

1 Farhād the Master

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1 Introduction

This study aims to investigate the origins of the character of Farhād, starting from a brief review of the sources referring to him and the hypotheses put forward concerning the birth of the character and his name. The origins of this character, the *Kūh-kan* (Mountain Excavator) for love of Shīrīn in the Persian romantic tradition, seem to be quite recent.¹ Indeed, unlike other more or less historical characters of the Persian narrative tradition, Farhād is unknown to the Byzantine, Armenian, and Syriac sources, as well as to the *Shāhnāma* and the earliest Arabic texts. He is first mentioned in Abū Dulaf's travelogue (in a passage dating from 340/951), and in the Persian adaptation of Ṭabarī's chronicle by Bal'amī (begun in 352/963 CE). The character of Farhād plays for the first time a significant role in the plot of Niẓāmī's poem *Khusraw va Shīrīn* (composed between 571/1176 and 576/1181, with later additions), and from there spreads into the Persian and Turkish narrative

¹ On the character of Farhād, see the groundbreaking study by Duda, *Ferhād und Schīrīn*, in particular 4-11, on the history of the legend of Farhād and Shīrīn before Niẓāmī; and Aliev, *Legenda o Khosrove i Širin*, 73-81, who offers a review of the Persian and Arabic sources for this character. For other studies on the origins of the character see below. 'Romantic tradition' is used here in reference to the literary tradition of long narrative poems of amatory content, in the Mathnavi form.

tradition and in other literatures of the Islamic world.² This poem, which narrates the love story between the Sasanid king Khusraw II Parvīz (r. 590-628 CE) and the beautiful Shīrīn, herself originally a historical character,³ is placed in a precise temporal frame: the period spanning from the troubled events that preceded Khusraw's accession to the throne of Persia (June 590) till his murder brought about by a conspiracy of noble-men (February 628) and the accession of his son Shīrūy or Shīrūya to the throne (Qubād II, r. February-September 628).

As will be shown, Farhād is a composite figure. In what follows, a survey of the different literary and non-literary (geographical or historical) sources is provided, in order to distinguish the different constitutive layers of the character. It should be stressed that the two types of sources cannot be rigidly separated, as there is a continuous interaction happening between literary and non-literary works.

2 The Backdrop of the Character and His Name

The character of Farhād and its origins are closely linked to the area surrounding the ancient route linking Hamadan to Baghdad. This area is rich in the vestigia of past epochs of Iranian history (see **fig. 1** below). It stretches from the mountainous passage of Bisutūn – with the relief and inscription of Darius and a number of other archeological remains⁴ – to the Sasanid site of Tāq-i Bustān, some ten kilometers north-east of Kirmanshah, at the end of the western spurs of Mount Bisutūn. This area also includes, further westwards, Qaṣr-i Shīrīn, a site – today in Iraqi territory – where the ruins of Sasanid buildings are still visible.⁵

The character of Farhād is also linked to the presence of springs and channels,⁶ and to the physical conformation of the territory: anyone travelling from Hamadan to Kirmanshah cannot but be struck – on ap-

² See Duda, *Ferhād und Schīrīn*, 77-129; Burrill, “The Farhād and Shīrīn Story”; and Moayyad, s.v. “Farhād”. A catalogue of authors following in the wake of Nizāmī's poems, with a bibliography of their works, is given by Aliev, *Temy i sjužety Nizami v literaturakh narodov Vostoka*.

³ On the historical character of Shīrīn see Scarcia, *Scirin*; and Baum, *Schirin Christin – Königin – Liebesmythos*.

⁴ See Lushey, s.v. “Bisutūn II. Archeology”.

⁵ See Streck (J. Lassner), s.v. “Qasr-i Shīrīn”; Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 63.

⁶ For channels in the region around Kirmanshah see Schwarz, *Iran im Mittelalter...*, 480-1. Lushey, “Bisutun. Geschichte und Forschungsgeschichte”, 138, has identified a channel in the area of Bisutūn as Farhād's legendary channel of milk (see also below, and fn. 53).

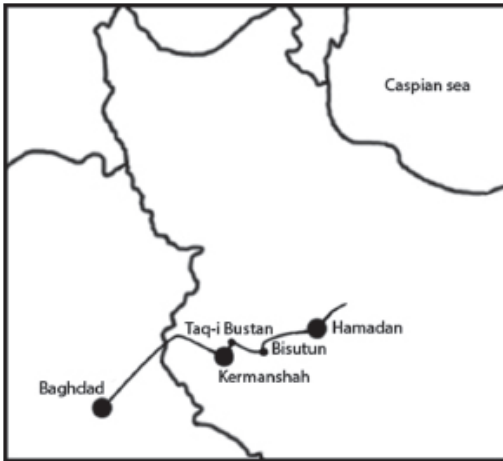


Figure 1 The ancient route from Khurasan to Baghdad, in the stretch between Hamadan and Tāq-i Bustān (drawing by Mansoor Farahpoor)

proaching Mount Bisutūn - by the impressive profile of the mountain, which appears as if it had been cut vertically. Among the geographers writing in Arabic, al-Iṣṭakhrī in his *Kitāb masālik al-mamālik* (written around the mid-tenth century), writes: “Bisutūn: an inaccessible mountain whose peak cannot be climbed. [...] Its shape, from its highest to its lowest point, is as smooth as if it had been hewed”;⁷ a description repeated - almost in the same words - by other subsequent authors.⁸

This area full of archeological remains is also connected to ancient literary traditions, such as the legend of queen Semiramis.⁹ The road linking Ecbatana (Hamadan), through Mount Bisutūn, to the West, is called in Greek sources ‘the road of Semiramis’;¹⁰ and the name Mount Bisutūn has in Arabic sources, *Sinn Sumayra* (The tooth of Semiramis), represents a meaningful survival of her legend.¹¹ Semiramis is described in Greek sources (Ctesias of Cnidus as referred to by Diodorus of Sicily’s *Bibliotheca historica*, II, 4-20) as a powerful queen, as strong and wise as a man, under whose orders a number of

⁷ Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb masālik al-mamālik*, 230.

⁸ See for example al-Qazwīnī (thirteenth century) in his *‘Ajāyib al-makhlūqāt*, 154, s.v. “Jabal Bisutūn”.

⁹ On her legend in connection with the legend of Shīrīn see Eilers, “Semiramis”, especially 47-67.

¹⁰ See Eilers, “Semiramis”, 20, 53 and 64.

¹¹ See Eilers, “Semiramis”, 64 and fn.120a. Schwarz (*Iran im Mittelalter*, 4: 452) and Le Strange (*The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 188), instead, wrongly consider the mountain called *Sinn Sumayra* by Arabic authors as a different mountain from Mount Bisutūn.

engineering works were accomplished. Among them there is the construction of roads, bridges, and tunnels, and – in particular – a channel through Mount Alvand (Orontes) to bring water to Ecbatana. The relation between Semiramis and the character of Shirīn, who commissions Farhād to build a channel to bring milk from the high mountain pastures to her castle, in the arid region of Qaṣr-i Shirin, is evident.¹²

The origins of the character of Farhād, therefore, are probably related to the natural characteristics of the area, and to the archaeological remains and engineering works spread throughout the region. Farhād came to be considered the creator of all of them; a sort of *genius loci* who would explain the natural, artistic and engineering wonders, as well as – possibly – also bringing to mind a character in the ancient legend of Semiramis: that of Onnes, Semiramis's husband (see ch. 2, § 3).

