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THE HISPANO-ARAB GARDEN ITS PHILOSOPHY AND FUNCTION

By JAMES DICKIE

The literary genres of *nawrīyāt* and *rawḍīyāt*, the description respectively of flowers and gardens, figure amongst those most cultivated by Hispano-Arab poets, and it would be superfluous to identify all the poets who found in a garden the most congenial source of their inspiration. One case must suffice : that of Ibn Khafāja, styled *al-jannān* 'the gardener' on account of the predilection he showed for this genre. Just as the full understanding of Graeco-Roman poetry is impossible unless the reader know what such plants as laurel, ivy, and myrtle signified to the ancients, the study of Arab gardening is important in superlative degree for the correct interpretation of Arabic poetry. But this is not the only point of contact between gardening and literature : for, by strange coincidence, the normal critical procedure used in analysing a work of literature, namely to consider it under its dual aspect of form and content, is equally applicable to garden design and we purpose here first to discover the plan or form of the Hispano-Arab garden and then to examine its content or flora.

Unfortunately the evidence on which an authentic reconstruction of the Andalusian garden could be based is tenuous in the extreme. The numerous allusions in poetry to flowers and fountains rarely or never specify the context in which they appeared. The gardens of the Alcázar at Seville, all too frequently eulogized as a fusion of the Arab and Spanish traditions, are neither the one nor the other but represent the typical Italian garden introduced into Spain during the Renaissance. The gardens of the Partal in the Alhambra at Granada enjoy no more antiquity than 40 years, and with their box-edging, ubiquitous ivy, and enormous Versaillesque perspectives in the style of Le Nôtre, are diametrically opposed to the Muslim sensibility with its emphasis on the intimate and the within. There remain, nevertheless, certain invaluable archaeological data which, combined with the literary descriptions and the evidence furnished by Muslim garden design outside Spain, permit the reconstruction in plan and in detail of the Hispano-Arab garden.¹

The Arab love of gardens stems from the fear and antipathy which the Oriental has always felt for nature in its hostile aspect of the desert which signified for him death, aridity, and the resort of ogres and evil spirits.² The

¹ The only comprehensive study of the Islamic garden ever undertaken is, to the best of my knowledge, contained in a paper ('Les jardins de l'Islam') read by Georges Marçais to the Association of Muslim Students at Algiers in 1941 and subsequently published in *Education algérienne*, Alger-Baconnier, 1941, but more accessible in *Mélanges d'histoire et d'archéologie de l'Occident musulman*, Algiers, 1957, I, 233-44. More limited in scope despite its title is Annamarie Schimmel's '*Al-Junaina. Al-azāhir wa 'l-basā'īn fī ḥaḍārat al-Muslimīn*', *Fikr wa-Fann* (Hamburg), I, 2, 1963, 45-61.

² The Arab attitude to the desert is more ambiguous and complex than this, but in the question of gardens only the negative side of this ambivalence concerns us.

Qur'ān abounds in accounts of Paradise (*al-janna* 'the Garden')³ in the form of a garden with plenteous shade and with water everywhere: 'And as for those who believe and do righteous works We will cause them to enter gardens underneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein eternally: they shall have purified companions, and We will cause them to enter abundant shade'.⁴ Indeed one can understand neither the Islamic garden nor the attitude of the Muslim toward his garden until one realizes that the terrestrial garden is considered a reflection or rather an anticipation of Paradise.

This being the case it is no cause for wonder that the Islamic garden should embody cosmological concepts. In Persian ceramics approximately datable to 4000 B.C. the world—represented by a plaque or bowl—appears symmetrically divided into four zones by two axes forming a cross; at the point of intersection a pool is depicted: in other words, there at the focal point of the world the Spring of Life breaks surface.⁵ This iconography, closely connected with the 'mandala' of Buddhist iconography, expresses a vision of the universe, a life-symbol which, by virtue of its adoption by the conquering Arabs, was distributed throughout the entire extent of their Empire. In this manner the Iranian garden came to constitute the prototype of the Islamic garden. A garden is, of course, one of the commonest life-symbols, and a garden designed in accordance with this archetype (using the term in its Jungian connotation of 'race memory') constitutes the world in microcosm. The word *firdaus* stands for both garden and Paradise; in like fashion *rauḍa* indifferently signifies garden and mausoleum, indicating that the garden frequently served as a burial-place where the owner, inadequately satisfied with the pleasures it had given him whilst he lived, wanted to continue enjoying them even in death and where—symboli-

³ Analogically the etymology of 'Paradise' in European languages reveals the primitive meaning of the word as 'garden', since it is derived from the Greek *παράδεισος* (of Persian derivation and signifying pleasure-park or garden) which is the word used in the Septuagint for the Garden of Eden.

