyer could not advance his communist ideas in the Bauhaus, so he went to the Soviet Union because he considered architecture to serve the masses. Whether we like it or not, we have to accept that politics is part of architecture and that architecture is influenced by it. Few buildings can be found that were not formed from the thoughts and ideologies of their time.

In Safavid Isfahan, as mentioned, after the capital of this city, we see the definition and construction of many large urban projects. These huge and accelerated projects and constructions provide the ground for the creation of a new city next to the former city. As Junabadi writes after explaining the constructions done in Isfahan by Shah Abbas: "Now the former Isfahan is called the old city and these positions and houses are called the new city"³⁵ (Figures 1&2). Regarding Shah Abbas's desire to increase the splendor and beauty of the capital, we can refer to Figueroa's explanation that: "In parts of these two settlers (Tabrizian town and Armenian town) there are very large houses that, The rich inhabitants of the city and the sultans or the ministers or other servants of the king with exorbitant expenses, have built it for good service and in fact his pleasure (Shah Abbas) and in fact this is one of the best places and the most beautiful regions of the world."³⁶ And all of these governments are examples of the influence of the power class on architecture and urban planning, which they design through powerful rulers to prove their hegemony. For this reason, ideology and religion can make the government appear eternal and divine, and cause the formation of an earthly state with theological thought, and in this way, the king shows himself as the deputy and representative of God and the sanctity finds its way to architecture.



Figure 1 Reconstructed map of Isfahan in the Safavid era by Mahvash Alemi.



Figure 2 Map of gardens around Samarkand.

City of God, earthly city (theological state, earthly state)

The city of God was named by Saint Augustine based on the fall of the Roman Empire in 410 AD. He wrote: The City of God is not a systematic political description but a vivid description of a dramatic historical view of Judaism and Christianity. In the Safavid Empire, two conceptions were gradually established, which helped to strengthen the sense of unity in the heterogeneous and contradictory land, which was achieved through the use of nationalism. First, the Shah was God-fearing and his representative on earth, and this was accompanied by indescribable praise because they mixed the thoughts of the people with Shiite thought and the ideology of Sharia. And the second was the idea of perpetuating the government in the minds of the people, which means that the government is always stable, and strengthened this thinking through religion, which will be discussed later in the article. As Opianus (3rd century AD), one of the famous Roman jurists considers the will of the emperor as law, so the king is the father of the nation, just as Ardashir Babakan considers himself the father of the nation. Under these circumstances, a dynamic political theory has no special place, and the distance between perceptions of human nature and political reality is constantly widening, and all thinking becomes one-dimensional and idealistic. As Seneca does not see the government as obligated to serve the people for the development of morality, but as a coercive tool that a decent life is necessary for a limited minority.

The Safavid kings considered themselves the vicegerents of the time and the shadow of God on earth, so as Paul the Apostle says in the letter of the Apostle Paul (one of the most important Christian writings in history): "There is no superior power that is not according to the will of God." For this reason, whoever fights with royal power is considered to be fighting against God, and the superior power of kings is due to the grace that God has given to the king. And this is the freezing of the audience's mind, and it is the first step towards sanctification. The dream of utopia without sanctification is nothing more than an illusion because people must believe in and be bound by utopia with their skin and blood. That is why the city of God is an ideal and utopian city. It is far from the facts. Utopia is nothing more than a lie to deceive the masses; utopia is nothing but empty slogans and promises.

The Safavid government has been trying to unite and form a central government since it took over Iran for this reason, at the beginning of the Safavid rule, all local Sunni powers were abolished, which was possible due to the formulation of ideology and political ideas. The Safavids had three general political strategies for forming their government:

- a) **Dominance over Iran through complete obedience and strong connection with the elder of credo (Morshed Tarigat)** that has been like this since the time of Aq Qyunlus. This was also confirmed through the successive victories of Shah Ismail in the beginning of his reign, and in a way, the Shah became a "Farreh Izaddi"² or the same theory of "Zelle Elahhi"³, which was an example of the idea of ancient Iran. A philosophy inspired by the ancient Zoroastrian religion has continued to this day, so it is not far-fetched to relate the symbolic motifs in the works of art of this period to previous religions and beliefs. When the continuation of rituals such as Nowruz, which has reached from ancient times to the present, can be considered another reason for the accuracy of this claim, it was Jean Chardin, a French jeweler and tourist

²Divine god.

³Divine shadow.

who came to Iran in the Safavid era. In a part of his travelogue, he describes the special customs of Nowruz in the Safavid court. Attributing Nowruz to Jamshid, the French tourist writes: "Iranians celebrate Nowruz according to the solar year, which was usually the ancient history of this people, and they consider Jamshid to be the founder of this festival, who is the fourth emperor of Iran and is proven by this ancient tradition." "The people of this country attach great importance to the festivals related to the evolution of the sun and the Rabi'i equinox, and consider the beginning of spring to be very good and happy."³⁷ The existence of strong roots of ancient beliefs among the people can be argued that despite the serious attention and efforts of Safavids to strengthen the religion of Islam and the Shiite religion by holding religious festivals and mourning of the Imams, even changing the date of the country's tax calculation to the first Muharram.³⁸ Also, in the Safavid era, national ceremonies, celebrations, and rituals helped to ignore the differences through the strengthening of similarities. In this regard, providing such spaces was necessary. On the other hand, Interventions focused on the development of public spaces such as parks, squares, Mosques ... were closely related to social solidarity, and collective identity.

