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## Original Research Article

# Exploring Architectural Elements in Nizâmî's Haft Peykar\*

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## Abstract

Nizâmî's Haft Peykar, which through its depiction and description of architectural states and features directly and indirectly presents architecture and architectural spaces, provides valuable material for understanding and comprehending the architecture of the past and the architectural culture of Iran. The study of the text of this work reveals that architects pay attention to elements that give shape and vitality to the buildings they create. In his work, Nizâmî describes two buildings, Khawarnaq Palace and Seven Domes, along with the events taking place inside them, which can shed light on the elements and symbols associated with architecture. The research methodology employed in this study is descriptive-analytical and historical. It is based on library research, involving the interpretation and analysis of content to examine the mentioned buildings. The study focuses on several structures mentioned in the text, namely the Khawarnaq Palace, and Seven Domes, as well as the mentioned architectural features, characteristics, and symbols. The research findings indicate that each of the aforementioned areas has rules and frameworks for describing and explaining the architectural culture of the order in the text. The architectural characteristics of the mentioned structures and elements and symbols related to architecture and the poetic and architectural narrative of the work include attention to the grandeur and magnificence of the structure, its form and appearance, suitability for lifestyle and use, customs and cultural aspects of life within the building, consideration of ancient patterns such as iwans, attention to its location, neighboring structures, and the focus on color and its meanings in verses, hierarchy, views, condition and quality of materials, attention to form and shape and its influence on the evolution of the story, attention to celestial sciences and stars, etc. Furthermore, the role of the architect in relation to the client, the multi-disciplinary expertise of architects, the prescription of lifestyle and style by the architect, etc., are features of architecture in Haft Peykar by Nizâmî.

**Keywords:** *Haft Peykar, Khawarnaq Palace, Seven Domes Palace, Architectural Elements, Nizâmî Ganjavi.*

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## Introduction

The history and art of Iran encompass values and characteristics that contribute to the longevity of artistic works throughout history. One of these important features, also observable in literature and poetry, is the attention to narrative elements. This feature serves as a tool for conveying various concepts and meanings envisioned by the artist or poet. This aspect, evident in Persian literature and the poetry of great poets of this land, has led to greater endurance and influence over time. "In poetry, the poet begins and ends their movement with stillness in space" (Shafiei Kadkani, 1996, 23). Space is one of the common and significant elements between architecture and poetry, and based on this notion, architecture, and poetry can evoke a sense of space and align with each other. The relationship between humans, nature, and their surrounding environment is facilitated through the five senses. Architecture engages with the creation and formation of space using materials. It aims to create a poetic space that evokes a sense of fluidity and imagination in the user. A part of literature that has a direct connection with the living space and the culture of people encompasses architectural aspects. Therefore, literature and literary texts can manifest a part of the architectural culture of their time. Within this context, poetic literature, which is narrative and accompanied by poetic expressions, encompasses various concepts and meanings that can be conveyed to the audience. Thus, in addition to the architectural features found in poetry, the concepts of these spaces can also be explored. Considering the limited sources and information available about Iranian buildings and architecture in the past centuries, the rich literature of Iran and the hidden meanings within it can greatly contribute to understanding the culture, history, and architecture of this land in the past.

Literature and poetry are important sources for understanding and interpreting architecture and the lifestyle of past generations. Among Persian-language poets, Nizâmî Ganjavi, a poet of the 12th

century, is one whose expressions evoke spatial and architectural imagery in the reader. His expression carries significant importance in the recognition and understanding of Iranian culture, lifestyle, and thought, particularly in his notable work called "Haft Peykar". In Haft Peykar, Nizâmî employs metaphorical language to describe spaces, colors, various architectural elements, and symbols. He discusses the construction methods and architects of certain buildings in a manner that serves as a valuable source for comprehending and recognizing architectural characteristics and architects of the past. The narrative poem Haft Peykar is a fantastical story presented in a historical framework. In other words, Haft Peykar by Nizâmî is an artistic interpretation of a historical story. It includes descriptions and depictions of the architectural features, characteristics, and qualities of buildings and spaces based on Nizâmî's life experiences during the 12th century AD, which encompasses the architectural features of that era. This research aims to identify and represent the architectural aspects of Haft Peykar by studying and analyzing its poems, such as the description of architectural spaces, architectural characteristics, and architectural works. This qualitative research utilizes an analytical approach and to achieve the mentioned objective, it employs a documentary method and content interpretation and analysis in the reading of this literary work. The research seeks to answer the following question: What architectural aspects are addressed in Haft Peykar by Nizâmî?

## Research Background

Numerous studies have been conducted on various aspects of the Haft Peykar epic, including its literary and artistic dimensions. In line with the title of this research, relevant sources have been examined that are related to the research topic. The primary source of this research is the book "Haft Peykar-e Nizâmî Ganjavi, edited by Hassan Vahid Dastgirdi," which includes Nizâmî's poems and verses from

the Haft Peykar (Nizâmî Ganjavi, 1936). In this regard, assistance has been sought in examining the architectural features of buildings such as the Khawarnaq Palace, Seven Domes, etc (Madadi, 2017). Attarzadeh considers the Khawarnaq Palace an actual palace discovered by archaeologists in the Khorneh mounds of Iraq, which has a square plan with sides measuring approximately 50 by 50 (Attarzadeh, 2005).

In another study, Asadpour and his colleagues examined the architectural features of the mentioned architects in the Haft Peykar epic (Asadpour & Sadeghi, 2021). Behpour, in a comparative approach, scrutinized the expression and analysis of the ambiance, weather, and architectural events in Nizâmî's Haft Peykar (Behpour, 2017). Aliakbari and Hajazi, based on the reception theory, analyzed and examined Nizâmî's Haft Peykar (Aliakbari & Hejazi, 2009). In their research, Varedi and Mokhtarnameh focused on the examination of the element of color in the Haft Peykar epic and its relation to the narratives presented in the story (Varedi & Mokhtarnameh, 2007). In another notable research, Namvar Motlagh has analyzed and examined characters such as Bahrâm, Sanammar, and buildings like Khorneh Palace (Namvar Motlagh, 2003). In research by Abbasi, the story of "Gonbad-e Sefid" (The White Dome) is critically examined, and the symbols and structure of the story are analyzed (Abbasi, 2010). In his study, Mohammadi investigated the various dimensions of the narrative elements in the stories of Seven Domes in Nizâmî's work (Mohammadi, 2011). Based on various sources and studies conducted on Nizâmî's Haft Peykar, it seems that each of the available sources has addressed some aspects of the characteristics of this work and, in some cases, focused on the architectural elements or the literary aspects of the epic. This research aims to extract and classify the architectural references and points related to Haft Peykar through a comprehensive examination and analysis, in response to the research question,

with a discerning perspective.

## Research Framework

Literature, particularly Persian poetry, is enriched with narrative aspects intertwined with poetic expressions of Iranian culture and way of life. This field encompasses various dimensions and incorporates multiple concepts and meanings. Different studies have been conducted on various aspects of literary works, focusing particularly on their imagery and visual interpretations. Some of the most important sources in this regard are mentioned in Table 1.