⁴ Sūra IV, verse 57. I have not consulted the commentators on the recurrent phrase in the Qur'anic descriptions of Paradise, *tajrī min taḥtiha al-anhār* 'underneath which rivers flow', but two interpretations seem possible. Quite evidently it refers to a Paradisal mount either washed by rivers at the foot, as Milton (*Paradise lost*, III, 30-1) says:

'Thee, *Sion*, and the flowrie Brooks beneath,
That wash thy hallowd feet, and warbling flow,'

or cooled by subterranean rivers, as in the following account, once again quoting from *Paradise lost* (IV, 223-30):

'Southward through *Eden* went a river large,
Nor chang'd his course but through the shaggie hill
Pass'd underneath ingulft, for God had thrown
That Mountain as his Garden mould high rais'd
Upon the rapid current, which through veins
Of porous Earth with kindly thirst up drawn,
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Waterd the Garden. . . .'

Howbeit, the image is an archetype which recurs constantly whether in literature or scripture.

⁵ cf. Donald M. Wilber, *Persian gardens and garden pavilions*, Rutland, Vermont, and Tokyo, 1962, 19. This book is incomparably the best work published on any aspect of Islamic gardening.

cally—he had already entered into Paradise.⁶ The custom of interment in a garden rests on an implied reciprocity between heaven and earth, a reciprocity whereby natural reality is plastically transformed into its supernatural counterpart. In these cases it would be no exaggeration to affirm that the garden's role is eschatological.⁷ In the light of this the well-known *ḥadīth*, 'Between my tomb and my chair (i.e. pulpit) there is a garden (*rauḍa*) which is one of the gardens of Paradise', acquires fresh significance.⁸

Evidence from non-Spanish sources makes clear the basic organization of the Muslim garden: a watercourse flanked with paths forms the main axis by which a rectangular enclosure is divided and in relation to which the principal elements are distributed.⁹ At right angles to this axis there are one or more secondary axes which may not necessarily carry water but simply be transversal walks, forming points of division or communication. In the case of the principal axis water is indispensable inasmuch as it is used for irrigation purposes.

Of literary sources we have found only two: one a Cordovan text of the

⁶ The following verse from the epitaph of the Granadine Sultan Yūsuf III (*shāhid* preserved in the Alhambra Archaeological Museum; transcription in Lafuente y Alcántara, *Inscripciones árabes de Granada*, Madrid, 1860, 60, and in Lévi-Provençal, *Inscriptions arabes d'Espagne*, Leyden and Paris, 1931, 172) makes clearer the aesthetics of this cadre better than any amount of description: 'May rainclouds water his grave and revive it, and may the moist garden carry to him its fresh perfume'.

⁷ The custom was very widespread and found perhaps its fullest expression in Persia and the Muslim regions of India. The most recent example that I know of is the funerary garden laid out in the Urdu Park at Delhi for the interment of Abu 'l-Kalām Azād, where the famous Indian theologian lies buried at the intersection of two asymmetrical axes. As far as Spanish practice is concerned by far the best account may be found in Torres Balbás, 'Cementerios hispano-musulmanes', *Al-Andalus*, xxii, 1, 1957, 133, where various references are given. The practice of siting monuments and even tombs within a garden so as to evoke sensations of not unpleasing melancholy in the beholder was revived by the sentimental eighteenth century, above all in France where such mausolea proliferated in the romantic 'jardin anglais'. In addition to the well-known case of Rousseau's burial in the park at Ermenonville other examples involving less celebrated personalities are found at Méréville, Morfontaine, Plessis-Chamant, and Maupertius. But this morbid indulgence is not really comparable with the Islamic notion of the funerary garden as forming the dwelling-place of the deceased, an attitude which finds practical expression in the custom of burying the dead in close proximity to a saint's grave precisely in order that they might partake of the sanctity of his presence and benefit from the *baraka* or spiritual emanation exuded by his tomb.

⁸ In 'La Rauḍa de Medine, cadre de la méditation musulmane sur la destinée du Prophète', *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie* (Cairo), LIX, 1960, 241-72 (reprinted in *Opera minora*, Beirut, 1963, III, 286-315), Massignon, with the extraordinary penetration characteristic of all his work, argues that the organization of the Rauḍa or Mausoleum of the Prophet at the Madina Mosque responds to abstract tendencies in Muslim art to provide a *schema* or framework for religious meditation and even for mystical sublimation.

