

MARIA TERESA PARPAGLIOLO SHEPHARD: RECONSTRUCTING A MOGHUL GARDEN. THE KABUL EXPERIENCE 1970-1972

Abstract

After a long experience across Italy and England in landscape design, in 1970 Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard went in Kabul to study the ancient garden Bagh-I Babur, asked by the Institute for the Middle and Far East (IsMEO).

Her mission was to study the site, that includes the garden where the Emperor had wished to be buried, starting from a measured survey including all the existing features, the position of the remaining trees, the buildings, and the fountains. The goals were to understand why Babur, the founder of the Moghul Dynasty, chose it intentionally, amongst many others possibilities, for his last resting place, and what vicissitudes went along in the many years of its existence.

The research of Parpagliolo Shephard makes evidence of her interest in the Bagh-I Babur, as one of the very few examples we possess today of a garden tradition which for more than 2500 years has subsisted in spite of wars and destructions. Formulating the restoration project Parpagliolo Shephard intended to bring back some of its former splendours as a task whose goal was to rebuild a sadly forgotten place.

Keywords: design, architecture, pioneer, landscape, restoration

Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shepard, born in Rome (1903–1974), approaches from the beginning of her carrier in an innovative way to architecture, gardening and landscape issues: she was the first Italian woman landscape architect. She participated in international conferences of European landscape architects (Paris 1937, Berlin 1938), and contributed regularly articles for specialist magazines such as *Domus*, *Il giardino fiorito*, *Landscape and Garden*, *Journal of the Institute of*

Landscape Architects. In 1938, she joined the planning team for the Esposizione Universale in Rome (E42), and in 1940 became head of the exhibition's Ufficio Parchi e Giardini. In 1946 Parpagliolo married Ronald Shephard, a British air force officer she met in Rome, and moved to London starting to work on projects with Sylvia Crowe (1901–1997). From 1950, with Frank Clark (1902–1971) she designed for the Festival of Britain and the grounds of several primary schools in the south of London. In 1954, the Società Generale Immobiliare – SGI commissioned her many projects for private and public gardens, parks and open spaces.¹

In Parpagliolo Shephard's idealist vision, the proper landscape must provide functional natural systems and integrated social communities, and it provided the cultural meanings to support human life: landscape architecture is a work of synthesis. The innovative idea of domestic gardens and parks was that of a natural landscape, where beautiful and functional green scenography becomes an aesthetic expression of practical land-use, looking to an innovative spatial qualities of the city. Parpagliolo Shephard well explained her idea of garden architecture, thus affecting the readers and professionals on this issue then underdeveloped in Italy, highlighting the fact that the garden and the landscape are part of the same picture. For Parpagliolo Shephard, this was the main point in the cultural debate of the twentieth century, as she herself underlined in her articles on architecture and landscape magazines.²

In her first part of professional experience, Parpagliolo Shephard started soon a break with landscape tradition to experiment new forms in garden design, parkways and community gardens. In this way, she contributed as a pioneer to establish the landscape architecture as a new specific discipline.³

¹ Lucia Krasovec Lucas, *Modern Women in (Modern) Architecture: Some Cases (Genesis of a Modern Lifestyle)*, in *Women Designers, Craftswomen, Architects and Engineers between 1918 and 1945*, (Women's Creativity Since The Modern Movement, Series Women's Creativity, 1, Ljubljana, 2017).

² Lucia Krasovec Lucas, *Modern Women in (Modern) Architecture: Some Cases (Genesis of a Modern Lifestyle)*.

³ Sonja Dümpelmann, *Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard (1903-1974): Her Development as a Landscape Architect between Tradition and Modernism*, (London, Pub. The Garden History Society, 2002).

As her European colleagues, Parpagliolo Shephard was interested in experimenting with new ideas in landscape design, through the research for innovative materials and construction techniques, thus contributing to the evolution of the modern movement on an international level.

When she started to have interest in landscape architecture there weren't specialised school in this issue and she developed as a self-taught landscape designer travelling mostly in Italy, England, France and Germany, to take contact with garden designers and their projects, and participating in thematic exhibitions and conferences ⁴. Although she was hired for the job because of her excellent botanical know-how and her ability to design planting plans and flower beds, Parpagliolo Shephard realized the new opportunities it offered for becoming involved in urban design and planning.

Serving the Fascist regime, she adhered to its political vision with her theoretical statements and design work for the exhibition E 42. And yet she showed no regret and no lack of self-confidence when reflecting, in 1971, on her work within the male-dominated planning team: “It was such an enormous job that I learned the profession doing one job and teaching all architects to see the site in a different way”⁵. In Parpagliolo Shephard's idealist vision, the healthy landscape consisted of functional natural systems and integrated social communities, and it provided the cultural meanings to support human life. Landscape architecture was a work of synthesis.

