

**Original Research Article****Analysis of the Decorative Features of Zuleikha's Mansion and Its Architect Based on Jami's Epic of Yusuf and Zuleikha**Javad Aghajani Keshteli<sup>1\*</sup>, Somayeh Omidvari<sup>2</sup>

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**Abstract**

In classical Persian prose and poetic texts, there are occasional references to discussions on art and aesthetics. Some of the descriptions in these sources can familiarize the audience with the principles and criteria of beauty and the foundations of Iranian art. In the descriptions of certain poets regarding buildings and architectural works, the principles and fundamentals of ornamentation and decoration in architecture are also distinctly evident. An example of such a poet is Jami, who, in his poem "Yusuf and Zuleikha", describes the mansion built by Zuleikha and her nanny and its commission to a skilled architect. This article aims to examine the features and descriptions of this mansion as portrayed by the poet, addressing the question: "What are the decorative features of Zuleikha's mansion based on Jami's Yusuf and Zuleikha? The research employed descriptive-analytical. Data collection was conducted through library research, with note-taking as the primary tool. The study examined literary works related to Jami's Yusuf and Zuleikha via a library-based approach and the sampling method was purposeful. Data analysis is carried out using "qualitative content analysis. The findings indicate that the mansion was built to arouse Yusuf's desire for union with Zuleikha. Therefore, the predominant form of decoration consists of paintings and miniature illustrations depicting their embrace. Alongside paintings, animal and plant motifs, as well as bird figures, were crafted using gold, silver, and precious stones. The polishing of the walls, ceiling, corridors, and seven interconnected chambers was intended to reflect images and attract Yusuf. The use of luxurious materials gave the mansion the grandeur of a magnificent palace.

**Keywords:** *Zuleikha's mansion, architectural decoration, Yusuf and Zuleikha, Jami.***Introduction**

Among the writings of Iranian literary figures, scattered references to art and architecture can be found. In some classical Persian prose and poetic texts, only terminology related to art and architecture appears. However, in others, alongside religious, mystical, epic, and romantic narratives, there are occasionally detailed discussions on structures,

mansions, and palaces. Iranian poets, especially those who stand at the pinnacle of Persian poetry and literature, have made brief yet distinctive references to the characteristics of Iranian art and architecture. Sometimes, exploring poetic sources can lead researchers to fundamental principles and criteria of artistic creation and beauty. This suggests that poets' descriptions of art, architecture, artists, and architects have the potential for further examination

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and analysis. Abdul Rahman Jami, a 9th-century poet, is among the figures who, in his exquisite collection *Haft Awrang*, not only composed ancient mystical and religious stories but also paid particular attention to such details. In parts of his poem *Yusuf and Zuleikha*, Jami beautifully and meticulously describes the story of the Prophet Yusuf, touching upon the aesthetic and philosophical aspects of art and architecture.

In the tale “The Construction of the House by the Nanny” where the images of Yusuf (PBUH) and Zuleikha are depicted,” Jami skillfully describes the architectural features, the architect, and the intricate designs of the building.

Regarding the significance and necessity of this research, it can be stated that, since most discussions related to art, art criticism, and aesthetics are found in non-Iranian texts or, more accurately, have been organized and compiled by Western thinkers, this research can offer insights into art and art criticism based on an Iranian and Persian text, or at least identify some scattered, albeit brief, elements. This article aims to answer the question: What are the architectural features of Zuleikha’s mansion and its

architect as described in Jami’s *Yusuf and Zuleikha*? Furthermore, the article seeks to investigate and examine the hypothesis that, based on Jami’s *Yusuf and Zuleikha* in *Haft Awrang*, Zuleikha’s mansion possessed intricate decorations inspired by natural and eternal patterns, reflecting the art and creativity of the architect (Fig. 1).

### Research Background

Researchers have explored topics related to art, beauty, architecture, and associated decorations in historical and ancient texts, particularly the poetic works of Persian-speaking poets. Studies show that the rich resources of Persian poetry have occasionally been used by scholars as a source for extracting principles of art and beauty. The following are examples of previous research that have been reviewed and critiqued.

Ghayoomi Bidhend & Pishvaei (2014) in their article “Pattern and beyond: An introduction to the aesthetics of Naqsh and painting in Rumi’s *Mathnawi*” point out that one important way to understand the dominant aesthetics of each era is by examining the

