

**Attribution Role of Verse Literature in the
Representation of Destroyed Safavid Buildings
Case study: Behesht-Ayin Mansion in Manavi-Nameh of
Mirza Mohammad Olia Nasrabadi**

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Introduction

Safavid kings used to order poets to describe some buildings in poems. Examples of these poems include "Three Poems (Khamasa)" by Abdi Beyg Shirazi, "Odes" of Saeb Tabrizi, "Golzare-e-Sa'adat" by Mirza Mohsen Ta'assir, "Shahr Ashoob" by Mohammad Tahir Vahid Qazvini, "Ramz Al-Riyahin" by Ramzi Kashani, and the "Manavi-Nameh of Emarat Shahi (Shahi's Mansion)" by Mirza Mohammad Olia Nasrabadi. Although most of these poems have exaggerated in describing the building, they are valuable since many of these buildings have been destroyed, and these poems provide important rare historical

information that would otherwise remain unknown. Shafia's Shirazi and Mirza Mohammad Olia Nasrabadi, two poets of the Safavid era, have written poems in the description of the Behesht-Ayin mansion. Masnai-Nameh of Nasrabadi is one of the exquisite works about the Behesht-Ayin mansion built by order of Sultan Hussein Safavi. Rare information has been left in prose documents about this demolished building in the Qajar period. Therefore, Nasrabadi's poem, which is written with a realistic view, makes it possible to have a picture of the whole atmosphere and decorations of this mansion. Among the main features of Masnavi-Nameh, one could point to the description of decorations, work plans, work rules, wages, and categories in explaining the general space of the building and occupations working in each part of the mansion.

Methodology, Background, and Purpose

This is a descriptive-analytical study. Research on destroyed buildings in the Safavid period and poems related to these buildings are very limited. Shahidi Marnani (2015) in Saadat Abad garden of Isfahan in the mirror of Golzar-e- Sa'adat; Alizadeh et al. (2012) in Spatial Features of the Design of Saadat Abad Garden in Qazvin, based on the Masnavis of Rouza al-Safat and Doha al-Azhar by Abdi Beyg Shirazi"; Eshraghi (2009) in Describing the Paintings of the Safavid's Government in the Poems of Abdi Beig; Eshraghi (2008) in Description of Safavid's State House, Palace and Gardens in the poems of Abdi Beyg Navidi, a Contemporary Poet of Shah Tahmasab I. And Soltani (2008), in Garden of Sa'adat Abad in Qazvin, based on the Poems of Abdi Beyg Navidi Shirazi, explored buildings in the Safavid periods in

the poems. This is the first research on the Behesht-Ayin mansion, and at the time of writing this article, no study was published in this field. Analyzing Safavid poems helps to understand the structural and decorative aspects of destroyed buildings. On the other hand, some of the social issues and interpersonal interactions of the Safavid period are evident in these poems, which facilitate a deep understanding of Iranian society and its strengths and weaknesses in that period.

Discussion

Among the sources related to the architecture of the Safavid era, one could refer to poets in the description of royal buildings. Although these works have exaggerated these descriptions, some contain historical information that can rarely be found in other historical sources. The analysis of these poems provides the opportunity to understand the overall structure and decorative aspects of the buildings that would otherwise remain unknown.

Behesht-Ayin mansion was built by order of Shah Sultan Hossein Safavi, where he lived until the end of his official reign. The only time the King was forced to leave this building was during the nine-month siege of Isfahan and the people's rebellion. There are rare data in written and visual sources about the Behesh-Ayin mansion that was destroyed during the Qajar period. In fact, the only notable work about this mansion is a Masnavi called "Description of Emarat Shahi (Shahi's Mansion)", written by Mirza Mohammad Olia Nasrabadi, which describes the Behesht-Ayin mansion. Masnavi-Nameh contains information not mentioned in other sources. Workin plans, division of tasks, working times, and other hidden information in these poems are

interesting for analysis. Using the Abjad letters in the hemistich "Place of government and place of happiness," Nasrabadi has pointed to the year 1106 A.H. as the time of completion of the Beheshtayin mansion. Although poems have been written describing royal buildings in previous periods, Nasrabadi's classification of occupations and features of each of them, as well as his realistic descriptions, have turned his poems into superior and more accurate works. In other words, he has described the tasks of each industry and the beauty of their works separately. The overall structure of Masnavi's Name includes general information about the client, working time, work plans, speed of construction, costs of current affairs, people involved in the construction, general aspects of the building, decorative structure, and the drawings in the Behesh-Ayin mansion. With a realistic approach, Nasrabadi described the mirror and plaster decorations, water basins, and woodworks in this building and also points to wall paintings with stories about Khosrow and Shirin, Leili and Majnoon, and Yusuf and Zulikha. This Masnavi-Nameh is so valuable that it can be considered a historical document about social interactions as well as systems of labor divisions and payments. Neither similar books of that era nor those of later eras contain such detailed information.

Conclusion

The architecture of the Safavid era is prominent due to its magnificence, and in addition to the remaining works, there were many buildings completely destroyed in the post-Safavi era with very little remained information. According to the custom of the Safavid era, poems were written describing Safavid buildings, some with a realistic view.

Behesht-Ayin mansion of Shah Sultan Hossein is one of the destroyed Safavid buildings in the Qajar period, which lacks clear information. *Manavi-Nameh*, written by Mirza Mohammad Olia Nasrabadi during the reign of Shah Sultan Hossein, describes the Behesht-Ayin mansion, and it is the only comprehensive and first-hand work available about this mansion. Careful analysis of this *Manavi-Nameh* provides an overview of the structure and decorative features of this building. This book provides valuable information about the overall supervision of the architect over all the departments, plastering, continuous efforts to quickly complete the building, calculating the wages, and the people working in the construction of the building. Since it was not customary to include this type of information in other similar *Masnavis* of that time, the importance of Nasrabadi's *Manavi-Nameh* became more prominent.

Keywords: Verse literature, *Manavi-Nameh*, Safavid buildings, Behesht-Ayin mansion, Nasrabadi's *Manavi-Nameh*

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