As to the character's name, an interesting hypothesis has been put forward by Wilhelm Eilers. The New Persian proper name Farhād is generally explained as the issue of Middle Persian *frahād*, from Old Iranian **fra-dāta*- (Young Avestan *fraδāta*- 'favored, enhanced').¹³ While recalling this etymology, Eilers also supposes an origin of the character's name from the past participle *frahaxt* 'educated, learned; the Master'; and conjectures a merging of the two etymologies. Indeed, the form *frahaxt* (written <frhht>, from *frahaxtan* 'to educate, teach, instruct') may have evolved into *frahāt* because of a phonetic change *-axt > -āt* attested in various Persian dialects; or may have been read *frahāt* through mere graphic confusion.¹⁴ According to Eilers, then, Farhād is not so much a proper name, as a title referring to the salient feature of this character: the Master.¹⁵

One of the questions still requiring further study concerns the possible bond between the Farhād of Mount Bisutūn and the different, more or less legendary heroes bearing the same name.¹⁶ Indeed *Fradāta*, Φραδάτης/Φραάτης in Greek sources, is the name of a number of Parthian kings whose possible relevance for the birth and development of the character of Farhād has still to be ascertained in detail.¹⁷

¹² Eilers, "Semiramis", in particular 53-4.

¹³ Gignoux, *Noms propres sassanides en moyen-persé épigraphique*, 86, no. 373.

¹⁴ Indeed, <hh> of the Pahlavi script can both represent *hx*, as in the participle <frhht> *frahaxt*, and *h'*, as in the reading *frahāt* supposed by Eilers.

¹⁵ Eilers, "Semiramis", 48-9 and fn. 85.

¹⁶ See Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, 101-2, s.v. "Frahāta" [sic for *Fradāta*]. See also Wolf, *Glossar zu Firdosis Schahname*, 613, s.v. "Farhād"^{1-3*}.

¹⁷ Moayyad ("Farhād", 257) defines Farhād as one of "the Parthian princes who are transformed in the Iranian national epic into warrior-heroes at the Kayanian court", thus connecting the figure of Farhād with the homonymous heroes of the Kayanian myth.

3 Farhād in the Sources

Different sources, pertaining to different literary genres, have been reviewed in connection with the development of the character of Farhād.¹⁸ Among the Persian romantic poems, those analysed are (in chronological order): Niẓāmī's poem *Khusraw va Shīrīn*; Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī's poem *Shīrīn va Khusraw* (composed in 698/1299); ʿArif Ardabīlī's poem *Farhād-nāma* (771/1369); and Hātīfī's poem *Shīrīn va Khusraw*, written between 889/1484 and 895/1490. Among early Arabic geographical and historical sources, some of which are earlier than Niẓāmī's poem, those of interest for this research are the abridged redaction of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Faqīh al-Hamadānī's *Kitāb al-buldān*, originally composed around 290/903,¹⁹ as well as the second *risāla* of Abū Dulaf, who travelled in Persia in the years 331/943-341/952.²⁰ Later authors writing in Arabic generally limit themselves to repeating the accounts of Ibn al-Faqīh and Abū Dulaf.²¹ Moreover, the case of Zakariyā al-Qazwīnī's works *ʿAjāyib al-makhlūqāt* and *Kitāb āthār al-bilād* (thirteenth century) is particularly significant in that they are by then so deeply influenced by Niẓāmī's narrative that they can probably be neglected in the study of the origins of the legend of Farhād.²² Among early Persian historical

18 I do not know any extensive research on the figure of Farhād in Persian lyrical poetry. According to H. Moayyad, one of the earliest references to Farhād in lyrical poetry is a line by Āġājī Bukhārī, a contemporary of Daqīqī (second half of the tenth century), quoted in the *Lughat-i Furs* (ed. ʿAbbās Iqbāl [Āshtiyānī], 382, s.v. "mītīn" 'axe, pick'), in which "the Samanid poet compares the alacrity with which his beloved rushes into his arms to the speed with which Farhād's chisel falls on Bisūtūn" ("Farhād", 257). This line (*ba tundī čunān ūftad bar bar-am/ki mītīn-i Farhād bar Bisūtūn*) is also quoted in recent anthologies of early poetry such as Maḥmūd Mudabbirī, *Šarḥ-i aḥvāl va ašʿār-i šāʿirān-i bī dīvān dar qarnḥā-yi 3-4-5-i hijrī-yi qamarī*, Tehran, 1370/1991, 195 (who refers to the *Lughat-i Furs*, *Šiḥāḥ al-Furs*, Surūrī's *Majmaʿ al-Furs*, and the *Farhang-i Vafāʿī*) and Aḥmad Idāračī Gilānī, *Šāʿirān-i ʿašr-i Rūdakī*, Tehran, 1370/1991, 158 (I thank Anna Livia Beelaert for these references); but is quoted neither in Gilbert Lazard's *Les premiers poètes persans (IXe-Xe siècles)*, Vol. 2: *Textes persans*, nor in other editions of Asadī's *Lughat-i Furs*, such as that by F. Muḥtabāʿī and ʿA.A. Šādīqī. According to Dihkhudā, s.v. "mītīn", this line is also attributed to Rūdakī. In Dihkhudā's *Lughat-nāma* another line concerning Farhād's hard work with his axe, attributed to Farrukhī, is also quoted (*čandān-ki ba šamsīr-i tu bad-xwāh fakandī/ Farhād maqar ki nafakand-ast ba mītīn*).

19 Textual problems concerning possible changes and additions by the eleventh-century editor of the work are not dealt with here.

20 See Minorsky, s.v. "Abū Dulaf, Miṣʿar b. Muḥalhil al-Khazraǧī al-Yanbuʿī".

21 See for example Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 3 (1868): 250-3, s.v. "Shibdāz", and 4 (1869): 112-14, s.v. "Qašr Shīrīn".

22 See the report given by al-Qazwīnī, s.v. "Jabal Bisūtūn", in his *ʿAjāyib al-makhlūqāt*, 154-6; and in his *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, 229-33 and 295-7, s.v. "Qašr Shīrīn". Concerning the story of Farhād the relationship between Niẓāmī's narrative and al-Qazwīnī's report should be studied in detail: al-Qazwīnī in both his *ʿAjāyib al-makhlūqāt*, 154, and in his *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, 229, refers to "the chronicles of the Persians" (*tawārīkh al-ʿAjām*) as his source; and it is difficult that with this expression he could have meant Niẓāmī's

sources, the following are relevant: the Persian reworking of Ṭabarī's chronicle by Bal'amī (begun in 352/963 CE); the anonymous Persian chronicle *Mujmal al-tavārīkh va'l qiṣaṣ* (composed in 520/1126 ca); and the *Nuzhat al-qulūb* by Mustawfī Qazvīnī (730/1340).

From these texts, different traditions concerning Farhād emerge, which correspond to different layers and different narrative features of this character.

4 Farhād and Ṭāq-i Bustān

In her invaluable research on Ṭāq-i Bustān and the growth of the legend of Farhād, Priscilla Soucek reviews the early sources describing the site, and discusses the identity of the figures in the reliefs according to the sources, and the artist who sculpted them.²³ The connection of Farhād with the site must be quite recent: in the current state of knowledge, Niẓāmī seems to be the first author explicitly attributing the realization of the Ṭāq-i Bustān reliefs to Farhād.²⁴

4.1 Ṭāq-i Bustān and the Master in the Romantic Tradition

In Niẓāmī's poem Farhād is a twofold character.²⁵ From one side he is a skilled sculptor and a master (*ustād*), an architect and engineer (*muhandis*), who had studied astronomy and geometry in China together with Shāpūr, Khusraw's counsellor and a skilled painter – Shāpūr himself introduces Farhād to Shīrīn in these terms.²⁶ From the other side he is a workman, skilled in using his adze and endowed with extraordinary strength and a mountain-like body who, by Khusraw's order and for love of Shīrīn, digs a route across Mount

poem. Between Niẓāmī's and al-Qazwīnī's narrative some slight differences can also be seen. Al-Qazwīnī had a direct knowledge of the region of Mount Bisutūn, whose area and archeological remains he also describes as an eyewitness.