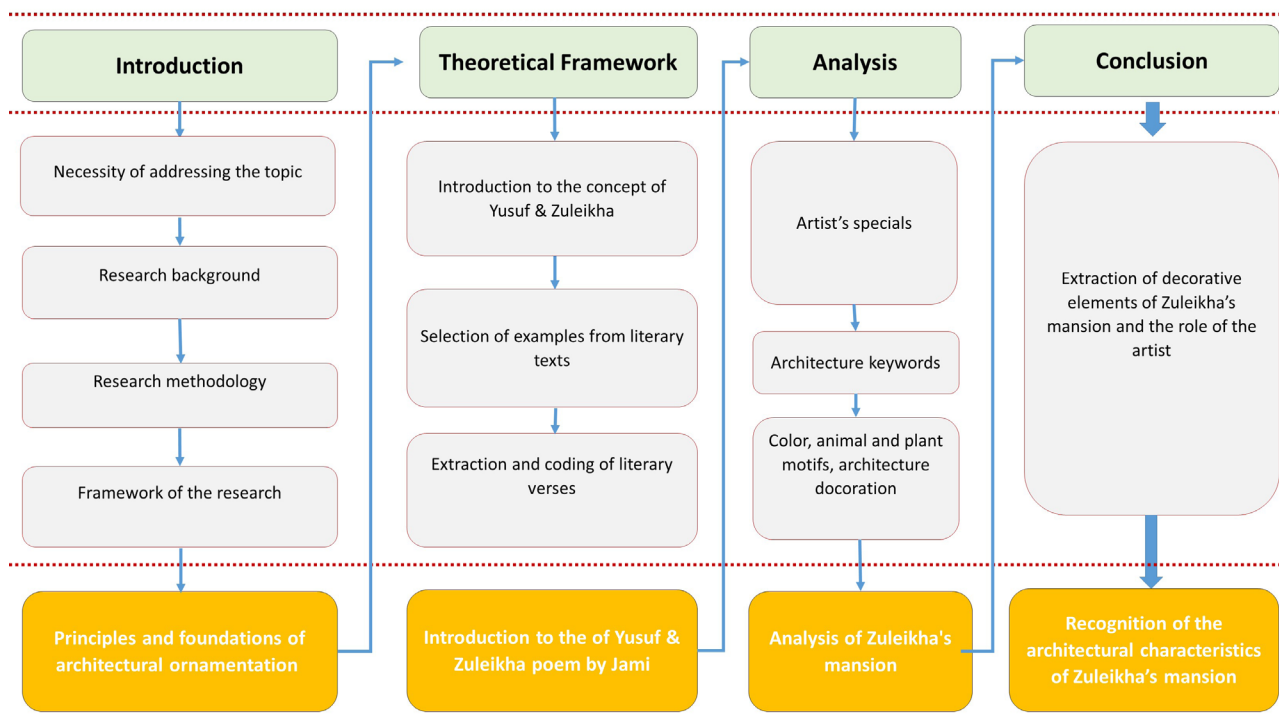


Fig. 1. Diagram of the Process for Analyzing the Decorative Features of Zuleikha’s Mansion. Source: Authors.

core concepts of art in textual sources. These textual sources can be found in the mystical literature of Iran. Seyyed Mohammad Rastgoo (2005) considers mysticism and art to share common characteristics. He writes that enigma and symbolic multiplicity exist in both phenomena. Mystics and artists not only see the world differently, but they also have a transformed connection with it. The study and analysis of terms related to art and architecture in various literary texts, especially in the poems of great poets, are often observed.

In the article “Exploring architectural elements in Nizâmî’s Haft Peyka,” (Baladi et al., 2023, 46), the authors critically examine the descriptive and analytical aspects of the palaces of Khornagh and Haft Gombad and their architects. The abstract of the article states that “Haft Paykar” by Nezami, through its description and depiction of the direct and indirect characteristics related to architecture and architectural spaces, serves as an excellent foundation for understanding and appreciating the architecture of the past and the architectural culture of Iran. The study of this work reveals that architects pay attention to elements that shape buildings and give them life.

In another article titled “Study on the description of architect in the Haft Peykar of Nizâmî” (Asadpour & Sadeghi, 2021, 49), the authors demonstrate the characteristics of the architect in Nezami’s thought through the concept of Totality. They write that the Totality begins with ethics from within, is adorned with the sciences of the time, is polished with technical qualities, and ultimately reaches perfection through artistry. In Nezami’s vision, the architect knows the sky’s celestial motions, from earthly geometry to the movements of the heavens. The influence of art and beauty can be observed in a study that examines the “Masnavi Ma’navi” and the story of the “Castle of Deception”. This study takes a mystical approach. The authors conclude that the king (Logos) advises his sons not to enter the castle, and they explain the reason: “The castle of Zaat al-Sur is the universe of sights, where each image can

deceive the intellect and trap a group of seekers” (Ramezani et al., 2020, 174). This is a similar artistic influence to the one seen when Zuleikha and her Nanny order the depiction of Yusuf and Zuleikha’s making love.

## Research Method

The research is theoretical and falls within the category of fundamental studies. The research method is descriptive-analytical in terms of its nature. Data collection was conducted through a library-based approach, utilizing indexing tools for gathering information. The study examined literary works related to Jami’s Yusuf and Zuleikha through a library-based approach. The samples were purposively selected from the Persian poets of the 9th century SH. They included verses related to art, beauty, architecture, and ornamentation. The verses were taken from the story “Building the nurse, where the images of Joseph (PBUH) and Zuleikha are depicted”, which have been thoroughly analyzed and interpreted. The analysis method was qualitative, involving the selection of the story, the extraction, and coding of the verses, followed by content analysis based on qualitative analysis principles.