The innovative idea of domestic gardens and parks was that of a natural landscape, where beautiful and functional landscape become an aesthetic expression of practical land-use, looking to an innovative spatial qualities of the city ⁶.

During the sixties, she designed two very interesting project: the patio and the garden of RAI – Radiotelevisione Italiana Headquarters and the park of the Cavalieri Hilton Hotel, both in Rome. As for the first, it reveals the international experience of Parpagliolo Shephard and how she was opened to experiments and receptive to new trends in landscape design: the geometrical organisation of

⁴Sonja Dümpelmann, “Breaking Ground: Women Pioneers in Landscape Architecture. An International Perspective”, *Shifting Ground*, proceedings CSLA/CELA 2006 Conference, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁵Maria Teresa Parpagliolo, “Giardino geometrico, giardino naturale”, *Domus* 1933-XI gennaio n. 61.

⁶Maria Teresa Parpagliolo, “Delle parti di un giardino”, *Domus* 1933-XI febbraio n. 62; “Il piccolo giardino”, *Domus* 1933-XI aprile n. 64; “Opus topiarium”, *Domus* 1933-XI maggio n. 65.

plants and paths highlights the influence of Japanese gardens, which had a substantial interest from the members of ILA, and Parpagliolo Shephard's endeavours to employ cross-cultural references and contemporary design in her works.⁷ The second one, it is characterized by a serpentine drive, now the trade entrance, which snaked up through the grounds to the entrance circle, and two artificial hills on the top: allowing a quieter experience on the terraces and rooms looking over the gardens and city, the new construction camouflages itself into the green and the Monte Mario skyline.⁸

In her introduction to the report on Bagh-I Babur, Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard wrote that the place is "to-day not only a place for pilgrimage to the Emperor's tomb, but it is also one of the public parks of Kabul. This double aspect explains why Afghan Authorities were anxious to restore the site, not only as a shrine, but also as an added amenity for the benefit of the growing population of the town."⁹ It was 1972, and few years before the Italian Archaeological Mission, sponsored by the Institute for the Middle and Far East (IsMEO), restored the Shāh-Jahān's Mosque.

At time, professor Giuseppe Tucci, President of the institute, was going to start a complete restoration of the whole site and he was suggested by De Angelis d'Ossat to contact Parpagliolo Shephard because she had already been asked twice by the Rome International Centre of Unesco to give lectures on the restoration of ancient gardens.¹⁰

In 1945, when war in Europe had just ended, Italy's position on the international scene was extremely uncertain¹¹. As a former enemy and a too recent co-belligerent of the winners, Italy had enormous problems to solve and, apparently, very little hope of taking its place again among the European powers, especially in relation to its two traditional areas of interest, Europe and

⁷"The Radio-TV New Office Building, Rome. Architect: Marie T. Shephard," *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects* 87 (1969) 18–19.

⁸"The Rome Hilton. Landscape. Architect: Marie T. Shephard," *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects* 97 (1969) 15–7.

⁹ Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard, *Kābul: Bāgh-I Bābur, a Project and a Research into the Possibilities of a Complete Reconstruction* (Rome: IsMEO, 1972), 1.

¹⁰ Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard, *Kābul: Bāgh-I Bābur, a Project and a Research into the Possibilities of a Complete Reconstruction*

¹¹ Maria Grazia Enardu, *A different role for Europe in the Middle East: Italy's experience*, (A. Varsori editor, Europe 1945-1990, Palgrave Macmillian, a division of Macmillian Publishers Limited, 1995), 198-199.

Mediterranean countries. In such an unpromising situation, it is rather surprising that the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was already making plans for a comeback in the middle-east. At time, Italy was a “clay vessel” among iron pots and therefore great prudence was required in any move but, at the same time, Italy should not underestimate its chances.

The first step was the simplest: sending representatives to the Arab countries, establishing contacts with the local leaders, trying to understand what was happening. Pietro Quaroni (1898-1971), brother of the architect Ludovico, one of the ablest Italian diplomats, added a few finishing touches and explained that liabilities could become assets. He was also president of RAI – Radiotelevisione Italiana, from 1964 to 1969, and it is for sure that he met Parpagliolo Shephard when she designed the patio of the Headquarters building .

When Parpagliolo Shephard went in Kabul to see the Bagh-I Babur, in October 1970, it was also a great occasion for Italy: it was going to lose its colonies, nevertheless it could play whatever cards it had by establishing economic and cultural ties with these countries, forging new relationships and new foundations on which to build, in time, a real political role.