⁹ A fuller account than is possible in this brief essay could not afford to neglect the possibility of Roman influence, particularly in Spain where the Roman irrigation system was still in use when the Arabs arrived in 711. One analogy is, however, too important to be overlooked: the axial watercourse of the Perso-Arab garden corresponds closely to the 'euripi' of the Romans, notably in the Garden of Agrippa at Rome and in that of Loreius Tibertinus at Pompeii. Parallel material, yielding points of comparison as well as of contact between the Perso-Islamic and the Egypto-Hellenistic garden traditions, can be found in Jack Lindsay's *Leisure and pleasure in Roman Egypt*, London, 1965, 248-346.

eleventh century and the other a Granadine of the fourteenth. These descriptions, separated by three centuries, demonstrate that the Arab garden underwent no significant changes in the interval. The first text describes the garden in Cordova known as Ḥair al-Zajjālī where the famous poet Ibn Ṣuhaid was buried beside his friend the vizier Abū Marwān al-Zajjālī whose private property the place had been. 'This *hair*', writes Ibn Khāqān, 'is one of the most marvellous, most beautiful, and most faultless places [of pleasure]. Its courtyard is of pure white marble; a stream traverses it, wriggling like a snake. There is [also] a basin into which all waters fall. The roof [of the pavilion] is decorated in gold and blue and in these colours also are decorated the sides and various parts. The garden has files of trees symmetrically aligned and its flowers smile from open buds. The foliage of the garden prevents the sun seeing the ground; and the breeze, blowing day and night over the garden, is loaded with scents Abū 'Āmir [ibn Ṣuhaid] enjoyed therein spells of well-being and rest both in the morning and afternoon. Fate gave him at that time whatsoever he desired, and the pleasures of sobriety and inebriation alternated with each other in his experience. He and the proprietor of the garden who is buried alongside him were companions in the youthful pursuit of the gratification of the senses and allies in joy.'¹⁰

Albeit vague and jejune this description constitutes, nevertheless, a key document. Apart from indicating that a garden was viewed as a place suitable for voluptuousness the passage gives prominence to the axial watercourse: 'wriggling like a snake' refers in all probability not to the plan but to the section, that is to say, at the point at which it reached the sunken, marble-paved courtyard in the centre, the water-channel would descend in steps until it reached the new level. There the water fell into a central basin over which would stand almost certainly the pavilion described. Parallel with the watercourse were rows of fruit-trees so that the enclosure would be decorative in the centre but becoming increasingly functional toward the periphery, forming thus not a garden (which is a Renaissance concept) but a 'hortus' in the Roman and Levantine sense. In the Alcazaba of Málaga there survives a garden pavilion contemporaneous with this account: lobulated arches which interlock in pure caliphal style support a wooden ceiling.

Our second text is from Ibn Luyūn's poem on agriculture:¹¹

'With regard to houses set amidst gardens an elevated site is to be recommended, both for reasons of vigilance and of layout;

and let them have a southern aspect, with the entrance at one side, and on an upper level the cistern and well,

¹⁰ *Qalā'id al-'iqyān*, Būlāq, 1283/1866-7, 153. For the location of this garden see *Al-Andalus*, xxix, 1964, 293-4, where we studied it in the context of Ibn Ṣuhaid's biography.

¹¹ *Kitāb ibdā' al-malāḥa wa-inhā' al-rajjāḥa fī usūl sinā'at al-flāḥa*, in Lerchundi and Simonet, *Crestomatia arábigo-española*, Granada, 1881, 136. The poem on agriculture, hitherto unpublished save in excerpts, has been edited with translation into Spanish by Sta. Joaquina Eguaras, and should appear shortly in the series of publications edited by the Escuelas de Estudios Árabes of Madrid and Granada.

or instead of a well have a watercourse where the water runs underneath the shade.

And if the house have two doors greater will be the security it enjoys and easier the rest of its occupant.

Then next to the reservoir plant shrubs whose leaves do not fall and which [therefore] rejoice the sight ;

and, somewhat further off, arrange flowers of different kinds, and, further off still, evergreen trees,

and around the perimeter climbing vines, and in the centre of the whole enclosure a sufficiency of vines ;

and under climbing vines let there be paths which surround the garden to serve as margin.

And amongst the fruit-trees include the [common] grape-vine similar to a slim woman, or wood-producing trees ;

afterward arrange the virgin soil for planting whatever you wish should prosper.

In the background let there be trees like the fig or any other which does no harm ;

and any fruit-tree which grows big plant it in a confining basin so that its mature growth

may serve as a protection against the north wind without preventing the sun from reaching [the plants].

In the centre of the garden let there be a pavilion in which to sit, and with vistas on all sides,

but of such a form that no one approaching could overhear the conversation within and whereunto none could approach undetected.

Clinging to it let there be [rambler] roses and myrtle, likewise all manner of plants with which a garden is adorned.

And this last should be longer than it is wide in order that the beholder's gaze might expand in its contemplation.'

