

## 10 Timcheh Bakhshi

### Morpho-Cultural Evolution of a Lost Timcheh in a Persian Bazaar

*Poorang Piroozfar, Hamidreza Jayhani,  
Eric Farr, and Elmira Mahmoodi*

#### Introduction

Bazaars have been an inextricable and indispensable component of the traditional Persian cities' spatial structure. The mesmerising mystical attraction of long labyrinth-like market structures (Rasteh Bazar) and the way in which the goods were put on display held a special allure for users and visitors alike. Continuous development of the city and the need to expand trade infrastructures provided a great opportunity for developing the main structure of its Bazaar – sometimes pre-planned but mostly developed organically – through new additional spaces. There is a relatively broad variety of such spaces due to their planned or actual roles and (trans)formation processes. The level and extent of their physical, spatial, socio-cultural, economic, and in rare cases even socio-political interaction with Bazaar structure and, more importantly so, with the urban texture played another substantial role in their chronological and typological development. This is regardless of whether Bazaar had immediately been superimposed on, or meanderingly diffused in, its urban context. This applies to a significant number of Persian Bazaars including Bazaar of Kashan. There is a need for more in-depth investigation of such spatial variations with reference to, (i) the ways in which they were facility-managed and (ii) the inter-relationships they nurtured between the vocations they accommodated and the parties involved in procurement and production processes. This in return impacted trading practices, the social constructs, and subsequently formed the morphology of bazaar. The bazaar's creation and development adopted a unique approach to sustainability which has been rooted in its vernacular capacities to perform.

#### The Morphology of the City of Kashan

The city of Kashan is located in an arable strip between the Mount Karkas domains to the west and The Desert Plain (Dasht-e Kavir) to the east. Throughout this strip, potable water is carried and dispensed, using a series of borehole chains (Qanat<sup>1</sup> or Kariz/Karez), from the heights of the

Mount Karkas to the lower levels of the Desert Plain and to agricultural lands in-between. Due to such highly engineered irrigation system, formation of pre-historic human settlements, heavily reliant on the agricultural economy, was made possible in the region. Sialk Hill (Tappeh Sialk) – now a protected archaeological site on the city's outskirts not far from Kashan city centre – is an exemplar of such early settlements dating back to the 5th Millennium BCE (Ghirshman, 1938). There is also a plethora of other less-developed settlements in form of Farmstead (Mazraeh), some of which developed a demarcating fortress for defence and protection purposes hence repurposed as Fortress (Ghaleh). Some of the old names for Kashan – e.g., Forty Fortresses (Chehel Hesaran; Narāqī, 1966: 15) – and the fact that Sialk Hill is now located in the suburbs of the modern city of Kashan suggest that the city dates back over 8,000 years ago. Archaeological excavations suggest that the post-Islamic city was mainly developed around the ancient and pre-Islamic settlements of which some grew higher significance, acquired more power, wealth, and developed dominance over the others or throughout the city due to their closer proximity to the existing regional link roads.<sup>2</sup>

Under the Seljuks (1037–1194), the city attracted more attention. A city wall was built for the first time, while some of the inner-city districts and important buildings also received further attention (Birashk, 2020: 135–142). A good example is Jameh Mosque, which was further developed, and a new Minaret was appended. The construction of the new city wall and two sets of two opposite gates instigated the need for two inner-city passages; one linking the two new main gates to the east (Market Gate [Darvaazeh Sough])<sup>3</sup> and to the west of the city (Fin Gate [Darb-e Fin]),<sup>4</sup> and another, connecting the other two gates to the north (Jamaal-Abaad Gate [Darvaazeh Jamaal-Abaad]) and to the south of the city (Isfahan Gate [Darvaazeh Isfahan]). This is not only important in the history of Kashan but also for the morpho-cultural discourse of this study as the east-west passage formed the core of the Bazaar. It is also important that the main Bazaar Passage (east-westwards passage) maintained its prominence, despite new developments being added almost always exclusive to the east of the main core pre-historic settlement in the city under Ilkhanates (1255–1335) and Timurids (1370–1505),<sup>5</sup> and later under Safavids (1501–1736)<sup>6</sup> and Qajars (1785–1925).<sup>7</sup>

