

Rereading the History of Dargazin City in Nasuh Matrakçi Miniature Images

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Abstract

This article focuses on the miniature paintings of Nasuh Matrakçi who came to the west of Iran during the Safavid period. Matrakçi's miniatures are among the oldest surviving images of Dargazin city, the like of which cannot be found in other travelogues and historians' works. The surviving three images at two different settings can help us understand the urban and social status of Dargazin in the Safavid period. The findings indicate that, thanks to its Sunni residents and because of its geopolitical significance, Dargazin was of great interest to Ottoman and Safavid rulers who turned it to the governing base of the region. This played an important role in the city's development in the way that in some areas, like the design of gardens, the traditional architecture of the Safavid period was mixed with original Persian style.

Keywords: Hamadan province, Ottoman, Dargazin, Matrakçi, miniature

Ponovno branje zgodovine mesta Dargazin skozi podobe miniatur Nasuha Matrakčija

Izvilleček

Članek se osredotoča na miniature Nasuha Matrakčija, ki je v zahodni Iran prišel v času Safavidov. Njegove miniature spadajo med najstarejše ohranjene podobe mesta Dargazin. V drugih popotniških besedilih in zgodovinskih delih ni mogoče najti takih podob. Tri ohranjene podobe, ki kažejo dva različna prizora, nam pomagajo razumeti urbani in družbeni status Dargazina v času Safavidov. Zahvaljujoč sunitskemu prebivalstvu mesta in njegovemu geopolitičnemu pomenu, najdbe nakazujejo pomen, ki ga je mesto imelo za Otomane in Safavide, v času katerih je bil Dargazin upravno središče regije. Ta status je imel pomembno vlogo

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v razvoju mesta, kar se kaže v tem, da se je na nekaterih področjih, kot je oblikovanje vrtov, tradicionalna arhitektura safavidskega obdobja mešala s prvotnim perzijskim slogom.

Ključne besede: provinca Hamadan, Otomani, Dargazin, Matrakçi, miniature

Introduction

Dargazin in Hamadan province was previously a part of a much wider region named A'lam or Elmar,¹ being its ruling and central city. When Safavid came to power, all the A'lam region was named after the city. As the nearest place to the Safavid Kings' capital, namely Qazvin, considerable importance was attached to it. At the same time, Dargazin was located along Iran's most important central routes, such as Qazvin to Hamadan, Rey to Hamadan, and Soltaniyeh to Isfahan, the last of which passed straight through it and had an important role in the development of Dargazin for many centuries. These connections alongside the agricultural boom and the proliferation of fertile lands led to a surplus of crops being exported to other areas (Lambton 2013, 183; Petrushevsky 1965). Based on the account of Hamdallah Mustawfi (680–750 AH / 1282–1349 AD), Dargazin had a myriad of gardens at the centre of the area called "A'lam", in which grains, cotton, grapes, and high-quality fruit were farmed (Mustawfi 1985, 44–66). According to the Chardin report, yogurt was also sent to Isfahan in the summer and a caravanserai named Dargazinian was established there (Chardin 1993, 1499). Along this same route, namely the one which connects Soltaniyeh to Isfahan, Nasuh Matrakçi came to Dargazin with Sultan Suleiman and painted the oldest surviving pictures of the city. Matrakçi's miniatures, created in 1533–1535 AD / 940–942 AH, show the status of Dargazin and its prominent elements. A re-reading of his works and comparing them with those of other travellers' can determine the location and situation of the places and type of urban architecture and gardens shown. Moreover, the miniatures contain real and valuable information about architecture and urban planning, especially from the western regions of Iran (Matrakçi 1976, 161). According to Franz Taeschner (1956), this book is the only 16th century urban planning document in the Middle East from an architectural and topographical point of view (see also Jafare and Balilan Asl 2015, 37). The artist also used a bird's eye view to capture images, drawing the city from above, which today can be considered as aerial and satellite images. This has thus added to the significance of these paintings and made them key documents with

1 A'lam or Almar in the past was one of the great historical areas in Hamadan that was a large geographical area, and Dargazin was at its centre and its largest city.

regard to urban and social studies of this area, as well as studies of the gardens of Iranian cities.

Accordingly, the present study seeks to answer the question of how Matrakçi illustrated Dargazin, what is the relation of these images with the images of other cities and reports of other travellers, and what are their salient features? No research has yet been done to analyse Matrakçi's pictures of Dargazin, although there has been some work on Matrakçi's pictures of other cities. The first research that can be considered as close to the present study is Elham Jafare and Leda Balilan Asl's (2015) study of "Historical Re-reading of Khoy City in the Safavid Period, Based on Matrakçi's Miniature from the Tourists' Perspective", in which the authors carry out a comparison between Matrakçi's pictures of the city, monuments and relics and the works of other travellers. Other research in this field include the study of Hanachi and Ahadnejad (2006) entitled "Re-reading of Sahebabad Square from Chardin and Matrakçi's Pictures Based on Historical Texts", in which the authors rely on the works of tourists and historical information and compare them with Matrakçi and Chardin's miniature works to re-read Sahebabad Square. Within the same domain, and related to Matrakçi's pictures of Dargazin gardens, other studies entitled "Safavid Gardens: Types and Patterns" (2006) and "Safavid Royal Gardens" (1997) by Mahvash Alami which investigate the Safavid Royal Gardens and their features should be mentioned. Furthermore, we can refer to Marianna Shreve Simpson's research (2008) under the title "Mostly Modern Miniatures: Classical Persian painting in the Early Twentieth Century", in which the author examines the miniatures in the versions of the book *Khamsa* from Amir Khusraw Dihlavi. The portraits of people are the main feature of these miniatures, whereas there are no people in Matrakçi's work, and only views of the town and its surroundings are seen in them. Therefore, in the present study the author relies on Matrakçi's pictures to collect historical data and documents and finally presents the results in the form of an analytical-comparative research.

Detailed Considerations of Matrakçi's Miniatures

Nasûh b. Karagöz al-Bosnawî or Nasûh b. Abdullah al-Silahî al-Matrankî or for short Matrakçi Nasuh Bey came from a Bosnian family. Either his father or grandfather was drafted into the state service. He was renowned in the 16th century as a mathematician, historian, geographer, cartographer, topographer, musketeer, and was an outstanding knight, calligrapher and engineer. Because he was a musketeer, he was also called al-Silâhî (the musketeer or gunman). He was a

polymath, writer, artist (he pioneered a particular artistic style for depicting cities) and theoretician. He wrote books in these fields, all in Turkish, and a brief discussion of these follows later in this study. He received the nickname “Matrakçi” after he created a game called Matrak. Matrak means “amazing” in Turkish and “çi” is a suffix. Therefore his nickname means “he who plays (invents) the amazing game” (Ayduz 2008).