## Theoretical Foundations

Nur al-Din Abd al-Rahman ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad (Jami) was a Persian poet of the 9th century AH, contemporary with the Timurid era. His works include the triadic divan (“Fatihat al-Shabab”, “Wasitat al-Iqd”, and “Khatimat al-Hayat”) and “Haft Awrang”, which consists of “Silsilat al-Dhahab”, “Masnavi Salamān”, “Tuhfat al-Ahrar”, “Subhat al-Abrar”, “Yusuf and Zuleikha”, “Layli and Majnun”, and “Khiradnama-ye Iskandari”. He held the title “Khatam al-Shu’ara” (Seal of the Poets), and his poetry, characterized by its simple yet eloquent language, became a model for many poets. Jami’s poetry presents mystical themes in the form of narratives and allegories. Some consider him a follower of the Naqshbandi Sufi order. Ali

Asghar Hekmat (2007) writes that Jami, from the beginning of his youth to the end of his life, remained a devoted seeker of knowledge, continuously engaged in teaching and learning, never ceasing in this noble pursuit. His existence serves as a complete example and a comprehensive model for those who embark on the path of scholarship and the pursuit of wisdom.

Poets such as Ferdowsi may have mentioned construction in their poetry; however, Jami is the first poet to have extensively discussed the art of building in the story of “Yusuf and Zuleikha” (Pakzad & Shoaie, 2020, 40). Jami composed twenty qasidas and two Masnavis describing royal structures and praising the efforts of their patrons, indicating that these poems were written upon the completion of these buildings. Notably, none of the poets of this era have written about architecture with such frequency, and this approach may be rare and unparalleled in the broader scope of Persian literature (Nasiri Jami, 2006, 97).

Jami’s “Haft Awrang” is considered one of the most significant literary works, providing valuable information on architecture and its ornamentation. The story of “Yusuf and Zuleikha” is one of the narratives within this collection, in which the poet describes the palace that Zuleikha built for Yusuf, detailing the intricacies of its decorative artistry (Alizadeh Khayat et al., 2022, 133).

#### • Summary of the narrative

Yusuf (AS) was one of the sons of the Prophet Ya’qub. Out of jealousy, his brothers cast him into a well, from which he was later retrieved by a passing caravan (slave traders). A nobleman named Malik purchased him for a small price and took him to Egypt, where he was bought by Zuleikha. Yusuf was raised in the household of the Aziz of Egypt and Zuleikha, who eventually fell deeply in love with him. Zuleikha made various attempts to force Yusuf into making love, but he rejected her every time. He was later falsely accused and imprisoned etc.

As mentioned, Zuleikha, with the counsel and assistance of her Nanny, repeatedly summoned

Yusuf in pursuit of making love. In Jami’s “Yusuf and Zuleikha”, several aspects of this pursuit are highlighted: Zuleikha personally requests Yusuf, while he remains indifferent; sends her Nanny as an intermediary to plead on her behalf; Zuleikha begs and pleads, and Yusuf rejects; preparing an elaborate setting in a garden and inviting Yusuf to a feast there; presenting maidservants to Yusuf to increase his desire for making love; devising schemes with her Nanny; and ultimately constructing a palace adorned with images of Yusuf and Zuleikha. These are among the themes that Jami explores in his poem.

#### Review And Analysis

Before beginning the tale of the palace adorned with images of Yusuf and Zuleikha, Jami includes related verses in the story “Zuleikha’s begging to Her Nurse and Pleading for a plan to Attain making love with Yusuf (AS)”.

*A thought has come to my mind,  
From which your heart will find peace, aligned.  
But only if you gather, with great care,  
A wealth of silver and gold to spare.  
I’ll build a palace, fair and grand,  
And then I’ll say, “Reveal your face, as planned,  
Within that palace, let your beauty shine,  
For all to see, in that design.”  
We’ll decorate this palace, wall by wall,  
With paintings of you and Yusuf, in love’s sweet thrall.*  
(Jami, 1996, 672)

After repeatedly requesting Yusuf’s presence and receiving no response, Zuleikha resorts to pleading with her nanny. The nanny, to comfort Zuleikha, suggests the solution of constructing a palace filled with images of their embrace.