Parpagliolo Shephard met a new country that was looking to progress, imitating Europe and USA. She noted that the site of the Bagh-I Babur was very much changed and how it had lost its original character through many alterations: the only authentic features of the ancient Moghul garden where the Emperor’s grave and those of some of his relatives, the Shāh-Jahān’s Mosque, and the three remaining very old *platanus orientalis* trees, the chenars. But the most striking impression was given by the total lack of water: the consequences was a derelict dusty site where older trees were dying, and newer one struggled to keep alive. As described in the sketch of the ideal reconstruction of a garden of Samarkand (**fig. 1**), from Wilber’s research based primary on accounts and drawings by European visitors and some standing remains, the pavilion and palace were placed on the central hill, the garden had an enclosed geometrical layout, avenues with trees planted “à la ligne”, channels of waters and square pools on two sides¹².

¹² The schetch probably represents the Gul-Bāgh or Rose garden, based on the descriptions of Ruy Gonzales and published in D.N. Wilber, *Persian Gardens and Garden Pavillions*, (Rutland, Vermont, 1962. Washington, D.C., 1979),

Babur in his lifetime planted and built several gardens at Kabul and in its surroundings, and all belong to the Persian garden tradition that he saw at Samarkand and Herat.

In the past, Bagh-I Babur had all the elements of a Persian enclosed paradise: the shady trees, the channels of water and the jet springing out of the pools, the awnings and tents, the platforms where to erect them and where to spread the carpets to sit upon, the pavilion in the centre and the magnificent gate at its entrance. All these features were composed on a strictly geometrical pattern on sloping ground, the central axis enhanced by canals flowing from terrace to terrace with waterfalls into the larger pools generally in front of a pavilion. The geometrical and axial lay-out was still that of the Hellenistic tradition of earlier times, but taken over by the Mohammedans in their conquests through Asia Minor¹³. The need of irrigation dictated the whole plan and arrangement, but it derived also from the Paradise garden of the Koran. The ground being divided into eight terraces with the four rivers flowing crossways through them, forming a pool sometimes very large in the middle, and other pools receiving the waterfalls gushing from one level to the other. All these pools were square in shape, full to the brim, and jets of water spouted up by gravity into the air so high that the falling sprays resembled masses of diamonds. Architecturally, these gardens were very simple, but enclosed by serrated battlements, they created, in the murmur of the running streams, the splash of the jets, the sweet-smelling herbs and rose bushes, the trees, willows, planes, cypresses, a truly peaceful paradise, shut out from the turmoil of the ever-changing world of conquest and battles.

When the twenty years old Babur (1483-1530), the first Mughal emperor - descended from the mountains of the Hindu Kush¹⁴ - he took with him the everlasting memory of Samarkand.

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¹³ The new conquerors in Asia Minor evolved their own style on preceding gardens. The influences were from Mesopotamia, Iran, Rome and North Africa. See: E. Hyams, *A history of gardens and gardening*, London, 1971, Ch. 6; Constance Mary Villiers-Stuart, *Gardens of the Great Mughals*, (London, A. & C. Black, 1913); Hussain, Mahmood; Rehman, Abdul; Wescoat, James L. Jr., *The Mughal Garden: Interpretation, Conservation and Implications* (Ferozsons Ltd., Lahore, 1996); Dede, Fairchild Ruggles, *Islamic Gardens and Landscapes*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

¹⁴ It was through the high passes of the Hindu Kush, a great mountain system of Central Asia extending c. 500 mi west from the Pamir Knot into the north east Afghanistan and Pakistan, that invaders from central Asia brought their Indo-European language. The name derives from the Arabic for "Mountains of India".

Being from the beginning not only a conquering chief¹⁵, but also a man of culture, Babur knew that he was bringing into Kabul new ideas, a new culture and a new civilized way of life. As an expert connoisseur and lover of gardens, he had always a keen perception of the essential elements of a climate, a region, a landscape, and he boasted of himself that he had brought the Ālū-bālū, the wild cherry of the north into Kabul¹⁶.

The natural landscape was central to the life of Babur's court, as he had a particular sensitivity for the natural beauty¹⁷. When he moved to India, to remind himself of the lands he had left behind, Babur started a process of creating exquisite gardens in every palace and province, where he would often sit shaded from the fierce Indian sun. He tried as far as was possible to recreate everywhere the gardens of Kabul, which he believed they were the most beautiful in the world. Almost thirty pages of Babur's memoirs are taken up describing the fauna and flora of his Hindustan. Though he wished to be buried in his favourite garden in Kabul, first he was buried in a Mausoleum in Agra and only nine years later in Kabul, where it is his tomb on which is the following inscription in Persian: "If there is a paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this"¹⁸. His successors, both Jahangir (1569-1627) and Shah Jahan (1592-1666), erected in the gardens some buildings in honour of Babur¹⁹.