Although this account reveals a garden more utilitarian in character than the Cordovan example it allows us to amplify our conclusions as well as confirming the presence of all the aforementioned features. The pavilion should be located precisely in the centre thereby crowning with its cupola the intersection of the two axes and should be decked with climbing plants.¹² The allusion to vine-trellises to shade the paths from the sun proves that the Arabs continued the Roman tradition of the pergola, at least in the form of the 'berceau' or covered walk. The enclosure—recommends Ibn Luyūn—ought to be 'longer than it is wide' in order that the central kiosk may give on extensive vistas, which is to say the garden must be rectangular in outline. Of other flowers the author refers only to myrtle, and for a long time I thought that this shrub,

¹² Here archaeology steps in to confirm Ibn Luyūn: the excavation of the Patio de la Acequia in the Generalife, hereafter referred to, laid bare the bases of columns which must have supported a dome over the central crossing.

being an evergreen, would also be that intended to shade the pool against evaporation (verse 5, above), but had no proof until confirmation came in the form of three verses by Ibn Zamrak :¹³

‘ O Palace of Genil,¹⁴ full is your abode and naught but beauty does your garden hold.

How lovely is your pool ! On it the East Wind weaves coats of mail beneath the banners which the trees extend ;

and the myrtle whose down surrounds it is plea enough for anyone whose passion is for down ’.¹⁵

The introduction of this shrub to line the pool in the Courtyard of Comares in the Alhambra in the late nineteenth century by the architect Contreras was, therefore, a happy accident. Starting out from the axial canal there should, in the foreground, figure the flowers, in the mid-distance climbing vines and fruit-trees whilst in the background would stand fig-trees as wind shelter.

We have left till the end the archaeological testimony if only to avoid falling into the trap of which García Gómez bids us beware, namely, that of ‘ taking as premiss the present structure of oriental gardens ’.¹⁶ Notwithstanding, this observation no longer has the force it once enjoyed now that excavation has disclosed in the Patio de la Acequia of the Generalife an authentic Arab garden of the Middle Ages. Although the immediate motive was to repair damage caused by the fire of 1958, the archaeologist Jesús Bermúdez not only found the pavement of the Arab paths, revealing thereby the primitive cruciform design of the garden, but, underneath the accumulated debris of almost five centuries, located the primitive level of the parterres (50 cm. below that of the paths) and even, pierced in the flanking paths of the watercourse, the outlet holes which made feasible the irrigation of the flower-beds.¹⁷ Now, for some obscure reason, other authorities have disfigured once more the Patio de la Acequia, sealing the outlet holes, burying the Arab level under half a metre of earth and debris as before, and planting once more upon this false surface the no less false plants unknown to the Arabs. But the plan, unaffected by these changes in the garden’s third dimension, continues to proclaim a *chahār bāgh*, or quadripartite garden, such as Bābur might have laid out at Āgra or Shāh ‘Abbās at Iṣfahān.

¹³ *apud* al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tīb*, Cairo, 1949, x, 80, ll. 15–17.

¹⁴ This palace still exists in the outskirts of Granada, albeit in a deplorable state of dereliction. Still extant also is the large rectangular pool (*bahr*) alluded to by the poet : measuring 121 × 28 metres, before it was filled in for cultivation, it must have been spacious enough to invite comparison with the *daryācha* or ‘ little sea ’ type of garden common in Iran.

¹⁵ I prefer the interpretation of this verse suggested to me by my colleague Dr. J. D. Latham to that of Dr. E. García Gómez (*Cinco poetas musulmanes*, Madrid, 1944, 247). The verse indicates that homosexuality, being something reprehensible, requires extenuation, which in this case, the dark beauty of the myrtle’s foliage, so reminiscent of down on the cheek of a youthful catamite, supplies.

¹⁶ *Silla del Moro*, Madrid, 1948, 111.

¹⁷ See ‘ El Generalife después del incendio de 1958 ’, *Cuadernos de la Alhambra*, 1, 1965, 9–39, whence we reproduce the excellent plan by Sr. Jesús Bermúdez (fig. 1).