By examining various visual aspects in literary works, it appears that the analysis of architectural aspects in these structures, architects, and architectural elements has taken place. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the Haft Peykar epic from this perspective.

This research focuses on studying and categorizing the features of buildings and architectural spaces, the characteristics of the mentioned architects in the Masnavi-e-Hafte Peykar, as well as the symbols and signs related to architecture, etc. Prior to that, a summary of the narratives of the book is provided to better understand the overall structure, and then various sections of it are analyzed from an architectural perspective. The Haft Peykar epic consists of three main parts. In the initial section, the life of Bahrâm Gur, the Sassanian king, from childhood to youth and his ascension to the throne of Iran, as well as his marriage to the daughters of Haft Eghlim (Seven Climes), is narrated. In the second part, the wives of Bahrâm recount seven stories from Seven Domes Palace, which are filled with excitement, imagination, and at the same time, moral teachings. In the third part, Bahrâm, who has become a mature and complete human, uproots tyranny and injustice in the country and promotes prosperity and well-being. Finally, he goes to the cave for hunting, and no one finds him anymore.

Table 1. Related Research on Haft Peykar by Nizâmî. Source: Authors.

Row	Research Title	Aspect of Study	Source
1	The Footprint of Poetry in Architecture and Their Interconnection	Investigating the relationship between architecture and poetry	(Amirkalal, Taqwa & Sana'i , 2013)
2	The Image of the Palace and Garden of Shah Mobad in the Epic of Vis and Ramin by Fakhruddin As'ad Gorgani	Elements, symbols, and garden elements	(Jayhani, 2015)
3	The Atmosphere of Architecture in Haft Peykar by Nizâmî	Examining architectural elements, symbols, and spaces	(Behpour, 2017)
4	The Manifestation of Architecture in Haft Peykar by Nizâmî	Study of buildings and architectural spaces	(Madadi, 2017)
5	Research on the Description of Architecture in Haft Peykar by Nizâmî	Architectural features	(Asadpour & Sadeghi, 2021)

## Research Methodology

This qualitative research employs a library method, relying on existing documents to achieve the mentioned objective. The text of the epic was examined using a documentary method and aided by interpretation and content analysis. To accomplish this, the verses of the epic were studied, and then the verses related to the mentioned buildings, architects, their behaviors, the patrons of the buildings, and the events and incidents within the structures were identified and analyzed. Points related to architectural qualities, addressing design issues, interior and exterior aesthetics, and other elements of utilizing architectural elements were extracted and categorized.

## Findings and Analysis

Based on the literature review and theoretical foundations of the research, the verses of the Haft Peykar epic were carefully studied. Among the mentioned buildings in the military Haft Peykar poems, the Khorang Palace and the Seven Domes, which received more attention in the text compared to other structures, were selected. The verses related to these buildings, some of which were mentioned in the text, were examined, and ultimately, the architectural features of the buildings and the characteristics of their creators were discussed. In the following sections, we will delve into the analysis of each aspect.

### • Architectural buildings

Khawarnaq<sup>1</sup> Palace: The name of a building reveals

many of its characteristics, and the term “ Khawarnaq “ has various meanings, each of which can represent a feature of this palace. “ Khawarnaq “ is derived from the root “Hurna” in Avestan, “Khorner,” “Khorangah” (Khorangah), and “Khawarnaq” in Arabic and Hebrew, which can convey meanings such as well-acquired, desirable, a place for feasting, the front porch of a house, a courtyard, a sunlit space for dining, a meadow, a cultivated field, a pavilion, and a magnificent palace. “Khorangah” referred to buildings where kings and nobles would temporarily stop during hunting grounds (Attarzadeh, 2005).

At the beginning of the story, the life of Yazdgerd, the Sasanian king, is depicted, who, over 20 years, lost several of his sons due to his oppression and tyranny. After some time, in a blessed circumstance, Bahrâm was born. Astrologers and fortune-tellers informed Yazdgerd that if he wanted Bahrâm to stay alive, he should send him away from his realm and to the land of the Arabs. Yazdgerd chose Yemen (Hira) and entrusted Bahrâm to Nu'mân, the king of Yemen. Nu'mân accepted the responsibility of Bahrâm and undertook his upbringing. When Bahrâm turned four years old, Nu'mân decided to build a grand and suitable structure for Bahrâm in a suitable location due to the hot and dry climate of Yemen, for his comfort.

*King Nu'mân said to his son, 'My mind's in pain.*

*Our air is dry, our land is hot;*

*this princeling is of tender stock;*

*He needs a lofty nurturing place*

*whose head from earth to the sky is raised,  
That he may soar upon its heights,  
be nourished by the north wind's breeze;  
Dwell among pleasant airs; have sleep  
and rest that will his life increase;  
His nature's gem remains untouched  
by earth's damp vapor and dry dust  
(Nizâmî Ganjavi, 1936, 117).*

Since the palaces of kings possess ideal and magnificent qualities (Attarzadeh, 2005, 11), Nu'mân chose a high location as Bahrâm's new place of residence, where fresh air would flow and provide greater comfort compared to ground level. Nu'mân embarked on a search and found a suitable piece of land that was elevated and protected from the heat. The selection of this elevated location was more than just to moderate the temperature (as the king could have placed his child in a pleasant and temperate environment). It indicated their desire for the palace to stand out as grand and taller than other structures, signifying royal governance and authority, while ensuring the prince's tranquility and serenity, free from any suffering, hardships, and injustices of the time, so that he would not exhibit anger, hatred, or any corruption and would grow up to be a virtuous king endowed with divine blessings. This distancing from the ground and the choice of elevated land, away from the plains where people lived, served this purpose. It is worth mentioning that wind, as a climatic element at the higher levels of the building, has better circulation and, upon entering the structure, creates a sense of gentleness, movement, and coolness, fostering a free and peaceful mind and promoting tranquility of thought.

*Munzir then with his father went;  
their thoughts to such a search they bent,  
Seeking a high and spacious place,  
from noxious heat and all harm safe.  
That region boasted no such fort,  
and useless were all other sorts.  
They summoned expert builders;*

*smoothed  
the way for such a task. All who  
Proposed to do that task, could not  
devise a plan that came out right;  
Until Nu'mân heard the news that such  
a master was within his reach.  
'A famed man dwells in Grecian lands;  
clever? stone's wax within his hands;  
Learned and skilled, in matchless art;  
of Sâm's race, and his name Simnâr  
(Nizâmî Ganjavi, 1936, 117-118).*

Then he searches for an architect to construct the building, but local architects are unable to handle the task. Eventually, Simnâr, a Roman architect who was among the greatest architects of that time, is chosen. From the descriptions in the verses about Simnâr, one can deduce his architectural style and direction. The verses of the poem introduce Simnâr as a renowned and famous architect, implying that he has seen the whole world and admired every place from different perspectives (Modaresi Havas, 2017). "clever? stone's wax within his hands;" (Nizâmî Ganjavi, 2015, 118) indicates his skill and cleverness in constructing stone buildings, as he can give life to a stone and shape it accordingly. "Learned and skilled, of matchless art;" (ibid.) shows his diligence and creativity, as he possessed knowledge of construction techniques and skills and executed them effectively. "the secrets of the stars as well." (ibid.) is another characteristic of Simnâr, indicating his ability to comprehend cosmic proportions and measurements. It is also mentioned in other historical accounts that he was a painter and astrologer (Roshani & Keshavarz Afshar, 2023).