b) "The glory of Farreh Izadi" and national unity in Iran has caused the Shah's position in the semiotics of political discourse, in addition to the material aspect, also has a meta-material nature. This ancient theory first gained strength after Islam in the Safavid era, and the king was represented on earth as the shadow of God.

c) Another factor is the use of Jabal Ameli clergy to immigrate to Iran, and it can be considered a turning point in history because before those jurisprudential clergy were not present in political, spatial and social issues, as some of these people they did not accept the religious legitimacy of the Safavids. The purpose of this work was to justify Safavid ideologies. In modern times, too, governments use philosophers or sociologists to advance their political goals in order to prove their ideals to the public. In his book "The Selfless Man", Dr. Shariati writes: "Hitler had hired five hundred German philosophers and scientists around him and ordered that whatever I said you should justify scientifically."³⁹ Or Mussolini invited twenty Italian philosophers and said, "I want to be elected in 15 days. You have to create an ideology." The role of Jabal Ameli Ulemas⁴ can be considered nothing but proving the legitimacy of Safavids and creating ideology; ultimately, the goal is important, now it does not matter what the tool is, whether it is religion or science or hiding the truth. The only thing that matters is the realization of totalitarian power with a tool called architecture.

d) The third factor, announcing and propagating the Safavid sovereignty, was a valuable strategy to justify the reign of Shah Ismail, and the theory of monarchy was the only valid model for the establishment of Shiite Islamic rule. According to Kaempfer, the belief in the sanctity of the king was innate and according to a tradition due to the attribution of the Safavid king to the Prophet of Islam.⁴⁰ As some people, citing the attribution of Safavid kings to Shiite Imams, considered them infallible.⁴¹ "Whatever the morals and behavior of the king is, he does not commit a sin and whatever decision he makes is flawless."⁴² It is as if the Safavid king himself claimed such infallibility.⁴³ This sovereignty can be seen even in the type of clothing of the Safavids in order to acquire a sacred nature by pretending. Sheila Canby writes about their clothes: "Haidar's followers wore a special hat which he claimed was shown to him by Imam Ali (AS) in a dream and it

was called Heydari crown and made of a red felt hat with a long stick. It was formed in the middle and the cloth of the turban was wrapped around it twelve rounds to symbolize the twelve Shiite Imams".

e) Systematic sanctification was a tool for the fertility and growth of the Shah's political ideas. For this reason, we are witnessing a special glory in formulating ideals as a garden city. Savory wrote "The Shah introduces himself as the representative of the Mahdi (pbuh) on earth".⁴⁴ In this way, it will be valid for the sanctification of the Shah and his material and metamaterial legitimacy to provide legitimacy for their rule, so that it will be a background for utopia in Baghshahr, Isfahan. By creating sanctity, Shah Abbas blocked the way for any kind of comment and criticism and strengthened the form of his totalitarian government based on the opinions of Ulmas such as Karki. And in the words of Nietzsche, who writes in the book "Now That Man⁵": "Sanctity is the source of dictatorship and tyranny." Therefore, the glory of any utopia has a totalitarian process that leads to the rise and growth of art, which in a way determines the totalitarian art. Although the Safavid state is recognized as the main factor in recognizing the Shiite religion in Iran, the issue of a society's religious orientation, like other historical phenomena, is a network-based issue. Numerous factors went hand in hand over a period of nine hundred years and provided the conditions for the formation of the Safavid state and the official proclamation of the Shiite religion. The acceptance of Shiism and its tendency towards it has been a gradual phenomenon in the history of Iran for a period of nine centuries, although its recognition was in the Safavid period. Ultimately, the Safavid monarchy is an interconnected amalgam of the Iranian Sufi sect and Iranian Shiism, so that the political discourse was the entire monarchy and the king himself. The Safavid Shah can be seen as a full-fledged mirror of the discourse of a power that has overshadowed its historical evolution on all aspects of art and architecture.

The glorious era of Shah Abbas I and the golden age of Iranian art

In 1502 AD, with the beginning of the reign of Shah Ismail in Iran, a dynasty took power that was founded by a holy man named Sheikh Safi Ardabili and this dynasty is named after him. After an unsuccessful war with the Ottomans, as a result of which Iran returned to its natural borders, this series reminds the national ideals of the masses and leads Iran once again to the peak of cultural elevation for the last time. Shah Abbas Safavid ascended the throne under conditions that expected a long-term government from him was very unlikely. In the domestic scene, during the twelve years since the death of Shah Tahmasb, the power of the king had significantly decreased and there were wide-ranging disputes within. In terms of foreign policy, almost all western and northwestern states were occupied by the Ottomans, and in the east, half of Khorasan province was invaded by the Atabakans.

