

ANATOLIAN TURKISH GARDENS

REPORT BY MRS. GÖNÜL ASLANOĞLU EVYAPAN

BACKGROUND

The Turks as nomads roamed in regions where nature was not at its most merciful, and where adapting to her required strenuous effort. With a Nature that ruled severely, the then pantheist Turks developed a relationship based on awe and respect; and attributed supernatural powers to the forces of nature.

Mythology described the place of origin of the Turks as an ideal hunting ground of perfect climate and abundant game. They carried with them this image and sought for it, as they dispersed from Central Asia.

During the course of their massive movements through history and geography, they came across sedentary cultures with which they mixed to produce new cultural patterns. The idea of a garden, which meant the use of land for leisure, occurred only then to this people of nomadic background.

Among the other cultural products, the gardens thus built bore the stamp of both the Turks love and respect for nature, and the qualities peculiar to the particular local culture.

When a branch of the Turks entered the faith of Islam in the 10th Century, a new relationship between man and nature evolved: man, created in the image of God, possessed the power to rule nature.

On the other hand, Islamic mysticism, like other mystic creeds, believed all creation to be a reflection of God and saw man at the same level in a harmonious relation within nature.

For both, the ideal of the "Paradise Garden" of Eastern thought became the link that elevated their attitudes towards nature to the realm of religion. Orthodox Islam aspired to create gardens resembling the Paradise promised in the Koran, while the mystic Islam praised in the garden God himself.

The gardens of pre-Islamic and Islamic Turks in Central and Western Asia have not yet been thoroughly examined. It is possible to assume that, having sprung from a common source and having come into contact with them, those early gardens might have had similarities with Chinese, Indian and Persian gardens. This fact seems to be assured from the reconstructed gardens laid out by Turkish emperors in India, and from the remains of the grounds of three 11th century Ghaznevid palaces in Afghanistan, of a 12th century Artukid

palace in Diyarbakr of present day Turkey. The use of courts, and the extensive use of water in the form of fountains, ponds and water canals, in some cases covered with exquisite coloured, gold-glazed and glass mosaics, characterize these layouts.

This background prepared for the evolution of the gardening concept of the Turks who settled in Anatolia. It is this particular development which will be discussed here.

SOURCE

No early pure Anatolian Turkish garden remains its entirety in three or even in two dimensions.

Moreover, pictures or written descriptions are rare. Since the Moslem Turks did not commonly draw or paint, they have left only miniatures depicting gardens scenes. Only when western influence penetrated the Ottoman Empire in the 18th and 19th centuries, were more descriptive garden pictures made by foreign artists¹.

Written descriptions by a few native authors and journey records of western visitors give some information.

Another clue comes from sites of old palaces. Palace grounds for obvious reasons have had more chance of survival; also, having been in the public eye, they were more often described.

PALACE GARDEN DEVELOPMENT

The Seljuk Turks of Anatolia, true to their nomadic tradition, built numerous palaces each one so situated as to enjoy the best climate during one of the seasons.

Those palace gardens of which nothing remains are unanimously described as "paradise" Descriptions also indicate dining, singing, holding court and government sessions in the gardens.

The Ottomans, as they established their power, with the capture of each more important town, moved the capital and built new palace grounds in addition to the existing ones kept for use at certain seasons.

These early palace gardens, though large, were divided by means of kiosks and pavilions into courts; and the whole comprised a self-sufficient complex surrounded by bosquet for hunting.

The Edirne Palace grounds in their final form covered an area of 700.000 sq. ms., which included 119 rooms of palace appartments, 21 government offices, 22 bath houses, 13 mosques, 5 kitchens and 14 summer kiosks, and adjoined a forest.

The earlier Istanbul gardens possessed similar qualities

The Topkapi Palace grounds, built throught three centuries, from the mid 16th century to the mid 19th, with the addition of each pavilion by the succeedign sultans, became a complex of adjoining courts faced by five groups of appartments, two groups of governement offices, five schools, twelve libraries, numerous garden pavilions and summer kiosks on the shore of the Seraglio Point. Outdoor activity was much pursued, in the form of banquets, processions, government sessions, horse racing, polo, wrestling, shooting and hunting.

Around the complex, there were vegetable gardens and vineyards, orchards and large extents of bosquet where 921 gardeners laboured at the end of the 16th century. The products were used for the palace, and the surplus sold to the public.

By the end of the 17 century, when the Ottoman Empire had reached its largest boundaries and had ceased growing, luxury had set in as a way of life. Six successive centuries in Anatolia and a victorious past had softened the camp-like ways of living and encouraged luxury. The Sultan holding court under a tent in the garden was now a thing of the past.

An envoy sent to Versailles brought back new ideas of how the court should conduct outdoor living. A version of Marly-le-Roi was built at Kâgithane at the tip of the Golden Horn. Here 170 summer kiosks belonging to people in high government offices were built around the Sultan's own summer palace.

A craze for luxurious garden banquets began. The tulip became the symbol of the age, and gave its name to the first half of the 18th century. There are records of night banquets in tulip gardens by the light of candles stuck on turtles that moved amongst the tulip beds, where hundreds of nightingales sang in cages hung from trees.