### **The Bazaar and Its Financial, Structural, and Physical Relationships to the Urban Context**

The Bazaar of Kashan starts from Pa-Nakhl Bazaar to the northwest of Kamaal ol-Molk Square and extends all the way to Coppersmiths (Mesgar-ha) Bazaar near Government Gate (Darvazeh Dowlat) linking Market Gate to the east, to Fin Gate to the west of the city. The Bazaar includes main markets and orders such as Pa-Nakhl Bazaar, New Path (Gozar-e Nau) Bazaar, Goldsmiths (Zargar-ha) Bazaar, Shoemakers (Kaffash-ha) Bazaar,

Drapers/Mercers (Bazzaz-ha) Bazaar, Gheisarieh Bazaar, Mianchal Bazaar, Upper Bazaar (Bala-Bazaar), and Coppermiths Bazaar. This predominantly linear structure comprises a section in the middle – around Gheisarieh – with a grid structure. It also incorporates a plethora of subsidiary orders and other elements such as timchehs, sarais, and caravansarais as well as mosques, public baths, and public water reservoirs.

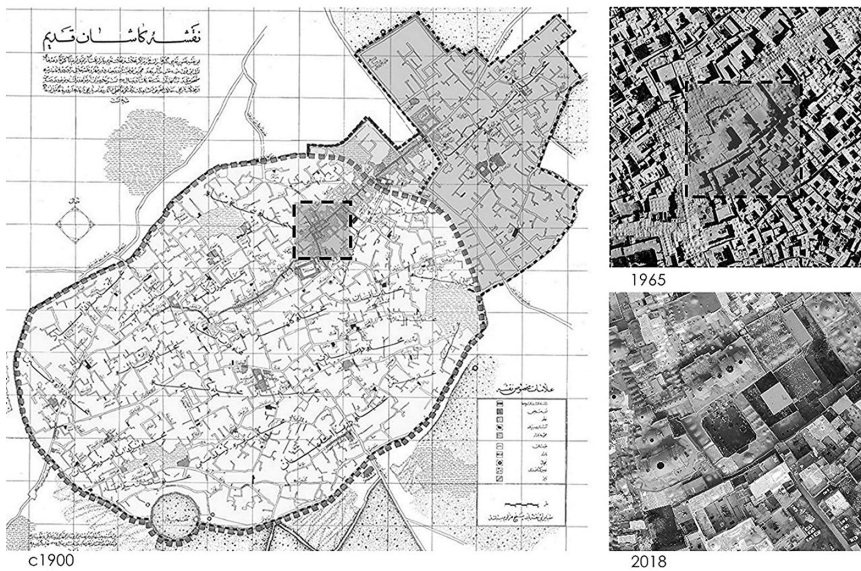
The old city's core Bazaar (Pa-Nakhl) located in the south of the Old Square (Maidan-e Kohneh) District, indicates the original external boundary of the old city. In the Islamic era, Kashan was developed eastwards and southwards. Under Seljuks, a new wall with four main gates was built to protect the city, of which the one to the east was located at the outer end of, and hence named after, Bazaar (Sough Gate); where Mianchal Chahar-Sough<sup>8</sup> is located today (Birashk, 1996: 384–385). Research suggests that Mianchal Chahar-Sough has probably most likely become a prominent urban node at the intersection of two main north-south and east-west passages in the old city dating back to circa C 1010 CE,<sup>9</sup> when the main structure of the city took its final shape (Birashk, 1996: 388). Development of the Bazaar continues further towards the east under the Seljuks to where Stone Square (Maidan-e Sang), the new square in C15th CE, was formed (Birashk, 2020: 146). This alongside the construction of the new Jameh Mosque and Stone Square Complex is another proof of the city's prospering economy in C15th CE (Kalāntar Zarrabi, 1999: 295), which led to further development of Bazaar eastwards. This, although to different extents and with different pace and speed, has been the case under both Safavids and Qajars until late C19th when important structures, e.g., Timcheh Amin od-Dolleh were added to the Gheisarieh area in Bazaar near Mianchal Chahar-Sough which has maintained its eminence to date. Another non-economic reason to render the significance of Timcheh Amin od-Dolleh higher than other Timchehs is arguably its role in socio-cultural events and religious ceremonies which were held there annually. In this role, Timcheh Amin od-Dolleh worked as yet another chain link to connect Bazar with communities in its immediate but not necessarily commercially-bound surroundings. This is only one but quite an important reason in a series of reasons which resulted in Timcheh Amin od-Dolleh overshadowing Timcheh Bakhshi rendering it as The Lost Timcheh in terms of its cultural and functional significance.