Accounts of nineteenth century travellers suggest that the garden fell into disrepair from nineteenth century, its perimeter walls were even damaged by an earthquake in 1842. Some repairs were carried out during the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan (1844-1901), who constructed also some buildings in the garden for his family's stays in Kabul²⁰.

¹⁵ Babur was the direct descendant of Turco-Mongol conqueror Timūr Barlas (1336-1405) through his father, and also a descendant of Genghiz Khān (1162-1227) through his mother. See: Wheeler M. Tackstone, Salman Rushdie, *The Baburnama. Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*, (New York, Modern Library Paperback Edition, 2002).

¹⁶ Constance Mary Villiers Stuart, (London: Gardens of the Great Mughals, 1931), 94.

¹⁷ Babur describes several gardens in his memoirs, as in *The Babur Nama*, (translation of J. Leyden and W. Erskin, London and Edinburgh, 1826), and *The Memoirs of Babur*, (translated by A.S. Beveridge, London, 1917-21).

¹⁸ These verses have been written by the Indian poet Amir Khusrow (1253-1325), and they are dedicated to the landscapes in the Province of Kashmir, in what is nowadays Northern India and Pakistan.

¹⁹ Michael Brand, *Orthodoxy, Innovation, and Revival: Considerations of the Past in Imperial Mughal Tomb Architecture*, *Muqarnas*, Vol. 10, Essays in Honor of Oleg Grabar (Leiden, Brill, 1993), pp. 323-334.

²⁰ Sultan Mahomed Khan, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, edited by Mir Munshi (London, John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1900), voll.I-II; <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/17693/>.

The Pargagliolo Shephard's research on the origins of the Kabul gardens wanted to understand well their evolution starting from the Mughal period, when Babur had brought Persian ideals into the new country: this fact became a sort of starting point for a new way of thinking and planning, a bridge between the Hellenistic Islamic tradition of the geometrical irrigated enclosure and the Indian tradition, where it flourished into the most magnificent achievements absorbing also local trends and ideals.²¹ At the end of the seventeenth century, European travellers had discovered China and a new philosophy of life and its relation to the physical world²². This change in feelings and objectives was promoted by innumerable descriptions of travellers, ambassadors and missions visiting China. This conception was based on a different outlook, more on visual perception of nature in its own rights, and less on mathematical certainties. The outside space, the gardens, was planned not on a relation of determined numbers, but more on the effect on the eye of the beholder of first planes, middle planes and background: the pictorial qualities of a natural landscape. This new idea arriving in Europe while the gardens in the great manner of Louis XIV were reaching their utmost possibilities at Versailles, Marly, St. Cloud and St. Germain, created in the realm of ideas a complete cesura, which started in England a new development, the English Landscape Park, and became in Europe le Jardin Anglo-Chinois of the eighteenth century. In Europe, it led to gardens of the utmost romanticism loosing, in the research for sentiments, the real balance of what belongs to nature and what derives from man in disrupting the logical sequence of shapes and forms.²³

The garden of Babur was modified several times, and the whole conception of the pools, the pathways and the central parterre became a little at a time European instead of Islamic. A very serious problem for the garden was always related to his maintenance and water supply. After a

²¹Zainab Abdul Latiff, Maheran Mohd Yaman, *A Review Into The Islamic Tradition In The Mughal Garden: (RE)SHAPING Our Stand On Islamic Art And Design*, (Planning Malaysia, Journal of the Malaysian Institute of Planners, vol. 15, Issue 1, 2017), 169-178, <http://dx.doi.org/10.21837/pmjournal.v15.i6.232>.

²² Charles Masson, *Narrative of various journeys in Belochistan, Afghanistan, the Panjab and Kalet during a residence in those countries*, (London, 4 voll., 1844).

²³Dora Wiebenson, "L'Architecture Terrible" and the "Jardin Anglo-Chinois", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, (Oakland, University of California Press, Vol. 27, No. 2 - May, 1968), pp. 136-139. Véronique Royet; Elisabetta Cereghini; Odile Faliu; Bernard Korzus, *Georges Louis Le Rouges: Le jardin anglo-chinoise*, (published by Bibliothèque Nationale de France – BNF, 2004). Bianca Maria Rinaldi, *Ideas of Chinese Gardens. Western Accounts, 1300-1860*, (University of Pennsylvania press, 2016). Martin Calder, *Experiencing the Garden in the Eighteenth Century*, (Bern, Peter lang AG, International Academic Publishers, 2006).

journey in 1925, Maurice Pernot, president of the French Study Centre for international politics and member of the French School in Rome, wrote that in the garden “havoc has been perpetrated amongst the trees, (...) of the 15 terraces, which had been described by travellers in rapturous words, there are only some fragments of canals in ruins and a few old trees”²⁴.