Nasuh Matrakçi Bey was a skilled illustrator and painter who accompanied Sultan Suleyman in his invasions of Iran. He depicted various towns during the Ottoman troops’ brief stays in them, which are included in the book *Bayan-i Manazil-i Safar-i Iraqayn-i*. This contains detailed information about Sultan Suleyman’s first attack against Iran’s Safavid between 1533 and 1536 AD. Matrakçi’s pictures show Ottoman army camps in Iran and other places where Sultan Suleyman Khan passed on his way from Tabriz to Baghdad. Dargazin was one of those places where the Sultan visited and Matrakçi managed to draw. These drawings are the oldest and most complete images of Dargazin. However, the originality of these drawings and the extent to which they reflect reality is one of those issues for which there can be no exact answer, and thus there have been some conflicting opinions in this area. According to some researchers, all of the drawings were based on observation and the artist tried to depict what he had seen. Therefore, “avoiding exaggeration” has been regarded as one of the most pervasive qualities of Matrakçi’s works. Franz Taeschener (1956) spoke for the authenticity of these works, but he also warned that we should be cautious in using them. After all, as these drawings go back to a long time ago, they are subject to changes, and the symbols which are present in them are mostly symbolic, rather than telling about reality (see Vampelj Suhadolnik 2019, 50, 64; Zhang 2019, 88; Lam 2019, 133). In spite of this, Taeschener introduced Matrakçi as a municipal analyst and recognized his drawings the only important documents with regard to urban development in 16th century Iran. According to Professor Yurdaydin, even though the miniatures were drawn by looking at the town from the opposite side, they were drawn with a bird’s eye view perspective, without any exaggeration, and based on observations (Matrakçi 1976, 161). These works can thus be considered as a valuable topographical source because they pay special attention to the outstanding buildings like mosques, mansions, and so on. Furthermore, Norman G. Johnson, in his book *The World of Urban Development in Nasuh’s Miniatures*, which was published in 1971, recognizes the importance of miniatures in sketching the houses in a town and applying many different colours to them. With the analysis that has been performed on Matrakçi’s miniatures, and with considering the opinions that has been gathered about them, we can figure out the type and place of topographical elements and

other structural qualities of the towns and we can also rely on them to rebuild and renovate the historic ruins or buildings.

Some Features and Distinctions of Matrakçı's Paintings with Other Similar Works

Iranian also known as miniatures include works from various periods of Iranian Islamic history, mostly in the form of representations of literary, scientific, technical, and historical books, as well as some religious works. In this type of art, the whole nature and environment desired by the artist is depicted in a small format. The Middle age marks the onset of this type of art. Although the history of the art of illustration and painting in Iran dates back to ancient times, it reached its peak in the Islamic period and especially with Tabriz School of Painting in the court of the Mongol Ilkhans in the late 7th century AH / 13th century AD and early 8th century AH / 14th century AD. At this time, the artists of the Chinese-Uighur school, who were mostly skilled at drawing maps, and the Baghdad School artists, who belonged to the Mesopotamian Arab painting tradition, created a new style. With the merging of the two schools during the middle of the 8th century AH / 14th century AD, the school of writing in Iran entered a new stage. Due to such an identity and role, the German scholar Schulze called the Tabriz School the mother school for the development of the art of painting in the Orient (Bayani 1977, 117). However, in the Safavid period, and with the unrest and war during the reign of Shah Tahmaseb I (1576–1514), a group of painters of the Tabriz School once again joined the court of the Ottoman rulers and were supported by Sultan Suleyman. After that, the art of book illustration in Iran declined and Istanbul became an important hub of this practice. In fact, it can be said that book illustration in the Ottoman Empire owes its existence to Iranian art, since Ottoman art could never have existed without contact with Iranian art (Ipsirogly 1980, 11). However, in addition to decorating books and literary and mystical works, the art of illustration in the Ottoman Empire found another use, and that was the military and political use of paintings to draw military maps and nautical charts. Its founder, Piri Reis, was one of the most important artists in the field, influencing Ottoman painters and documentarians after him, especially Nasuh Matrakçı. The paintings of Piri Reis included charts of weather conditions and scales and sea distances, as well as paintings of resorts, rivers, castles, and more (Atil 1987, 78). It is obvious that Piri Reis used not only cartographic sources, but also illustrated manuscripts and numerous diagrams to produce his unique maps (ibid., 80).

These images are the first examples of an atlas in the nautical topography genre, which was continued a generation later by Nasuh Matrakçı paintings, with their

special and unique designs. These used size and colour to create an image appropriate to their subject (mapping) and in order to draw the paths of the army and achieve the other goals that all maps have. Matrakçı's paintings depict reality in a symbolic way, in accordance with the common visual traditions of his time. In addition to the visual aesthetic, these paintings played a major role in transmitting historical and cultural concepts. These images, all taken from a high angle and the so-called bird's eye view, act as a camera that moves towards and out of the subject in different places and increases or decreases the breadth of vision, depending on the area to be shown in the paintings. Sometimes it focuses on a specific place and examines it from up close, and sometimes it distances itself from and introduces the region with a more general view (Sanei 2012, 62). However, it should not be assumed that because of the very small scale of the images in miniatures that only a small part of nature can be found in them, or that since nature is the inspiration of a miniaturist, he thus have no choice but to depict only a small landscape. The truth is very different. Instead, the effort to create these miniatures and inspire ever more appreciation is a special feature that distinguishes miniatures from other types of Iranian painting. The miniaturist is an artist who depicts everything that he thinks is interesting to others and does not follow any customary rules of painting (Murad Ganjeh 2009, 48). Therefore, in these images, which are a bridge between cartography and visual arts, the presence of colour, line, and concept can be seen in the most abstract form, and it can be included in the field of geographical imaging, which is itself a form of scientific imaging (Sanei 2012, 59). In addition, these drawings can be considered a kind of cartographic map because both science and art played a key role in shaping them. In other words, these maps depict reality with a symbolic expression. This style and its characteristics continued for centuries and even appeared in other fields, such as guide maps for the Haj or drawings with different themes (*ibid.*, 65).