23 Soucek, "Farhād and Ṭāq-i Bustān".

24 Soucek ("Farhād and Ṭāq-i Bustān", 45) writes: "He [Niẓāmī] merged the traditions regarding the sculptor and workman of Ṭāq-i Bustān with those about Farhād, the noble lover of Shīrīn. Whether or not he was the first to attribute the carving of the sculptures at Ṭāq-i Bustān to Farhād, it was from his account that later authors drew and developed this theme".

25 The story of Farhād and Shīrīn occupies eight chapters (51-58) in Niẓāmī, *Khusraw va Shīrīn*, ed. Tharvatiyān.

26 See Niẓāmī, *Khusraw va Shīrīn*, ch. 51, 15-21. In references to the text of Niẓāmī's poem the first cipher refers to the chapter in the Tharvatiyān edition, and the following to the number of the verse line(s) within each chapter.

Bīsūtūn.²⁷ Indeed, according to Niẓāmī, Khusraw – when informed of Farhād’s love for Shīrīn – orders his rival to perform an impossible task, hoping to get rid of him: to cut a route through Mount Bīsūtūn. Before setting about the task, Farhād sculpts the images of Shīrīn, Khusraw and Khusraw’s famous horse, Shabdīz, on one side of the mountain (see **figs. 2-3** below), corresponding to the reliefs of Ṭāq-i Bustān according to popular belief (Niẓāmī, however, does not mention any toponym).²⁸ As already stated, this is, at present, the first attestation of the tradition according to which Farhād is the sculptor of these reliefs.

Niẓāmī’s account, which locates the reliefs of Ṭāq-i Bustān close to Mount Bīsūtūn and to Shīrīn’s castle (Qaṣr-i Shīrīn), shows that the poet had never seen the places he alludes to (see **fig. 1** above). Indeed Niẓāmī shows Farhād as working hard during the day and, in the evening, speaking to the stone image of his beloved (one of the reliefs of Ṭāq-i Bustān), and looking towards her castle.²⁹ Mustawfī Qazvīnī, in his work *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* (comp. 740/1340), voiced a criticism towards Niẓāmī for not having had any direct knowledge of the places described in his poem. Mustawfī underlines the fact that from the foot of Mount Bīsūtūn to the *Ṣuffa-yi Shabdīz* ‘Platform of Shabdīz’ – as this author calls the site now known as Ṭāq-i Bustān – there is a distance of six parasangs (about 35 kilometers).³⁰

While in the poems by Amīr Khusraw and Hātīfī no mention is given of Farhād’s connection with this site, ‘Ārif Ardabīlī’s poem *Farhād-nāma* (771/1369) clearly connects the character of Farhād with the main arched grotto and the reliefs of Ṭāq-i Bustān (see **fig. 3** below).³¹ During a trip to Baghdad ‘Ārif had had the opportunity to see the area linked with the Farhād legend, and refers to the site as an eyewitness.³²

‘Ārif narrates what, according to him, is the true story of the *Kūh-kan*, the Mountain Carver Farhād, and is openly critical of Niẓāmī’s poem. He intends to present Farhād in a different light: Farhād is a foreigner, but is neither unsuccessful nor desperate; on the contra-

27 See Niẓāmī, *Khusraw va Shīrīn*, ch. 51, 29-30, and ch. 56. On the different aspects of the character of Farhād in the sources see Scarcia, “Alla ricerca di un Ur-Farhād”.

28 Niẓāmī, *Khusraw va Shīrīn*, ch. 55, 42-44.

29 Niẓāmī, *Khusraw va Shīrīn*, ch. 56, 1-13.

30 Mustawfī Qazvīnī, *The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat-al-Qulūb*, 193.

31 ‘Ārif Ardabīlī, *Farhād-nāma*. The poem is attested by a single manuscript conserved in Istanbul (MS Ayasofya 3335). It was studied for the first time by Duda in 1933, and later edited with an introductory essay by ‘Abd al-Riḍā Ādhar in 1976. Summaries of the poems are given by Duda (*Ferhād und Schīrīn*, 86-97) and Sattārī, *Uṣṭūra-yi ‘ishq va ‘āshiqī dar chand ‘ishq-nāma-yi fārsī*, 53-64. See also Aliev, *Temy i sjužety Nizami*, 60-2.

32 ‘Ārif Ardabīlī, *Farhād-nāma*, 173, ll. 3627-3629. On ‘Ārif’s biography see Ādhar, “Introduction to ‘Ārif Ardabīlī”, pp. nuh-pānzdah [9-15]. In particular, on ‘Ārif’s trip to Baghdad, cf. pp. čahārdah-pānzdah [14-15].



Figure 2 Ṭāq-i Bustān – The reliefs in the front upper panel of the great grotto (drawing by Mansoor Farahpoor)

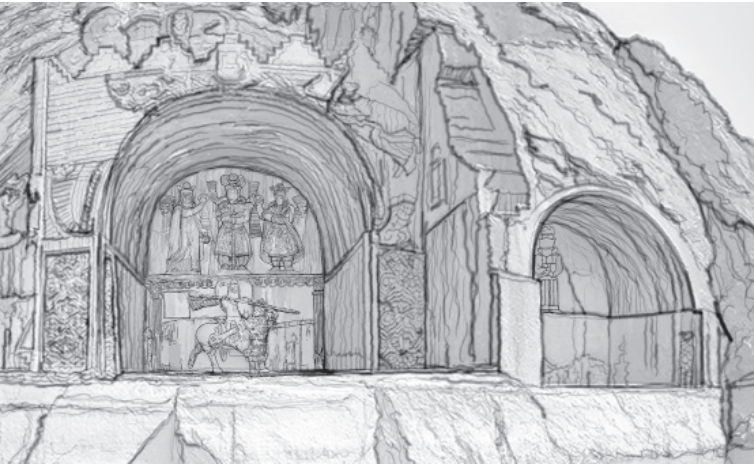


Figure 3 The site of Ṭāq-i Bustān (drawing by Mansoor Farahpoor)

ry, he is a very skilled artist, proud and satisfied with his art.³³ His love for Gulistān, in the first part of the poem (*Farhād va Gulistān*, ll. 1-2558), and for Shīrīn in the second part (*Farhād va Shīrīn*, ll. 2559-4364) is fully reciprocated.

Farhād is the son of the emperor of China (*Faghfūr*) and a skilful architect, calligrapher and painter. Dispossessed of his kingdom at his father's death by his paternal uncle, he seeks refuge in Abkhāz (Abkhazia), a region of Georgia replacing Niẓāmī's Armenia.³⁴ His companion is Shāpur (Shāhur/Shāūr in this poem), a native of Abkhazia who had come to China to study painting.