As a result of these actions, Shah Abbas Kabir concentrates all the forces of the country in him in order to show his authority against the Ottomans and make Isfahan the center of Islam. The boasting of Safavid authority during the reign of Shah Abbas can be seen in his policy and type of governance. The idea of moving the capital and shaping the city with Shiite motifs was a thought that followed Shah Abbas's policy of confronting the Byzantines, as the glory of the capital as the center of Islam and shaping Shiite ideology were among the preferences of the Safavid political discourse. Walcher writes of the Safavid royal gardens: "The concepts of space, territory,

⁴Scholar, Someone who knows about religion.

⁵Wie man wird, was man is.

and the theoretical system of the Safavid rule have been gathered and manifested in the form of combining the city with the royal gardens and architecture. Therefore, the shape of the classical Iranian garden is a preference in choosing the capital of Shah Abbas and the view of the new part of the city.⁴⁵ These political actions pave the way for it to become one of the brightest political cities and for the artistic structure of the city to move towards a totalitarian utopia based on the prevailing ideologies. After approving his possessions, including Khorasan, from the Uzbeks, Shah Abbas ordered the construction of a new bazaar and Qeysariyeh in Isfahan, and at the same time, the construction of a field for polo and horse racing began. And in 1595 AD. The king ordered the construction of a wall around the square to become a place for the glorious celebrations of Homayouni.

The legitimacy of the Safavids, or the public perception of the right of a member of the Safavid dynasty to exercise political power, was largely based on effective public relations.⁴⁶ Effective public relations meant that the monarchy had to constantly affirm and prove its obligations to respect the customs and traditions of ancient Iran and the Shiite customs in the lives of the people and the king. The Shah's great interest in portraying Isfahan as bigger and richer was due to the power he displayed in the central government through increasing legitimacy. By doing so, Shah Abbas wanted to put the public opinion next to him and thus communicate with the people, and the square was a tool to strengthen the rule and focus more on the people, such as the squares of ancient Rome and Greece. Shah Abbas's long-term ideas for turning the new capital into a lofty utopia were costly and exorbitant, so economics became his main concern. Political stability and internal security, especially the road system, was one of the factors that led to the growth of Iran's economy and trade at this time; consequently, it led to an increase in agricultural and industrial production and the development of domestic and foreign transactions, the creation of productive jobs, trading, and the circulation of money. In this period, the cities of Isfahan, Tabriz, Ardabil, Kashan, Yazd, Bandar Abbas, Hamedan, Qazvin and Mashhad expanded in terms of trade and industrial and agricultural products.

Sheila Canby writes in this regard: "Unlike Shah Tahmaseb, Shah Abbas welcomed foreign ambassadors and merchants from Europe and India, and trade, especially the silk trade, increased with the East and the West". There was no country in all of Asia and even Europe that did not send its trade to Isfahan, some of which were wholesalers and some of which were retailers," Olearius writes of trade during the reign of Shah Abbas. This author mentions more than 12,000 Indians in Isfahan who were selling silk and cotton fabrics. Chardin writes: "The scope of activity of Iranian businessmen is often limited to the interior provinces and India, and trade with European countries is done by Armenian businessmen". Road safety and Shah Abbas' encouragement of trade and support for foreign merchants made foreign traders eager to invest in Iran. In addition to the merchants who came to Iran privately and engaged in trade and thus gained great wealth, during this period several contracts were concluded with foreign governments and their various companies, especially in the silk trade.

For this reason, by sheltering the Armenians and the policy of scorched earth, he included them in his economic game in order to be able to finance the army and build the city from the proceeds of the sale of silk, and for this reason, Canby's creative plan for Isfahan According to the Shah himself, according to the author of the Shah's biography, the Shah himself described the plan and considered the whole Chaharbagh plan as a kind of Shah Abbas' idea to build his city.

In fact, Shah Abbas I created a delicate balance, while preventing the direct intervention of scholars and jurists in the political arena, and employed them to consolidate power and gain legitimacy. Shah Abbas's policy of religious tolerance with other religions and sects, which was in line with his political and economic interests.⁴⁷ The adherence of the institution of religion to this approach and the lack of opposition to it prove the claim that the Shah not only led the worldly people, but also supervised the institution of religion by appointing religious officials, and in fact the power of Shah Abbas I above all powers. It has been in the Safavid realm both religiously and secularly.⁴⁸ Thus, the religious policy of Shah Abbas I put the relations between the Shah and the ulema in a certain orbit, and the ulema also accepted this equation and moved in the direction that he had determined for them. Shah Abbas's developments in the field of the country brought the political structure and the religious institution of the country closer, and finally created a deep connection between this intellectual structure and each other. Of course, this connection had many benefits for both parties. For the rulers of the earth, the best means is riding, and the best means is religion; because religion is the greatest natural force of human beings. But throughout history, humanity has fallen victim to religious justification in various ways, and the masses have been called humiliated in the name of religion. The role of Farreh Izadi is that he gives the right of representation to the king and the people in the role of subjects are obliged to obey the ruling system. All this is done only to justify the ideals of the government and to deceive the masses.

Safavid art

The art of the Safavid era is a continuation of the Timurid period and very close to it. But the time of Shah Abbas is the era of creating works of art in terms of quantity, which seeks economic power and the use of new methods in the field of art and industry.

