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## Traditional Gardens of Anatolia in term of the Vineyard and Vegetables: The Case Study Siirt Gardens

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### Abstract

Mesopotamia is the region where milestone in human history has been developed and the first settled societies were formed. The formed agricultural structure in the region was differentiated and developed according to the relationship between the region's geographical specifications, life features of people who live in that region and food sources. In this process, vineyards and vegetable gardens that are regional gardens were formed in the scope of agricultural structure. In traditional life, the vineyards are agricultural fields where the fruit need which is based on dryland farming, the vegetable gardens are agricultural fields where vegetable production is mostly made and based on irrigated farming. The city of Siirt where was built on the high parts of Mesopotamia is one of the oldest places in the world which the vineyard. In this study; vineyards and vegetable gardens in and around the city of Siirt were evaluated in terms of their general garden plan, its elements, and border plants by examining their general specifications. In this way, the regional garden cultures that have reached from the past to modern-day introduction was aimed. In the region, the signs of these traditional gardens' essential cultures were detected. The vineyards and vegetable gardens kept their existence up to modern-day as an important element of regional nutrition relations and economy by providing the daily fruit – vegetable need. However, the local gardens that have come from history are gradually becoming narrow and changing its quality because of urbanization and intensive agriculture.

**Keywords:** Mesopotamia, garden culture, fruit - vegetable, urbanization, Anatolia

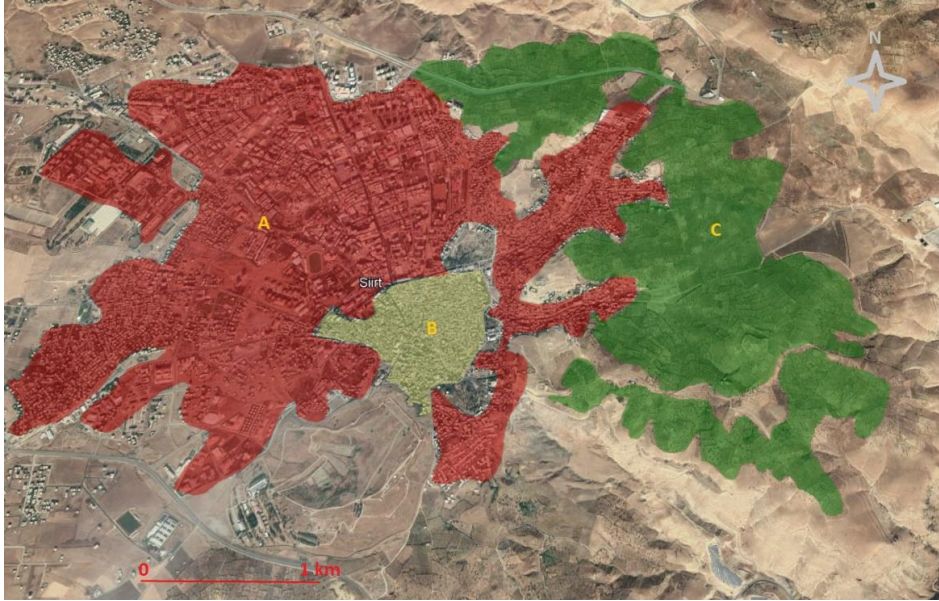
## INTRODUCTION

The Fruit-tree cultivation in Mesopotamia region was started relatively in a later period according to other agriculture branches. It is known that grape, fig, and olive were cultivated in the Bronze Age (3000 BC- 1000 BC) (Hobhouse, 2002; Zohary at all., 2012). Horticulture indicates a fully sedentary way of life. Though grow fruit were forced to pass into the settled life in the first periods of history. The agriculture villages in river basins of Mesopotamia were formed as the first cities of the world in the years of 4000 BC. In the archeological diggings, discoveries were made belong to species that can be bred as vegetative such as olive, wine grape, fig, dates, and pomegranate (Zohary and Spiegel-Roy, 1975; Zohary at all., 2012). The vineyard and vegetable garden culture are in the Mesopotamia region, including the Siirt region which is also known as “core zone” as well as the first cultivated grains in agriculture (Orhan at all., 2011). The city of Siirt is placed in Dicle part of Mesopotamia and South East Toros Mountains side curves zone. The region is known as one of the centers which the oldest vineyard and garden growing area. There is an essential vineyard and garden culture in the city. Thus, Katip Çelebi refers to a very famous grape species that is known as Şafii grape in Siirt region in his travel book that he wrote in XVII. Century. Another indicator for this richness is 35 species of local grape in the modern-day