*When Yusuf sits in the palace for a moment,  
He will see himself in your embrace wherever he turns.  
The love for your beauty will stir in his heart,  
And with all his soul, he will long for your union.  
As waves of affection rise from every side,  
All will unfold just as you desire*  
(ibid., 673)

In the above verses, the impact of imagery on the audience becomes evident. The nanny believes that when Yusuf enters the palace and sees those images, love for Zuleikha will take root in his heart, and he will long for union with her. The characteristics that the wise poet attributes to the palace built by Zuleikha and its architect are described as follows:

*The architects of this grand hall say,  
When Nanny dared to build her way,  
She found a master, skilled and wise,  
With hands that wove a hundred ties.  
In geometry, he was well-versed,  
With astral laws, his guide rehearsed.  
Ptolemy's Almagest he made seem light,  
While Euclid trembled at his sight.  
With compass free, his fingers drew,  
As if his hands the circles knew.  
And when his art required a line,  
Without a ruler, it stood fine.  
He leaped and soared to Atlas' height,  
On Saturn's porch, he carved with might.  
When to his chisel he turned his hand,  
Soft as clay, the stone would stand.  
With thought alone, designs took flight,  
A thousand forms, both fair and bright.  
In shaping art, his mind was vast,  
As if life's tablet he recast.  
Whatever image his brush let flow,  
From every drop, new life would grow.  
If on a stone he drew a bird,  
The heavy rock took flight, unstirred*

(ibid.)

In the above verses, the poet highlights the exceptional skills of the architect who built the grand structure. This master is proficient in the fundamentals of construction, working with precision based on numbers and measurements. He is well-versed in astronomy and the art of stargazing, and it is through this knowledge that he creates the magnificent edifice. The architect does not require tools such as compasses or rulers for his designs. Another notable characteristic is his creativity in design and decoration. He imagines

patterns for the structure's adornment that appear so lifelike, they seem to come alive.

In these verses, the poet uses terminology to showcase the skill and mastery of the architect, with each term rooted in the wisdom, philosophy, and aesthetics of not only Iran but also lands such as Greece, Rome, and China. These concepts served as principles and standards for the proper design and construction of buildings, palaces, and temples for centuries. Additionally, these terms represent the objective criteria that architects and artists have historically focused on when considering aesthetics.

The term "art" in the second verse of this tale refers to mastery of a craft. In classical Persian literature, an artist had reached the peak of skill in performing a task, a craft, or a production. The architect of this building is introduced as a master of art in both hemistichs of the second verse.

Familiarity with geometry and its principles was considered a fundamental requirement for any professional architect in designing and constructing a building. One of the tangible principles of aesthetics in art and architecture has always been the artist's and architect's knowledge of mathematical proportions and geometry. The composition, the proportion of a part to the whole structure (such as the ratio of the iwan to the entire building), the foundation of the edifice, the arrangement of columns, the height of the structure, and similar elements were all aspects a skilled architect had to be well acquainted with (Fig. 2).

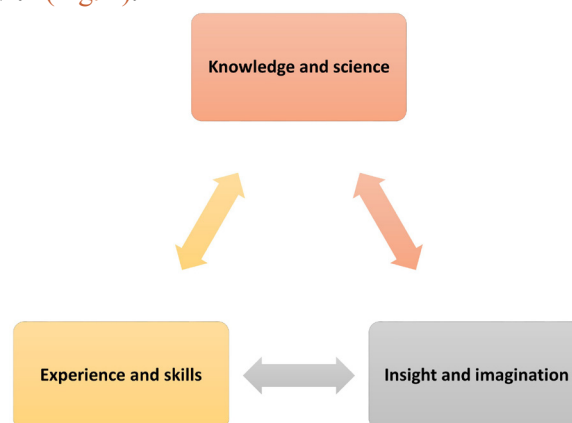


Fig. 2. Three indicators of architecture of Zuleikha's mansion. Source: Authors.

Knowing proportions such as the golden ratio, spiral and circular proportions, human body-based proportions, and the ratios established by Vitruvius was a hallmark of a skilled builder. The term “observation laws” is also one of the expressions Jami uses regarding the architect of the structure. A professional architect was expected to be knowledgeable about the movement of planets, stars, the moon, and the sun.

The use of light in architecture, the understanding of the sky’s landscape, and the positioning of the moon and sun have been significant considerations in construction since ancient times. Structures such as Stonehenge, Chahartaqis, and some other buildings are believed to have been directly connected to timekeeping, calendars, and determining the proper seasons for agriculture and livestock farming. Architectural masterpieces like Persepolis, Parthian and Sassanian structures, and Islamic monuments have also paid direct and indirect attention to star observation. Even the initiation of construction was often aligned with an auspicious astrological moment (Sa’d time), based on the favorable positioning of the stars.

Regarding the term “Majisti” (Almagest), Dehkhoda (1993, 17934)’s dictionary describes it as follows: It is the name of a book belonging to the Magi, meaning the fire-worshippers, concerning the rules of their faith, attributed to “the Mobad Majist”. It is also the name of a mathematical. Book by the Greek philosopher Euclid, dealing with principles and proofs of geometric forms. The founder of this work is Ptolemy, and originally, it was a scientific term related to the study of celestial spheres, the Earth, the measurement of motions, dimensions, and celestial bodies. In Greek, it means “order,” as such a systematic arrangement of this science did not exist before Ptolemy. Some have attributed it to Euclid, and the existing version of “Majisti” is a translation edited by Nasir al-Din al-Tusi.