*Although a builder, clearly he  
a myriad of artists holds sway.  
And, of sound judgment, he can tell  
the secrets of the stars as well.  
Like Apollonius wise, he can  
devise and lose all talismans  
(Nizâmî Ganjavi, 1936, 118).*



Simnâr is a skilled and visionary architect who possesses expertise in craftsmanship, creation, and construction techniques. He is knowledgeable in ironworking, adept at using precious metals, and observant of celestial phenomena. He is renowned for his understanding of heights and has acquired insights from astronomy and celestial knowledge. He is also skilled in divination and celestial observation, incorporating these elements into his work (Asadpour & Sadeghi, 2021, 46).

*The master's hands all measured well.  
For five years he labored, until  
He with his golden hands had made  
a silvery palace of stone and clay,  
Its tower rising to the moon,  
the cynosure of everyone.  
A palace richly decked with gold,  
flame-hued, as only he could build;  
A palace with a heavenly dome  
round which the heavens' nine spheres turned;  
A pole formed like those south and north,  
whose fancies seemed like Teukros' work.  
Its sight was rest to weary hearts,  
its image water to the parched.  
When the sun on it cast its rays,  
the houris hid their dazzled gaze. Within, a paradise  
of ease;  
without, embellished like the skies.  
Its roof, polished with milk and glaze,  
reflected like a mirror's face.  
Both day and night, both swift and slow,  
like brides it would three colors show,  
Of three opposing, varied hues:  
now white, now yellow, and now blue*  
(Nizâmî Ganjavi, 1936, 118-119).

Over five years, Simnâr constructs a palace or pavilion called “Khawarnaq.” The palace is highly distinctive in terms of its color, height, and design, captivating everyone with its grandeur. It possesses an exterior of magnificence and an interior of comfort and tranquility, befitting the splendor of Bahrâm. The

construction utilizes earthly materials, and a silver-domed portico is built (reminiscent of the Firuzabad Palace and its spacious portico and hall). Simnâr creates an elevated structure and adorns it with various colors, establishing a luminous, spacious, and emotionally engaging environment. The verses highlight the primary building materials as being clay and stone. Nizâmî refers to the structure as a “Kiosk”, indicating that it was likely situated amidst gardens, with its veranda offering a view of the garden landscape. Since pavilions in Iranian architecture exhibit regular geometry with symmetrical shapes (such as squares, squares with rounded corners, octagons, etc.), it appears that this structure also adheres to such principles. The mention of gold and yellow or earthy colors in Nizâmî’s work suggests the presence of gilding. This building likely has a northern or southern orientation, as Nu’ mân sought to take advantage of the northern breeze. The emphasis on sculpting and comparing it to the book of Rumi’s illustrations, which contains numerous designs and patterns, indicates that the walls of the building are adorned with unique paintings and decorations. Nizâmî introduces the roof of the building as polished and mirror-like, which suggests two points: first, the reflection of the roof in the interior space, achieved by polishing the surface of the stone floor with a combination of silk and milk-based substances, or the presence of a fountain and pool on the floor of the building. Second, the roof’s mirror-like quality, reflects the sky and the movement of the night (dark blue or indigo) and day (blue and white), sunrise and sunset, and the radiance of the sun (yellow and orange). This could refer to the use of glazed tiles and their reflective properties. It is mentioned in sources that the roof of the building is coated with a mixture of milk and plaster (Attarzadeh, 2005). The subsequent verses emphasize the specific time of day when the roof of the pavilion appears in a particular color, indicating that this feature distinguishes the building from the surrounding structures.

*This has three hues; that would have owned  
a hundred; it is ruby, this but stone.*

*This shows but one sphere; that would seven  
high domes display, like seven heavens’  
(Nizâmî Ganjavi, 1936,120).*

In the verses that discuss the payment of Seminars and the conversation between him and Namaan, Seminars engage in a comparative analysis between this building and a building that could be built better than this. Seminars introduce the building with three colors (dark blue, white, and yellow) and describe its structure as stone with a dome. Since there has been previous mention of a tall hall or portico, this indicates that in this building, like other Sassanian palaces, there is a hierarchical arrangement of a hall or portico, followed by a dome chamber. However, mentioning the possibility of building a better structure through Seminars ultimately caused his life to be at stake.

*He kindled fire, himself fell in  
the smoke; climbed late, and fell low soon.  
He raised it high—a hundred ells  
and more; did not his fall foretell;  
He’d not—had he his grave foreseen—  
have bettered three ells by a span (ibid.).*

Some sources indicate that this building had a fire temple (ibid.). This is consistent with the architectural characteristics of fire temples, which were often built in elevated areas and typically featured a dome chamber. Regarding the height of the building, it is mentioned to be more than one hundred Gaz (a measure of length), which is a large number. However, it is unlikely that the building was actually that tall. If one Gaz is equivalent to 95 centimeters (Hinz, 1989, 99), the building would have a height of over 100 meters, which is not possible considering the time of its construction (Mill and minarets have had half of this height).

*From that high building Nu ‘mân’s fame  
did cast its lasso around the moon.  
Called ‘mighty sorcerer’ by the earth;*

*by men, the Lord of Khavarnaq  
(Nizâmî Ganjavi, 1936,121).*

The people also recognized this building as the “Nu‘mân kiosk” perhaps because his name was inscribed on a plaque on the building. As mentioned earlier, since the building reflected the image of the sun and the sky, it was considered the lord of the sun (“Rab al-Khur”). It is possible to associate the term “Khawarnaq” with a viewpoint or a place where the sun is seen.

Furthermore, verses describe the grandeur and splendor of Khawarnaq, suggesting that this building was so remarkable and significant that many people traveled to Yemen specifically to witness its palace. This highlights the importance of architecture in creating attraction and allure in the environment.

