UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY FACULTY OF DESIGN ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDING



DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE IN SAFAVID IRAN, 1501-1737

by

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

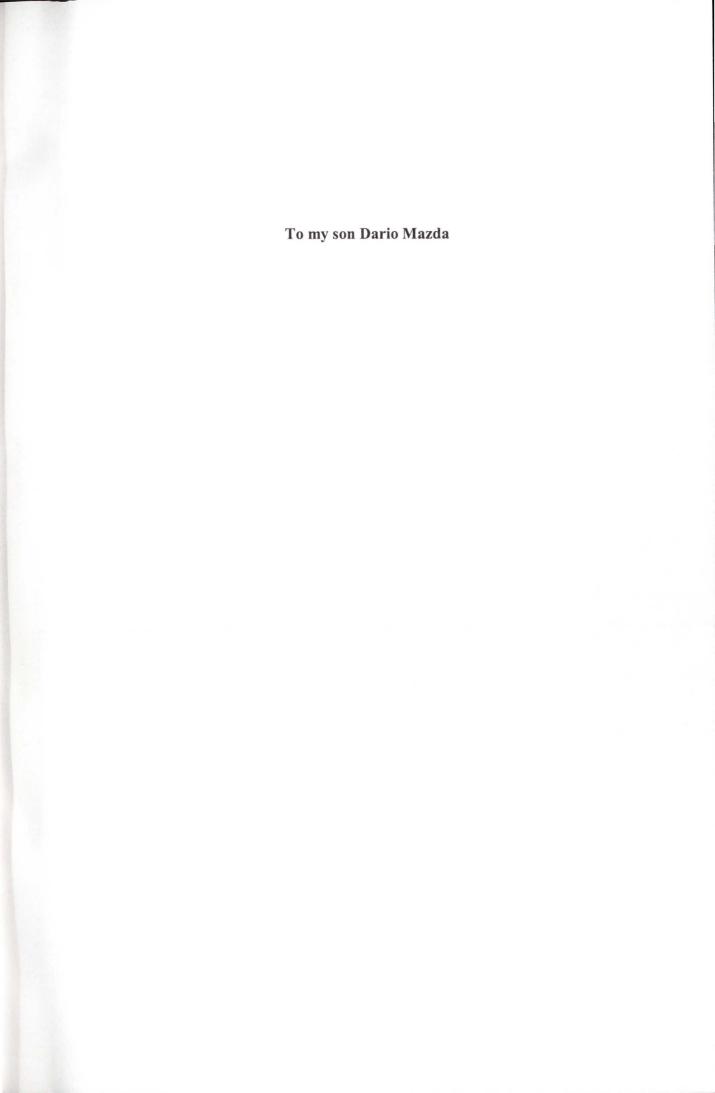
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Abstract

This thesis reveals, for the first time, the significance, scope and achievements of Safavid (1501-1736) domestic architecture in Iran. Through extensive illustration and analyses the research details the construction of buildings such as palaces, houses and pavilions, as well as the gardens, gates and walls that defined their settings. The political, religious, economic and social circumstances of Safavid architecture are described and the impact of these circumstances upon the formal expression and spatial organisation of buildings is discussed. The key drivers of Safavid architectural development are found to lie in the conflicts between the Safavid and Ottoman Empires and in the reign of Shah Abbas I. While most of the buildings examined in this thesis are located in Qazvin and Isfahan, buildings and gardens in the Caspian Sea area are also addressed.

The research uses two quite distinct and different sources. The first source is existing buildings and ruins that have been measured, extensively photographed and empirically studied by the author during two field trips. The second source is significant information about Safavid architecture that has been gleaned from European travellers who visited Persia during the Safavid era, including the French jeweller and traveller Jean Chardin, Engelbert Kaempfer, Sir Thomas Herbert, Pietro Della Valle, Don Garcia de Silva y Figueroa and Cornelius de Bruin. This second body of material provides information about the ways in which Persian architecture was viewed by foreigners whose accounts are coloured by their expectations and the politics under which they made their visits as diplomats, traders and adventurers. Accounts of buildings from this source are necessarily interpreted against empirical evidence.

The research identifies the key buildings and building types of the era and gives detailed accounts of their development, their importance during the Safavid period and their current condition and future. These include the Ali Qapu gateway and Chehel Sotun pavilion at Qazvin, Hasht Behesht pavilion, Ali Qapu and Chehel Sotun palaces in Isfahan, Armenian Marta Peters and Sookiassian houses of the Julfa suburb in Isfahan, and palaces of Farahabad and (Ashraf) Behshar in the Caspian Sea area.

Transliteration

The system of transliteration adopted for the Persian letters uses the Roman alphabet in such a way that a single Roman sign represents each Persian letter. The letters & ch, J zh, kh, h sh and b gh represent a single consonant in the Persian alphabet. After Islam became prevalent in Persia, some names and words, such as Tahmasp and Pars, changed their pronunciation to Tahmasb and Fars. The letters \hoto, p, & ch, J zh, and \hoto g are Persian and differ from the Arabic alphabet.

The system of transliteration indicated above is the one employed in the majority of this thesis. However, there are some exceptions: the names of persons, cities, provinces and buildings in well-known cases such as Qazi Ahmad, Qandahar, Qazvin, Qom, Ali Qapu and Isfahan.