were determined in the study plot (Özgen and Karadoğan 2009; Uyak and ark., 2011). Centrum of Siirt was built by; water sources (fountains and wells), worship places and markets similar to other Anatolian cities. (Cerasi, 2001; Özcan, 2006; Kejanlı, 2010). While the city consisted of attached stone houses around the centrum and vineyards and vegetable gardens around these stone houses until the 1960s, it grew swiftly and started to lose its old identity (Özgen and Karadoğan 2009). The change in the term of the housing styles have been started after the 1960’s period and this change continues up to today. This situation is changing the traditional tissue of the city. The local gardens are also being affected by this new change that modernism is imposing on the city. In the modern-day, there are a few vineyards and vegetable gardens left from the past. Especially vegetable gardens and vineyards which have an important place in the traditional identity of the city are in danger of vanishing or changing. In this study; vineyards (bag) and vegetable gardens (bostan) were identified in terms of the historical developments from past to present and the structure of the traditional gardens has been identified in the city of Siirt.

## MATERIALS and METHODS

In this study, the vegetable gardens and vineyards which are traditional gardens around Siirt were examined (Map1).



**Figure 1:** General Map of the research area: A - new city area; B - old city area; C - Study plot

The analysis was made and collected data related to general planning, land use, and design characteristics, parcel conditions of gardens, garden elements and growing plant species and growing methods by face to face interviews with stakeholders. After that, the conversations with local people and individuals of area have been done and verbal data has been collected after that this data has been coded with help of the qualitative data processing program. In the content of this, qualitative data's were analyzed and finding has been processed in the light of the deep interview. In identifying some natural plants that are detected in vineyards, a benefit was taken from the flora of Turkey (Davis, 1965-1968)

## RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The following information has been acquired from the study related to vineyards and vegetable gardens from the past to the present of Siirt.

### Vineyards- Traditional Turkish Garden (Bağ)- in Siirt;

The vineyards were located properly to established the region's

topographical specifications in the close areas of the city. On the locating, the distances of vineyards were a decisive factor. The necessity of crossing the distance between the city and vineyards by walking or pack animals set a limit to the widening of vineyards. Donkey used to be used for transportation and carrying loads because its maintenance is easier. Besides this, those who have economic power and possibility used to use a horse. In general, the planning of the vineyards is dominated by simplicity. A style based on general usage was formed as well as there were no certain design rules. The center of this style consists of petal leaf trees that can be sat under their shadow. In the close perimeter of these trees, while early riser and edible grape species were being grown, the temporary and for-drying grape species were being grown as go farther from the center. The peanut, fig and almond trees take place in hillsides and outer areas of vineyards in a way that won't make shadow to hanging gardens. In order to help the planted trees grow in hillsides and ease the pruning and fruit collecting, the perimeters of trees are surrounded by terraces. The most important feature of

vineyards is that they were built by close relatives who come together. The vineyards won't be sold to someone who non-relative so that the privacy and safety of the vineyards maintained. Vineyards contain a certain amount of privacy feeling, the introversion created the unchangeable character of the vineyards. The main plant of the region vineyards is grape that is growing in order to provide the sugar needs of the public. Grape; used to be grown for wine-making in the period which the Christians used to live, as well as both fresh and dry grape consumption. Pistachio and almond are being grown commercially in the vineyards; pear, fig, and sumac are being grown in the houses for personal consumption. In order to determine the limits in the vineyards, some bush plants that spreading by its bottom shoots and resistant against drought such as *Rosa foetida* Herrm. and *Rosa hemisphaerica* J. Herrm., roses and *Rosa canina* L., and almond, sumac trees which won't cause a problem in the border conflicts and the economic value is relatively less are being planted. Vineyards are sanctuaries that are free from the commonness of the daily life and nested with nature. People who live in Siirt that the summer is very hot and arid, so they used to take shelter in vineyards, which have shadow and cooler places to get away from the city. Besides this the vineyards; used to be used for thinking, spending some free time and resting purposes. Also, the vineyards used to form a habitat for wildlife. A well-used to be opened for providing water for those who come to the vineyard and a few vineyards could use it at the same time. A shadow making foliated tree used to be planted next to the well. A flat surface stone used to be placed next to the well pointing the qibla for performing prayer. Vineyards; are in such a position that they are feeding,

sheltering and breeding environments for various plant species and small wild animals. Also, the vineyards around the city connect the woodland and green corridor that it forms for wild animals; it provides a safe passage to these wild animals which are stuck to these areas. Because of this reason the vineyards are partially hunting areas.