This new mode of outdoor living naturally brought a new interpretation to garden design. New palaces and gardens were built particularly on the shores of the Bosphorus by foreign landscapers. Thus it was especially in Istanbul, the capital and a common place of visit for westerners, that both the formal and the natural picturesque western gardening styles made their influence felt.

QUALITIES OF PURE ANATOLIAN TURKISH GARDENS

Before the penetration of western influence, the Turkish garden was characterized by the simplicity of its layout, its being lived-in, and its functionality.

Outdoor living was held so important that often the garden came before the building. Its site would be chosen for the beauty of its terrain, view, air, water, or hunting possibilities; then the house built for protection.

So the lines of the garden were not dictated by the architectural edifice, thus resulting in non-axial and non-architectural layout, and lack of an architectural climax.

Contrary, however, to that found in the gardens of the middle ages, this non-axial relationship with the building was a product not of immaturity, but of choice.

Because of non-axial development, and the fact that the garden was lived-in, instead of perception through one or a few overpowering axes, numerous angles of perception were created.

Lack of axuality prevented the development of extreme formality of design. Nevertheless, the garden was formal on a modest scale; control of man's hand was apparent in each element while nature was given her due. The straight line was more often used than not, for the reason that it was the simplest means of joining two points. Its use was always on a small scale, that of flower beds or an alley.

Living in the garden in intimate relationship with nature on the whole softened the design to achieve closeness to the natural.

Non-axial relationship with the building, to a degree prevented integration of outdoors with indoors. Nevertheless, this was achieved through the element of a sitting and dining area,

which was at times an outdoor extension of the building, and at others independent and in the form of a kiosk or pavilion.

Often in relation to the sitting area, or even indoors there would be water in the form of fountains, ponds, small jets and canals. Its use was extensive, but never in elaborate dimensions.

Such sitting areas and a few alleys might be paved with patterned stone or pebbles

Flowers were much enjoyed in the garden, especially near the sitting area and around the pond. Colour combinations or fanciful parterre designs were not attempted. It was common to plant only one species on a terrace or in the whole garden.

Fruit and other trees were planted for shade and seclusion. To a superficial observer they might look randomly scattered, but close examination shows shrewd calculation.

Where the natural slope dictated, there would be terracing, but differences of level were usually modest.

Often, a vegetable or vineyard, or an orchard, or a bosquet was attached to the garden proper, thus combining leisure with functionality.

All of these qualities were true of Turkish gardens whether on palatial or on modest scale. These qualities were also inherent in the courtyard which was another means of outdoor extension of the building.

Love of outdoors on another scale created public grounds chosen at particularly favourable spots of wooded land with water, where people flocked for picnic and play. These partially organized grounds were thus early public parks.

WESTERN INFLUENCE

With the penetration of western influence, modesty and simplicity of outdoors layouts, at least in the larger towns, generally disappeared.

The influence of western formal garden resulted in:

- less living in the garden, to leave it mainly to be watched,
- axiality becoming a goal of design,
- terraces increasing differences of level,
- a change in the use of water to give stiller and larger surface,
- simple flower beds giving way to more complicated designs,
- trees getting out of flower beds, topiary entering,
- garden furniture becoming numerous, complex and westernized.

Under the influence of the western picturesque natural garden several park-gardens were laid-out.

As one goes away from the formal layouts before the buildings, the influence of this style becomes apparent in the use of terrain as hilly slopes, picturesque tree groupings, the use of water and garden furniture.

There were attempts also at smaller scale gardens for layouts boasting the "S" curve of beauty.

essentiellement pour leur parfum. des arbres plantés dans le but de donner de l'ombre et de mettre à l'abri des regards, quelques petites terrasses, et la proximité d'un jardin potager, d'un vignoble, d'un vergèr ou d'un bosquet.

A partir du XVIIIe siècle apparaît l'influence à la fois du jardin baroque et du jardin paysager. C'est le jardin baroque de taille modeste, mieux adapté au goût turc de la vie en plein air, qui a eu le plus de succès.

G. A. E

DISCUSSION APRÈS LE RAPPORT DE MADAME ASLANOGLU EVYAPAN

Monsieur Pechère remercie bien vivement Madame Aslanoglu Evyapan de son rapport et des documents inédits qu'elle a fait photographier pour l'illustrer. Il déplore que les jardins turcs soient encore mal connus des spécialistes des autres pays. Il a été frappé par les ressemblances existant entre ces jardins et ceux que représentent les miniatures persanes: jardins de petite dimension, angles de vision très divers et nombreuses promenades, escaliers aux marches très hautes, plantations d'amandiers et de cyprès.

Monsieur Gazzola suggère qu'une étude des sources littéraires (poésies surtout) sur les jardins turcs serait du plus grand intérêt.