From the state of the garden in 1970, Parpagliolo Shephard understood the evident increasing decay of the site: only some years before, for example, it was possible to recognize more clearly the parterre, the still existing walls of the caravanserai at the bottom, and more trees (**fig. 2**). At her time, most of the beds of the central parterre were missing, and the caravanserai was only present in its outer walls. Even the trees were far less, most of them still standing but dead, and mulberry seedlings, historically associated with beauty, were few and scattered here and there.

Helped for drawings by Elena Martini (1936-2015), Parpagliolo Shephard made an accurate survey (**fig. 3**) showing the few remaining traces of the past and the situation in 1970. Her project included a complete reconstruction of a lost environment, to bring Bagh-I Babur back to its former splendours. For Parpagliolo Shephard, only by bringing back the grove of magnificent trees and the murmur of water falling from terrace to terrace it would have been possible to achieve something similar to which made Babur choose this site as his last resting place (**fig. 4**). For Parpagliolo Shephard this approach for reconstruction would also benefit the tradition, transforming the garden in a place for pilgrimage and a special place for the people of Kabul, as it has been so from times immemorial²⁵.

The main problem that she has faced in the project, in addition to those related water supply and reforestation of the site, was the one related to the additions like the Queen’s Palace and the pavilion. Indeed, they have a great weight in the current composition: along with the tombs and the Mosque they are the main structural elements which had to be restored and rendered functional for the Kabul citizens.

²⁴ Maurice Pernot, *Afghanistan*, (Paris: L’inquietude de l’orient: en Asie Musulmane, Hachette, 1927, 24).

²⁵ Charles Masson (alias of James Lewis), *Narrative of various journeys in Belochistan, Afghanistan, the Panjab and Kalet during a residence in those countries* Vol. II, 241. *Bagh-E Babur, Kabul: The Mughal Dynasty*, Aga Khan Trust for Culture Historic Cities Programme, <http://www.akdn.org/publication/aga-khan-trust-culture-baburs-garden-rehabilitation-framework>

It was necessary to face a restoration and a planning review also as far as concerned the swimming pool and the upper reservoir, which they were derelict and in a state of neglect: even if they were less important elements within the general area of the garden, Parpagliolo Shephard was sure that they must become an integral part of the design.

Departing from these considerations, Parpagliolo Shephard presented two solutions for Bagh-I Babur.

The first plan (**fig. 5**) proposed an open parterre in front of the pavilion, where the positions of the water channel, the pools and the terracing correspond to the description of the Badshah Nama. The second plan provided a reconstruction based on the descriptions of the nineteenth century travellers, in particular on the detailed description of Charles Masson, when visited it in 1838: in this project, she gave more importance to the avenue and to the presence of the magnificent trees, as showed in the section (**fig. 6**). Observing the site during the survey, she had also analyzed several aspects as canals, waterfalls and pools, especially from the aerial photograph that she has been provided by the Afghan authorities. Parpagliolo Shephard also discovered the foundations of a wall which length was about 100 m running parallel to the central parterre on the right of it, looking up towards the pavilion. There were, under the actual level, in the centre of the lower square and in front of the caravanserai, other remains of a foundation, probably of a pool. She thought that if this will be could be proved, then originally Shāh-Jahān's canal, pools and waterfalls were on the central axis of the modern parterre. At time, there were still people in Kabul who remembered from their youth the presence of three square pools: one below, one in the middle, one on the terrace immediately under the pavilion. And this may be confirmed by the photograph of Major Cleveland's residence in the pavilion (**fig. 7**).

But even so, doubts still remained due to two reasons: on the one hand, it would have been necessary to think that in ancient times the place was oriented in a different way; on the other it had to be kept in mind that most of the descriptions speak of the waterfall next to the Mosque, not below it. Parpagliolo Shephard tried anyway to reconstruct graphically the different possibilities,

about concerning the position of the canal: starting from the 12th terrace beside the Mosque; putting a cascade beside the Mosque, parallel to the direction of the Mecca; inserting it in the middle of the virtual line towards the Mecca direction (similar to the present situation). The water canals, derived originating from the tank, were conducted in parallel to the course of the road, the water falling in cascades over the descent of several terraces (as in the description of Charles Masson in 1832-38). In the last description we have: the avenue running along the waterfalls, was separated from them by lines of cypress trees, so that the ascent was on the right of cascades; the tank was in the middle of the channel, at the top, and therefore the waterfalls were on the central line of the grounds.

Although the whole is not organized symmetrically as one might expect in a traditional Persian garden, the asymmetry of the project gives a perfectly balanced composition so well adapted to the site to the point that Pargagliolo Shephard presented it as an alternative for a possible restoration, which was among other things a less expensive solution.