Introducing the Geography of Dargazin

Dargazin, or Darjazin in Arabic, is one of the rural districts of Razan² in the northeast of Hamadan province, located 85 kilometres to the northeast of the

2 Hamadan is divided into western and eastern parts because of the Alvand mountain ranges. These mountains are a natural barrier in the northwestern and southeastern sides, and based on the political divisions in eastern and western districts function as a barrier between the central plateau and central Zagros, and to the west border (west and southwest) have created some connected plains like Malayer, Nahavand, Tuyserkan, and Asad Abad, which are categorized under the group of western plains. On the other side of Mount Alvand to the eastern (east and northeast) border, there are some plains such as the Hamadan-Bahar (Chahar Bluk or Samine Rud), Ghahavand (Shera'), Kabudarahang, and Razan-Famenin, on which Dargazin is also located.

province and five kilometres to the east of Razan, at a longitude 49 degrees 10 minutes and latitude of 35 degrees 21 minutes. It is located at an altitude of 1830 meters, with the total elevation of Razan plain being 1850 meters. The amount of rainfall in this area is about 319.2 mm per year, and the water is mainly supplied by the Kariz and aqueducts. Due to rich rangelands and fertile lands, agriculture and livestock thrive and the main crops are wheat, barley, alfalfa and legumes (Ministry of Interior of Republic Iran 1950; Bosworth 2007, 20).

The Dargazin region meets the Kharāqan mountains in the north, Saveh in the east, Hamadan province in the south, and Sardrud located in Hamadan in the west. As this region is located midway between Hamadan and Qazvin, it has long enjoyed significance. Dargazin currently has two districts. One of them is Dargazin-e Olya, of which Razan town is the centre, and this includes 43 villages such as Razin, Changarin, Mahnian, Farsejin and Velashjerd. The second district is called Dargazin-e Sofla, which was previously a part of Famenin borough. However, it has been separated from its villages which include Tamuzan, Behkandan, Jamishlu, Asleh and Givdarreh (ibid.). The majority of villages and rural districts of Dargazin were the closest to connective roads like the one running from Qazvin to Hamadan, which was one of the side routes of the Silk Road, and to the Mesopotamia highway to Rey, which passed east of Dargazin (Tucker 2015, 136). The latter was of great importance to Dargazin before the Ilkhanate gained power in Soltaniyeh.

However, the road that branched off from Qazvin, passed Abgarm and Avaj and went through the Kharāqan area, joining Dargazin and then Hamadan, gained importance since the Ilkhanate, for whom the centre was Soltanyeh, and as a consequence Dargazin became important as a location on the way to other places (Sharafi safa et al. 2017). This route, then, forked into two in the Dargazin area, one of which joined Golpayegan and Isfahan, and the other of which reached Hamadan, and from there went on to Baghdad. That was a part of the route taken by Nasuh Matrakçı, when he accompanied Sultan Suleyman and his invasion of Iran, some parts of which were recorded by Matrakçı (2000, 45). Therefore, the physical and human geography of Dargazin along with the nearby connective routes caused its economic prosperity and ethnic diversity and, undoubtedly had an influence on attracting the attention of rulers. This is substantiated by studying the historians' and geographers reports, especially those of Turkish tourists.

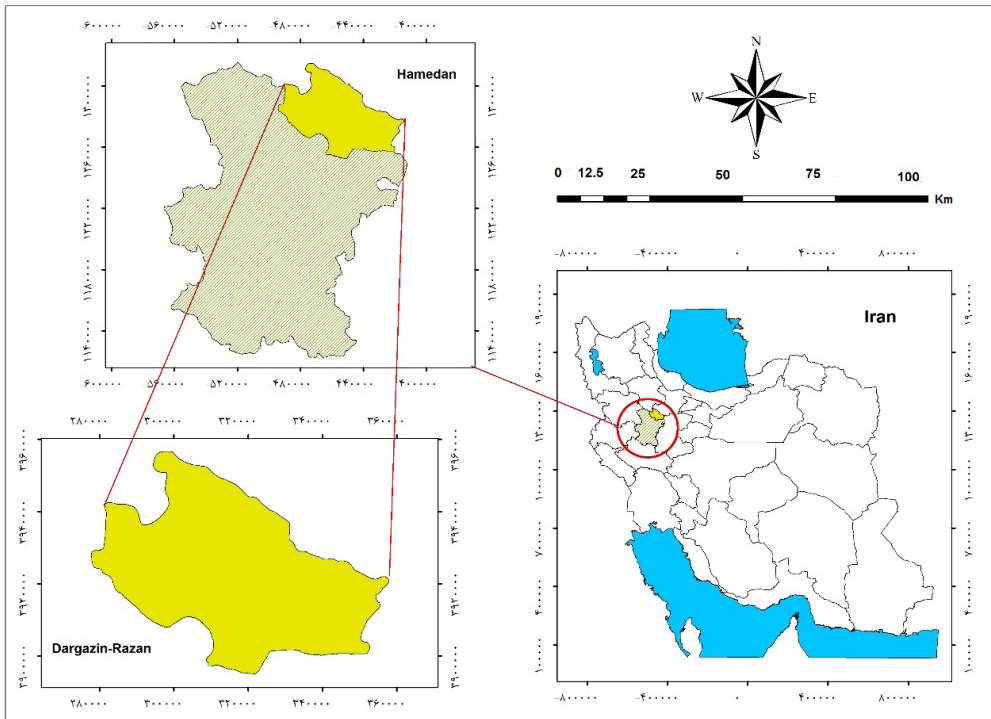


Figure 1. Geographical location of Dargazin in Hamadan. (Source: <https://storegis.com>)

Nasuh Matrakçı during Sultan Suleiman's Expedition to Iran

Ottoman Sultan Suleyman (900–974 AH / 1494–1566 AD) conducted two campaigns in Iran. The first time he went to Qasr-e Shirin and Baghdad through Khoy, Tabriz, Zanzan, Soltaniyeh, Dargazin and Hamadan, coming back through Qasr-e Shirin to Tabriz. The next time he came near to Hamadan when chasing Shah Tahmasp I, only to leave Iranian territory afterwards. Nasuh Matrakçı, the chronicler and army secretary of the Ottoman Court, who accompanied the troops at the time, presented a report on the campaign and illustrated most of the campsites on the Ottoman route in the book *Beyan-i Manazil-i Sefer-i Irakeyn* (*The Stages of Suleiman the Magnificent's Iraq Campaign*) (1976; 2000). The campaign began in early 940 AH / mid-second half of 1533 AD, and lasted for about two years, until Rajab 942 / January 1536 AD. It was then that the Ottoman troops passed through Azerbaijan, Ajam and Arab Iraq, hence the Ottoman historians named it “Safar-i Irakeyn”, meaning the travel of two Iraqs (Mitrakçı 2000, 35).