Monsieur Fernando Chueca Goitia précise qu'en Espagne, musulmane comme dans d'autres pays soumis à l'influence arabe, les escaliers des palais et des jardins avaient toujours des marches très hautes. Ils devaient occuper un espace restreint et permettre de monter très vite. Cette habitude a été conservée dans l'architecture populaire espagnole.

Madame Micoulina fait la même remarque pour l'architecture russe ancienne avant Pierre-le-Grand, et Monsieur Bhagwat pour les Indes.

En réponse à une question de Madame Mc Dougall, Madame Evyapan précise que les jardins des palais byzantins ont dû avoir une influence sur les jardins turcs, mais qu'il ne faut pas oublier que la civilisation byzantine était en pleine décadence lors de l'installation des turcs.

Monsieur Feray fait un rapprochement entre les fontaines à piédestal - montrées par Madame Evyapan - et une fontaine à vin byzantine, en argent, conservée au Musée de Cleveland (USA), portée par des piliers. Il les compare aussi aux vasques romaines, montées sur un pied, qui ont une apparence similiaire (bains de Dioclétien à Rome).

DISCUSSION FOLLOWING MRS. EVYAPAN'S REPORT

Mr. Pechère warmly thanked Mrs. Aslanoglu Evyapan for her report and for the photographs of unpublished gardens she had specially had taken to illustrate it. He felt it to be most regrettable that Turkish gardens should be so little known to specialists from other countries; he had been struck by the resemblances between these gardens and those shown in Persian miniatures - the same small gardens intended to be seen from very different angles, with their numerous walks, their steep staircases, and their groves of almond trees and cypresses.

Here Mr. Gazzola suggested that it would be very much worthwhile to make a study of the literary sources of information on Turkish gardens, especially the poetical sources.

Mr. Fernando Chueca Goitia specified that in Muslim Spain, as in other countries under Arab influence, palace and garden stairs had always had very high steps; they were required to

DEVELOPMENT TO THE PRESENT DAY

Apart from palace (especially) and estate grounds in the few larger towns, western influence was not deeply felt. Where it penetrated, formal garden influence dominated. Obviously the formal layout on a modest scale was more suitable to the climate, and closer to the Turks' idea of a garden.

Except for a few late palace grounds laid-out mainly to be watched from the building, formality of design was softened to adapt it better to Turkish outdoor living.

Axiality not over-emphasized, terracing on a modest scale, trees within parterres and parterres of simple design were some aspects of this adaptation.

In present-day Turkey, garden design is an adaptation of either the western formal, or the natural garden layouts to the Turkish way of outdoor living; and it retains as its criteria the sense of privacy, of being lived-in, and simplicity of design and execution.

Rapid urbanization is diminishing both the number and the size of gardens, but outdoors is so much a part of life that its values have to be somehow kept alive. This requires a new interpretation and reorganization of outdoors areas.

This is a difficult task; its accomplishment at least partly lies in thorough research into the original gardens to discover more of their basic values.

NOTES

Petrusier (18th cen W.H. Bartlett (end of the 18th cen T. Allom. R. Melling (beginning of 19th cen.)

Evliya Celebi Emya Celebi

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT BY MRS. ASLANOGLU EVYAPAN: LES JARDINS TURCS DE L'ANATOLIE

Au cours de leurs périples à travers les régions arides, les Turcs, alors un peuple nomade, étaient éternellement à la recherche de ce "pays de l'abondance" qui, d'après leur mythologie panthéiste, aurait été leur lieu d'origine. Au fur et à mesure que des groupes s'installaient de manière sédentaire sur des territoires assez vastes, ils tentaient de traduire cet idéal en réalité sous forme de "jardin-paradis".

Des jardins ainsi créés en Asie Centrale ou Occidentale, que ce soit avant ou après l'islamisation, on ne sait que peu de choses; pour l'Anatolie, également, les sources de renseignements sont rares.

Les principales caractéristiques de ces jardins résidaient dans l'impression qu'ils offraient d'être des lieux habités, à l'abri des regards, ainsi que dans leur disposition essentiellement fonctionnelle.

Cette disposition, bien que non-axiale, était peut-être empreinte, tout de même, d'une certaine tendance au formalisme.

D'autres caractéristiques étaient constituées par: la présence de lieux de repos ou de pavillons, une large utilisation de l'eau, des plates-bandes simples plantées de fleurs cultivées

occupy a limited area and to allow of rapid ascension. The habit had persisted in Spanish vernacular architecture.

The same was true of both ancient Russian architecture in the days before Peter the Great, and of Indian architecture; this information was provided respectively by Mrs. Micoulina and Mr. Bhagwat.

In reply to a question from Mrs. Mc Dougall, Mrs. Evyapan explained that while the gardens of Byzantine palaces must have had an influence on Turkish gardens, it must not be forgotten that when the Turks were settling in the country Byzantine civilization there had been in a state of advanced decadence.

Mr. Feray suggested a connection between the fountains on pedestals on Mrs. Evyapan's photographs and a silver Byzantine wine fountain resting on pillars, now in the Cleveland Museum in the U.S.A. He also likened them to the Roman basins having a similar appearance but standing on a foot, in the Baths of Diocletian in Rome.