It is evident that the term “Majisti” is closely

associated with the relationships between stars, astronomy, and physics. Jami, in comparing the architect of this structure (whose identity remains unknown) to the Greek philosopher Euclid, acknowledges that this builder had a profound knowledge of these celestial relations or the book “Majisti”. Therefore, he considers the architect to be highly proficient in design.

The fifth and sixth verses emphasize the architect’s experience and skill, highlighting his precision in drawing circles and straight lines without relying on design tools. Creativity is the next trait attributed to this architect, whose imaginative vision allows him to conceptualize various designs. This creativity belongs to the realm of imagination, a mental process rooted in the artist’s power to envision. Jami draws a parallel with Rumi’s story of the “Chinese and Roman Painters,” where the architect is likened to the Romans, who, through refining their hearts, could generate endless patterns. In the ninth verse, Jami effectively portrays how these creative designs are organized. The final verses suggest the architect’s expertise in not only building but also in ornamentation and visual arts, painting him as a master in both design and art. Like many Persian poets, Jami’s view of painting aligns with realism, as seen in his depiction of an artist who can render a bird so lifelike that it seems ready to fly, demonstrating how the artist’s work brings the image to life (Table 1).

#### • Features of the Building

Jami moves on to describe the building, created by the master architect:

*The corridors were paved with marble, so fine,  
The doors of ebony and ivory shine.  
Within, seven chambers, vast and wide,  
Each with its own hue, where colors reside.  
Polished and gleaming, each stone set with care,  
A palace of beauty, beyond compare.  
Thirty golden columns, raised so high,  
Carved with wild beasts beneath the sky.  
At the base of each, a gazelle was placed,*

Table 1. Characteristics and traits of the architect of the Zuleikha Mansion. Source: Authors.

Relevant Verse or Hemistich	Number	Extracted Word	Extracted Concept	Concept Interpretation
With the method of engineering and experience	3	Engineering method	Geometrist, Experienced and skilled in technical drawing, familiar with mathematical sciences, engineering	The artist and architect's knowledge of mathematical and geometric proportions, how to compose, and the proportion of a component in architecture.
The laws of observation guide it	3	Observation laws	Astronomer, Awareness of planetary motion, celestial phenomena, and scientific knowledge of celestial bodies	Knowledge of the rotation of planets, stars, the moon, and the sun, how light is used in architecture, understanding the skyscape and the position of the moon and sun
The formation of a spherical structure of the sky	4	Majesti (Spherical)	Majesti science, Scientific term for the shape of planets and stars, motion phenomena, measurement of dimensions and masses in Greek terminology	Astronomer
The twinkling of Aldebaran in Khorasan	4	Aldebaran	Science of astronomy	Comparable to Aldebaran in philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy
He brought the skill of art into action	2	Art skills	Architecture and refined knowledge	The importance of artistic skill in accomplishing tasks, merging science and talent with technical expertise
Every returning hand is a hundred skills in art	2	Fingerprint	Art	The architect in their profession resembles a skilled artist
As if an engraver had deeply carved patterns	5	Engraver	Skilled design and drafting	With precision and detail in drawing and designing, an architect requires the tools of design
The path of drawing remained without tools	6	Line	Drawing without tools	Mastery in drawing lines and designing structures without using drawing instruments
In stone carving, he mastered the skill	8	Stone carving	Stone carving art	Ability and expertise in stone carving and sculpting
As if he depicted a pattern in painting	13	Image	Illustration art	Skills in visualization, painting, and decoration, inspired by traditional artistic styles

*With the tail of musk, a fragrance traced,  
 Peacocks of gold, in pride they stand,  
 Their jeweled tails fanned across the land.  
 In the midst, a tree reaching for the sky,  
 No vision had seen such splendor, oh my!  
 Its trunk of silver, branches of gold,  
 Its leaves of turquoise, a sight to behold.  
 Each branch adorned with emeralds bright,  
 And rubies as beaks, sparkling in the light.  
 The birds, so tame, with humans at ease,  
 Resting together, in perfect peace.  
 Through every hall, the story was told,  
 Of Yusuf and Zuleikha, in love, so bold.  
 Like lovers, they sat, hand in hand,  
 Embracing, their hearts in love did stand.  
 Their lips met softly, a kiss to bestow,  
 In each corner, their love did grow.*

*The ceiling above, like the sky so wide,  
 The moon and the sun did in radiance reside.  
 Two forms emerged from one shared seam,  
 As if they danced in a celestial dream.  
 Every flower in the garden bloomed with grace,  
 Two fresh stems intertwined in this space.  
 No place in the house was empty, bereft,  
 Where love and beauty were always left.  
 And when the house took this form so divine,  
 Zuleikha's heart for Yusuf did shine.  
 Each time she gazed upon the home so fair,  
 Her love for him grew, beyond compare.  
 For when a lover sees their beloved's face,  
 Their heart fills with longing, a fervent embrace  
 (ibid.)*

The corridors and hallways of this building were paved with marble, and its doors were made of ebony.

