

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY
FACULTY OF DESIGN ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDING



**DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE IN SAFAVID
IRAN, 1501-1737**

by

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**A dissertation submitted for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy**

2007

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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To my son Dario Mazda

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to many people whose contributions have made the completion of this thesis possible. Thanks to my principal supervisor, Professor Desley Luscombe, Dean of the Design, Architecture and Building Faculty, at the University of Technology, Sydney. Thanks also to associate professor Sandra Kaji-O'Grady, Head of School of Architecture.

I would like to express my gratitude to Persian architect, Mr Abdul Hamid Eshragh, Secretary of the *Association des Amis de l'Encyclopedia Iranica* in Paris. Mr Eshragh encouraged me via telephone, e-mail and letter, and he sent me articles and information about Safavid architecture. Thanks also to Mr Firouz Bagherzadeh, Archaeologist. Mr Bagherzadeh helped and advised me via telephone and email from Paris, finding information and sources about Safavid history and architecture.

Thanks to Professor David Boud and Professor Andrew Benjamin. Thanks also to Professor Mark Tennant, Dean of the University Graduate School, for assisting in obtaining economic support for my trip to Iran. I was able to be in Iran from July to October, 2005. My research in Isfahan, Shiraz, the Caspian Sea, Qazvin, Dehdasht, Tehran and other cities in Iran was facilitated by the university's letter and also by the kind permission of The Cultural Heritage Organisation of Iran.

My special thanks go to the late Dr Bagher Ayat-Allah-zadeh Shirazi in Iran for helping me to gain access to the architectural library and facility in Tehran. I would also like to thank the librarian, Ms Akram Bahroulouloum. I wish to express my gratitude also to the late Dr Parviz Varjavand in Iran for his advice about architectural research and for introducing me to Mrs Sohila Rajaei Alavi, director of the Mázandarán Cultural Heritage Organisation.

I would like to thank Mrs Sohila Rajaei Alavi, Ms Maryam Madadi, Mrs Kanani, Mrs Brimani, Mr Saeed Solimani, Mr Ali Mahfrouzi, Mr Kamyar Asghari, Mr Abdoulvahab Mousavinasab, Mr Karimi, Mr Ghasemi in Sari and Behshahr. I would like to thank Mr Azmoudeh, mayor of Behshahr, and Mr Taghipour for their support. Also thanks to Mr Ismail Hadadi, *Cheshmeh Emarat* Pavilion Behshahr.

Thanks to Ms Roya Khalili and Mrs Asiabanha of the Qazvin Cultural Heritage Organisation for the maps and support in finding books and regional sources about Safavid buildings in Qazvin. Thanks also to Mr Asghar Mohammadi, Cultural Heritage Organisation of Kermanshah Kourdestan, for his support. Thanks to Mr Shokroulah

Alizadeh and Mr Azizi, Cultural Heritage Organisation of Dehdasht (Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad) for technical and illustrative comments.

My gratitude goes also to the Isfahan Cultural Heritage Organisation Director Mr Vakil, and Library Director Mrs Wil Kee Jee, to Mr Ahmad Adib for his support in finding old photograph pictures of Isfahan, and also to Mr Mohammad Karim Mottaghi for significant advice about Safavid buildings in Isfahan's Julfa. My gratitude goes also to Mrs Ayeda, Julfa's David Library of Isfahan University.

Thanks to Dr Kazem Abhary, University of South Australia. Thanks also to Professor Bijan Samali and Dr Ali Saleh, the University of Technology, Sydney. Above all, I cannot adequately express my gratitude to all the staff of the UTS city campus library, especially Ms Kim Hodgman and Danielle Ambriano. Also thanks to Pat Skinner, of the Graduate School at UTS. I wish to thank to Masoud Rowshan, Campus Librarian, Illawarra Institute Wollongong, for helping me to find books and sources about the Safavid Dynasty and also for teamwork help with me in founding the 'Association of Iranica', here in Sydney and Australasia to support the Encyclopedia Iranica Foundation.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the former Dean of the Design Architecture and Building Faculty, Professor Peter Burgess, as the Acting Principal Supervisor for my PhD, in the early stages. I would like to thank Professor Steve Harfield, Dr John Phillips and Dr Cameron Tonkinwise for their help in the early stages.

I have to thank Maria Isabel, in Madrid, for her support in finding articles and books about the Safavid Dynasty in the Spanish language, and sources in the National Library of Spain. Here in Sydney, thanks to my long-time friend Amanda Gearing for her encouragement.

Finally, my heartfelt appreciation to my Sister Mariam, my brother-in-law Ibrahim, my nieces Leila and Pegah, my nephews Bardia, Ramin and Babak, my cousins Hossein Sharifnia, Kiamars Salehinia, Payman and Pezhman Sayadi in Iran, and my son Dario Mazda in Spain, for their technical support, such as car, mobile telephone, laptop computer, photographic camera, film camera, drawing facilities, measuring, and for their sustained encouragement, which motivated me to complete this thesis.

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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 چ ch, ژ zh, خ kh, ش sh and ق 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 پ p, چ ch, ژ zh, and گ 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.

آ a ب b پ p ت t ث s ج j چ ch ح h خ kh د d ذ z ر r ز z ژ zh س s
ش sh ص s ض z ط t ظ z ع e غ g ف f ق gh ک k گ g ل l م m ن n
و v ه h ی y