Safavid art is a theological art that is intertwined with nationalism and involves political-economic issues, which is due to the formation of a powerful central government. In this regard, Kerry Welch believes that: "History of art and history of politics are inseparable in many ways, and the growth of Safavid painting is in line with the success of Shah Ismail as a man on the battlefield and politics. Unlike his Turkmen predecessors, he dominated both eastern Iran and the west. It is therefore natural that the styles of the artists of his court reflect this unity. And this is where Shah Ishmael puts himself in the role of a divine figure "Sultan Zul Allah" in the heart of the people and based on the common political thought of the monarchy is a place of "divine gifts". In the second Safavid period, coinciding with the reign of Shah Abbas I, there was an increasing growth in the art of Iran and the emergence of national art and offers a style of uniform in the new capital, Isfahan. The 42-year reign of Shah Abbas I is the heyday of art in Iran. During this period, on the one hand, Iran-Europe relations and on the other hand, India-Iran relations were developed.⁴⁹ Shah Abbas I built the Aali Qapo Palace for government and court work, and many of his political decisions were made there. After the death of Shah Abbas I in 1627 AD., Iran suffered a severe crisis and as Shodan puts it: "Iran ended life".⁵⁰ In this period, the innovations that took place in urban design and urban planning, especially in Isfahan, are a magnificent manifestation of the utopian art of this period. But from the time of Shah Suleiman onwards, with the political and economic recession of the Safavid government, it was on the verge of extinction, and as a result, the artistic recession also prevailed. But in general, to summarize here, the author briefly examines the art of this period (Table 2).

Shah Abbas order on the construction of Chaharbagh Street (index axis)

The political goals of the construction of Chaharbagh Street can be seen in the magnification and boasting of its capital in front of Istanbul, as Pietro Della Valle acknowledges in his travelogue and Chardin considers it the most beautiful street he has ever seen. Shah Abbas' interest in building an ideal utopia can be seen in this street and its structure. He had designed Chaharbagh as a place for walking and recreation in order to make his ideal city look calm and pleasant. Isfahan was officially chosen as the capital of Shah Abbas I in 1006 AH, and from this year onwards considerable activity was done to build palaces, bridges and historic mosques to decorate the capital. One of these new phenomena is Baghshahr of Isfahan, which Shah Abbas in 1598 AD.⁵¹ Built He was thinking of owning the most beautiful garden in the city. His method in urban planning, with a plan that undoubtedly involved most experts and consultants, reached a point where European tourists themselves have mentioned it as superior to Constantinople (capital of Eastern Rome) and Rome (capital of Italy).⁵² Shah Abbas I decided to decorate his capital Isfahan in every way and consider it the first city in the world. The construction of the long and wide Chaharbagh Street, which was originally a royal promenade and is today considered the best promenade in Isfahan, was one of the actions of the king.⁵³ As we can see in Figure 7, Iskanderbeg Turkman describes this street as follows: "from the river (Zayande-Rood River) to the foot of the mountain on the south side of the city at the end of the street, surrounded by government officials and nobles, each of whom A garden has been designed."⁵⁴



Figure 7 View of Hezar Jerib Garden and its pigeon tower, Isfahan.

Since the Safavid era, the garden has been a part of the physical structure of the city. All available documents from that period indicate that there was plenty of water in the city of Isfahan. Zayande Rood River has existed in this city as a natural axis and by creating ditches; water has reached all parts and gardens of this city. In fact, the architecture of Isfahan in the Safavid period was formed in the context of the city and its nature.⁵⁵ Chaharbagh Street was used by Safavid designers as the major axis of the new city sections and to connect the new to the old sections of the city. It was the most important element of Isfahan urban design and a Safavid innovation. Since it was designed as an Isfahan garden city axis, the street conformed to the special multi-functional aspects of Persian garden axes such as dividing and connecting and the visual characteristics as drawing vision to specific vistas (Figures 9&10).⁵⁶

Along Chaharbagh Street, from the beginning of the election of Isfahan until its decline in 1135 AH, many gardens have been created around this street, some of which Chardin describes as follows: "Gardens of Khargah, Bulbul, Tot,⁶ Darvishan Nematollahi Guest

House "Shirkhaneh is located on the eastern front and fertile gardens, Takht, Moo,⁷ Darvishan Heydari guest house and Tavous Khaneh are located on the western front of Chaharbagh Abbasi Street in Isfahan". Shah Abbas knew very well that architecture takes human thoughts with it and binds and follows them. For this reason, he chose the best way to explain his aspirations to turn Isfahan into his utopia, and that is to capture the nation's thoughts through urban planning and architecture.

In Chaharbagh Street of Isfahan and the surrounding gardens, various commercial, tourism, communication, educational-religious, governmental and residential activities have been carried out. Iskanderbeg Turkman to the ceremony of sprinkling and Junabadi have referred to the activity of pubs and coffee houses in this street. Chardin mentions the existence of two guest houses of Dervishes Heydari and Nematollahi in this street and most of the tourists have mentioned the movement of people in this street. Also, Chaharbagh Street in Isfahan was used as a highway in its time and in terms of performance, it connected the southern part of the Safavid government to the upper part of the city, i.e. Hezar Jerib garden (Figures 7&8).