*When Khavarnaq, by Bahrâm’s star,  
became a garden fresh and fair  
Heaven called it the qibla of the earth;  
earth judged it Chinese painters’ work.  
Hearing of it, from near and far  
flocked thousands just to gaze and stare.  
All those who saw sang praises loud,  
and humbly at its threshold bowed.  
Over its porticoes, in fair  
calligraphy, flowed verses rare.  
Since Canopus lit Yemen’s land,  
not the moon nor the sun had ever been  
So praised. Like Aden’s sea, it strewed  
fair pearls; the land with light-infused (ibid.).*

Khawarnaq had a peculiar characteristic, as it would change colors throughout the day depending on the time. <sup>2</sup> In the morning, it appeared blue, in the afternoon, it turned yellow, and at night, it was white. This aspect is significant in relation to the construction of the Khawarnaq Palace. The architect employed a method of using materials that allowed light to reflect on the walls, interacting with the colorful decorations, resulting in a different hue at every moment. This palace, with its reflective and harmonious colors aligned with the cosmic order,

possessed the quality of a celestial phenomenon (Roshani & Keshavarz Afshar, 2023). The colors of the palace harmonized with the regular patterns of nature.

Other poets, whenever they wanted to speak of a terrestrial paradise, referred to this structure and used the name “Khawarnaq” (Atarzadeh, 2006). The people of Khawarnaq, Sadeer, Bareq, the palace with glorious features of Sennad (Aswad ibn Ya’far) (Al-Isfahani, 1985, 337), the inhabitants of Khawarnaq, Sadeer, Bareq, the palace with congress in Sennad, whose winds have carried their land’s signs. And the remembrance of the Lord of Khawarnaq, when it was exalted, contemplating the guidance (Khawarnaq) (ibid., 139), remembering the God of the Khawarnaq palace, which they would gaze upon their land from its heights, contemplating the path of guidance.

Or examples like:

*“The desert speaks, adorned like Khawarnaq, The garden is illuminated like lightning”* (Manochehri Damghani, 2011, 171).

*“Listen to the system of the proof’s word, This firm poem is like Khawarnaq “* (Naser Khosrow, 2005, 451).

*“The affairs of the world were entrusted to one caravan, The whole world became like Khawarnaq, Sadeer”* (Farrukhi Sistani, 1984, 189-227).

*When Bahrâm mounted to its top  
and Venus bore his festive cup  
He found a round tower, the sphere’s twin,  
the moon without, the sun within.  
Within, the sun in a bright display;  
without, the moon’s light-giving rays.  
The wind above blew ever fresh;  
’twas safe from Autumn’s cruel blast.  
Beneath the castle walls, his gaze  
roamed o’er a plain like Paradise:  
On this side, the Euphrates passed,  
sweet as the Water of Life; on that  
Sadîr, like Sidra, throne-like, held  
a village filled with oil and milk.*

*Before the plain, behind the mead,  
whose soft airs musky perfume breathed  
(Nizâmî Ganjavi, 1936, 122).*

Furthermore, Nizâmî provides descriptions of the structure from a distance, essentially describing it from the outside. We seem to be facing an outward-facing structure. It consists of a building with facades in all directions, adjacent to a plain or nature, or encompassed by gardens. The structure is visible from a far distance and serves as a landmark and symbol, introducing the way. Due to the climatic conditions, the form of the structure appears to be designed to minimize sunlight penetration, suggesting that the architectural design employed various methods to provide lighting within the interior spaces. For example, there were domed chambers or skylights in the walls of the domes, which not only provided illumination but also enhanced the play of sunlight within the structure. Nizâmî introduces the palace in four corners, indicating that it does not have a circular plan and its geometry is regular. In each corner, there were gardens, perhaps implying that there were pavilions situated within the heart of these four gardens. The text refers to the use of water (the Euphrates River) in the four gardens, which completes the elements of the garden. It also mentions the presence of streams of milk and oil, indicating that livestock breeding was common in the region and that there were facilities in the palace for the storage of materials, providing tranquility of mind.

*Those royal heights one-day Nu ‘mân  
did climb to view; with him Bahrâm.  
All around that vault, like Paradise,  
he saw red tulips and green grass.  
The plain a Shushtar carpet seemed,  
where partridge plump and pheasant teemed.  
Said he, ‘Was e’er a spot so choice?  
In such a place one should rejoice.’  
The king’s vizier was, in those days (ibid).*

Continuing, it mentions the behavior of Nu’ mân and Bahrâm, who sit on the rooftop to enjoy the



view. Since rooftops are usually not utilized, it is likely referring to a moonlit night or open-air spaces resembling rooftops, overlooking the four gardens, with surrounding areas covered by pavilions, transforming it into a paradise in the heart of the desert.

Inside the structure, there is a garden reminiscent of paradise, lush and verdant, where the means for joy and tranquility are provided. An interesting point in these verses is the attention to the scenery and surroundings of the structure. It seems that behind the palace, there is a lush bird garden that creates a suitable view of the palace, and in front of the palace, there is a desert path that increases the thirst for reaching and observing the palace. On the sides of the palace, there is a river and a blue stream, which make the surrounding environment fruitful and delightful, serving as a place for red tulips to bloom and nightingales and partridges to rest. On the other side, there is a prosperous and vibrant village.

The painting of Behzad (Fig. 1), drawn in the 15th century and two centuries after Nizâmî, depicts the building in the process of completion. Perhaps Behzad's intention was not to showcase the grandeur and beauty of the Khawarnaq Palace, but rather to emphasize the efforts, hardships, and determination of the people and workers involved in its construction. The painting alludes to a building with cubic geometry and worn-out corners, with two incomplete vaults that are in the process of completing the palace's dome. The roof's cones also indicate the presence of partially constructed surrounding arcades. In the image, over 4,000 bricks can be seen, signifying the magnificence of the structure (Roshani & Keshavarz Afshar, 2023). Additionally, 21 workers are depicted, with the tallest figure presumed to be Simnâr, and the person wearing a similar hat is likely his apprentice. The tall height of the building is emphasized with scaffolding, ladders, and facades facing towards the sky as if anyone standing on the roof is living in the heavens. The marginal poems in the painting allude to

the purpose of these workers, which was previously discussed. The construction material of the building is bricks and clay, and three workers are shown carrying stones or bricks to the site. Two workers are using a chisel to polish the stone, indicating that the facade of the building is made of stone. There is a person holding something black in their hand, which appears to be water or milk carried in a container.

The Seven Domes Palace: During the winter celebration of Bahrâm, someone in the crowd expresses a wish for the current state of affairs to continue indefinitely, away from any harm to the king and the kingdom. At that moment, Shîda, who was a seminar disciple, envisions the key to the lasting happiness of the king and the country and asks Bahrâm for permission to build a palace in a manner that corresponds to the position of the stars, the days of the week, the horoscope, the climate, and so on, so that happiness and stability can be maintained. It



Fig. 1. The depiction of the construction of the Khawarnaq Palace, an artwork by Kamal al-Din Behzad (15th century) in the British Royal Library (or.6810). Source: Gray, 1990, 205.

seems that in the past, the architect was not merely a builder but had a more important duty of presenting a more desirable lifestyle to the occupants of the structure. This indicates that proper behavior and conduct are required within the building, which, if observed, will provide quality and comfort for the residents. Initially, Bahrâm ignores this request for a few days, but eventually succumbs to temptation and grants permission to build the Seven Domes Palace, and thus the architect embarks on the construction of the palace.