She had hypothesized the four reconstructions in an attempt to clarify as much as possible the conflicting factors that afflict this case, because the situation in her time was very different from the descriptions of the travellers and the project settings assumed by Babur and his descendants. She was convinced, however, that only through a systematic and more detailed research could the right answer be obtained to make an adequate restoration plan.²⁶

First of all, with her research work Pargagliolo Shephard highlighted the primary elements to be considered for the reconstruction of the place, such as: where to find water and the rehabilitation of Queen's palace (**fig. 8**). Considering that at that time the building belonged to the Afghan army and was used as a warehouse, its restoration could foresee new uses as museum, cultural centre, concert halls and conferences, etc. Another goal of her project was to reconstitute an enclosure separated from the rest of the garden for the shrine, the mosque and the tombs, with the same spirit as the

²⁶ Maria Teresa Pargagliolo Shephard, *Kābul: Bāgh-I Bābur, a Project and a Research into the Possibilities of a Complete Reconstruction*.

Secret Gardens of the Renaissance; and finally, the area of the entrance gate and the caravanserai should have become a sort of square patio open to the falls.

The squalor of the garden, wrote Parpagliolo Shephard, depended not only on the lack of water and of trees, but also on the fact there were no constructive lines to hold together the whole composition, especially from the 10th terrace downwards.

Even the boundary wall needed to be redesigned, at least the one at the bottom near the caravanserai (**fig. 9**). In the proposed reconstruction of the garden, she introduced also a swimming-pool and a sport-grounds that should be shut away from the rest of the garden by a screen of trees and shrubs, to provide fun and leisure to the citizens of Kabul. About planting, Parpagliolo Shephard said that it was a question of a proper reforestation to bring back, in reasonable time, to the Bagh-I Babur to that state of a venerable grove, all visitors of the nineteenth century spoke about, describing how in an ecstasy the beauty of the trees, their masses and the variety. For this reason, Parpagliolo Shephard recommended that in the replanting of the garden it was necessary to keep in mind the double aspect of the trees, the tall trees (grove), the flowering shrubs and roses, and fruit trees.

The rose, especially, was so important in the Persian world of gardens, as far as “that gul” means at the same time rose and garden. This is probably the reason for Babur's ideal of converting the world into a rose garden, through the creation of as many gardens as possible.

Parpagliolo Shephard, unfortunately, became seriously ill in 1972, and she died after two years.

For this reason, she could never begin to develop and realize her project.

By the time fighting broke out in Kabul in 1993–94, the landscape of Bagh-I-Babur was much altered and the site was in a poor state of repair. Only in 2002 an agreement for the rehabilitation of the eleven-hectare garden was signed between the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and the Transitional Afghan Administration.

In 2003, some works were started for the conservation of Babur's tomb, which had been significantly modified over time. Based on marble fragments found in the grave area, it was then possible to erect a replica of the marble enclosure around Babur's grave, inside the walled area.

The war-damaged marble mosque, built by Shah Jahan in 1675 and which had also built the Taj Mahal in Agra, was remade with lime mortar and the cracked marble elements were replaced, while the mihrab wall was redone with marble in 2004.

Among other historic buildings of the garden subsequently restored, they were the nineteenth-century garden pavilion and the Queen's palace, both now in use for public functions.

The excavations carried out in the western part of the garden in 2003 revealed the stone foundations of a seventeenth-century gateway, around which was built a caravanserais complex. The restoration of the area, performed using traditional forms and techniques, now it hosts a translation centre and other facilities.

The archaeological excavations in 2004-05 revealed sections of a marble-lined water canal, already discovered by Parpagliolo Shephard, and a series of water tanks along the central axis: this provided the basis for the reconstruction of a system that again allows water to flow into the centre of the garden, as in Babur's time.

The project for the restoration of the garden²⁷, which since 2008 is managed by the Bagh-I Babur Trust, aims to preserve the tradition and restore the original garden image (**fig. 10**), through the reintroduction of flowing water and the organization of the adjacent terraces that have been replanted as distinct orchards. The terraces were planted with mulberry trees, apricot trees, figs and almond trees, inserting walnut groves along the reconstructed perimeter walls.

Stone pathways and stairs have been laid on each side of the central axis, which is flanked by an avenue of plane trees, interspersed with pomegranates, apricots, apples, cherries and peaches.

The Parpagliolo Shephard's work was probably the first renovation project for a such important historical garden in Middle East. It can be considered as the first example of a complex and

²⁷Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme, "Babur's Garden Rehabilitation Framework", Kabul, Afghanistan: The Aga Khan Trust for Culture, (2004). Zahra Breshna, "A Program for the Rehabilitation and Development of Kabul's Historic Center," in Development of Kabul: Reconstruction and Planning Issues, by Babar Mumtaz, Kaj Noschis, (Lausanne is a city in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, Comportements, 2004). Zahra Breshna, is one of the architects of the Department for Preservation and Rehabilitation of Afghanistan's Urban Heritage, which deals with the restoration of the garden.

multidisciplinary scientific approach, which relates different levels of knowledge: the data taken from history, literature, religion, geography, political aspect, are interpolated with the geometric matrices and constructive. The innovative aspect of her research lies in the fact that the measurements and the notes, which she have reported in sketches and projects, represent not only quantitative, but also qualitative informations, thus becoming fundamental for an appropriate project of reconstruction.