Farhād had fallen in love with Gulistān (Rose Garden), the daughter of a highly skilled sculptor and stone-mason (*sang-tarāsh*) simply called Ustād (Master) in the poem, on the basis of the portrait Shāpur had painted on the walls of a palace, while still in China. The Master and his family live in Abkhazia, in a beautiful garden called Khumistān, so called because of the presence there of numerous jars (*khum*) of wine connected to one another by channels bearing the wine to little basins – wine and wine-drinking being emphasized in relation to the Christian setting of the poem. According to 'Ārif, Gulistān's name, too, was due to the fact that she was born in that garden. As the Master had promised his only daughter to the man who would prove his equal in stone-carving, Farhād accepts the challenge of learning the hard craft of stone-cutter out of love for Gulistān, and carves a statue, or a relief, of her. With this wonderful work Farhād is victorious over the other suitors to Gulistān's hand. The marriage covenant between the two young people is decided. The Master makes Farhād a gift of the garden of Khumistān and has a palace with a portico (*ayvān*) constructed for him, with a door opening onto the garden – a clear reference to the site of Ṭāq-i Bustān, though transposed in Abkhazia. Farhād, in his turn, builds there an arch (*ṭāq*), with the images of the King of Abkhāz sitting on a throne (he is Shīrīn's father, brother of Mihīn Bānū³⁵), together with Shāpur and Farhād on one side, and the Master in the act of entrusting Gulistān's hand to Farhād, on the other – again a loose reference to the reliefs in the front upper panel of the main arched grotto in Ṭāq-i Bustān. He decorates this magnificent vault with figures reproducing the wall-paintings in the palace Farhād had had built in China. Farhād is converted to Christianity and the two lovers marry. Thus ends the first part of the poem.

33 For this criticism, see especially 'Ārif Ardabili, *Farhād-nāma*, 173-4, ll. 3635-3654.

34 In Islamic times the term 'Abkhāz' (Abkhazia), western Georgia, was used to refer to the whole country of Georgia. Cf. Giunashvili, s.v. "Abk̄āz".

35 Here Duda's summary of the poem should be corrected (*Ferhād und Schīrīn*, 90), as he asserts that Mihīn Bānū was the wife of the king of Abkhazia.

The culminating section of the poem's first part, therefore, is located in a garden (*bustān*), the garden of Khumistān, where Farhād builds a beautiful arch (*tāq*). In the poem there is no mention of the toponym 'Ṭāq-i Bustān', this archeological site being referred to as *Shabdīz* in the second part of the poem (l. 3627).³⁶ However, the description of the arch in the garden, decorated with a series of figures, clearly alludes to the main arched grotto at Ṭāq-i Bustān and its reliefs. Also a number of linguistic hints (the garden is often referred to, with a hendiadys, as *bāgh u bustān*) seems to allude to this site and to the certainly corrupted name, Ṭāq-i Bustān, that has come down until today to refer to it (see below).³⁷

In the first part of the poem, then, Farhād is explicitly identified as the author of what appears to be a replica, in Abkhazia, of the Ṭāq-i Bustān's reliefs. It is important to note that in 'Ārif's poem not only is Farhād a foreigner – the son of the king of China – but his work is also described as inspired by foreign models: the reliefs of the arch in the Khumistān garden – had said the author – were a copy of the paintings in a palace in China. As to the Master, the father of Gulistān, he lives in Abkhazia, a Christian region. He appears as a duplicate, with geographical displacement (from China to Abkhazia) of the master who had taught Farhād and Shāpūr sculpture and painting, in Niẓāmī's poem. These elements: Farhād as the sculptor of the arch and its reliefs; the focus on the Christian milieu of the story; and the foreign (Chinese) inspiration of his work, point to important features in the origin of the Farhād legend (see ch. 2 below).

4.2 Ṭāq-i Bustān and the Master in the Historical and Geographical Tradition

Unlike the romantic tradition, early historians and geographers attribute the construction of Ṭāq-i Bustān and its reliefs to another personage, different from Farhād, whose name is variously given: Faṭṭūs or Qaṭṭūs (Ibn al-Faḳīh),³⁸ Qaṭṭūs (Yāqūt),³⁹ Fuṭrūs (Zakariyā al-

³⁶ 'Shabdīz' is the toponym given by many Arabic geographers for the place now called Ṭāq-i Bustān. See for example the passage by Yāqūt referred to in note 21 above.

³⁷ The hendiadys *bāgh u bustān* recurs many times in the first part of the poem. See for example 'Ārif Ardabīlī, *Farhād-nāma*, ll. 1081, 1298, 2495, and 2551, at the end of the first part of the poem. In the latter line, the first part of the poem is called 'the story of the Garden' (*nivishtam dāstān-i bāgh u bustān*).

³⁸ Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-buldān*, 214,15 and 216,14 (French transl., 259 and 261).

³⁹ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, 3: 250 and 251, s.v. "Shibdāz".

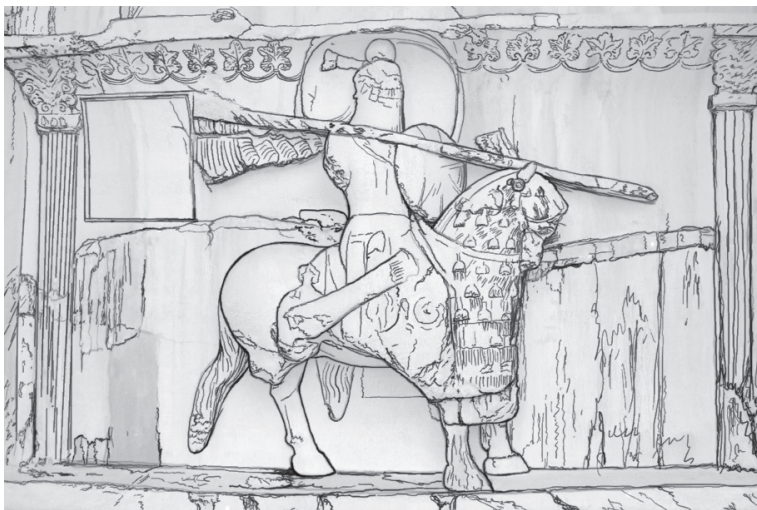


Figure 4 Ītāq-i Bustān – The reliefs in the front lower panel of the great grotto (drawing by Mansoor Farahpoor)

Qazwīnī),⁴⁰ Kīṭūs (*Mujmal al-tavārīkh*).⁴¹ They describe the site when speaking of the town of Qirmāsīn/Qirmīsīn (Kirmanshah): among the wonders near the town, these authors mention the relief representing Shabdīz, the famous horse so beloved of Khusraw Parvīz (see fig. 4).

A short poem describing the beautiful arch of Ītāq-i Bustān and its reliefs, quoted in Ibn al-Faḡīh's *Kitāb al-buldān*, seems to provide a trace of an early legendary development concerning the Master who had created them – not yet identified with Farhād, however. The poem is ascribed to Aḡmad b. Muḡammad i.e., probably, Ibn al-Faḡīh himself.⁴² In this poem it is told that, among the reliefs on the arch, Faṭṭūs had represented himself.⁴³ It is possible – as supposed by Priscilla Soucek – that by the beginning of the tenth century legends concerning the sculptor of the reliefs were already circulating in the area.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, 230. If Fuṭrūs is not the original name of the master, it may be a form adapted to represent the well-known Greek name, Pétros.

⁴¹ *Mujmal al-tavārīkh va'l qīṣaṣ*, ed. Bahār, 79,15. See also the Berlin manuscript dated 751/1350, published in fac-simile: *Mujmal al-tavārīkh va'l qīṣaṣ. Nuskha-yi 'aksī-yi muvarrahk-i 751 qamarī (kitābhāna-yi Birlīn)*, f. 30r13.

⁴² Herzfeld, “Khusraw Parwēz und der Ītāq i Vastān”, 98.