It had seven large interlocking rooms, each with a distinct, polished color.

There were forty golden columns adorned with animal and bird designs. At the base of each column, there was a golden statue of a gazelle. The courtyard was filled with peacock statues, their tails adorned with jewels. In the center of the courtyard, there was a tree whose trunk was made of silver, its branches of gold, and its leaves of turquoise. On each branch, there was a bird with wings made of emerald and a beak made of ruby. Throughout the house, images of Yusuf and Zuleikha were painted, seated together

like lovers, embracing and kissing. The ceiling of the building depicted the moon and the sun, and on every wall of the garden, flowers were illustrated, their stems intertwined (Table 2).

Throughout the entire courtyard and interior of the house, images of Yusuf and Zuleikha were depicted, and no matter where the viewer looked, they would see the two of them. This was done in such a way that Zuleikha's longing for Yusuf's union grew even stronger, upon seeing these images as well (Table 3). The decorations associated with this mansion are described in both three-dimensional and two-dimensional

Table 2. Usage of Architectural Terms in Zuleikha's Poetry. Source: Authors.

Verse or Hemistich	No.	Elements	Description
Just as architects said about this palace	1	Palace	-
That boiled in the vast palace	6	Building	-
The grand buildings of the world, both visible and hidden	10	Buildings	Indicates multiple constructions
In the seventh palace, the seventh wheel is rotating	19	Seventh house	Refers to seven large rooms inside the building
Every turn reveals that the kitchen	40	Kitchen	Compared to a kitchen due to the images on its walls
The space of the house was like a treasure of aspirations	15	House space	-
In that house, there was no story, only a place	37	House-Place (Ja)	The term "Ja" means place
From peacock wings in the courtyard	22	Courtyard (Hayat)	Refers to an open area, meaning life
On the porch of Saturn, tightly held in orbit	7	Porch	Saturn: a symbol of the sky, meaning grandeur
The layers of the porch greeted the morning	15	Platform	Spaces similar to porches in Timurid architecture
The marble flooring of the porch gleamed	7	Marble flooring	Marble-paved walkways and porches
The quadrangular courtyard was filled with columns	20	Column	Structural elements forming the porch space
The courtyard's columns stood in succession	21	Column	Decorations present at the base of each column
The ceiling was like a dome of the sky	32	Roof	Compare of roof to celestial elements
The vaulted roof turned into an arch of satin	7	Vault	Arched ceilings made of bricks on doorways and rooms, similar to bridges
The marble flooring of the courtyard gleamed	16	Marble flooring	Walkways and corridors covered in marble
The doors were connected with travertine and stone thresholds	16	Doors	Doorways made of travertine stone

Table 3. The Use of Color Words in the Poems of Zuleikha's Mansion. Source: Authors.

Line/Couplet	Number	Color
By the decree of the nurse, golden-handed, the master built a gold-plated foundation.	14	Golden-handed, gold-plated
Each stone arranged in a different color—polished, clear, and beautiful.	18	Color, beautiful color
He raised forty jeweled columns of gold.	20	Gold
At the base of each column, he made it of gold.	21	Gold
From the golden peacocks in his courtyard, their feathers...	22	Golden
Its branches of gold, its leaves of turquoise.	24	Gold
A green and flourishing tree sways...	26	Green

forms in this epic. In this part of the story of Yusuf and Zuleikha, Jami vividly depicted the ornamentation of the building, elaborating on each detail for the audience. The dominant color of the building, referenced in various verses, is gold, which was created through the gilding of the hall, columns, column bases, and the branches of the tree, reflecting on the polished walls. This reflection was further enhanced by the polished and mirror-like stones on the floor of the building and the walls of the courtyard. As seen in various accounts of Yusuf and Zuleikha, this mansion was built in the form of seven successive courtyards, each constructed with a different type of stone and color (Fig. 3).

After illustrating the materials used on the floor and walls, the poet refers to the forty golden columns. The following verses address the forms, figures, and sculptures made of animals. Animals and birds such as the gazelle and the peacock (specifically) and the terms “wild beasts” and “birds” (in general) appear in the poetry. The gazelles are said to exude a strong scent of musk from their navel, captivating the audience. The juxtaposition of birds, animals, and a tree that shows no sign of withering evokes an image of paradise, especially with the golden peacock whose tail feathers are made of sparkling inlaid stones. By depicting a silver tree with golden branches and leaves, and gazelles and birds perched on the branches, the poet aims to present a space free from sorrow and an edifice for recreation and comfort. Table 4 refers to the designs and forms that the visual artist of Zuleikha’s court, inspired by nature, either painted or created (Fig. 4).