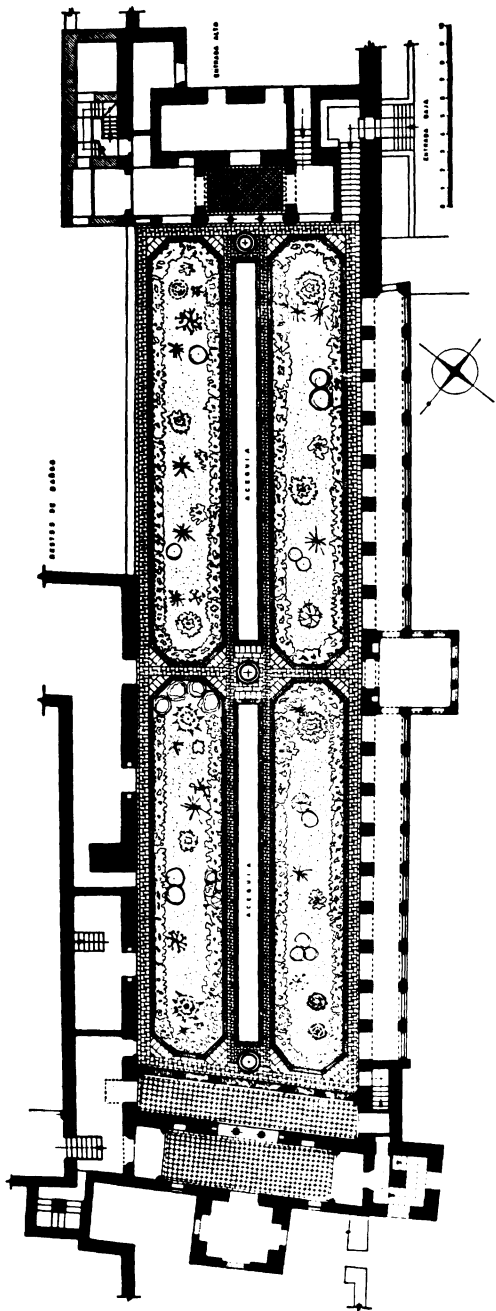


FIG. 1. Plan of the Generalife showing the medieval garden recently discovered.

[Courtesy the Patronato de la Alhambra]

