

Viewpoint

A Critique of the Schematic Project of Masjed al-Nabi's Landscape in the Book "Islamic Gardens and Landscapes"

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Received; 04/09/2022

accepted; 18/09/2022

available online; 01/10/2022

Abstract

Considering the important position of mosque in the Islamic world, referring to the first mosque built by the Prophet (s) can lead to new interpretations of the mosque and its design. Paying attention to the jurisprudential sources and narratives of the past centuries, along with the traditional attention to historical sources of architecture and landscape, is a way in this regard. The Prophet's reluctance to roof the mosque on the condition of necessity, and his desire to simply architecture the mosque and the borderlessness between the seraglio)shabestan(and the courtyard, as well as preventing the planting of trees in the courtyard of the mosque are some of the points that have been discussed in jurisprudential and historical sources. Ruggles has not paid attention to these issues in the schematic design he presents in the book "Islamic Gardens and Landscapes" from Al-Nabi Mosque.

Keywords: *Masjid al-Nabi, Landscape, Islamic Gardens and Landscapes.*

Introduction and Problem Statement

What was the architecture and landscape of al-Nabi Mosque? Ruggles, author of "Islamic Gardens and Landscapes" gives a schematic picture of the body of the Prophet's Mosque and the presence of a tree in its courtyard (Ruggles, 2008), which briefly criticizes this view in the field of architecture and landscape (Fig. 1). It is common to refer to conventional sources, such as historical books that so-called historians look at the passage of time, but it seems that attention to the narratives that look at the architectural and landscape of the mosque from the perspective of the sources and religious teachings should also find its place. Considering the extraordinary accumulation of jurisprudential-legal issues in Islamic civilization, which is also

considered a jurisprudential civilization, it is possible to find jurisprudential and narrative issues, to achieve Islamic architectural and landscape patterns, and to critique the opinions of those who are far from this tradition.

Structure of Criticism

It represents the pattern of sanctuary in the Islamic world of the Holy Prophet (s). In today's words, the designer of the mosque and the observer and his construction partner is the Prophet (s). According to Islamic narrations, he drew a line on the ground in the form of a rectangle and specified the limits of the earth and divided the earth into two parts: a place to live (home) and a place of worship. In a reliable hadith from Imam al-Sadiq (a), including in the main Shiite sources (via Mashayekh al-Thalata), the Prophet (s) raised the walls of his mosque with

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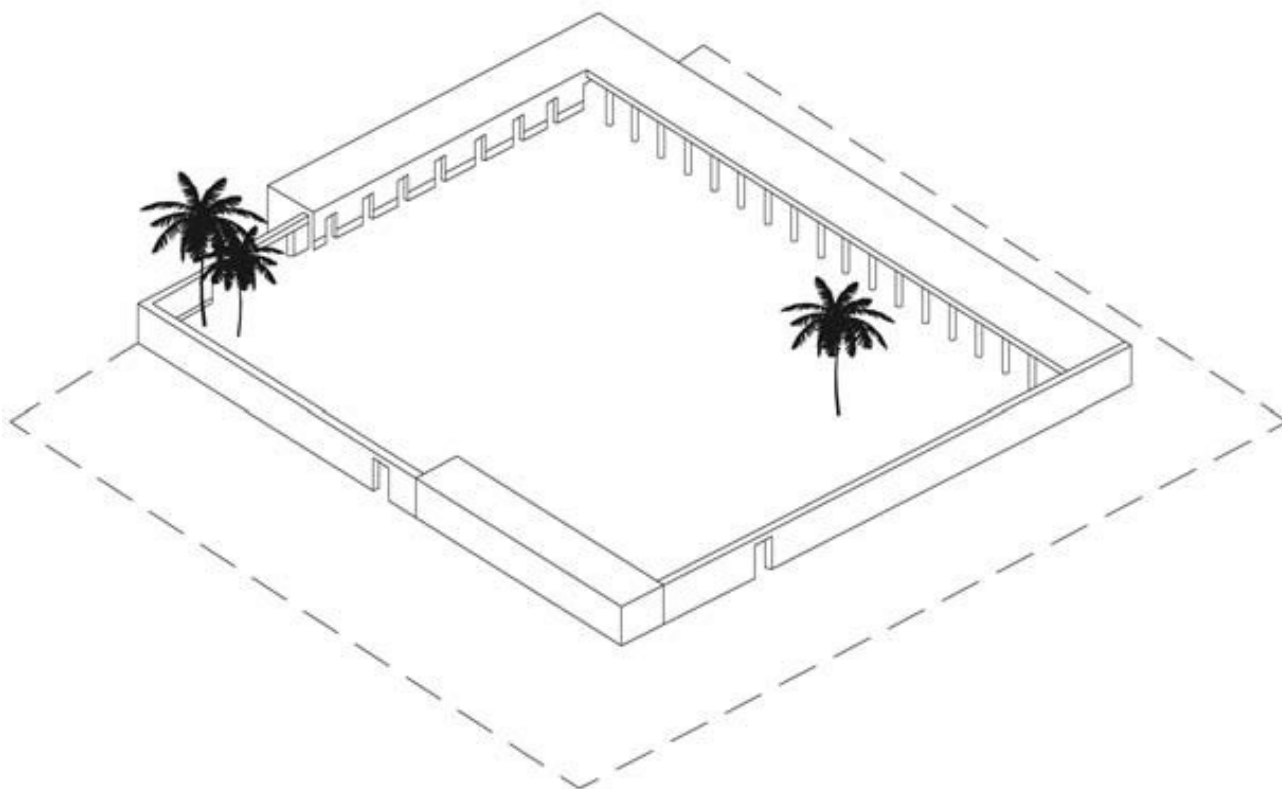