Figure 8 Reconstructed map of Chaharbagh Abbasi Safavid Street according to Kempfer and Wilber drawings and descriptions of this street in historical sources.

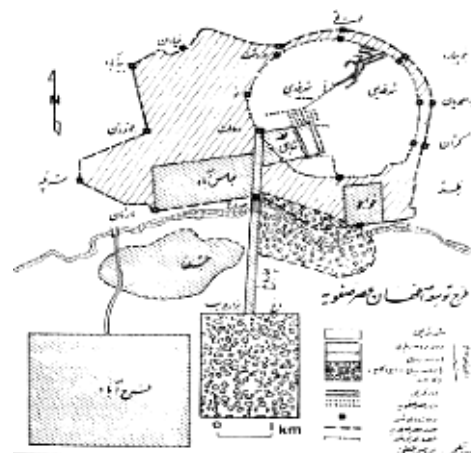


Figure 9 Old city and new neighborhoods in the development plan of Isfahan in the Safavid era.

⁶Mulberry.

⁷Vine.

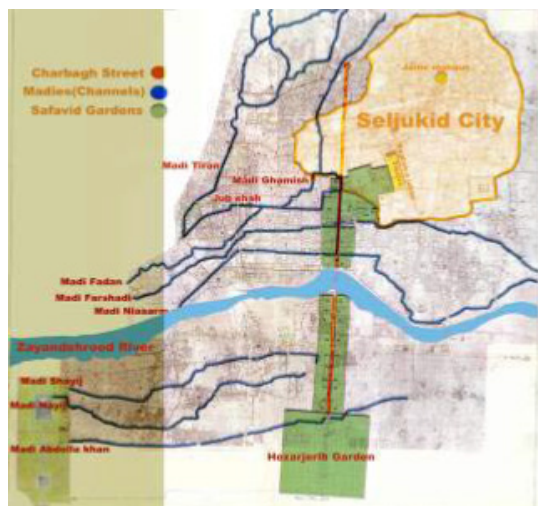


Figure 10 Isfahan developments during the Safavid period and at the Maadies location.

Factors affecting the principles of Safavid urban planning (Isfahan city garden)

In the concept of art in the service of politics, governments often tried to create a glorious and majestic image of them, developed their ideologies in artistic dimensions such as architecture, painting, miniatures, etc., and somehow solved them in style and context in politics. In general, art became a concept for establishing ideology, so it was undeniable that art could give amazing credibility and grandeur to the political structure. The following are:

Art and urban planning in order to legitimize politics

It means that art and urban planning in the service of politics, which takes on a credible role and at some point in time, will be a passage for government approval. This type of function has been used frequently from various pasts (from the reign of Darius to Shah Abbas I) to the present day (Soviet Communism, Western Fascism) and was a stereotype of art to beautify and color politics. "The theological and religious basis of the legitimacy of the Safavids in the acceptance of the Shi'ism of the Twelve Imams by the general public and the role of the Safavids as the custodians of this religion". In this regard, The Safavids also used religious beliefs and they considered themselves imams, and thus gave themselves religious legitimacy, and this legitimacy became an excuse to sanctify the government.

Art and urban planning in order to consolidate political power

Here, art plays the role of Machiavellianism and considers the goal of political action to be power and therefore does not limit it to any moral rule. As a result, it allows the use of anything in politics to advance goals, and thus separates politics from morality altogether.⁵⁷ For this reason, in order to strengthen the foundations of their government, political regimes have to unite all the thoughts of the society and lead them towards themselves, in order to pay attention to the legitimacy of loyalty to the values of the system. So, consolidating power justifies everything. The construction of Baghshahr was a demonstration of the power that Shah Abbas wanted to show to the Western states and prove his authority over the world. In the design of Chaharbagh, we see a straight path that has a north-south direction, which is known as Chaharbagh Street, and in the general description,

it is a show of symmetry and balance in design and the same concept of straight line, and it is the line that the king provides to the people as a transcendental (Figure 7).

Art and display of economic and commercial power

No government can create centralized power without money and economy. Economic power is one of the basic foundations of government because art has the potential to grow alongside economics. For this reason, Shah Abbas paid close attention to economic issues and welcomed any trade relations. He tried to reach out to all European countries in order to increase his economic power because he knew well that a good economy ensures the survival of the government. For this reason, Canby calls this period a golden age for Iran. In designing the garden of Isfahan, Shah Abbas tried to revive the economy of the old fabric of the city by connecting it to the new fabric. The purpose of designing the bazaar and Qeysariyeh was to increase the power of the domestic economy, which tried to strengthen the financial strength of the government through the export of silk and carpets. "Iranian art has been known as the art of carpet weaving for several centuries and has been a good attraction among European tourists. It has been a gift to foreign tourists since the 15th century. With this description, it is easy to understand that the export of Iranian carpets was not something that is common in this era, but since the Safavid era, the export of carpets has enjoyed a good boom."⁵⁸