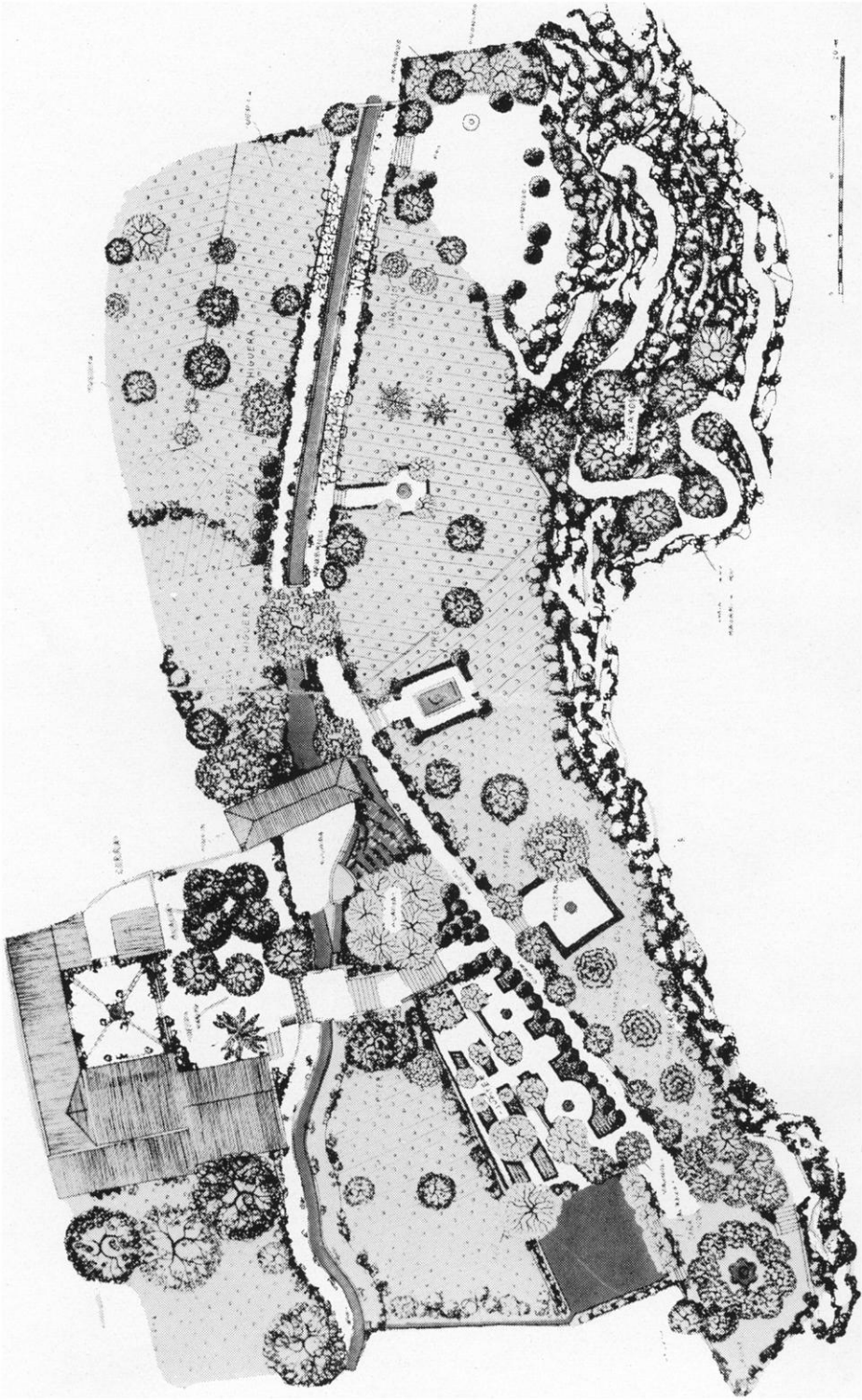


FIG. 2. Plan of garden at Vélez Benaudalla.

[Courtesy Sr. Francisco Prieto-Moreno]

Almost the only other Arab garden to survive¹⁸ is the so-called Courtyard of the Lions in the Alhambra and here also, when the architect Cendoya had the courtyard excavated in order to reinforce with concrete the foundations of the surrounding buildings, the stratification of the soil was upset; however, Manuel Gómez-Moreno, who witnessed the operation, has said that the Arab level was 80 cm. below the present one. This disparity in level between the parterres and the paths had more than one purpose: firstly, it lent added prominence to the geometrical character of the enclosure; secondly, the vegetation could never attain such a height as would allow it to interfere with the architecture; and lastly, it converted the garden into a floral carpet where a person walking on a path at the level of the blossom had the illusion of treading upon a carpet woven with flowers instead of threads. The elevation of the walks so as to create a sequence of sunken flower-beds is particularly conspicuous in Indo-Islamic gardens, as, for instance, in the *Shālimār* Gardens at Lahore or in the funerary gardens of the *Tāj Maḥall* at Agra and Akbar's Mausoleum at Sikandara; it still persists as an essential feature of almost any garden in Morocco.¹⁹ The Palace of the Lions was built in order, we are told, to beautify a garden, and there is no need to postulate a hypothetical origin in the Christian cloister to explain its fundamental difference from other Naṣrid palaces—all versions on a grander scale of the typical Granadine Arab house—but its origin is rather in the Persian garden as is clearly shown by the seven superimposed axes of symmetry in accordance with which the columns of the colonnades are disposed around the four sides of the courtyard.²⁰ Too well known to require description, the fountain the lion-supporters of which we now know to be of eleventh-century date, occupies the point of confluence of two water-axes which, before they converge, cool the surrounding rooms in which they rise as jets and trickle in narrow conduits down steps into the courtyard to be returned to the fountain and spewed forth again from the lions' maws.

These two examples, due to their peculiar situation, show how the architecture, entering into and influencing the garden, has ended by imposing its own personality, but the norm was doubtless much less formal. Both kinds of garden were found in juxtaposition in the Generalife: the formal represented by the Patio of the Acequia and the informal by the gardens on the upper level, gardens of which unfortunately not a vestige remains but for the water-staircase

¹⁸ The possibility of there being another Arab garden under the present Parador de San Francisco (inside the walls of the Alhambra) cannot be excluded, because the courtyard of this hotel is still crossed by the watercourse of the Muslim palace which anciently occupied the site. Nor can mention be omitted in this context of the immediate predecessor of the Court of the Lions, the ruined palace known as the *Castillejo* in the Vega of Murcia, which dates from the twelfth century. See Torres Balbás, 'Patios de crucero', *Al-Andalus*, xxiii, 1, 1958, 176–8.

¹⁹ On the Indo-Islamic garden see C. M. Villiers-Stuart, *Gardens of the great Mughals*, London, 1913, *passim*. Some useful data on Moroccan gardens are contained in Jean Gallotti, *Le jardin et la maison arabes au Maroc*, Paris, n.d. [but c. 1926], 2 vols.

²⁰ See Georges Marçais, 'Remarques sur l'esthétique musulmane', *Annales de l'Institut d'Études Orientales* (Algiers), iv, 1938, 64–9; reprinted in *Mélanges d'histoire et d'archéologie de l'Occident musulman*, Algiers, 1957, i, 99–102.

which, covered by its vault of laurel-branches, corresponds to the 'watercourse where the water runs underneath the shade' of Ibn Luyūn.