In the first campaign of Sultan Suleyman, the Ottoman army reached Soltanyeh and Abhar after conquering Tabriz and the cities on the way. On 12 Rabi' al-Thani 941 AH / October 20, 1534, they departed for Baghdad by leaving Abhar through Sain Qaleh. After leaving campsites including Parsian Zavieh, Koushk Robablar Village, Abgarm, Ave/Avaj, Darband-e Qaraqan, Hamian Village (Mahnian), Dargazin, Sazin Village, Dastgir (Dastjerd) Lain Chaman (Laljin), arrived in Hamadan and then continued on its way to Arab Iraq *via* Aramand (Arumand), Sa'id Abad or Sadawa, Darband-e Sonqor, dinavar in Kermanshah. It then arrived at the fortress of Delawar on 28 Rabi' al-Thani, and the next day, according to Matrakçi, passed Razor, reached the Bistoun districts, and eventually reached the Arabic Iraqi border on 10 Jumada al-awwal, seizing Baghdad. They spent the whole winter there and on 28 Ramazan 941 AH / April 1535 AD left the city to for Tabriz.

Nasuh Matrakçi, who accompanied the Ottoman army in these campaigns, produced a picture of the city during the two stops of the Ottoman army, which is considered the oldest existing image of the city. Matrakçi illustrated the cities along the way for the Ottoman troops, depicting each of these campsites according to their significance and size. In some cases he painted some places in the form of a single image and in other cases, such as Tabriz, Soltanyeh and Dargazin, on one or more page(s). Since some settlements, such as Qar-e-Tapeh, Mianeh, and Khan Sarcham, and Dargazin, were visited by the army twice they have portrayed twice, from two different perspectives (Matrikçi 2000, 76). This drawing of Dargazin in two different times and from several different angles has some advantages for researchers with regard to both the comparisons that can be made and the documentary value of the images (ibid. 1976, 164).

Although Matrakçi draw what he saw, since he did not have the opportunity to paint and complete the book until two years after the campaign, it is likely that this time-lapse had some impact on the images (ibid. 2000, 77), and thus their accuracy cannot be confirmed with certainty. Nonetheless, the painter obviously tried to portray everything he saw, and so avoiding exaggeration is an essential feature of these images, and the painter also tried to make the images fit reality as much as possible, with realism being noted as among the features of these pictures. Therefore, Matrakçi's miniatures are the oldest and in fact the most complete existing images of some of the Safavid cities, and they are also important in terms of showing the composition of cities and providing architectural examples and some of the architectural history of the area.

The Reports of some Historians, Geographers, and Travellers to Dargazin

Throughout history, many historians, geographers, and travellers have explored the political, cultural, social, and urban contexts of Dargazin, some of which have come from direct observations. Here, before discussing the status of Dargazin in the Safavid period and in Matrakçı's images, it is necessary to consider the views of some of the other people who visited Dargazin or learned about it from other sources. The oldest text in which Dargazin is mentioned is the missing book named *Nafsat – Al masdur fe Fotür zamân al-şodür wa şodür zamân al-fotür (In the History of Seljuk Ministers)*, by the minister Anushirvan ibn Khalid ibn Muhammad Kashani (532 AH / 1138 AH). Emad-Al Din *Kateb Esfahani* (519–597 AH / 1125–1201 AD) and Yaqut-al-Hamawi (626 AH / 1229AD) quoted from it as follows: “There is a town from Alam region and *Abu 'l-Qasim Anasabadi Dargazini*, the minister, is from there.” (Emad-Al Din *Kateb* 2004, 264; Yaqut-al-Hamawi 1995, 451). Emad-Al Din *Kateb*, in the biography of a Dargazini minister, writes:

Anasabad is a village from Elmar near Dargazin. *Abu 'l-Qasim* introduced himself as a man from Dargazin, because Dargazin is the largest rural area of that region. Most of the people there are heterodox and cultists. The majority of them are the followers of Mazdak. (Emad-Al Din *Kateb* 2004, 264; Crone 2012, 187)

This place became very important during the time of the Iraqi Seljuks due to the emergence of ministers from Dargazin. Nasser al-Din Monshi Kermani (675 AH / 1296 AD) writes:

As ministers were chosen from Dargazin, it should have been called Dorgozin, meaning “the Chosen Pearl”, and not Dargazin. For a while, people's job was wonderful and profound. Ministers were so easy to find and Dargazin was like Yemen. (Monshi 1985, 13)

When Khaqani (520–595 AH / 1126–1199 AD) arrived in Iraq Ajam in late 547 AH or the spring and summer of 548 AH, during the reign of Sultan Muhammad ibn Mahmud Seljuq (548–555 AH / 1153–1160 AD) and the ministry of Jalaluddin Dargazini (500–578 AH / 1106–1182AD), he saw the city well and said that it no longer had its former glory (Khaqani 1978, 4, 30), because there was a period of chaos in Hamadan and Dargazin between the falls of the Iraqi Seljuks and the emergence of the Mongols. Consequently,

there are not many reports on this period. However, with the beginning of the 7th century AH, Yaqut al-Hamawi (574–626 AH / 1178–1229 AD) presents the first reports on the status of Dargazin. Yaqut mentions it as “Darkajin” in the Elmar region of Hamadan, located midway between Hamadan and Zanjan. *Abu ‘l-Qasim* Nasser ibn-Ali Dargazini (died 526 AH / 1132 AD) was minister to Sultan Mahmud bin Muhammad Saljuq (died 485 AH / 1092 AD) and to Toghrul III (590 AH / 1194 AD), who was assassinated in 521 AH. He was originally from a village with the name *Anasabad* in Alam region. Since Dargazin was the largest rural area of the region he was known as Dargazini, meaning “from Dargazin” (Yaqut-al-Hamawi 1995, 451; Awad 1999, 355). The most complete account of Dargazin is from Mustawfi Qazvini (1281–1349), the 8th century AH historian and a court official of the Ilkhanid dynasty, who obtained it from direct observations of Dargazin. Ḥamdallāh Mustawfi, in the division of Hamadan districts, considered Dargazin as a part of Khoreh³ (Kureh) of Alam, and stated:

Dargazin used to be a village from the area of Alam. It is now a rural district and some other places are called by its name. It has an elevated land and a lot of gardens producing good quality grapes, cotton and other fruits. Its people are of Shafi’i faith with pure religion, and Sheikh al-Islam Sharaf al-Din Dargazini’s—May God Benefit Muslims by Lengthening his Life—court salary is one toman and two thousand dinars. (Mustawfi 1985, 72–73)

After Mustawfi’s detailed report on Dargazin, comprehensive information about the social and urban status of the place became available not earlier than the Safavid period, when Evliyâ Çelebi (1020–1093 AH / 1611–1682 AD), the well-known Turkish traveller, came to Dargazin. According to Evliyâ Çelebi’s report, Dargazin Castle in the Safavid period had five towers and battlements, walls and public places (Evliyâ 1896, 355). There are also some later reports about Dargazin. Zeynalabdin Shirvani (1193–1253AH / 1779–1837AD), who visited Dargazin in the mid-13th century AH, wrote:

It’s a pleasant village, belonging to Hamadan. In the old times it used to be a city, but gradually it has fallen into ruin. Now, it has approximately 1,000 houses and several villages are its subordinates. It has gardens galore and grains are cheap. It is located on flat earth and its surroundings

3 “Khoreh” or “Kureh” is derived from the Greek word “chora”, which can be considered equivalent of a province based on today’s geographical divisions (see Ibn al Athir 1983, vol. 4, 191; Ibn al-Balkhi 1984, 121; Pygoluskaya 2008, 240).

are expansive. Its water is clean and supplied from Kariz. The weather is healthy, the people are Turks and from Qaragozlu tribe. They're all Shiites. Those possessing perfection and dignity, including Seljuq viziers, have come from there. Dargazin and its eminent figures have frequently been visited by the author. (Shirvani 1968, 830–31)

In other sources Dargazin is mentioned briefly. For instance, Texier, in his travelogue, recorded it as Targazin and stated that Mehran and Ave (Avaj) are located to its south and north, respectively (Schwartz 1896–1926, 535–36).

Re-reading Nasuh Matrakçı's Miniature Pictures

Introducing the Images

From the town and castle of Dargazin, three pictures by Nasuh Matrakçı are left, two of which show the town, its walls and the areas surrounding it. The third picture captures Dargazin gardens. In the first picture, which is more comprehensive, the miniaturist tried to show the route from Tabriz to Baghdad taken by Sultan Suleiman's forces. A proof of this is Matrakçı's mentioning some names such as Sazin and Lain Chaman (probably Lalejin), which is located to the east of Hamadan with a greater distance from Dargazin (Figure 2). However, in the second picture Matrakçı painted for Sultan Suleyman's second campaign (942 AH / 1536 AD), the aforementioned names of Sazin and Lain Chaman are no longer seen. Furthermore, the painter has shown the town from a closer distance and with more details. This is due to the fact that, this time, the Ottoman Sultan Suleyman did not go beyond Dargazin in his second campaign in pursuit of Shah Tahmasp. He gave up chasing the Shah, and instead returned to Soltaniyeh and Tabriz via Abgarm and Abhar, after staying in Dargazin for some days. This led to the second image being dedicated solely to Dargazin, which is one of the unique images in the book, in which the full details of the town can be compared and contrasted with the first picture (Figure 3).



Figure 2: Matrakçı's picture of Dargazin and its surroundings on Sultan Suleyman's route to Baghdad (Source: Matrakçı 2000)



Figure 3: Dargazin during the second campaign of Sultan Suleiman (Source: Matrakçı 2000)

Physical Features of Dargazin and Its Surroundings in Nasuh Matrakçı's Paintings

Walls and Surrounding Areas

One of the salient features of Matrakçı's miniature paintings is painting cities from a high angle, which gives a comprehensive view with more details. This feature kept the painter's eye on the surrounding areas of towns, castles, fortresses and the types of materials used, in addition to displaying more detail in the pictures. The city fortresses and ramparts have been depicted in various colours and building materials, which may indicate the importance and solidity of the fortresses. The colouring used in the images of Dargazin and the materials shown, compared to other castles, also indicate a simple but solid design that can be compared to Abhar Castle. But since—unlike for other towns—there are two surviving images of Dargazin Castle, drawn at different times, one can investigate the changes to the city and the castle in a one-year period. For example, in the second image (Figure 3), in addition to the open parts of the castle that can also be seen in the first picture, parts of the fort walls, especially on the south side of the city and next to the main gate, have been destroyed and only a small part of it remains, which does not appear to have been a waterway passage, as some have speculated, as it can also be seen in the east and west parts of the Dargazin images that the water passage ran both below the fort and the open passageways. We also see the Dargazin gardens and pictures of Abgarm, Khoy and other cities. However it is possible to consider the open part of the fort as a gateway to orchards or simply due to a period of chaos and conflict during the war between the Ottoman and Safavid troops in these areas.

Like the other cities, Dargazin fortress, as shown in the picture, is surrounded by a wall of five towers, which has a large entrance in the south and smaller entrances on the left and right. Similarly, in the north part of the fort, there are two smaller doors. Moreover, the painter did not neglect other details of the city, and even painted the shrubs and trees inside the fort with great care. In these pictures, cedar trees along the north and south sides of the fort are orderly and painted darker in contrast to the scattered trees inside the city. In terms of design, they are different from the trees in Sazin and Lain Chaman, with some blossoming trees seen among them. The painter also noted a few other places besides the open space around the castle, but did not go further to draw a specific buildings there, because his aim was to show the route taken by the Ottoman troops. For this reason, the place referred to in the picture as Sazin has no buildings and there is not any information about it today. However, Sazin seems to have been one of the important sites and stops of the Ottoman troops midway between Dargazin

and Hamadan.⁴ In the middle of the image, there is a river that runs east-west, and is wider than any other river in the area of Dargazin Castle, with white waves on a blue background. This river is most likely Qareh Chay⁵ River, which crosses through the middle of the Hamadan to Dargin road, and the painter has used it very carefully to specify the stop zones. Moreover, according to another local name, “Lain Chaman” (Lalejin), which the author mentions in “Dar-Moqabele-ye-Hamadan”, Sazin can be located between Hamadan and Dargazin, of which today nothing is known.