⁴³ Ibn al-Faḡīh, *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-buldān*, 216,14 (French transl., 261).

⁴⁴ Soucek, “Farhād and Ītāq-i Bustān”, 43-4.

In his second *risāla*, edited, translated and commented on by Vladimir Minorsky, Abū Dulaf, speaking of the image of Shabdīz near Qirmīsīn, describes a relief or a statue, which has often been interpreted as referring to the character of Farhād: “Before the king [the “man on horseback made of stone”] there is a man with the appearance of an artisan with a bonnet on his head [...] and in his hand he holds a *balkān* with which he is digging the earth”. The interpretation of this description and the meaning of the word *balkān*, translated as ‘spade’ by some scholars, are controversial. Despite Minorsky’s contrary opinion, it has often been taken as meaning that one of the reliefs, or a statue, at the site was popularly interpreted as representing – if not Farhād – a worker connected with the creation of the site.⁴⁵

It should be noted that in the early historical and geographical sources here analysed, nowhere is the toponym Ṭāq-i Bustān attested. In the poem by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad (Ibn al-Faḡīh) just referred to, the place where the famous arch is located is called Wastān (this is the vocalization given in the printed text).⁴⁶ Paul Schwarz considers this form, which is glossed as “name of a village” in one of the manuscripts of Ibn al-Faḡīh’s work, as a shortened form for Bahistūn/Bisutūn.⁴⁷ However, Bistām/Wistām as the name of a village near the site is also attested by two Persian sources. The first one is the *Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, which preserves what probably was the original name of the place, Biṣṭām⁴⁸ – though the author of the *Mujmal* wants to connect it with Biṣṭām/Gustaham, Khusraw’s uncle (see ch. 2, §§ 2 and 3).⁴⁹ The other source is Mustawfī Qazvīnī’s *Nuzhat al-qulūb*. The author writes: “Viṣṭām (var. Biṣṭām): it is a big village facing the Ṣuffa-yi Shabdīz”.⁵⁰ Indeed, *Ṣuffa-yi Shabdīz* is the name Mustawfī uses in reference to the archeological site.⁵¹ The Arabic geographers generally refer to this site as *Shabdīz*, from the name of Khusraw’s famous horse.

To sum up: Farhād as the artist of the reliefs of the site now called Ṭāq-i Bustān only appears in the romantic narrative tradition. This version of the Farhād legend is first given by Niẓāmī and then – in

⁴⁵ Abū Dulaf, *Travels in Iran (circa A.D. 950)*, 45 § 34, and 92 (Minorsky’s Commentary). On the identification of this figure as that of Mithra in the relief of Ardashīr II, see Lushey, “Bisutun. Geschichte und Forschungsgeschichte”, 138.

⁴⁶ Ibn al-Faḡīh, *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-buldān*, 216,2 (French transl., 261).

⁴⁷ Schwarz, *Iran im Mittelalter*, 4: 488 fn. 1.

⁴⁸ *Mujmal al-tavārīkh va’l qīṣaṣ*, 79,15; see also the Berlin manuscript *Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, f. 30r12.

⁴⁹ On the presence of the proper name Bistām/Biṣṭām as a place-name in different regions of Iran, especially of western and northwestern Iran, see Eilers, s.v. “Bestām (or Bestām)”. On Khosrow’s uncles see ch. 2, §§ 2 and 3.

⁵⁰ Mustawfī Qazvīnī. *The geographical part of the Nuzhat-al-Qulūb*, 109.

⁵¹ Mustawfī Qazvīnī. *The geographical part of the Nuzhat-al-Qulūb*, 108, 109, 193.

much greater detail – by ‘Ārif Ardabīlī. Instead, in the early Arabic sources and in the Persian *Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, other names are recorded for the Master of Ṭāq-i Bustān.

5 Farhād as a Constructor of Channels

Among the famous works accomplished by Farhād according to tradition only the construction of a channel to bring milk for Shīrīn is mentioned in all of the analyzed poems.

Farhād’s excavation of a channel to bring milk from the fertile mountain pastures to Shīrīn’s castle is first recounted in Niẓāmī’s poem, where this work, commissioned by Shīrīn herself, is the first of the famous deeds accomplished by Farhād.⁵² After him, also Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī, in his poem *Shīrīn va Khusraw* (composed in 698/1299), recounts that Farhād was commissioned by Shīrīn to carve a channel for receiving milk at her palace – though, distancing himself from the other authors, Amīr Khusraw locates this work in the area of Mount Bīsūtūn.⁵³ At the beginning of the Farhād episode is the construction of a first channel in the Bīsūtūn area (referred to in a line not even present in all manuscripts) placed,⁵⁴ along with a reference to another of Farhād’s works at Mount Bīsūtūn (see below, § 6). Among the traditional deeds accomplished by Farhād, neither the engraving of the reliefs of Ṭāq-i Bustān, nor Farhād’s carving a route through Mount Bīsūtūn by Khusraw’s order are referred to in Amīr Khusraw’s poem.

In ‘Ārif’s poem Farhād carves a number of channels, bearing not only milk but also wine (on the emphasis on wine in the poem see above). Whereas a garden recalling the ‘garden’ of Ṭāq-i Bustān (The Arch in the Garden) is the main setting for the first part of the poem, Qaṣr-i Shīrīn is the main setting of the second part. ‘Ārif recounts that after a long period of mourning for the death of his first wife, his beloved Gulistān, Farhād at last reciprocates the love Shīrīn had felt for him since their first encounter. In Shīrīn’s palace in Abkhazia Farhād builds a cellar with pipes bringing the wine to a basin.⁵⁵ After Mihīn Bānū’s death, however, Shīrīn flees from home to escape from

⁵² Niẓāmī, *Khusraw va Shīrīn*, ch. 51.

⁵³ Cf. Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī, *Shīrīn va Khusraw*, 145-6, ll. 1655-60 (Shīrīn commissions the work) and 153, ll. 1744-52 (Farhād carves a channel through Mount Bīsūtūn). Lushey (“Bīsūtūn. Geschichte und Forschungsgeschichte”, 138) has identified a channel in the area of Bīsūtūn as Farhād’s legendary channel of milk. In Amīr Khusraw’s poem the Farhād episode is narrated in 142-200, ll. 1623-2270.

⁵⁴ Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī, *Shīrīn va Khusraw*, 143, l. 1636.

⁵⁵ ‘Ārif Ardabīlī, *Farhād-nāma*, 160-1, ll. 3343-70.

an unwanted Armenian suitor, taking refuge in Qaṣr-i Shīrīn.⁵⁶ After a short time Farhād joins her, and excavates a channel and a pool for the supply of milk, as in the traditional account. According to his declared polemical attitude, ‘Ārif corrects the version given by Niẓāmī about the famous channel constructed by Farhād for Shīrīn: in this channel no milk but only water flowed, the milk being carried sealed in goatskins floating on the current and watched by attendants⁵⁷ – an example of ‘Ārif’s rationalizing attitude from one side, but also a reference to a perhaps preexistent version concerning the channel, also testified by Mustawfī Qazvīnī in his *Nuzhat al-qulūb*, who speaks of “goatskins full of milk thrown into that channel of water”.⁵⁸

In Hātifī’s poem *Shīrīn va Khusraw*, written between 889/1484 and 895/1490, Farhād is of Chinese origin and the colleague (*ham-pīsha*) of Shāpūr.⁵⁹ In this poem not only does Farhād excavate a channel for Shīrīn, but also a tunnel to escape from the well where he has been thrown by Khusraw’s order:⁶⁰ indeed, after the carving of the channel, an innovation in Hātifī’s treatment of the matter is that, when Khusraw is told of Farhād’s love for Shīrīn, he has him taken to the top of a mountain and thrown into a well. With the help of a spade he finds by chance Farhād, however, manages to dig a tunnel through the foot of the mountain and escapes from the well – a new deed attributed to Farhād in addition to the traditional ones.