By what one can only describe as little less than a miracle, in Vélez Benaudalla, between Granada and Motril, a garden of Arab date has been preserved which, its rather utilitarian nature notwithstanding, presents an invaluable testimony. The plan shows how the prototypal Arab garden, of which this represents a free interpretation, has suffered severe modifications on being adapted to the exigencies of the terrain.²¹ For this reason the Vélez garden is notable rather for its asymmetry and picturesque properties than for the elements we have been analysing in this study. Of these elements the one most immediately apparent is the central axis constituted by the watercourse to the importance of which there contribute pergolas (exactly as Ibn Luyūn recommends). In the orchard are several fountains whence the water bursts forth under gravitational pressure by virtue of the inferior level they occupy with regard to the axial canal. This last runs along the spine of the terrain, thus enabling this garden to dispense with the disparity in levels necessary elsewhere, because the fall in ground level on either side of the canal suffices for the irrigation. The transversal axis, here dislocated from the centre, connects the house with the garden by means of a bridge and steps. The pool forms the starting-point of an oblique axis whose alignment determines the disposition of the decorative zone of the garden, and, by prolongation, this axis meets the main one precisely at the point where the latter would normally have been bisected by the transversal axis.

Up to this point we have limited ourselves to the form of the Hispano-Arab garden, to the neglect of its content. For the restoration of the primitive planting of the Andalusian garden two alternative methods are possible, one positive and the other negative. The former consists in ascertaining, on the basis of textual sources, which flowers were cultivated in the Arab garden. The negative method operates in the inverse direction; it is applied by excluding from the current catalogue of Iberian flora all items imported after the Fall of Granada in 1492. This importation had two phases: the first as a consequence of the discovery of America in this very year and the second as a result of the discoveries made by botanists such as Robert Fortune in the nineteenth century. The agaves and prickly pears in the Alcazaba at Málaga form, perhaps, the most conspicuous of these anachronisms.²² By using either of these methods, or both, it ought to be possible to restore to the Arab palaces still surviving in Spain not only the plants of their gardens but also—less tangible but perhaps even more evocative—the perfumes with which these

²¹ Acknowledgements are due to Sr. Francisco Prieto-Moreno, on pp. 190–1 of whose book (*Los jardines de Granada*, Madrid, 1952) appears the plan which we reproduce here (fig. 2).

²² Although these prickly pears are an anachronism there can be no doubt that, in spite of the popular belief that this cactus came to Spain from the American continent, there flourished on the Mediterranean littoral a species known as *Opuntia tuna*, because the German traveller Münzer saw it there in 1494, only two years after the Reconquest. See *Viaje por España y Portugal, 1494–1495*, Madrid, 1951, 29–32.

places overflowed during the Middle Ages. However, in *al-Badī' fī waṣf al-rabī'* 'Novelties in description of the spring' ²³ al-Ḥimyarī (a Spanish Muslim of the eleventh century) lists the names of 20 of the commonest flowers. In the sequence of their appearance these are: *ās*: myrtle (alternatively 'arrayán' in Spanish from the other Arabic name *raiḥān*) ²⁴; *yāsīmīn*: white garden jasmine (whose role in Arab gardens was to relieve the monotony of whitewashed enclosure walls); *zayyān*: yellow wild jasmine; *bahār*: narcissus (rival of the rose for the affections of the poets, this is the pheasant's eye narcissus, variegated in white, yellow, and green); *banafsaḡ*: violet (which, being the favourite flower of Almanzor, was prominent in the gardens of the 'Āmiriyya Palace); *khīrī nammām*: mauve stock; *khīrī asfar*: yellow wallflower; *narjīs qādūshī*: trumpet narcissus; *ward*: red rose; *sausān*: white lily (a frequent symbol of purity); *khurram*: blue iris; *nailūfar*: water-lily; *naur al-lauz*: almond-blossom; *uḡhuwān*: marguerite or camomile (the petals of which provided the poets with a conceit to describe the beloved's teeth); *shaqir* or *shaqīq al-nu'mān*: poppy (sometimes these terms denote the red anemone); *naur al-bāqillā'* or *naur al-jirjir*: bean-flower; *naur al-ḡhālība*: ivy-flower; *naur al-rummān*: garden pomegranate blossom (the fruit as a symbol of the female breast is a poetic commonplace): and *jullānār*: wild pomegranate blossom (the 'garden' variety is productive, the 'wild' decorative).