The study and the proposals by Parpagliolo Shephard prepared for the restoration of the garden were to be considered only a first model that had to be subsequently verified and developed.

*“Paradise is the eternal abode of Bābur Bādshāh is written on his tomb”, she said, “ Bfitting his memory the place of his everlasting rest, should gradually become again the Paradise on earth he loved”.*²⁸

²⁸Maria Teresa Parpagliolo Shephard, *Kābul: Bāgh-I Bābur, a Project and a Research into the Possibilities of a Complete Reconstruction*.

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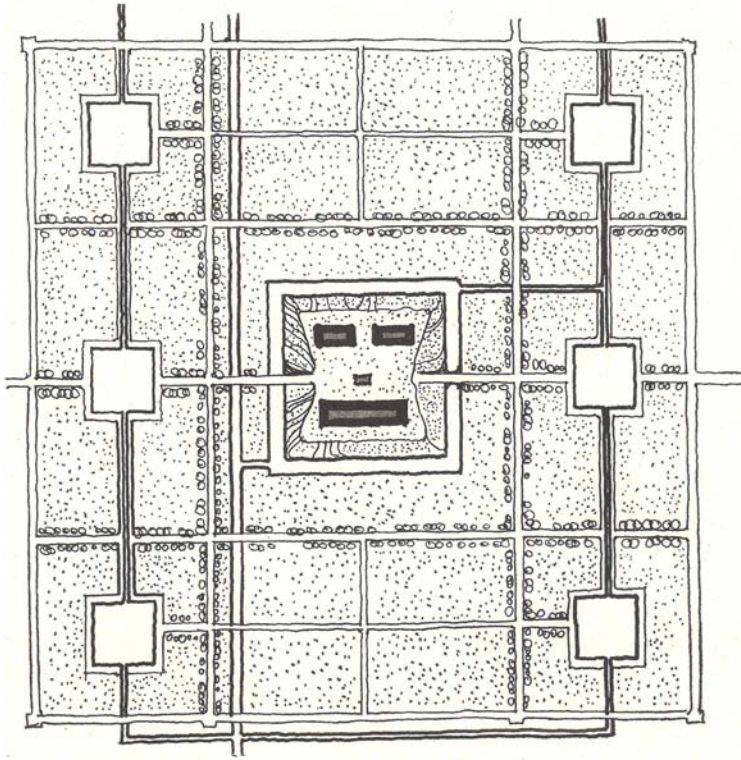
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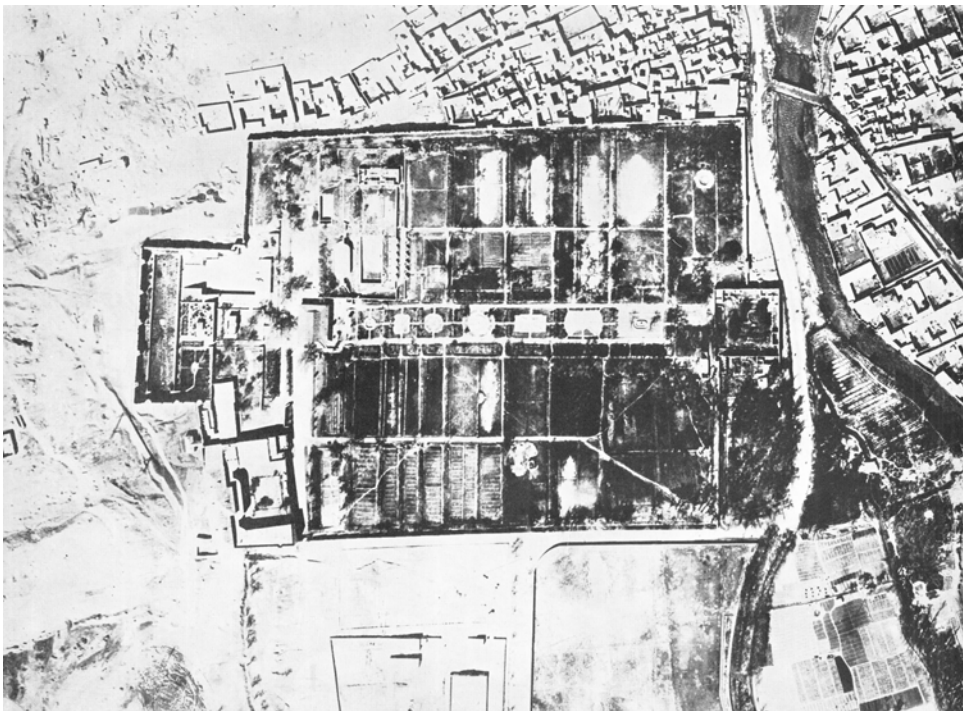
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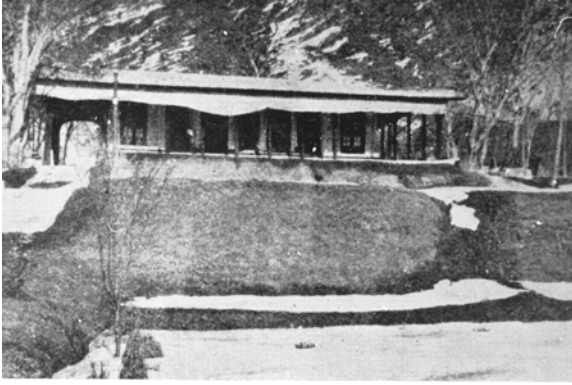
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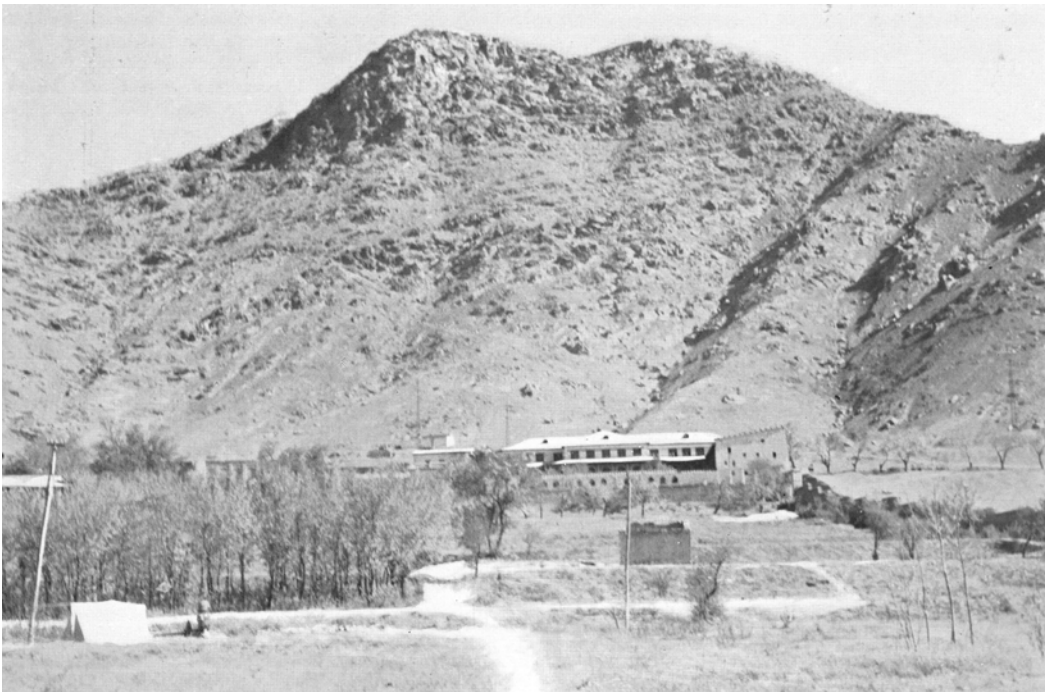
Figure_1. Ideal reconstruction of a garden at Samarkand (courtesy of M.A E.C.I. /ISIAO).



Figure_2. Bagh-I-Babur: aerial photograph taken some years before the coming of Parpagliolo Shephard in Kabul (courtesy of M.A E.C.I. /ISIAO).



Figure_7. Above: Bagh-I-Bābur: the Pavilion photographed in 1906 and published by Angus Hamilton as Major Cleveland's residence at Kabul, seen from the lower terrace (Schinasi Collection). Below: Bagh-I-Bābur: the state of the central parterre taken in 1970 from the terrace below the Pavilion. (courtesy of M.A E.C.I. /ISIAO).



Figure_8. Bagh-I-Bābur: the Queen's Palace seen from the bottom of the garden, and the line of trees on the right showing the position of the water channel, 1970 (courtesy of M.A. E.C.I. /ISIAO).



Figure 9. Bagh-I-Bābur: the walls and the centre of the Karavanserai in 1970 (courtesy of M.A. E.C.I. ĀSIAO).



Figure 10. Bagh-I-Bābur: above, aerial view in 2008 (from: www.AKDN.org); below, aerial view in 2017 (from Google Earth).