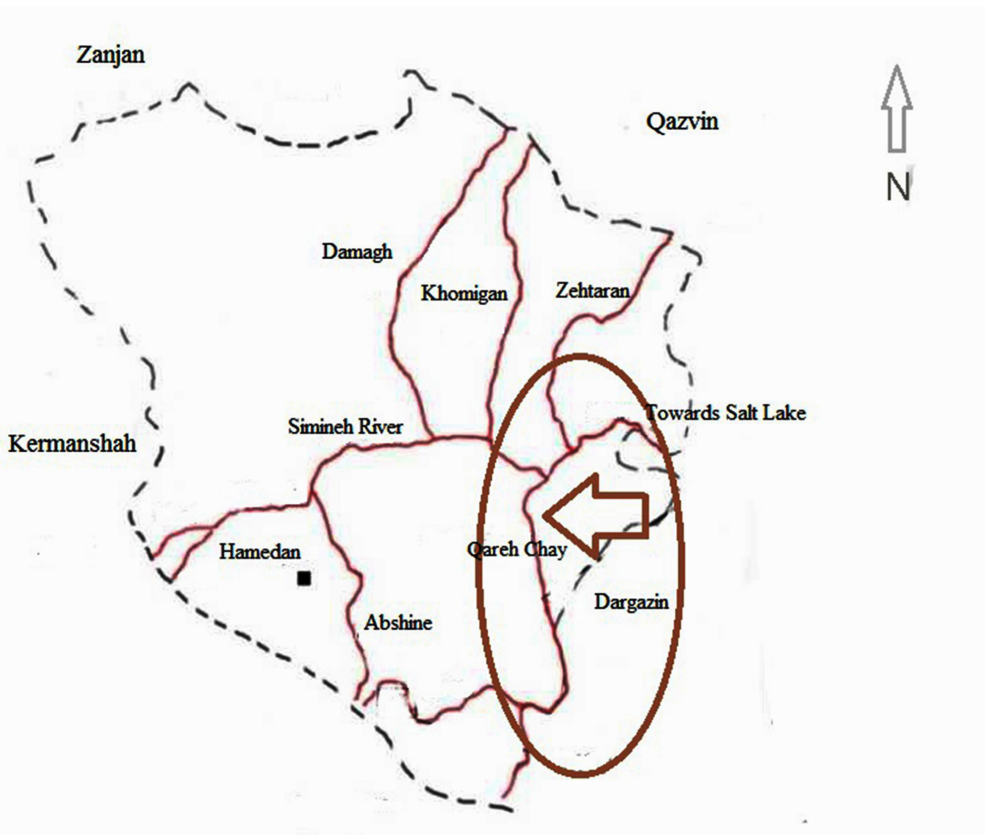


Figure 4: Qareh Chay river route in Hamadan and adjacent provinces (Source: Khodabakhsh and Vafaei 2010, edited by author)

- 4 It is worth mentioning that there is another Sazin in Zanjan province. Although it is very close to the border between Hamadan and Zanjan, to the west of Dargazin, it very unlikely to be the place in the painting.
- 5 “Qareh Chay” is a large river in the centre of Iran that originates from the heights of Hamadan province and finally flows into the salt lake in Qom province.

Re-Reading the Buildings and Interior Architecture of Dargazin in Matrakçı's Pictures

In the illustrations, the viewer is first drawn to the colour and the interior of the city, and then to the outer space of the fortress, which is far less important and is illustrated to show the city's location, as described earlier. In these pictures, the main city gate is located in the southern part of the fortress, with smaller doors a short distance from it, along with elements such as rivers, houses, public centres, mosques, trees and some other buildings, which make up the main body of the city. In the pictures of Dargazin, however, some elements in other pictures, such as bridges, cannot be seen, because the blue paths shown in the image—unlike the larger and wider river seen in the southern part of the fort between Dargazin and Hamadan—were mainly small waterways which supplied water to Dargazin city and its orchards.

The most prominent vegetation in Matrakçı's pictures is cedar trees and flowering shrubs, which can be seen in all three available images of Dargazin. In the first (Figure 2) we see the cedar trees inside and around the fortress, but the scattered cedar trees inside the castle are darker in colour compared to the surrounding fortress trees. In the second picture, we see flowering shrubs, as also seen in the first picture, mainly outside the fort and in Lalejin and Sazin areas.

Other important elements in these pictures are the buildings, which are shown in different designs and sizes. The buildings are painted pink and pale goldenrod, and only turquoise has been used to decorate the tiles. The buildings do not overlap as they used to, and some of them are covered with a part of the roof or other buildings walls, but the amount of overlap is so small that one can easily see every element. In the tradition of the painter's other works, the city's main buildings are easily recognizable. A mosque with a dome and two turquoise minarets can be seen on the right, and other buildings, including tombs with a cone-shaped dome and a monument with a round dome, on the far left. If this painting is compared with others then differences can be noticed in colouring, applying several colours for one building, the type of decoration, the amount of detail and even the shape of the elements in the picture and the height of the painter's point of view (Sanei 2012, 96). In the second picture, the painter has drawn the city from a shorter distance and in greater detail. In terms of colouring, the buildings are very well-drawn and a wide range of colours, such as blue, orange, yellow, azure, green and brown, attract attention. Since the buildings in this picture do not overlap, the viewer can see the whole image clearly and without any obstacles. In the first picture, many ordinary buildings, probably residential, are visible and are located mostly in the northern part of the image. However, in the second picture where the artist has drawn the city from a short distance, fewer smaller houses are seen and

larger and more important buildings are scattered everywhere. The first building is a mosque on the left which has a similar building on the right with a minaret. In the first picture, the chapel is drawn separately in the middle, but it is drawn as a joined chapel connecting the two mosques. Here, the artist has drawn details of the domes and minarets, and has not ignored other details such as the cedar and blossoming trees. This is probably the same mosque that Muṣṭafā Na'imā, the Ottoman traveller who came to Dargazin during Husrev Pasha's offensive (1039–1040 AH / 1629–1630 AD) refers to, saying that there was a mosque in the middle of the city and the city was located in the middle of some gardens. Nevertheless, during their three-day stay the Ottoman army killed many of the inhabitants, stole their possessions and destroyed the city, just like they did at Hamadan (Na'imā 1864–1866, 35). The mosque of Dargazin may also have been intact until Na'imā travelled to Dargazin, but then completely disappeared because of the events that he mentioned. In Matrakçı's picture, another important building is seen in the right-hand corner, which consists of three cone-shaped domes, covered with hexagonal ornaments. The design uses six colours of purple, yellow, orange, green, black and pale goldenrod. A little further on the left corner there is a three-domed building, which was not visible in the first picture, has a different colouration, and is limited to black and orange in its decoration. Next to it is another green domed building, probably the tomb of one of the key figures of the city. There is also another tomb in the right-hand corner where parts of the colour have been scratched and damaged. Next to it is another building with a tall, green dome that may have belonged to one of the important figures of the city. But of all the buildings mentioned in the picture, it is only the latter tomb that survives today and is known as "Imamzadeh Azhar". The modern façade of the building corresponds to the picture by Matrakçı and there is not much difference in the design of the building. The only change is in the design of the dome, a part of which it is hidden behind the chapel of the mosque.

Today, there is nothing left of what was can be seen in Matrakçı's miniatures, except for a few hills and the tomb that was noted above. This building is today located in the east of the residential area in Dargazin (see Figure 5, No. 2). A look at the location of this tomb and the modern map of Dargazin shows that after the killing, looting and destruction of the late Safavid era the development of the site occurred westwards (see Figure 5). In Matrakçı's pictures of Dargazin, Imamzadeh Azhar is located exactly in the middle of the image, with a river passing in front of it, which still remains as a large valley and floodplain. Considering the prosperity of the city in the Safavid period and the location of the aforementioned building in the middle of it, the areas to the east and west of Imamzadeh Azhar should be considered the former urban area of Dargazin. Today its eastern part remains uninhabited, which is the main part of the city in Matrakçı's pictures, with the Dargazin gardens located

just below it (Figure 5, Nos. 3 and 7). Most of the old hills of Dargazin are also in this same area, and the old cemetery surrounds the building. According to the pictures and evidence available, the city was not developed much on the south side, and its whole territory did not transcend than that shown in Figure 5. In contrast, on the north side its boundary went a little further, traces of which are still visible on both sides of the road. Nowadays a road passes through the ruins of the old city. The picture shows some rivers, as well, which today correspond to the aqueducts and canals that flow into Dargazin from the north (see Nos. 4, 5, 6). Dargazin enjoys fertile lands to this day, and has retained some of the signs of its history of ups and downs.