Amongst al-Ḥimyarī's omissions Pérès notes six plants featured in other Arabic texts, viz.: *ḥabaq*: basil; *khuzāma*: lavender; *zahr*: orange-blossom; *qaranful*: carnation; *mardaḡūsh*: marjoram; and *diḡlā*: oleander.²⁵

But to this catalogue of 26 plants, trees, and shrubs could be added at least 24 more, to wit: *hāshā*: thyme; *na'na'*: mint; *za'frān*: saffron (all three, together with basil and marjoram, above referred to, being herbs used in Arab cuisine); *tarmus*: lupine; *laimūn*: lemon-tree; *rand*: laurel; *karma*: vine; *nakhl*: palm-tree; *qarāṣīya* or *ḥabb al-mulūk*: cherry-tree; *ijjās*: pear-tree; *khaukh*: plum-tree; *tūt*: mulberry-tree; *kharrūb*: carob-tree; *mauz*: banana-tree; *sarw*: cypress; *ṣafṣāf*: willow (symbol in poetry of the slim figure); *za'ūr bustānī*: medlar-tree; *shajarat al-safarjal*: quince-tree; *tuffāḥ*: apple-tree; *ṣāb*: colocynth (alternatively 'alhandal' in Spanish from

²³ Pérès's ed., Rabat, 1940. Al-Ḥimyarī's list really totals 21, but we have excluded *zahr al-kittān* 'linen-flower' because this plant was cultivated for industrial purposes only.

²⁴ The Arabs, like the Greeks and the Romans, were addicted to the beautiful custom of scattering, during and after the funeral, branches of odoriferous shrubs on the grave, in addition to censing it with frankincense or asperging it with rose-water. Münzer (op. cit., 39-40) relates how in Granada he saw the Imām chanting beside a tomb whilst seven women, all dressed in white, scattered thereon branches of myrtle. A funerary garden should, of course, be an aromatic spot, redolent with the spices of jasmine and of myrtle; indeed, to judge from how luxuriantly it flourishes in Andalusian epitaphs, the latter of these must have figured very prominently in those places where the moods of death were so exquisitely captured. But climatic as well as aesthetic factors determined the character of the setting, and in India myrtle gives way to iris, known as 'the graveyard bulb', because it grows only in the shade of tombs away from the Indian heat: a role which accounts for its presence in Mughal iconography.

²⁵ op. cit., 5. Cf. the same author's *La poésie andalouse, en arabe classique, au XI^e siècle*, Paris, 1937, 167-85.

the other Arabic name *hanzala*: symbolizes bitterness); *shajarat al-tin*: fig-tree; *tuffāhat al-jinn*: mandrake (the Satanic plant *par excellence* as shown by its etymology—‘apple of the genie’); *shaukat al-yahūd*: acanthus; and probably *qulqas*: colocasia.

Such are the data furnished by the positive method; as far as the negative method is concerned perhaps it would be better left to botanists. It is worthwhile indicating that this list, which in no sense pretends to be exhaustive, is not confined to garden flowers properly so called but embraces certain ‘wild’ flowers and even many food-plants as well as fruit-trees, because the Arab garden was at once flower-garden, kitchen-garden, and orchard all in one. The current, post-Renaissance notion of what constitutes a garden would have been unintelligible to a medieval Arab. As regards the arrangement or disposition of the flowers within the garden probably this differed little, if at all, from that prevailing in contemporary monastic gardens in Europe or in the Persian garden, in both of which cases miniaturists depict the plants as sprouting individually, or in informal groups, from an expanse of turf, whose green background lent depth and resonance to the blossom: the antithesis of the modern habit of mass grouping of blooms in beds cut with monotonous precision in a shaven lawn, where the personality of the flower is erased by the density of its planting.

The differences in psychology between Muslim and European are accurately reflected in their respective garden traditions. The high walls of the Islamic garden prevented its owner being seen from outside and insulated him against the clamour and dirt of the antipathetic life of the streets. There, inside his artificial paradise—the title of Soto de Rojas’s famous poem²⁶ could have been chosen by an Arab—he could enjoy in solitude the voluptuous pleasures produced by different perfumes, colours, and shapes in endlessly varied combinations: in sum, it was a place where the refined sensuality of the Muslim sensibility could find full and perfect expression. But within the European garden tradition there exists a profound dichotomy represented on one hand by Le Nôtre in France and on the other by ‘Capability’ Brown and Humphry Repton in England. If Versailles conforms to Cartesian criteria, that is to say, the triumph of reason over nature, with man imposing his will upon the external world, and the romantic English landscape-garden symbolizes the unconditional surrender of the human spirit to that same nature (as in Wordsworth), the Islamic garden betrays—in a fashion more ephemeral than the architecture but no less certain—an equilibrium of both elements, the rational and the natural, in a felicitous compenetration where each one supplements the other. The only remaining dimension—the imaginative—was furnished by the architecture, without which no garden was complete.²⁷

²⁶ *Paraíso cerrado para muchos, jardines abiertos para pocos* ‘Paradise closed to many, gardens open to few’. It is perhaps no accident that this poet was a native of Granada.

²⁷ The article by E. García Gómez, ‘Primavera de flores árabes’, *Vértice*, v, 61–2, 1942, 91 and 100, was not accessible to the author till proof stage. This brief study is a notable analysis of the floral metaphors in al-Ḥimyarī’s work.