*Within that fort, the Seven Domes  
the seven planets' natures owned.  
The hue of each the star-knower weighed,  
against each planet's cast assayed.  
The dome of Saturn, as was fit,  
was veiled in musky black; while that  
Of Jupiter, just as it should,  
received the hue of sandalwood.  
The one that Mars encompassed clasped  
red as its emblem; as for that  
The Sun informed, bright bands of gold  
made its hue yellow. That which hoped  
For Venus-like adornment blazed  
as bright and white as Venus' face.  
That one sustained by Mercury  
was turquoise-hued, like victory;  
While that towards whose tower the Moon  
went forth, was clad in verdant green,  
Like Bahrâm's fortune. Thus were raised  
those domes whose forms the planets gave.  
The Seven Climes to them were tied,  
the seven princesses their brides.  
[15a] Each one, in colour and in mode,  
had made one dome her own abode,  
And everything within it made  
the selfsame hue the dome displayed  
(Nizâmî Ganjavi, 1936,193-194).  
In painting and building, you would say  
God's art inspires me. I will make  
A likeness of the heavenly sphere,*

*that it not bring him harm; and nor,  
While he dwells in earth's picture-house,  
need he have fear of Heaven's stars.  
He'll dwell protected all his life;  
on earth he'll govern like the sky.  
To do this, I will build for him,  
like seven strong forts, seven fair domes,  
Each of a different hue, and all  
than hundred fanes more beautiful.  
The king has seven idols fair;  
each one a country's banner bears.  
Each clime is firmly governed by  
its sister planet. Every day  
Within the week, as all know well,  
is by one planet clearly ruled.  
On such auspicious feast-days, let  
him in a dome his pleasure seek;  
Don robes of that dome's hue; drink wine  
with the fair bride who dwells within.  
If with my words the king complies,  
he'll raise himself above the skies.  
As long as life endures, he'll gain  
enjoyment of his life'*

(*ibid.*).

Within two years, which is three years less than their master, Shîda constructs a palace that, according to the poetic text, is more magnificent and complete than Khawarnaq. It stands side by side with paradise and provides tranquility and comfort within its walls. This meticulously designed palace, crafted with architectural finesse and skill, adheres to perfect proportions. Due to its origin rooted in beauty and joy, it remains immune to the ravages of time. The structure consists of seven sections, each representing one of the seven planets and days of the week. Every day, corresponding to a particular planet, Bahrâm spends time in that section with one of his wives. On that day, they must dress in attire matching the colors of the palace. These colors, namely black, green, yellow, red, blue, sandalwood (a shade of brown), and white, form a combination known as the color

wheel. The number seven has long held significance across various cultures and is considered sacred, possessing supernatural aspects. It appears that the design of the Seven Domes Palace and the prescribed etiquette for living within it are mutually reinforcing elements of happiness and necessity. The architect was knowledgeable in cosmology and enhanced the value of the structure by associating each dome with a planet. This analogy goes beyond color, size, and other characteristics. A summary of the descriptions for each dome mentioned in the verses is reflected in the table below (Table 2).

From what is mentioned in the verses, we can infer that each dome was separate and had its structure, but together they formed a unified palace with seven domes. The arrangement of the domes next to each other can be likened to the coexistence of planets in the solar system. Assuming this, the size of each dome, from largest to smallest, is as follows: the fourth dome, the first, the second, the third, the fifth, the seventh, and the sixth. Perhaps their coexistence side by side was radial, and the fourth dome was located at the center as the largest dome. Considering that there is no mention of a towering structure anywhere, it is likely that the height of this building was not significant, and it was not built in a towering form. No difference in height was probably due to the difference in size of the domes.

*When the dome-builder with such skill  
those precious Seven Domes had built,*

*The nature, ruling star, of each  
was as Shīda had first decreed.  
The king observed the seven spheres  
joined hand in hand in love, and heard  
How all men spoke, both near and far,  
of Nu‘mān’s dealings with Simnār;  
How all wise men expressed their blame  
that he that wondrous man had slain  
(Nizāmī Ganjavi, 1936, 192).*

Considering the verses and the hierarchy of the story and the personal growth of the main character, Bahrām Gur, it seems that the Khawarnaq Palace and the Seven Domes are connected. The expressed connection can be examined from two main perspectives: the Seven Domes is an evolved and completed version of the Khawarnaq Palace, which Simnār mentions towards the end of his life. For example, according to the verses of the Haft Peykar, the Khawarnaq Palace is a single-domed structure, while the Seven Domes Palace has seven domes. Another notable point regarding the connection between these two buildings is the duration of their construction. The Khawarnaq Palace was built in five years, while the Seven Domes Palace, which is more complete and magnificent than Khawarnaq, was built in two years. Therefore, it is likely that the second palace was constructed in competition with the first palace and to demonstrate the architect’s abilities. In Haft Peykar, brief references are made to other architectural structures and spaces. For example, in

Table 2. Characteristics of the Seven Domes. Source: Authors.

	Planet		Climate	Day of the Week	Color	Metal
	Persian	Arabic				
Dome 1	Kavān	Saturn	India	Sunday	Black	Lead
Dome 2	Urmazd	Jupiter	China	Friday	Sandalwood	Tin
Dome 3	Bahrām	Mars	Saqalab	Wednesday	Red	Iron
Dome 4	Khurshid	Sun	Rome	Monday	Yellow	Gold
Dome 5	Ānahid	Venus	Iran	Saturday	White	Copper
Dome 6	Tīr	Mercury	Egypt	Thursday	Blue	Mercury
Dome 7	Māh	Moon	Khwarazm	Tuesday	Green	Silver (Salt)

the story of Bahrâm and Handmaiden, Bahrâm has a secret residence in his kingdom, a beautiful and lofty house with many stairs, where he spends time away from the eyes of others. This building also has exquisite arches and halls, and like the main buildings of the story, it serves as the main backdrop for important events in the tale. There is a mention of a domed structure with a design similar to the Khawarnaq Palace, featuring the same grandeur and height, with a columned hall or veranda at the entrance of the palace.

*Mounting the sixty steps, the king  
found there a vault lofty as Heaven,  
As fair as Khavarnaq in form;  
its carpet was the azure dome (ibid.).*

In the story of the “Red Dome,” titled by the Lady of Rus, the daughter of the King of Rus, who had numerous suitors but found none worthy of being her husband, ordered the construction of a tall fortress on top of a mountain. The daughter, who possessed various arts such as sorcery and astrology, commanded that a spell be placed upon the fortress, preventing anyone except the guardian of the fortress and herself from accessing it. Anyone who attempted to enter the fortress would have their head separated from their body. It appears that the Lady’s fortress was built as a protective barrier atop a mountain, using iron and stone in its construction. The entrance passage to the fortress was not meant to be opened or passed through by ordinary people.