Farhād as the constructor of one or more channels in the region of Qaṣr-i Shīrīn, instead, is unknown to the earliest historical and geographical sources. Ibn al-Faqīh, in the chapter devoted to the reasons for the construction of Shīrīn’s castle, relates a tradition concerning the construction of two channels in this site; but this work is not attributed to Farhād. Ibn al-Faqīh recounts that Khusraw (i.e. Khusraw II Parvīz) had ordered the creation of a big garden destined to become a hunting reserve, with every kind of animals. The king was so pleased with the garden that in a moment of intoxication he asked Shīrīn to express any wish she had. Shīrīn asked Khusraw to have two channels, one bearing milk, the other wine, constructed. Though this text attests to an early connection between Qaṣr-i Shīrīn and the construction of one or more channels at Shīrīn’s request,

⁵⁶ ‘Ārif Ardabīlī, *Farhād-nāma*, 164, l. 3428.

⁵⁷ ‘Ārif Ardabīlī, *Farhād-nāma*, 170, ll. 3562-3572.

⁵⁸ Mustawfī Qazvīnī, *The geographical part of the Nuzhat-al-Qulūb*, 43, s.v. “Qaṣr-i Šīrīn”.

⁵⁹ Hātifī, *Shīrīn va Khusraw*, 64, ll. 854-855. The Farhād episode is narrated in 63-89, ll. 833-1185.

⁶⁰ Hātifī, *Shīrīn va Khusraw*, 65-8, ll. 863-989 (channel for the milk), and 72-3, ll. 953-68 (carving of the tunnel through the mountain).

no mention of Farhād is to be found here.⁶¹ Also Mustawfī Qazvīnī, in the already mentioned passage from his *Nuzhat al-qulūb* about a channel of water carrying goatskins full of milk in the area of Qaṣr-i Shīrīn,⁶² does not mention Farhād as the constructor of it. Only a geographical source probably already influenced by Niẓāmī's narrative, Zakariyā al-Qazwīnī's *Kitāb āthār al-bilād* (thirteenth century), refers to Farhād's construction of a channel for Shīrīn.⁶³

To sum up: Farhād as the constructor of one or more channels by Shīrīn's order only appears in the romantic narrative tradition and in late geographical sources, such as al-Qazwīnī's *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, probably already influenced by Niẓāmī's poem. This is the sole legendary deed attributed to Farhād to be found in all of the analyzed poems. In the present state of research, also the attribution of this work to Farhād, in the same way as the carving of the reliefs of Ṭāq-i Bustān, seems to be an innovation due to Niẓāmī, widely accepted in the subsequent poems in response to his *Khusraw va Shīrīn*. The popular etymology of Shīrīn's name, explained as referring to her being fond of milk (*shīr*), may have helped the diffusion of the motif of the 'channel of milk' (*jūy-e shīr*) in the poetic narrative tradition.

6 Farhād and Mount Bīsūtūn

The first mention of Farhād in connection with Mount Bīsūtūn, which is also the very first mention of this character, is to be found in the second *risāla* of Abū Dulaf's travelogue, in a passage seemingly derived from local sources in 340/951. After having described the reliefs at the site near Qirmisīn (Kirmanshah), Abū Dulaf continues the description of his itinerary in these words: "Thence [from Qirmisīn] to a rock called Sumayra, high, towering (over the plain) and bearing a wonderful image and beautiful pictures. It is reported that Kistrā Abarvīz charged Farhād-the-Sage (*hakīm*) with this work".⁶⁴

The "wonderful image and beautiful pictures" referred to in this passage are certainly to be identified as the reliefs of Darius⁶⁵ - though the commissioner is, according to this tradition, Khusraw Parvīz. As suggested by Ghazanfar Aliev, the expression "it is

⁶¹ Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-buldān*, 158-9 (French transl., 192-3). 'Ārif Ardabīlī's version, recounting of channels for the wine beyond the famous channel for the supply of milk ('Ārif Ardabīlī, *Farhād-nāma*, 46-7, ll. 940-57, and 160-3, ll. 3343-405), can have been derived from this tradition.

⁶² See above, and fn. 58.

⁶³ Al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb āthār al-bilād*, 296.

⁶⁴ Cf. Abū Dulaf, *Travels in Iran*, 46 § 35, and 92-3 (Minorsky's Commentary).

⁶⁵ Cf. Minorsky, Commentary to Abū Dulaf, *Travels in Iran*, 92.

reported” (*yuqālu*) indicates that the author is here relating oral traditions gathered on the spot.⁶⁶ This passage is important, both for its ancientness, and because it testifies to an early connection of Farhād with Mount Bīsūtūn and the (Darius) reliefs. By contrast, Farhād’s connection with Shīrīn is not referred to, yet.

A clear reference to Farhād’s legendary excavation of a route through Mount Bīsūtūn is given for the first time by Niẓāmī: Khusraw – when informed of Farhād’s love for Shīrīn – orders his rival to perform an impossible task: to cut a route through Mount Bīsūtūn.⁶⁷ It is possible, however, that a short passage by Bal’amī already refers to Farhād’s legendary excavation of a route, considered as Farhād’s punishment for having fallen in love with Shīrīn (see below, § 7).

In his poem Amīr Khusraw – who had already placed Shīrīn’s channel of milk in the area of Bīsūtūn (see above, § 5) – seems to refer to another of the archeological remains in the Bīsūtūn area. He recounts that one day, when wandering on horseback near Mount Bīsūtūn, Shīrīn sees “a stone (*sang-ī*) polished in the likeness of an anvil, white and beautiful as a blossoming petal (or a smiling face, *gul-barg-i khandān*), as smooth and shining as crystal, which not even an ant could have climbed”.⁶⁸ The poet is probably referring here to the huge panel commissioned by Khusraw Parvīz and left blank, popularly called the ‘Tarāsh-i Farhād’ (Farhād’s Smoothing), which is still visible not far from the relief and inscription of Darius.⁶⁹ This panel is apparently already referred to by al-Iṣṭakhrī who, after the description of Mount Bīsūtūn quoted above (“Its shape, from its highest to its lowest point, is as smooth as if it had been hewed”), adds: “And (for) a number of cubits from the ground its surface is already hewed and polished”.⁷⁰

At the end of the second part of ‘Ārif’s *Farhād-nāma*, Farhād is clearly connected with the works at Mount Bīsūtūn and Tāq-i Bustān. Indeed, the poet recounts that, after the construction of the channel of Qaṣr-i Shīrīn (see above, § 5), one day Farhād and Shīrīn go hunting together. Pursuing some gazelles they arrive at a mountain: the name is not given, but it is certainly to be identified with Mount

66 Aliev, *Legenda o Khosrove i Širin*, 75-6.

67 Niẓāmī, *Khusraw va Shīrīn*, 55, 24-26.

68 Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī, *Shīrīn va Khusraw*, 143-4, ll. 1637-8.

69 See Lushey, “Bisutun. Geschichte und Forschungsgeschichte”, 129 and fig. 25, and s.v. “Bīsūtūn II. Archeology”; Howard-Johnston, “Pride and Fall: Khusro II and his Regime”, 94-5; and s.v. “Kosrow II”.