Special attention to the environment and urban or reflection of utopian art

Attention to the environment is also abundant in ancient Iran and Avesta, and cutting down any tree is considered an unforgivable sin. As in Islam, environmental protection and respect for nature are among the jurisprudential principles. But beyond that, art can be a representation of revolutionary ideals and utopias. As can be seen in the story of Orwell, these revolutionary slogans have lost their color, such as "all animals are equal, but some are more equal".⁵⁹

Utopian ideas were severely criticized by Karl Popper and Karl Mannheim because they subjected people to fantasies and illusions, linking them more and more to racism and the fascist dimension. In his most important work, *Ideology and Utopia*, which was in fact a sociological response to Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness*, Karl Mannheim defines utopia as a desire for change, meaning that utopian thought is the main driving force behind history. Utopian aspirations are an attempt to transform existing social roles.⁶⁰ Mannheim argued that utopias are fleeting fantasies and delusions that eliminate any desire to change things. This concern is based on a simple view because all utopianism becomes totalitarianism when it gains power. Popper considers Plato and Marx to be the enemies of society and in a way disruptive, and believes that utopian engineering not only does not create a free and suitable society for life, but also creates abstract illusions and imaginative attitudes.⁶¹ Baghshahr Isfahan is the show of totalitarian power as a Safavid utopia. "The method of creating urban cities during the Safavid period was considered by urban planners as the most basic model of urban planning; as the masterful design of the gardens of Isfahan, Qazvin, Ashraf (Behshahr) in this period can be considered as successful examples of urban planning based on green space."⁶²

A show of heaven

In the ancient religion, the Iranians, according to Zoroastrian beliefs, described a part of life after death as follows: "Paradise in the base star, the class of stars and from there up. The real paradise is based on the sun and the Minoan gods are in it". In the heavenly

book of the Qur'an, about 368 verses, using the synonymous words of paradise and the components of paradise: Al-Manhar, Al-Oyun, etc., have introduced and described paradise, of which 81 cases refer to earthly paradises.⁶³ The Persian garden, also has a deep place in mystical concepts and it is called as an imaginary worlds. For this reason, the Persian garden is an allegory of heaven, which can be called the first primitive form and the original archetype. Dariush Shaygan also considers the garden to have an eternal face: "... Thus, the Iranian garden is a reflection or heavenly manifestation of a garden that has always existed in the ethnic subconscious mind and its eternal memories".⁶⁴

The emphasis on the manifestation of the highest paradise described in the Qur'an in the Safavid gardens was considered by the kings to such an extent that by choosing appropriate names such as Hasht Behesht, Eram Garden and Paradise Garden for these gardens, they referred to this relationship more and more. As mentioned, the Safavid kings used this metaphorical concept to establish a permanent connection between the land under their command and the most important religious concepts of Muslims in order to strengthen the foundations of their religious legitimacy. Thus, Shah Abbas used the Persian garden to glorify the atmosphere of the city and show his utopia in the form of an exemplary world, and decorated Chaharbagh Street with various gardens and various functions, so that Kaempfer calls it the best gardens in the world. This has not been seen in any of the rulers of the West and its predecessors. Shah Abbas was so eager to build his utopia that even Chardin writes: "Shah Abbas was so interested in building these streets that he did not want to plant a single tree without his presence".

Paying attention to Ron and urban direction

Ron⁸ examines the orientation of the city based on climate, sunlight and the direction of air conditioning or storm, and especially poisonous and insidious monsoon winds, and is of great importance in urban planning. Ron Esfahani has a northwest-southeast direction and includes the cities of Isfahan and Fars. The effect of this ron can be seen in Naghsh Jahan Square and the 45 degree rotation of Imam Mosque towards the Qibla.

Development and construction of cities based on the community plan

Planning the design and implementation of the new city of Isfahan for 25 years during the reign of Shah Abbas I and from the first years of the 11th century AH.⁶⁵ Also, the city of Qazvin became the capital with an eleven-year plan, and the development of the city took place alongside the old texture without disturbing the texture. The middle period of the Safavid rule, due to its powerful political / social base, provided a very fertile ground for the flourishing of the talents of artists and craftsmen. They knew well that art makes sense through innovation, and innovation means heresy, not repetition and imitation of the past. Every voice in our soul arises from consciousness and in other words is a special culture (Figure 9).⁶⁶

Development and expansion of old cities by preserving the past textures of those cities

As it was said, in the Safavid era, cities were built or expanded based on the previous plan and comprehensive plan. One of the most important features of comprehensive urban development was the lack of destruction of the old fabric of cities; As a result, the old and new

tissues had a coherent and stable relationship in a complementary and definite way. As Savory writes: "In Isfahan, an important feature of Shah Abbas's urban planning was that his plan did not involve the destruction of the old city; the new city began only where the old Isfahan ended. The new plan was implemented in open land (gardens and public lands) and away from the old restrictions and problems". This means that the bipolarity of Isfahan, between the Old Square and the New Square, led to a stable and organic integration of the new Safavid city with the previous old city, and the new city was able to withstand the crisis that occurred after the conquest of Isfahan by the Afghans (Figures 9,10).