*Upon the road, from a clever plan,  
she set up several talismans.  
Of iron and stone the form of each,  
each holding in its hand a mace.  
All those who trod that fearsome path  
were severed by those blades in half.  
Helpless all travelers on that road,  
except for one, the fortress’ guard (ibid.).*

## Summary

### • Architectural features

In the Haft Peykar epic, there are two architects

named “Semnâr” and “Shîda.” Based on the text of the epic, it appears that the architects of the Khawarnaq Palace and the Seven Domes had a master-apprentice relationship with each other, with Shîda being the apprentice of Seminar and gaining experience alongside his master in the construction of the Khawarnaq Palace. This reflects the traditional system of master and apprentice in architecture. However, in some sources (Asadpour & Sadeghi, 2021), the Russian Princess (Banu-i Hesarri), one of the main characters in the story of Red Dome, is also mentioned as an architect. However, it seems that based on the verses of the “Haft Peykar” epic, the Russian Princess is more of an artist and sorceress who, through her sorcery and magic, brings about the creation of the fortress and the mentioned structure. The resulting construction has secretive and mystical qualities. “The architect was a delicate and sophisticated artist in artistic matters. Each architect, according to their position and role in the narrative of Haft Peykar, possesses these qualities” (ibid.). The table below describes and categorizes the attributes of the architects mentioned in the “Haft Peykar” epic. The characteristics and qualities of Seminar and Shîda are mentioned in Table 3.

### • Symbols and architectural features

A summary of the features of the two examined buildings is as follows (Table 4).

Based on the conducted studies, it appears that the discussion of architecture and architectural aspects in the verses of the “Haft Peykar” poem is significant. In this poem, all the events of the story take place within or in the vicinity of buildings and architectural spaces, providing a suitable framework for understanding the architectural features of these spaces. In certain verses of this poem, architecture, and lifestyle are recommended and created by an architect as a guarantee of happiness and well-being for an individual or a state. Some architectural elements and features play a more prominent role in the narrative of the poem. Some elements are architectural spaces



Table 3. Architectural Characteristics. Source: Authors.

Architect	Simnâr	Shîda
Nationality	Roman	-
Masterpiece	Khawarnaq	Seven Domes
Fate	Death	Shahr-e Babak
Attributes	Builder, painter, skilled, authentic, talented, artist, craftsman, astronomer Until Nu‘mân heard the news that such a master was within his reach. Although a builder, clearly he a myriad of artists holds in sway. Like Apollonius wise, he can devise and loose all talismans. He’ll raise a vault from the earth so high that it will plunder from the sky The stars’ bright lamps.’ ‘A famed man dwells in Grecian lands; clever? stone’s wax within his hands; Learned and skilled, in matchless art; of Sâm’s race, and his name Simnâr Learned and skilled, in matchless art; of Sâm’s race, and his name Simnâr	Scholar, engineer, illustrator, authentic, free, great, builder, sculptor, artist, painter, craftsman, astronomer, astrologer A master of the design was he, surveyor famed. Geometry, Physics, astronomy: all these were like wax in his hands. There was with them a man of worth, freeborn, upright, of noble birth, Named Shîda, brilliant as the sun, who all things, black or white, adorned. A master of the design was he, surveyor famed. Geometry, Physics, astronomy And he A master-builder was as well, and painted images with skill; Reason’s apprentice he; Simnâr had his first master been. In Khavarnaq, at that rare task, he’d helped his master.
Poem	Although a builder, clearly he a myriad of artists holds in sway. The master’s hands all measured well. For five years he labored, until He with his golden hands had made a silvery palace of stone and clay, And, of sound judgment, he can tell the secrets of the stars as well. His gaze draws o’er the sphere a web, like the spider of the astrolabe. He knows the veiled ones of the sky, the moon’s raids, the sun’s hostile eye; Like Apollonius wise, he can devise and loose all talismans. (Nizâmî Ganjavi, 2015, 118-119)	In painting and building, you would say God’s art inspires me. A master of the design was he, surveyor famed. Geometry, Physics, astronomy: all these were like wax in his hands. For I can weigh the sky, and know the stars; my wit their work does show. Shîda, Who knew the stars’ connections, bent his mind to choose a fair portent; On an ascendant fortunate the palace’s foundations laid; (ibid.)

themselves, such as the “dome,” which has been used throughout history and is considered part of ancient patterns. And some are conceptual elements and qualities that gain meaning in conjunction with architecture, such as “time and place,” “hierarchy,” or aesthetic concepts of form that contribute to the beauty and grandeur of the structure, such as “color”

and “light,” which enhance the quality, beauty, and grandeur of any architectural space. Although the meanings and symbols expressed in these verses are not explicitly stated, the poet conveys his message symbolically and metaphorically using these elements and components in a way that is comprehensible to the reader. It can be said that the description of these



Table 4. Characteristics of Kiosk-e Khawarnaq and Seven Domes Buildings. Source: Authors.

	Kiosk-e Khawarnaq	Seven Domes
Architectural Name	Simnâr Learned and skilled, in matchless art; of Sâm's race, and his name Simnâr.	Shîda Who knew the stars' connections, bent his mind to choose a fair portent; On an ascendant fortunate the palace's foundations laid;
Construction Period	Five years The master's hands all measured well. For five years he labored on	Two years
Form	Square-shaped pavilion, single dome, tall ivan, surrounding garden with a rooftop portico  Beneath the castle walls, his gaze roamed o'er a plain like Paradise: This shows but one sphere; that would seven high domes display, like seven heavens.	Seven Domes  Within that fort, the Seven Domes the seven planets' natures owned.
Height	One hundred Gaz (exaggerated)  He raised it high—a hundred ells and more; did not his fall foretell; He'd not—had he his grave foreseen	Tall  The king observed the seven spheres joined hand in hand in love
Form Features	Changing the colors of the building  Both day and night, both swift and slow, like brides it would three colours show	Seven Domes in seven colors, following celestial events The hue of each the star-knower weighed, against each planet's cast assayed. Shîda, Who knew the stars' connections, bent his mind to choose a fair portent; On an ascendant fortunate the palace's foundations laid;
Color	Blue, yellow, white	Black, yellow, green, red, victorious (turquoise), sandalwood, white Each of a different hue, and all than hundred fanes more beautiful
Materials	Stone, brick, gypsum This has three hues; that would have owned a hundred; it is ruby, this but stone.	-
Surroundings	Facing: desert, Back: orchard, Two sides of the palace: a village called Sedarah and a river On this side, the Euphrates passed, sweet as the Water of Life; on that Sadîr, like Sidra, throne-like, held a village filled with oil and milk. Before the plain, behind the mead, whose soft airs musky perfume breathed.	-

seven stories refers to the nature of perfectionism and desire in humans. The following will delve into the examination of these symbols and signs.