### **Vegetable Gardens–Traditional Turkish Garden (Bostan)- in Siirt;**

In general, vegetables are being grown in vegetable gardens for commercial purposes. The size of the water source determines the size of vegetable gardens. The transportation and distance are important determinative factors for the location of the vegetable gardens as well as for the vineyards. In transportation and load carrying, mostly mule was used because it can take more loads. There were two parts in vegetable gardens; the water source pool and the vegetable growing area around it. The pool and its perimeter were available for everyone and whoever wants to benefit from this water, they used to benefit from it. The vegetable garden pool can be square, rectangle, circle, ellipse, etc. shape. The size of the pools wouldn't be less than Kulleteyn, which is the ideal size for Muslims to perform ablution. Stairs were built in the middle of the pool for the usage of ablution. A flat surface stone used to be placed next to the well pointing the qibla. Around the pool, mulberry trees with big and plenty of leaves that grow fast used to be placed. The pool used to be built to the closest point to the water source. In the part of water falling to the pool, there used to be a hollow, the water used to be gathered here and everyone used to take from here and the water used to be poured to the pool from there. The pool used to have two exits; one at the below-bottom, other at the top-surface. The below exit used to be used when there will be irrigation and

the water used to be directed to the inside of the vegetable garden. When the pool is overflowed, the pouring water from the top is directed to the vegetable garden. The pool is in such a position that, it is in the center of the vegetable garden. The close areas to the pool are reserved for foliage such as parsley and basil and for the every-day collecting vegetables such as tomato, cucumber, and pepper. In the farther places, less frequent harvesting vegetables such as eggplant used to be grown. The vegetables grown in the vegetable gardens used to be consumed both fresh and dried or kept as paste or pickle. Around the vegetable gardens, water-dependent species as fence plants, especially pomegranate used to be grown. Also, bushes used to be grown such as apple, sumac, *R. canina*, *R. foetida*, and *R. hemisphaerica*. Also daffodil (*Narcissus tazeta* L.) used to be grown at the bottom of pomegranate trees. The daffodils are used for a sign that the dirt has warmed up and digging time has come when they started to vegetate.

#### **DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION**

The city has taken its shape without certain planning in its physical structure forming and development, its physical structure has taken shape naturally by the public's possession. It because there were no green areas in this developing structure of the city, the public has built long-standing very old vineyards and vegetable gardens around the city and these gardens had a very important place in the city's identity. The regional gardens of the city; vineyards and vegetable gardens have been shaped under the effect of three basic factor; first of these and undoubtedly the most important one the geographical and climate circumstances of the city; second is the cultural accumulation and religious

mentality of different ethnic and social structures that form the society, the third basic factor is the production and consumption relations of the society. In the forming of vineyard and vegetable garden culture, the suitability of the definition of 'Heaven', described as "The place that's shaded by trees and every kind of fruit tree exists." in Islam, found its reflection in vineyards and vegetable gardens. As for in Christianity the important place of wine and grape in the religion, developing the vineyard growing in the region and diversifying the grapes. The vineyards-vegetable gardens that the public lives in and satisfy its needs comprehended as a symbol of reverence and admiration to nature and plants-animals by the same public; embraced as a reflection in its dreams – a small model of heaven. In this way, unlike the other eastern societies, it's shaped and used the vineyards and vegetable gardens with avoiding any type of exaggeration, appropriate to their function and needs. The commerce in the social organization based on the relation of locals with dirt found its place near agriculture and affected it. While the grown vegetable and fruit satisfy the need for landowners and the townspeople, it is also be used as a commercial product. The urbanites whose nutrition resources attached to vineyards and vegetable gardens to some degree are also provided a motive force for the production by keeping the vineyards and vegetable gardens sustaining. In this way, there is a mutual addiction between vineyard and vegetable garden owners and the townspeople. The life standard remained at such a level that the public can provide only for themselves because the region is far from production level which would create luxury and pride. Turkey's economy started to apply a developing strategy based on export after the 1980s.

This strategy encouraged modern-day agriculture made for commercial purposes especially in West Anatolia (Mediterranean and Aegean regions). In the region, usage of new growing techniques by means of scientific developments and by improvement studies, in addition to developing species resistant against diseases, effective usage of agricultural fertilizers and pest controls increased the fruit and vegetable production at a significant rate. In addition to that, the conveniences provided by developing the transportation services in the country, besides exporting the grown agriculture products, carrying them even to farthest corners of Anatolia in a cheaper, quicker way heavily affected the local growers such as Siirt. The agricultural structure of the affected region couldn't keep up with this situation and lost blood at a significant rate. Siirt, where was a living vineyard-vegetable garden center, is facing the danger of losing these values. As a result of increasing costs in the vineyard-vegetable garden, increasing of modern agricultural production, gradually urbanizing of consumption, etc; the vineyards-vegetable gardens are changing their location, losing their lands and losing their function-importance.

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