Figure 5: Development of Dargazin based on satellite images (Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/search/@35.3585779,49.0815087,1278m/data=!3m1!1e3?hl=fa>, edited by author)

Dargazin from Evliyâ Çelebi's View and Comparing It with Matrakçı's Pictures

Çelebi's journey to Dargazin (1065 AH / 1655 AD) and his account of the city, about a hundred years after the travel of Nasouh Matrakçı, show that this place continued to have a special reputation and status. A comprehensive report on the city and its urban, cultural and social status proves this. Evlia Çelebi attributes building of the castle to the Sassanid King Yazdegerd, and says that it had previously been a small village until the castle was built. It then developed in

the 8th century (740 AH / 1339 AD) (Çelebi 1896, 355). According to Çelebi's report, Dargazin Castle, as can be seen in Matrakçı's picture, was pentagonal with five towers, three of which were located in the south and two in the north. He stated that the castle had three gates, and that Hamadan and Baghdad gates were attached. He then added that although the castle appears to be large, it is smaller than Hamadan Castle. Çelebi divided Dargazin Castle into two parts, internal and external. The internal part is encircled by a moat and the khanate, bathroom and the bazaar are located there. The external part is also surrounded by a large moat and seven large houses, five madrasas, ten maktabas, seven khanates, four bathrooms, seven large gardens and 600 stores are located there. Chahar Suq (marketplace) is decorated with brown stones (ibid.). Evliyâ Çelebi contends that the city of Dargazin is similar to Diyarbakır in Iraq, where the fort contains large quantities of weapons and ammunition and has a large military garrison with an entourage and Darugha (ibid.). Çelebi's report on the outer and inner parts of the castle, the bazaar and other parts of the city shows that Dargazin was more developed and important compared with when Matrakçı travelled there, and it was the centre of the region (ibid., 355–57). For this reason, although Matrakçı carefully documented Dargazin in pictures and separated Dar-al-Hokuma from the other parts of the city in the drawing of Tabriz and other places, not all that Çelebi has mentioned in his report can be seen in Matrakçı's work. Therefore, if Matrakçı's pictures are the first in the field, Çelebi's report must be considered the most complete and comprehensive report on the urban and social status of Dargazin.

Dargazin Orchards in Matrakçı's Pictures

Physical Features of Dargazin Gardens

Nasuh Matrakçı drew Dargazin gardens in one of his pictures, the like of which cannot be found in his other works. From Matrakçı's point of view, these gardens were a small portion of Dargazin, which were illustrated separately and can be compared with other similar gardens of the Safavid period in Isfahan and Qazvin. Matrakçı's picture of Dargazin is one of his masterpieces, the view and composition of which is modern and different. It is as if the miniaturist were standing in parallel with the vertical passage that divides the picture into two parts, and drew the gardens from there (Sanei 2012, 101). The painter looked at the garden from different angles and drew it, thus making the picture coherent and comprehensible. Despite the damage to the buildings over time, the colours, decorations and floors of every building can still be seen.

In Matrakçı's picture of Dargazin gardens there is a main passage to which a side road joins. However, unlike similar ones in Isfahan (Chahar bagh), the gardens do

not overlap each other in the picture of Dargazin. The gardens are surrounded by cedar trees and water flows from one garden to another. In all the gardens, there are similar elements such as cedar trees, trees in blossom, waterways and buildings. The existence of mansions in the middle of gardens is another feature of these pictures. The appearances of the buildings differ from one another and the painter has drawn them in different sizes based on their level of importance and magnificence (*ibid.*). As has already been mentioned, the Dargazin gardens are similar to those of the Safavid period in Isfahan and other cities, and these pictures can even be considered the oldest images of the Safavid period that survive from before the capital was moved to Isfahan. An examination of existing reports also shows that when Shah Tahmasp (930–984 AH / 1524–1576 AD) chose Qazvin as his capital (950 AH / 1544 AD) he began to expand the city and Dar-al-Hokumah, and most of his additions and incorporations of additional territory into the city involved gardens and mansions dedicated to the royal family and court. This part was converted into a city garden which was later called “Sa’adat Abad” (Alami et al. 2008, 49). It is probably at this time that Dargazin became important in the immediate vicinity of the capital (Qazvin), and there was a version of royal gardens there. A confirmation of this claim may be Çelebi’s report that also cited Dargazin as the centre of these areas (Çelebi 1896, 22).

Dargazin, the Model for Garden Cities

The main structural elements of the city can be divided into three parts: (a) centrality or core; (b) city structure; (c) small aggregates. The structure of the city was the connecting factor of the small aggregates of the city, and in most cases “Ma’bar” (Literally, thoroughfare) constituted the main element of the structure (Mansouri 2007, 52). A thoroughfare, which rose in importance as an urban element from the Safavid period on, was established in order to introduce the re-identification of the city as the largest wooden city resort, according to the Iranian garden model and as the pivotal element of a Safavid garden city (Haghighat bin et al. 2007, 19–29). In fact, state axes were used to integrate the spatial structure of the city (Arabsolghar 2016, 83). These axes were influenced by the garden, as an—axis is a prominent urban element in the cities of the Safavid era, with the refurbishment and development of the city done with the help of garden-axes in cities such as Qazvin, Isfahan, Mashhad, Neyshabur and Shiraz. The garden-axes were divided into longitudinal and lateral sections, and the axis of the Dargazin gardens was the north-south axis with the aqueduct route entering the city for the use of government buildings and people (see Figures 6 and 7). Therefore, the locating of urban and suburban gardens should have been subject to the slope of land and water resources.