Dome: In the features examined from the structures of the Khawarnaq Palace and the Seven Domes Palace, the element of “dome” is common to both

buildings. “The dome is always a representation of the sky, and its placement on cubic bases symbolizes the union of heaven and earth. Here, the dome plays an intermediary role between heaven and earth, with the circle symbolizing the sky and divinity, and the square representing strength, stability, and the earthly

dimension” (Burckhardt, 2007, 111). Therefore, the dome is a sacred and mystical symbol and possesses a special grandeur and magnificence that defines both the external and internal spaces in terms of architectural form. A noteworthy point regarding the Seven Domes Palace and Khawarnaq is that while Khawarnaq has a single dome, the Seven Domes Palace features seven domes. This arrangement refers to the hierarchy and continuity of the past, present, and future in the life of Bahrâm, and almost all significant events of the story take place within the spaces of these domes, where the growth and stages of Bahrâm’s character development occur. The dome is, in fact, the gateway to the heavens and the cosmos. In Khawarnaq’s dome, the cycle of day and night is implemented, and the seven domes encompass the entire cosmos as if embracing the universe. That is why the dome is a valuable and illustrious presence. The word “dome” is repeated multiple times in the text, and its repetition adds to the value of the structure. Examples of multi-domed structures from the Timurid era can be seen, such as the Shah-e-Zinda mausoleum in Samarkand, the tomb of Ahmad Yasawi, and the mausoleum of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili.

**Portico and Iwan:** In describing the features of the buildings in the epic of the Haft Peykar, one common element found in the existing structures is the ancient pattern of the portico. Based on various interpretations of the verses, which abundantly appear in Iranian architecture, different understandings of this ancient pattern can be derived. In some verses, such as those describing the Khawarnaq Palace, it seems that the concept of the portico is mentioned as a repetitive four-fold arrangement, which is colloquially referred to as “iwan.” The portico refers to the front entrance of the building and carries the concept of an iwan, which is adorned with a dome. However, regarding what has been mentioned about Bahrâm and Nu‘mân observing the surrounding landscapes, it is more similar to a portico.

*Those royal heights one-day Nu‘mân  
did climb to view; with him Bahrâm.  
All around that vault, like Paradise,  
he saw red tulips and green grass.  
The plain a Shushtar carpet seemed,  
where partridge plump and pheasant teemed.  
Said he, ‘Was e’er a spot so choice?  
In such a place one should rejoice’*  
(Nizâmî Ganjavi, 1936, 122).

In a section of the story of Bahrâm and the slave girl, reference is made to the building of General Bahrâm, which also has a portico in its entrance section and is connected to the pavilion and upper section through 60 columns or pillars. The building features a four-columned portico, which is essentially a columned iwan that is open on one or three sides. This architectural element has deep roots and has been used in Achaemenid palaces and pre-Achaemenid architectural works, and it is essentially an element that has been incorporated into Iranian architecture from Roman architecture (Akbari & Fattahi, 2016).

*The officer owned fertile lands,  
estates far from the eyes of men;  
A palace there rose towards the sky,  
beaten by waves from Heaven’s sea.  
A tower sixty steps in height  
was crowned with a fair place to sit*  
(Nizâmî Ganjavi, 1936, 164-165).

From another perspective, the meaning of the base refers to the platform, steps, and emphasis on the height of the building. From another viewpoint, it can be referred to as the coexistence of repetitive modules of the portico placed next to each other. However, this recent definition has been less utilized in prominent and royal structures.

**Time and Place:** In the narrative of the Haft Peykar, special attention is given to time and place. In certain sections of the story, such as the description of the features of the Khawarnaq Palace, the poet delves into the neighboring areas, the shape and form of the building, and the reflection of colors throughout

the day. The description of the features of the Seven Domes Palace also focuses on the time of entry and the manner in which Bahrâm and his wives enter the place. In other sections, like the description of General Bahrâm's building in a village, the attention is drawn to the height and different qualities of the structure. However, in some parts, the poet merely addresses the qualitative discussion of the space and avoids providing precise information about the temporal, spatial, or architectural context within the story. "Therefore, when mentioning the location of the events, the poet often relies on words such as a garden, a city, a desert, and so on, and sometimes mentions specific places briefly, such as the city of Rome or the province of Rus. Of course, in some stories like the story of Mahan, the location of the events is not devoid of symbolism and narrative message, but in most Seven Domes stories, the location is merely a container for the unfolding events" (Mohammadi, 2011).

**Location and Climate:** In the early parts of the story, attention is given to the geographical location and climatic conditions. In some verses of the epic, reference is made to the hot and dry conditions of the land of Yemen, and Neman and his son Mazar devise a solution to escape the heat and dryness of the land by building a tall palace on a high surface that can attract the cool northern breeze and provide protection from the heat and dryness of the land.

Some days,

*beneath the azure sphere, with a song  
and pleasant games, they sported long.  
Each, for that bright lamp's happy sake,  
in house and garden held a feast.  
A noble man, not small but great,  
once in his garden made him a guest*  
(Nizâmî Ganjavi, 1936,174).

In the past, people divided all lands into seven regions. The Iranians, in addition to dividing the land into seven climates, considered a central region for it. It is mentioned in the Bundahishn: "When Tishtrya (the star) made it rain, the earth did not touch everywhere, but it broke into seven pieces, one as big as half, and six pieces around it" (Faranbagh, 1990). In the center of the world, Khunrath, which is more important than other climates, is located, and from the perspective of Iranians, Khoonires is actually the land of Iran. Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (Biruni,2006) introduced these seven climates in "Al-Tafhim," and the order and names of these seven lands are as follows: the first land is Hindwan, the second land is Arab and Habasha, the third land is Misr and Sham, the fourth land is Iran Shahr, the fifth land is Saghalab and Rome, the sixth land is Turan and Ya'juj, and the seventh land is China and Machin. Among them, the Iranians and the Romans considered astrological divisions corresponding to the seven climates, which are not always consistent and have differences. Nizâmî provides a classification in Haft Peykar, which corresponds to Table 5.

**Hierarchy:** Among numbers, some of them have taken on symbolic and sacred significance among different tribes and cultures. The number "seven," which is one of the important and foundational elements in the Haft Peykar epic, is considered a sacred and significant symbol. It seems that the seven stories told by the princesses, to each of which Bahrâm goes to a specific dome and observes certain customs, have correlations and similarities with the seven stages of mysticism (1- Seeking, 2- Love, 3- Knowledge, 4- Independence, 5- Abstraction and Unity, 6- Bewilderment, 7- Poverty and Annihilation). It can be said that these seven narratives, expressed over seven days of the week by the seven princesses

Table 5. Seven Climates. Source: Authors.

Seven Climates.							
Land	India	Khwarazm	Rome	Saghalab	Maghreb	China	Iran
Celestial	Kavian	Mah	Sun	Bahrâm	Atarad	Moshtri	Nahid

who are Bahrâm's wives, represent the hierarchy of Bahrâm's spiritual journey and personal growth. The seven colorful robes that Bahrâm dons successively and in relation to his spiritual progress correspond to the general concept of the robe of the soul. This is where one might connect the seven colors of the seven domes with S. A. Wilson's classic pattern of the seven stages of self-purification: 1- In the self-commanding stage, the soul conquers the world, 2- In the self-blaming stage, the soul reproaches or repents, 3- In the self-inspiring stage, the soul receives inspiration, 4- In the self-assured stage, the soul finds peace, 5- In the self-satisfied stage, the soul satisfies God, 6- In the self-pleasing stage, the soul pleases God, 7- In the purified stage, the soul is pure and complete (Barry, 2006).