Creating a fun and lively environment and raising the quality of social relations

Due to the existence of Zayande-Rood River and gardens, walking in Charbagh or Naghsh Jahan Square would increase the vitality of the people of the city. Also, according to Pietro Della Valle, the city was divided according to religious beliefs, and the means of communication were different, but in general the quality of social relations was at its best and social unity was maintained. Naghsh Jahan Square and Chaharbagh Street were among the main urban spaces that Shah Abbas had considered as a place for celebrations, ceremonies, polo and various celebrations, the design and planning of which was directly related to the court and the rule of the time.

Creating and designing urban squares

One of the important features of Shah Abbas I urban planning art is designing a large-scale square that includes the most important urban spaces such as religious spaces (mosque), economic and commercial spaces (bazaar and *Gheisariyeh*), services (baths and Caravanserai) and government (palaces and castle). All these features can be seen in Naghsh Jahan Square, according to Donald Wilber, "it is still one of the largest public squares in the world".⁶⁷

Development of urban communication roads

During the Safavid period, due to the importance of economy and trade, especially foreign trade, as well as the increase of religious travel and travel of tourists and foreigners, roads and communication networks were expanded. Ring roads at the entrances and exits of cities were designed to facilitate travel. With the expansion of communication networks, bridges are also expanding as a means of communication, so in this period we are witnessing a significant growth of bridges.

Introversion

This feature, which is rooted in Islamic culture and even pre-Islamic culture of Iran, is based on the traditions of Iranian social life and their climatic conditions, which makes houses and urban fabric unobtrusive. Overall, in Isfahan, the urban texture is introverted, so that although outside, it seems as if you go from one inner space to another, for example, from the bazaar to the mosque.⁶⁸

Niaresh

Safavid architecture according to the style of the late Pirnia is considered as one of the Isfahani style in which the simplification of designs that are in most buildings and spaces or four-sided (square) or rectangles that are chamfered in the corners like a pavilion Qazvin Fortress and Hasht Behesht Palace of Isfahan. The geometry of the designs after a strong period in the Azeri style was used as a simple geometry and broken lines, which was due to the increase in construction speed, so they used modulation and the same limbs in buildings.

⁸Ron architecture refers to the location of a house or any building. There are three types of Ron in Iran: Ron Rasteh, Ron Esfahani and Ron Kermani. These three types of Ron are obtained from a hexagonal geometric shape.

Unity and National Identity in the Shahriari Tradition (Strengthening solidarity, sense of belonging and collective identity)

National identity creates a kind of sense of commitment and emotional belonging to the national community in an individual that leads to the unity and cohesion of a society. Therefore, it can be considered as the mental element of national unity, an element without which national unity and unity is not possible. National identity, by using its symbolic abilities such as language, religion, historical past, etc., provides social harmony and national unity. In fact, national identity has a decisive role in the field of culture, society, politics and even economics and is a very comprehensive concept and at the same time legitimizes the socio-political order. It leads to the internal unity and cohesion of a political unit.⁶⁹ Ahmad Ashraf also considers the history of Iranian national identity in the period before the Muslim Arabs invaded Iran and in the early Sassanid and Achaemenid periods.⁷⁰ According to the theories of this group of theorists, Iranian identity existed centuries before the emergence of the concept of national identity in the West, in the second half of the nineteenth century, and belongs to the ancient periods of Iranian history. And this identity ultimately creates a sense of belonging to the place and the concept of belonging.

In the environmental psychology, spatial belonging denotes to the cognitive relationship of an individual or a population with an environment and in terms of identity, spatial belonging is one's identity relationship with the social environment.⁷¹ Belonging to a community is one of the effective factors in creating the sense of the place as Hummon described that the spatial sense includes belonging to a community and a locality sense.⁷² A collection of individual and collective anecdotes and narratives that occur along with the environment are effective in creating social belongings to this place. This sense leads to a bond between the individual and the place in a way that human being considers himself/herself as part of the environment and according to his/her experiences about symbols, meanings and functions, envisages a role for these places in his/her mind. This role is unique and different before him/her and so the environment is important and respectful for him. Due to the possibility of occurrence of a social relationship and common experience among people, a place forms a sense of belonging and attachment.⁷³ According to the issues raised, it can be said that the most important type of collective identity is national identity; because it has a decisive role in the field of culture, society, politics and even economics. In other words, national identity is the most comprehensive and at the same time the most legitimate level of identity in all social systems.⁷⁴ The Safavids were the first government in Iran to institutionalize national harmony and unity in the governmental structure. Therefore, in their political ideas, they tried to combine Islamic thought and ancient Iran. In this way, they revived the Iranian nation. "The achievements of the Safavids based on modern indicators can be described as the creation of national identity and resistance to external imperialism".⁷⁵ It can be said that the emergence of Iranian national identity during the Safavid period was a kind of political discourse that was based on the distinction between Shiism and Sunni and in contrast to the Ottoman Caliphate. In other words, since everything is meant within the discourse, the national identity of Iranians is a subject of discourse that the Safavid Shiite discourse has bestowed on individuals and social phenomena. Therefore, the Safavid kings revived the tradition of Iranshahri monarchy in the process of concretizing the idea in the mentality of the elites of the society.⁷⁶