Fig. 1. The Prophet's Mosque in Medina. Source: Ruggles, 2008.

clay and enclosed it. After the muslim population increased, it expanded the walls and added to its thickness, and then, with a larger Muslim population, re-enlarged the mosque. An important point in this narration is that the Mosque of the Prophet (s) had no roof and when Muslims complained about its sunshine and heat, the Prophet (s) placed a shadow of wood and tree branches for it. Until they were exposed to rain and demanded that a muddy roof be built for the mosque to prevent raindrops from entering the mosque. The Prophet (s) refused their request to build a muddy roof and until the Prophet (s) was alive, the mosque was the same as (Kulayni, 2020). The Prophet (s) prays in this mosque until the end of his life. During the holy month of Ramadan, he spent a decade in the E'tikaf mosque, sometimes dripping from the ceiling and wetting the Prophet (s). Regarding the construction of a place of worship, perhaps the most important point of the Prophet's (s)

opposition to the proposal of the Companions is to roof the mosque (with clay and adobe). In response to the Companions, he replied: "I would like to have a shade of (Arish) like my brother Moses" (Bayhaqi, 1982). Arish is made of wood found in desert. Not using bricks and clay in the construction of the roof and using the horns, while simplicity and popular, provided the necessary light and ventilation for the place of worship. Those who have narrated hadiths have completely accepted these hadiths and have given a fatwa according to it: the roofing of the Mosque of Makruh or its revelation is mustahabb. In this regard, some people, such as Shaykh-Tusi, have been very committed to the dislike of roofing or the revelation of it, which they have said: "The dislike of roofing is not emphasized even in cases of need, and in rainy weather, going to a mosque is not emphasized, because it is narrated that when the ground is soaked with rain, perform the prayer

at home" (Mousavi Ameli, 1988). It seems that early Muslims of Islam are simply recommended in the construction of a mosque (the construction of the house of God and the house of the people). The revelation of the mosque is so important that The Vali-e-Asr (aj.) destroys the roofs of mosques after his uprising and re-creates them like the shade of the prophet Moses (a) (Saduq, 1437 AH). From the perspective of the landscapes in the division of the area of the mosque, there is no clear boundary between the roofed section (temporary) and the courtyard of the Prophet's Mosque, and there is no barrier to the sight and movement between the two parts of architecture and landscape, although the direction of Qiba has always been facing the wall even due to the change of the position of Qiba in the second year of Hijra (the view of the courtyard is other than worship). In addition, paying attention to this borderlessness and recommending that the mosque not be roofed (airflow, smell, sound) brings the mosque's use closer to the landscape. That is, it can be considered as a matter of landscape design. The Prophet's (s) view on planting plants in the courtyard of the mosque is also important in understanding the pattern of his view. There are several narrations about the ground of the Prophet's mosque. Among them was the land of al-Anbi Mosque where they dried dates. According to historical hadiths, there was a garden in front of the Prophet's (s) mosque and there was a well called "Ha" from which the Prophet (s) entered the garden and drank from that well. Another narration

is that in the ground of the mosque, there were some polytheists graves, dilapidated buildings and several palm trees, which he commanded to move graves and cut down trees, and flattened the land's elevations (Najafi, 2007). Thus, in the Prophet's (s) pattern, the courtyard of the mosque lacked any trees and possibly a water source, and both were searched somewhere outside the mosque. It needs further investigation, what is essentially the function of the courtyard as an open space enclosed in the Prophet's Mosque and whether it is the interface between the Prophet's house and the seraglio (semi-open) or, an interface to get from outside the mosque to the seraglio. According to the above explanations, the design that Ruggles presents in the book "Islamic Gardens and Landscapes" from the ceiling and courtyard of al-Nabi Mosque is not compatible with what is obtained from Islamic narrative sources in terms of architecture and landscape. In addition to the narrative and jurisprudential texts of Islamic gardening history, it shows that tree planting in the courtyard of the mosque for the first time in the Córdoba Grand Mosque and then some other parts of the Islamic world was carried out by justifying the endowment and financing of the maintenance and management of the mosque, and since the roofing of the mosque began during the Umavi era, it is not correct to assign it to al-Nabi Mosque. In the early pattern of the mosque, the courtyard and the seraglio are interwoven and there is no plant element in it.

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HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Kasravi, R. (2022). A Critique of the Schematic Project of Masjed al-Nabi's Landscape in the Book "Islamic Gardens and Landscapes". *Journal of Art & Civilization of the Orient*, 10(37), 73-76.

DOI: 10.22034/JACO.2022.365097.1266

URL: http://www.jaco-sj.com/article_158774.html?lang=en