*The hue of each the star-knower weighed,  
against each planet's cast assayed.*

*The dome of Saturn, as was fit,  
was veiled in musky black; while that  
Of Jupiter, just as it should,  
received the hue of sandalwood.*

*The one that Mars encompassed clasped  
red as its emblem; as for that*

*The Sun informed bright bands of gold  
made its hue yellow. That which hoped  
For Venus-like adornment blazed  
as bright and white as Venus' face.*

*That one sustained by Mercury  
was turquoise-hued, like a victory;  
While that towards whose tower the Moon  
went forth, was clad in verdant green,  
Like Bahrâm's fortune. Thus were raised  
those domes whose forms the planets gave.*

*The Seven Climes to them were tied,  
the seven princesses their brides*

(Nizâmî Ganjavi, 2015, 193-194).

Regarding the hierarchy of architectural elements in the palace of Khawarnaq, similar to many valuable Iranian buildings, the hierarchy of Iranian gardens can be observed, where after entering the garden, we

reach a pavilion leading to the dome of the house in front.

**Light:** Light has been an important and significant element in human life since ancient times. In Iran, due to climatic conditions and the intensity of light in different regions, the encounter and proper use of light have held special importance. This importance can also be observed in Iranian architecture, ranging from the use of skylights and clerestory windows in private buildings such as houses to lighting design and utilization of light in religious and public structures such as mosques. In the Haft Peykar epic, attention is also given to light and its spatial arrangement.

In the palace of Khawarnaq, it is likely that the play of light through the openings and apertures around the dome, while utilizing sunlight to illuminate the space, emphasizes the manipulation of light and lighting design, highlighting its various states.

**Color:** In the seven tales of the Haft Peykar epic, which contain numerous moral lessons and advice, it appears that the element of color plays an important and vibrant role in each tale.

*When Bahrâm mounted to its top  
and Venus bore his festive cup  
He found a round tower, the sphere's twin,  
the moon without, the sun within.  
Within, the sun is a bright display;  
without, the moon's light-giving rays  
(ibid.).*

In a way that by examining and studying, one can discover the connection between the content of the tales and the expressed colors. In Black Dome, the hero of the story remains distant from union and happiness, and throughout his life, he adorns himself with the color black, which symbolizes mourning and sorrow. In Yellow Dome, considering that yellow is a sacred color, an illuminator, bright, and a symbol of wisdom and knowledge, in the story, the hero and his slave trust each other after deciding to be honest and reveal their secrets and fears, leading them to happiness and prosperity (Varedi & Mokhtarnameh,

2007). The tale of the Green Dome speaks of the color green, which represents tranquility, spirituality, faith, and so on. In the mentioned story, humans ultimately receive the reward for their pure intentions and good deeds and reach their beloved, becoming happy. Red, representing vitality, excitement, love, etc., plays an important role in the fourth tale. In the story, the lovers of Lady Hasari sacrifice their lives on the path of love and union, and eventually, a wise young man succeeds in achieving union. The fifth dome, as mentioned by Shahdokht, utilizes the color blue, symbolizing tranquility, serenity, balance, etc., where in this story, Mahan Masri surrenders to God after facing numerous troubles and dangers, seeks His help and ultimately finds salvation.

*From white does the day's brilliance come;  
from white the world-illuminating moon.  
All hues with artifice are stained,  
except for white, which pure remains.  
He who despairs when stained will be,  
when pure, called 'white' by all who see.  
In worship, when men strive for right,  
it is the custom to wear white*  
(Nizâmî Ganjavi, 2015, 341-342).

In the sixth dome, the color of the chair is mentioned, representing peace, comfort, etc. In the story of the sixth dome, the conflict between good and evil is portrayed, where ultimately good achieves happiness, prosperity, and tranquility (Varedi & Mokhtarnameh, 2007). White, representing purity, distance from sin, sanctity, etc., plays a vibrant role in the White Dome. In this story, the hero, who is tempted and seeks sin, decides to repent after experiencing various hardships and eventually reaches happiness and prosperity.

## Conclusion

It appears that each of the examined aspects of the seven military structures has rules and frameworks for explaining the architectural culture of the orderly era text. For example, considerations such as the grandeur and magnificence of the buildings,

their form and appearance, their suitability with the lifestyle and usage, customs and cultural aspects of life within the buildings, and more, are all features of the architect's attention. Factors like color, hierarchy, perspective, materials and form, attention to celestial sciences and stars, etc., are part of the elements and signs associated with architecture, which constitute the essence of the text.

However, a significant portion of the historical, cultural, and architectural descriptions of the past architecture of this land resides within the heart of poems. By reading and analyzing these descriptions, one can gain an understanding and comprehension of past architecture and develop a broader and clearer perspective regarding the cultural and social needs of progressive architecture. The present study is an architectural interpretation of the military aspects, which can be approached in two possible ways:

**Literal interpretation:** This involves interpreting and drawing inspiration from Khawarnaq Palace and spatial descriptions found in the poems. It extensively focuses on the descriptions and expressions of various aspects of the structures, familiarizing the reader with their form, color, materials, essence, quality, and more. This type of interpretation can be useful in understanding and interpreting the past architecture of this land.

**Content-based interpretation:** This approach involves reading and drawing inspiration from the essence and symbols present within the stories (poems). It encompasses symbols and concepts embodied in the dome and its form, or symbols within the narratives. Through reading and inspiration from these symbols, architectural ideas and concepts can be generated. Additionally, the hierarchical progression and journey from adversity to happiness, as depicted in the Seven Princesses narratives, or the spiritual and character growth of Bahrâm, who briefly lives according to the architectural recommendations, leading to the perfection and maturity of his character, can serve as important sources for understanding the customs



and traditions of the past people of this land and as inspiration for designers in creating forms and structures.

It seems that the best approach for reading and utilizing literature and poetry in architecture is a combination of literal and content-based interpretations. By understanding the states and overall form of the structures, as well as the essence and concepts within them, we can extract the closest interpretation and understanding from the heart of these poems.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest in conducting this research.

### Endnotes

1. The name of Khawarnaq Palace, the ancient fortress of Hirah, has long been considered in Eastern Islam with unparalleled earthly beauty. The word Khavarnaq, which comes from Middle Persian, means porch. All historians confirm that Shah Nu'man built this palace as the prince's foster home (Khadivi & Alipour, 2013, 15).
2. The subject emerged in the paintings of the Impressionists in the second half of the 19th century. They endeavored to capture their perception of architecture through fragmented color patches and brushstrokes, creating dreamlike images.

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