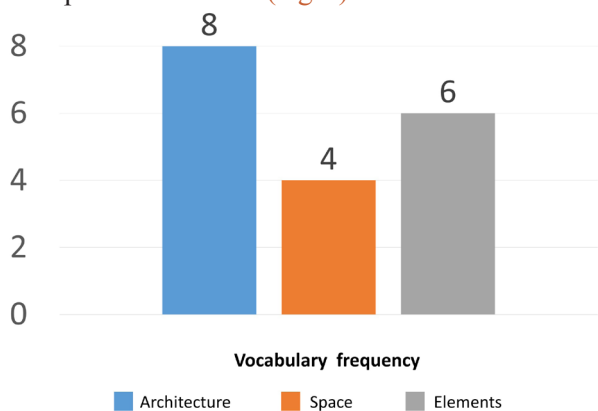


Fig. 3. The Frequency of Architectural Vocabulary in the Poems of Yusuf and Zuleikha Jami. Source: Authors.

Table 4. Presence of Nature in Zuleikha Mansion. Source: Authors.

Nature	Verse or Hemistich	No.	Word	Meaning
Plant	Among them, a tall tree has grown	23	Tree	Tree
	Its delicate trunk was made of raw silver	24	Tree	Trunk
	Its branches were of gold, its leaves of turquoise	24	Tree	Branches - Leaves
	On each branch, craftsmanship was soaring	25	Tree	Branch
	Named a lush and green tree	26	Tree	Tree
	Like a fresh rose garden in spring	34	Rose Garden	Flower
	On each flowered branch of its ground, more or less, two fresh flowered branches intertwined	35	Flower	Flower - Flower
	--	35	Branch - Flower	Branch - Flower
	Everywhere the carpet was blossomed	-	Flower	Flower
	Two flowers lay together in the decorated cradle	-	Flower	Flower
Animal	From wild beasts and birds, beautiful shapes were made	20	Wild Animals & Birds	Animals & Birds
	A gazelle with a navel full of fragrant musk	21	Gazelle	Deer
	Its courtyard was filled with golden peacocks	22	Peacock	Peacock
	A yellow-winged bird with a ruby beak	25	Hen	Chicken
	All its birds were tamed by humans	27	Roosters	Rooster
	From wild beasts and birds, beautiful shapes were made	20	Wild Animals & Birds	Wild Animals & Birds

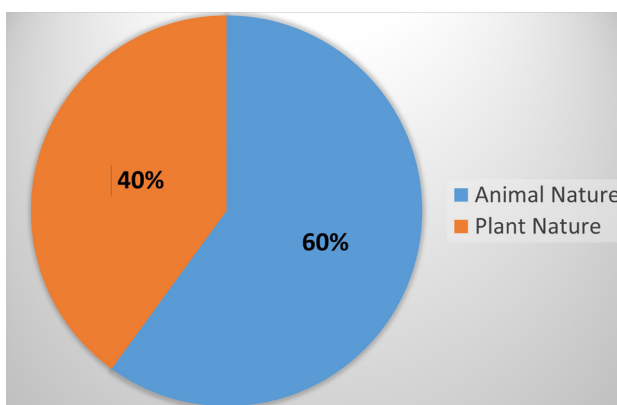


Fig. 4. The frequency of plant and animal nature in Zuleikha’s mansion. Source: Authors.

More important than all are the images depicting the sitting together, kissing, and embracing of Yusuf and Zuleikha, which are expressed in verses as paintings. These images and their reflection in mirrors, so that the guest encounters these images wherever they look, can express the impact of art in general and painting in particular on the audience. The purpose of creating these images was to arouse enthusiasm for the prophet Yusuf in his union with Zuleikha. In the Masnavi and the tale of the fortress of Hoosh Ruba, it is also noted that the king warned his sons against going to that fortress, and the influence of images and paintings explains the reason for this caution. The artist of this palace has depicted Yusuf and Zuleikha together in such a way that their love and affection for each other are expressed. In the next verse, a sky is specifically depicted where the sun and the moon are embraced. The sun can refer to Yusuf, and the moon to Zuleikha, meaning that both the walls and the ceiling are filled with images of their close relationship. The artist, by drawing flowers and fresh plants, creates the image of spring and a magnificent garden in the palace. Thus, it can be observed that the artist, using the figures of animals and birds, creating a tree made of silver and gold in the courtyard, and intertwining the two-dimensional images of animals, birds, and plants, aims to create a peaceful and delightful place. The peak of the illustration, however, lies in the close images of Yusuf and Zuleikha, which were the primary goal of establishing this palace”.

“In the Masnavi of Salaman by Jami, the lover (Zuleikha) orders that her face and body, both alone and in the embrace of Yusuf, be painted on the walls of the palace to attract his attention. Between Zuleikha, who made a hopeful heart,

*A palace like a Sufi’s pure heart,  
She sought the hand of the skilled artist,  
So that her image was painted everywhere.  
Yusuf turned away from hearing her talk,  
But seeing her image, he turned toward it.  
When he saw her face again and again,  
A desire to unite with her appeared within him*

(ibid., 240)

In this narration, Yusuf’s heart fills with affection for Zuleikha after seeing the image of himself and Zuleikha together, which again shows the impact of images, painting, and art on the audience. However, in the Yusuf and Zuleikha narrative, there seems to be no place for the emergence of this desire, although the influence of art is still evident (Table 5).