Figure 6: Matrakçı's pictures of the Dargazin gardens (Source: Matrakçı 2000)

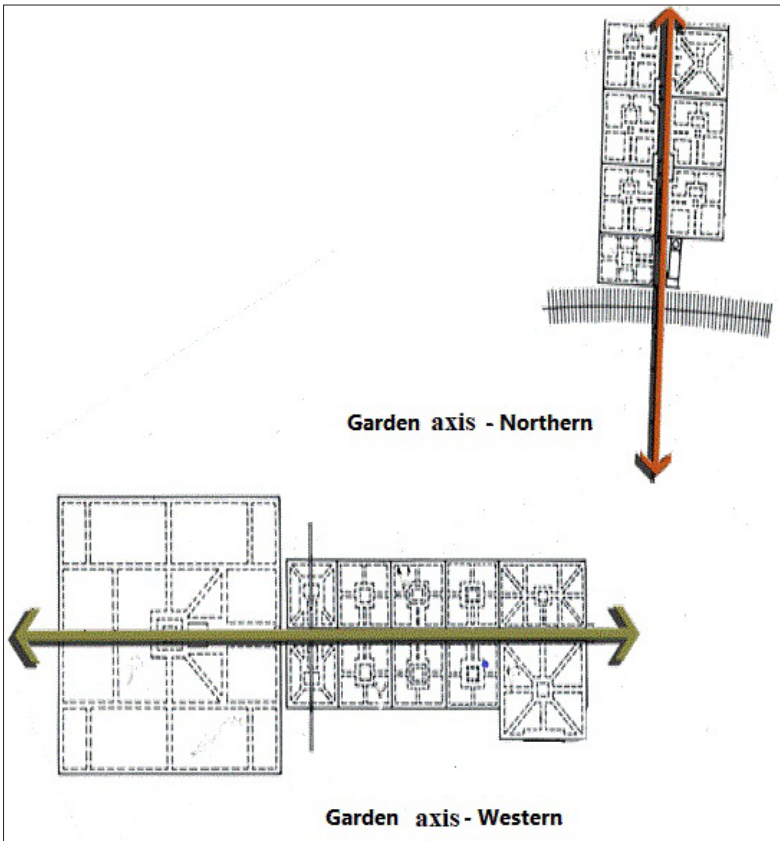


Figure 7: Linear model of the gardens (Source: Arabsolghar 2015)

The Dargazin gardens, like Iranian gardens in different periods, used linear and cross-sectional irrigation methods that were also seen in gardens such as “Delgosha-ye-Eram”, Fin Garden and “Chehel sotoun”. Although the Dargazin gardens were known by different names, such as “Chahar bagh”, Shahi and the longitudinal gardens, they had the same functionality and characteristics of Iranian gardens, and the most prominent elements include open waterways and mansions, enclosed gardens, unity in diversity, diversity in unity, creating perspective and lengthening the garden (Moharami 2016). However, there are differences in the design of the gardens as well. For one thing, in Matrakçi’s pictures each of the gardens has a portal, which is not symmetrical, in contrast to Chahar bagh. Rows of intertwined plane trees circle the garden where people could walk under its green arch. Chahar bagh was a kind of longitudinal garden that served as a street and connected the royal neighbourhoods in the city with suburban

gardens. The main elements of the design of these gardens were a simple plan with a width that encompassed the waterpaths and ponds with pine and cedar trees, while the edges of this street were adorned with portals of various gardens (Alami and Javari 2006, 83). These semi-open spaces were located along with the main axis of the garden and used to provide a place for people to talk and drink with one another. Similar buildings can be found in the paintings of Haft Awrang (authored in 872–890 AH / 1468–1485 AD) by Abd ar-Rahman Jami (Alami, Jeihani and Rezaei 2008, 55).

City gardens formed a system of urban spaces that facilitated varying degrees of interaction between the king and his subjects by exploiting features of the design and display of royal grandeur (*ibid.*, 53). An Iranian Garden was a place where people were allowed to engage in social activities in an environment that brought together outstanding achievements in art and nature. Furthermore, the gardens could have made every aspect of social life potentially enjoyable. It is thus clear how the gardens were a wonderful facility that the king could provide to obtain the support of his subjects (*ibid.*, 55). Although many of these gardens are nowadays destroyed, the traces of their main network can still be seen in the Dargazin residential context.

Conclusion

Nasuh Matrakçı's paintings of Dargazin contain valuable information about the urban situation, its location and the surrounding areas. In this regard, the results obtained in the two cases of urban mapping and painting of gardens in Dargazin are discussed. In the two existing images of the city, the city's castle, towers and fortifications, public buildings, government buildings, religious buildings, cypress trees, vegetation and waterways can be directly seen. An examination of the city's internal structures, which from the artist's point of view can be seen in two ways, near and far, with a view from a high angle, gives a special advantage to these images, enabling a comparison of the two works. By examining the images and comparing them with historical reports some damage was discovered in the castle in the second image, which was the result of the battles between the Shah Tahmaseb and the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman and some local riots. In addition, by examining these paintings in more detail, a number of public, governmental, and religious buildings were discovered, which show political and religious significance of the city. The correctness of the drawings was confirmed by the painter, who came to Dargazin a century later, with further confirmation provided by the current location of this area. Another valuable characteristic of

these images is the precision in painting the buildings, show the architecture without any problems, and separating the shrines, mosques, and so on. These drawings, with their unique design and with the help of size, colour, as well as showing the geographical area of the city, using some names of neighbourhoods and borders being designed on the basis of rivers, are very suitable for their purpose (i.e. mapping). With the aim of drawing the path of the army of Sultan Suleyman, these works achieved the goal that all maps pursue. However, a careful look at the area around the city in the drawings shows that the painter did not adhere to the geographical directions or accurately record them. Since the distances in the works of Nasuh Matrakçı are by no means reliable, the artist was nowhere near the exact geographical distances. Some of these places around the city of Dargazin are either not located there at all or are at a great distance from it, which indicates the importance of the maps for political and military purposes, rather than strictly geographical ones. But the second category of Matrakçı's paintings includes the painting of the Dargazin gardens, which contains valuable information about the architecture of these. The tree planting system, the division of water between the gardens, the division of the land network and the determination of the boundary between the gardens and the trees, and the location and geometry of the plan of the towers inside the garden can all be seen. The examination and attention to detail in these paintings show a connection among the components of the gardens. The stream of water resources that run under the garden walls, without disturbing the façade, the streams in front of the building and fruit trees, and the use of octagonal plans in the structures inside the garden to better use sunlight, show a kind of garden design suitable for cold climates. To these elements can be added some water features and the creation of pools on higher areas to control the water and bring it to the gardens, all of which shows the evolution and progress in the use of private and public resources in this place. Therefore, relying on these components, it can be claimed that the Dargazin gardens, as noted by Evliyâ Çelebi who saw them up close during his visit a century later and was amazed by their beauty, were used for recreation, and thus to increase the well-being of the residents of this place in the Safavid period. This research, in addition to proving the position and importance of Dargazin in the past by relying on the paintings of Nasuh Matrakçı, provides information on how to create traditional recreational spaces for new architects and urban planners. It also seeks to create a new branch of historical studies based on painting, and contributes to the works of scholars in using these valuable documents to enrich historical research.

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