70 Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb masālik al-mamālik*, 230. See also Schwarz, *Iran im Mittelalter*, 4: 452. As Amīr Khusraw did not travel outside the Indian subcontinent, he may have come to know of this panel from Iṣṭakhrī’s description, or from other sources.

Bīsūtūn. Farhād stays in this area for some time, hunting and polishing stones (possibly another allusion to the *Tarāsh-i Farhād*), and sculpting beautiful images.⁷¹ Farhād also sculpts a series of figures in the place called *Shabdīz* (Ṭāq-i Bustān). ‘Ārif adds that *Shabdīz* is the name given to this beautiful place (*but-khāna*), full of stone images (*buthā-yi sangīn*) from antiquity; a place located two days travel away from Qaṣr-i Shīrīn.⁷²

In Hātifī’s poem, it is only after Farhād’s escape from the well (the new episode added to the saga of Farhād by this poet) that Khusraw decides to free himself of his rival by having him cut a passage through Mount Bīsūtūn. Both Amīr Khusraw and ‘Ārif Ardabīlī, instead, omit the traditional datum of Farhād’s hard work for carving a route through Mount Bīsūtūn, an omission probably connected with the increasing idealization of the character of Farhād, the son of the emperor of China travelling incognito in Persia (see also below, § 8).

To sum up: a reference to the legend of Farhād as the author of the reliefs, or of any other work, on the wall of Mount Bīsūtūn, is given by Abū Dulaf, Amīr Khusraw, and ‘Ārif Ardabīlī. As to the narrative element of Farhād as the Mountain-Carver for love of Shīrīn, this feature is present, among the romantic poems here considered, only in Niẓāmī and Hātifī’s poems, and is possibly alluded to in Bal’amī’s account (see below).

7 Farhād as Enamoured of Shīrīn

It is, seemingly, in the second half of the tenth century that the legend of Farhād is enriched with a new element: the romantic development of his character and his connection with the legendary cycle revolving around the love between Khusraw and Shīrīn. The Persian reworking of Ṭabarī’s chronicle by Bal’amī (begun in 352/963 CE) is at present the first source speaking of Farhād as enamoured of Shīrīn.⁷³ In the section describing the marvels of Khusraw Parvīz’s reign, the horse *Shabdīz*, and the astonishing beauty of Shīrīn – one of Khusraw’s handmaidens – Bal’amī says: “This handmaiden was the one with whom Farhād was in love; and Parvīz punished him by send-

⁷¹ ‘Ārif Ardabīlī, *Farhād-nāma*, 173, ll. 3624-9.

⁷² ‘Ārif Ardabīlī, *Farhād-nāma*, 173, ll. 3627-9.

⁷³ Cf. Aliev, *Legenda o Khosrove i Širin*, 75. Aliev does not exclude the hypothesis, advanced by E.É. Bertel’s (*Nizami. Tvorčeskij put’ poéta*, 106), that the passage on Farhād in the chronicle by Bal’amī represents a later addition.

ing him to dig the mountain”.⁷⁴ The mountain referred to is, certainly, Mount Bisutūn, and Farhād is by then the *Kūh-kan*, the Mountain-excavator for love of Shīrīn.

In the anonymous Persian chronicle *Mujmal al-tavārīkh va’l qiṣaṣ* (composed in 520/1126 ca), in the chapter related to the reign of Khusraw Parvīz, two different traditions concerning Farhād are related, in both of which Farhād is, strangely enough, credited with the title of *sipahbad* (general).⁷⁵

The first tradition has some resemblance with the one narrated in the just quoted passage on the wonders of Khusraw’s reign in Bal’amī’s chronicle (the second tradition from the *Mujmal* will be analyzed in ch. 2 below). Among the wonders of Khusraw’s reign the author speaks of Shīrīn, the most beautiful among the 12,000 women of his harem – here, too, Shīrīn is only one of the women of Khusraw’s harem. Then the author adds: “The *sipahbad* Farhād was in love with her. He executed the work at Bisutūn, the vestiges of which are (still) visible”.⁷⁶ According to this tradition, then, Farhād is enamoured of Shīrīn and the author of a work (perhaps this refers to the reliefs and inscription of Darius) on Mount Bisutūn.

Another source speaking of Farhād in connection with Shīrīn is a passage from the *Siyar al-mulūk* (end of the eleventh-beginning of the twelfth century), which seems to pertain to a different tradition from the romantic one. In chapter forty-two, the advice of allowing women no access to the secrets of their men is illustrated with the following brief consideration: “As Khusraw nurtured such a love for Shīrīn handing her the reins of (his) pleasures, he used to do all she wanted. Inevitably Shīrīn became arrogant and – with such a great sovereign – was inclined towards Farhād”.⁷⁷ Shīrīn is here considered as having, at least to a certain extent, requited Farhād’s love.

74 Bal’amī, *Tārīkh*, 2: 1091. The same tradition is also reported in another recension of Bal’amī’s chronicle, represented in the French translation by Zotenberg: “C’est de cette femme que fut amoureux Ferhād, que Parwīz punit en l’envoyant extraire des pierres à Bisoutoun” (*Chronique de [...] Tabari...*, 2: 304). On the problem of the text of Bal’amī’s chronicle see Aliev, *Legenda o Khosrove i Širīn*, 75 fn. 47; and Lazard, *La langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane*, 38-41.

75 *Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, 78-82 (for Farhād’s title see 79, lines 12 and 17). See also the Berlin manuscript *Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, ff. 29v-31r; in particular, for Farhād’s title, see f. 30r lines 10 and 14.

76 *Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, 79,12-13; see also the Berlin manuscript *Mujmal al-tavārīkh*, f. 30r10-11.

77 Cf. Nizām al-Mulḳ, *Siyar al-mulūk*, 246. Khismatulin (“To Forge a Book in the Medieval Ages”) has convincingly demonstrated that Nizām al-Mulḳ was not the author of either the last eleven chapters of the *Siyāsat-nāma/Siyar al-mulūk*, or of the anecdotes of the first thirty-nine chapters. Khismatulin has also shown that the additions to the original piece are the work of the poet Mu’izzī at the beginning of the twelfth century.

Priscilla Soucek, in reference to this passage that she considers as going back to Sasanid sources, states that “the story of Farhād and Shīrīn originated at the Sassanian court”.⁷⁸ However, this short passage only seems to reflect the unfavourable light surrounding Shīrīn in early texts, and probably also in Sasanid sources, well represented in the *Shāhnāma*; but, in itself, is insufficient to prove that the character of Farhād as lover of Shīrīn could hark back to Sasanid sources. On the subject, Aliev was definitively of the opposite opinion. Considering that there is no mention of Farhād (as enamoured of Shīrīn, or otherwise) either in Ṭabarī or in Jāhīz, and that he is unknown to Christian (Byzantine, Armenian and Syriac) sources, Aliev concludes that the origins of this character must be considerably later than the events narrated in the poems. He asserts: “According to us it is certain that in the Pahlavi sources no mention of Farhād was to be found”.⁷⁹

In the romantic narrative tradition Farhād is chiefly the rival of Khusraw in his love for Shīrīn. He embodies the type of the lover who dies for his unhappy love, a literary type destined to great fortune in the Persian and other Islamic literatures, especially in connection with the increasing influence of mystic currents on literary production. (Such a development of the character in a mystical direction, and his partial overlapping with the figure of Majnūn, does not concern us here).

To sum up: Farhād as enamoured of Shīrīn is recorded for the first time in Bal‘amī’s chronicle, and is afterwards present in the first tradition concerning Farhād quoted in the *Mujmal*. This narrative feature is characteristic of the romantic narrative tradition, in its entirety.