The role of Chaharbagh in Safavid design

Respect for nature, both before and after Islam, is considered as

a kind of manifestation of the Garden of Eden, which is based on the concepts and patterns in the Persian Garden and the influence of the Persian Garden on Islamic mystical ideas. The identity of the Iranian garden, based on our definition of identity, is composed of two aspects: "existence" and "nature".⁷⁷ This identity has been preserved since ancient times and has reached here like the Chaharbagh pattern which is both monstrous and semantic and has a deep meaning and a deep look with the Iranian gardening system.⁷⁸ The Iranian garden is part of the identity of Iranians. In the age of globalization, the identity of societies is more important, because participation in a pluralistic global society requires the expression of one's own identity and cultural identity.⁷⁹ Nature and its inspiration is the Persian garden mixed with symbols that have a special look at numbers and figures, and Osanloo by "stating that the number four in Islamic cosmology is interpreted in the following meanings: natural elements (cold, hot, dry and wet), The four primary elements (water, air, earth and fire), the four main directions (north, south, east and west) and the four elements (metal, plants, animals and humans)".⁸⁰ Moore in his book "Patterns of the Garden" says about Chaharbagh: "Chaharbagh in its complete order is with a precise (mathematical) mystical inspiration from the city and from heaven".⁸¹ We have the participation of the four elements, which Plato himself explains with the interpretations of Eastern thought in Timaeus, the reasons for the need for the four elements. First, "fire" to make the world spectacular and soil to make it resistant to touch. Fire belongs to heaven and soil belongs to earth, these are the two final elements. The Creator placed the climate in the middle of fire and dust, creating the same ratio between them.⁸² The influence of these thoughts can be seen in the gardens around Chaharbagh Street and the reason can be found in and because Shah Abbas spent his childhood in the city of Herat, which is one of the Timurid capitals and contains many gardens, so the garden The city of Herat, which was influenced by the garden of the city of Samarkand, has been a model in the mind of Shah Abbas. Timur inspired the pattern of Chaharbagh from the gardens of Shiraz because he loved the gardens of Shiraz very much and even in naming he did not change the name of the gardens in Herat, such as Delgsha, Bagh-e No, Bagh-e Jahannama, etc.⁸³

The role of Herat model in the design of Isfahan city garden

As mentioned, "Shah Abbas lived in Herat from his childhood until the beginning of his eighteen-year reign. The city of Herat, which was one of the capitals of the Timurids and consisted of many gardens, played a key role in shaping his thinking of the ideal city. Therefore, the Shah had the map of Baghshahr Herat in mind as a primitive model and when he settled in Isfahan, with the guidance of Shiite scholars, especially Sheikh Baha'i, he ordered the expansion of the city based on the pattern of the Iranian garden, which is a kind of garden city".⁸⁴ The two cities of Samarkand and Isfahan had common characteristics both in terms of natural potentials and in terms of the government of the time in their time, which these common characteristics have influenced the gardening of both cities. Sources indicate that there are many gardens in both cities. Teymourians, while making fundamental use of the traditions of Persian gardens themselves influenced the Mongol gardening of India and Safavid Iran.⁸⁵

Zayande-Rood and its role in the design of Isfahan city

Due to the existence of Zayande-Rood River as an important axis in the design of the city and by creating abundant waterway, water reaches all parts and gardens of this city. In fact, the design of the city of Isfahan by Shah Abbas is a contextual design in which the base of the city and its nature is formed.⁸⁶

Zayande-Rood was a great natural element in Isfahan plain that supported the Safavid's city development plan. The main achievements

of the planning depended on the river and its nature.⁸⁷ Therefore, the river in the development plan is not only a natural supporting system but also a fine architectural system in the city and its spaces.⁸⁸

All the historic documents from the Safavid Era and the tourists' memoirs place emphasis on the planned presence of natural elements in the city.⁸⁹

Conclusion

According to what has been said, the city of Isfahan is a unique model in terms of being a garden city. Shah Abbas chose Isfahan as his capital to continue his ideas and create an ideological utopia, and finally for the sake of political security, to be a mixture of both ancient Iranian culture and Sufi Shiism like his. The Persian garden city was the utopia of its builders; because it is rooted in their beliefs and traditions, and for this reason, the Safavid garden showed the physicality of the two beliefs of the highest paradise, centered on the Charbaghi principle, a shadow of paradise in the present world. The school of Isfahan, based on Shiite thought and ancient Iran, had realized its architecture and urban planning as an exemplary and imaginative form. Using these intellectual and ideological foundations, Shah Abbas tried to build his utopia to have an immortal and eternal work in all the arts, as the Isfahan school owes to his thoughts. Baghshahr, the utopia of Shah Abbas, a new city with residential and governmental settlements on the outskirts of the old Seljuk texture, has been skillfully developed without diminishing the value of the old texture, but has also made it more prominent. For this reason, in the whole of design, there is a great change in the urban landscape and visual quality, and this quality can be seen from various travelogues. Finally, Baghshahr, Isfahan was a symbol of personal ideals that had a great interest in art and used it as a tool for He knew the survival and proof of the ideology. That is why politics uses everything to explain more power and influence. Political discourse is nothing but the domination and concealment of truth in the nature of art.

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