## Conclusion

As mentioned, after Zuleikha expresses a desire for Yusuf and her repeated failures, with the advice of her nurse, she orders the construction of an expensive palace to arouse Yusuf’s interest in her. The best architects and artists are invited to build and decorate this palace. The architect, who is highly skilled in geometry, mathematics, architectural principles, and astronomy, combines these architectural features with his knowledge of art, making him a proficient and effective master. This architect thinks and designs creatively, and after the design, he successfully constructs the palace in the best way possible. (The characteristics of the builder are somewhat similar to those of Sanmar, the architect of Khornak in Nizami’s “Haft Peykar”, and the features of the palace are somewhat similar to the building created by Shida in the same poem.) However, due to the specific purpose of building the palace, the poet must depict it in such a way that this intention is recognized and visible in the palace. For this reason, in this narrative, more focus is placed on the adornments and decorations of the building rather than the structure, height, strength, and technical aspects.

“The features that indicate the use of both three-dimensional forms (animal figures, bird shapes, and trees) and two-dimensional images (depictions of Yusuf and Zuleikha, intertwined plants, and flowerbeds) in this palace are evident. The use of expensive materials such as gold and silver, along with stones like ruby, emerald, and others, shows that this palace is magnificent and costly. The use of various colors on the walls and ceiling, especially the two colors of gold and silver, are references that can be seen in this narrative. Overall, it can be said that the grandeur of the decorations, the beauty of the images,

Table 5. Decorative Features of Zuleikha's Palace. Source: Authors.

Species	Verse	No.	Place of usage	Description of decorations
Inlay work	The inlaid pillars were raised with gold.	20	Column	- The use of precious stones such as marble polished valuable stones in various colors. (Somewhat similar to Nizami's narrative of Bahram's palace built by Shida in the Haft Aurang epic.) - Stones such as inlay, ruby, turquoise, and emerald.
	With the inlaid breath in bewilderment.	22	Courtyard	
	The branches were made of gold, leaves of turquoise.	24	-	
Muqarnas	The Muqarnas were placed on the porch of Saturn.	7	Porch	-
Stone carving and polishing	When he struck the chisel, his hand swerved. From raw clay, the stone softened.	8	-	- Production of Animal Figures - Creation of three-dimensional figures in the shape of birds.
	Each stone was arranged with a different hue. Its brightness was polished, pure, and beautiful.	18	-	- Decorations inside the courtyard and rooms. Polishing of stones.
Illustration	If you drew the shape of a bird on the stone, The heavy stone would leap away light as a feather.	13	Hall	- Expertise in Illustration and Painting - Realistic and narrative representation of patterns (realism). - Use of plant motifs in painting and miniature art, reminiscent of the Garden of - Paradise and the Persian garden. - use of mythological, Indigenous, and abstract plant motifs in Iranian art and its various branches such as arabesques (Eslimi), Khatai patterns, and Chaharbagh designs. - Animal and bird motifs were prevalent in Iranian art. - Present of Different patterns such as hunting grounds, struggle scenes, Gol-o-Morgh (flower and bird), etc. in various branches of art, including carpets, architecture, and textiles. - Illustrations of landscapes, plains, and more.
	In that house, every corner was painted, The image of Yusuf and the portrayal of Zuleikha.	28	House	
	Yes, when the lover sees the image of the beloved, He reads the words of desire from the image.	41	-	
	The image of Yusuf and the depiction of Zuleikha. They sit together as lover and beloved.	29	-	
	At once, the lips meet with a kiss.	30	-	
	How miraculous, these two figures, one of the moon, the other of the sun.	33	-	
	Two flowers together, resting with tender affection.	36	-	
	The two beloved ones, Daraam and Daraaay, emptied.	37	-	
Painting/Miniature painting	From ebony and ivory, the doors of Mosul.	16	Door	- Use of Rare and Precious Materials
Ebony and ivory work	The inlaid pillars raised with gold.	20	Column	- Dominance of golden hues in the structure. - evoking of royal palaces and aristocratic buildings by golden color - In some sources, gold is associated with material wealth, while in others, it symbolizes spirituality. - Use of gold metal and gold plating in columns and other parts of the structure. Animal figures sculpted on tree branches.
	By the order of the nurse, the master with golden hands. They covered the foundation of the house with gold.	14	Hall	
	The courtyard was filled with golden peacocks.	22	Courtyard	
	The branches were made of gold, leaves of turquoise.	24	-	
	The base of each column, made of gold. The gazelle had a neck of musk and amber.	21	Column	
Silversmithing	The darling's legs were of pure silver.	24	-	-

the use of sculptures and figures, the images of embracing, and the bright colors of the polished stones described in this passage are beautifully depicted by the poet?.

### Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in the conduct of this research.

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