8 Farhād as a Foreigner: His Social Status and Fatherland

Early non-literary sources speaking of the reliefs of Ṭāq-i Bustān and the master who carved them (see above, § 4.2) unanimously assert that the sculptor (variously named as Faṭṭūs, Qaṭṭūs, etc.) was the son of Sinimmār/Sinnimār, the constructor of the castle of Khawarnaq;⁸⁰ and Sinimmār is defined as *al-Rūmī* (the Greek). The foreign origins of the master of Ṭāq-i Bustān may possibly represent a historically reliable datum. Priscilla Soucek considers the reliefs in the main grotto as inspired by Greek (Byzantine) models;⁸¹ and seems to lean

⁷⁸ Soucek, “Farhād and Ṭāq-i Bustān”, 45.

⁷⁹ Aliev, *Legenda o Khosrove i Širin*, 73-5.

⁸⁰ On this castle see Massignon, s.v. “Al-Khawarnaq”; Würsch, s.v. “Kawarnaq”; and “Das Schloss Ḥawarnaq nach arabischen und persischen Quellen”.

⁸¹ Soucek “Farhād and Ṭāq-i Bustān”, 29-34.

toward a possible Greek origin of the sculptor's name, as she writes: "The correct Greek form of the name has never been established".⁸² Ernst Herzfeld, on the other hand, considers the form Qaṭṭūs, given by one of the manuscripts of Ibn al-Faḡīh's work, as the closest to the original, and favours a purely Iranian origin of this name.⁸³

In the romantic tradition Farhād is generally seen as a foreigner. In Nizāmī's poem, among the features that make up his character, the most important one is that of being a loner, rootless and far from home: "Plants have roots in the earth; but not I. Dogs have their place in the world; but not I".⁸⁴ Moreover, in the famous question-and-answer confrontation (*munāzara*) between Khusraw and Farhād, which is a set piece in all the poems in response to Nizāmī's *Khusraw va Shirīn*, and in many passages of the poem, Farhād embodies the type of the lover suffering from love without hope: he is a commoner, while his rival is a king, a powerful man.

In Amīr Khusraw's poem Farhād, though being an artist and a foreigner, becomes the son of the Khāqān of China living incognito abroad. Likewise, in 'Arif's poem Farhād is the son of the Faghfur of China and a skilful architect, calligrapher and painter, dispossessed of his kingdom at his father's death by his paternal uncle. The increasing idealization of this character comes to a halt with Hātifī's poem: Farhād is here mainly presented as a specialized workman – the emphasis on the importance of work and manual skill being an issue probably dealt with in connection with the social advancement and prestige acquired by the artisan class in the Timurid period.

As to Farhād's fatherland, Nizāmī is silent. He simply states that Shāpūr and Farhād had been companions (*ham-zād*) in China, where both had studied under the same master.⁸⁵ Only in the poems composed after Nizāmī is Farhād's Chinese origin asserted with certainty. As Shāpūr and Farhād are unanimously considered as artists – Shāpūr a painter, and Farhād a sculptor – their connection with China, the homeland of Mani (famous in Persian literature as a skilled painter) is hardly surprising. Moreover, according to a well-established tradition attributed to the prophet, China was the place where one should go to learn science. However, the foreign origin of Farhād can also represent a significant element in connection with the origins of this character (see ch. 2 below).

To sum up: Farhād is generally seen as a foreigner in the romantic tradition; and is considered of Chinese origin in the poems composed after Nizāmī's poem. While already in Nizāmī's poem, and afterwards

⁸² Soucek "Farhād and Ṭāq-i Būstān", 40 fn. 69.

⁸³ Herzfeld, "Khusraw Parwēz und der Ṭāq i Vastān", 97-8.

⁸⁴ Nizāmī, *Khusraw va Shirīn*, ch. 56, 99.

⁸⁵ Nizāmī, *Khusraw va Shirīn*, ch. 51, 17.

in Hātifī's, he is a highly qualified worker, with possibly a lower social status (at least in Hātifī), in the poems by Amīr Khusraw and 'Ārif he appears as the son of the emperor of China. In the historical and geographical sources, instead, the master of Ṭāq-i Bustān, called Faṭṭūs, Qaṭṭūs, Fuṭrūs, etc. according to the different sources, is the son of the Greek Sinimmār/Sinnimār, the constructor of the castle of Khawarnaq.

9 Conclusions

From the review of the literary and non-literary sources given above it emerges that the two most ancient sources referring to the character of Farhād – Abū Dulaf's travelogue, and Bal'amī's chronicle – connect this character to Mount Bisutūn. He is the sculptor of the "wonderful image and beautiful pictures" on the mountain side, according to Abū Dulaf; and is the lover of Shīrīn "punished by Khusraw Parviz by sending him to dig the mountain", according to Bal'amī.

In the romantic narrative tradition, in the poems by Niẓāmī, 'Ārif Ardabiīlī and Hātifī, Farhād is the carver of one or more channels, and in particular the carver of a channel, commissioned by Shīrīn, to bring the milk from the high mountainous pastures to her castle, the famous Qaṣr-i Shīrīn – Amīr Khusraw, however, places Farhād's channel in the area of Mount Bisutūn. 'Ārif does not only speak of the famous channel for milk, but also of a number of channels for carrying wine, that Farhād constructed for Shīrīn. Farhād's character as the constructor of one or more channels (for milk and for wine) is instead unknown to the earliest non-literary sources, and in particular to Ibn al-Faḥḥāh's *Kitāb al-buldān* (beginning of the tenth century), in the section concerning Qaṣr-i Shīrīn and the reasons for its construction.

Farhād's legendary deed as Mountain-Excavator for love of Shīrīn is to be found – after a possible hint to it in the passage from Bal'amī's chronicle – in the poems by Niẓāmī and Hātifī, but not in Amīr Khusraw and 'Ārif's poems: these authors give an idealized portrait of Farhād as the son of the emperor of China. As for the reasons for Farhād to be committed to mountain excavation, this deed is explained either as a punishment for his love for Shīrīn, as in Bal'amī's report, or as a trick devised by Khusraw and his minister(s) in order to get rid of him. Indeed, in Bal'amī's chronicle Farhād appears as if sentenced to hard labour at Mount Bisutūn; whereas in the poetic narrative tradition the excavation of the mountain is presented as due to Khusraw's pretended wish to have a route carved through Mount Bisutūn: a deed in which, contrary to Khusraw's expectations, Farhād succeeds.

The connection of Farhād with the reliefs of the site now called Ṭāq-i Bustān seems to be a relatively late narrative development. It seems to be first attested in Niẓāmī's poem; and becomes a central feature of the character of Farhād only in later poems, such as the

Farhād-nāma by ʿĀrif Ardabiīlī. Earlier non-literary sources, such as Ibn al-Faḡīh's *Kitāb al-buldān*, show however that, at the beginning of the tenth century, the development of legends concerning the master who realized the site were already circulating in the area.

A clear link between a certain 'Farhād' - a general under Khusraw Parvīz - and Ṭāq-i Bustān is attested by a passage from an early Persian historical source quoted in the anonymous historical work *Mujmal al-tavārīkh va'l-qiṣaṣ*, which will be analyzed in the second chapter of this study. This will give us the opportunity to discuss another personage, historical this time, who may have been also relevant in the growth of the legend of Farhād, especially in connection with its romantic development: Farhād as the unrequited lover, enamoured of a queen or a woman of royal origins.