According to several Voyage Memoirs (Safarnameh),<sup>10</sup> the Bazaar of Kashan has been experiencing a thriving period until mid-C19th CE. For instance, Adam Olearius (1669), in his 1647 *Beschreibung der muscowitzischen und persischen Reise*,<sup>11</sup> refers to an extraordinarily magnificent and astounding Bazaar in Kashan. Vocations, financial, and production activities in Kashan's Bazaar are also mentioned widely in Western travellers', ambassadors', and diplomats' memoirs. In his 1686 *Journal du voyage du Chevalier Chardin en Perse*,<sup>12</sup> Jean Chardin (1963), whose work is widely regarded as the finest early western scholarly work on Persia, proclaims that yarn-threading, silk-weaving, velvet-making, satin-weaving, brocade

fabric-making, coppersmithing, and silversmithing were the main drivers of the economy of the city with no other noteworthy competitors throughout the country. Silk-weaving and coppersmithing were also highlighted in Baron De Bode's 1845 *Travels in Luristan and Arabistan*.<sup>13</sup> This conforms to Persian scholars' and statespersons' accounts such as Zarrābi's description in his 1872 *Meraat ol-Ghasaan* (Kalāntar Zarrabi, 1999: 227). This prosperity did not last beyond mid-C19th (Narāqi, 1966: 272) and has been on a downward trajectory ever since.

Although Timcheh and Sarai-e Bakhshi (and Amin od-Dolleh) remain almost untouched, a wave of new urbanisation starts changing the vernacular urban texture in the city and even in Bazaar. Modernisation in the old bazaar almost extends to the well-protected two Timcheh and Sarai which still remain untouched. Opportunities to preserve and restore the Lost Timcheh may be lost soon if no proportionate action is taken.

Nevertheless, Bazaar has always had a close connection with its immediate urban context, and Middle Bazaar and Gheisarieh have been no exception (Figure 10.1). Gheisarieh, had links to Chain Gate (Darb-e Zanjir) District to the south and, through Chain Gate Passage and Gollan Gate



*Figure 10.1* Left: Old map of Kashan towards the end of the Qajar era (Courtesy of Mrs. Soraya Birashk), the marked square shows the location of Timcheh and Sarai-e Bakhshi and Amin od-Dolleh in Bazaar and within the city circa 1900. Top right: Timcheh and Sarai-e Bakhshi and Amin od-Dolleh, Central Bazaar of Kashan, 1965 (Aerial photo: National Cartographic Centre of Iran). Bottom right: Timcheh and Sarai-e Bakhshi and Amin od-Dolleh, 2018 (UAV Photo: H. Jayhani)

(Darb-e Gollan, aka Pa-Derakht) Passage, to Minting (Zarrabkhaneh) and Scale (Paghapan) Districts. The historic area of Gheisarieh has also had access to the Tamqachi-ha District to the north and through the Tabrizi-ha and Tamqachi-ha Passages was also connected to the urban areas and neighbourhoods located to the north of Bazaar. Gheisarieh has been the house to Timcheh and Sarai-e Amin od-Dolleh, Timcheh and Sarai-e Bakhshi, Timcheh Haji Seyyed Agha and Mianchal Madreseh,<sup>14</sup> and Mosque. This prolonged and broad historic connection comprised not only an organically developed physical connection between Bazaar structure and its surrounding urban texture but also facilitated trades between the centralised Bazaar economy and small industrial and craftsmen workshops located to the south of Bazaar and the trade houses in the Jewish Quarter in Bazaar's immediate contiguities.

### **Timcheh and Sarai-e Bakhshi: An Exemplar in Bazaar of Kashan**

Historical site surveys and comparative content analysis of historical references<sup>15</sup> suggest that Haj Mohammad Hossein Malek ot-Tojjār, a successful businessman, decided to add a new Timcheh to his existing Sarai after experiencing a thriving business (Kalāntar Zarrabi, 1999: 426). Both Sarai and Timcheh were initially named after him, which later changed to Sarai and Timcheh Bakhshi, respectively (Figure 10.2).

Contrary to many other examples where the evidence suggests that Sarai and Timcheh were built simultaneously as a single project, the Timcheh Malek ot-Tojjār has been developed in a responsive mode, as a gradual process in response to the thriving business in the Sarai. For a thriving international business, the Timcheh (Figure 10.2, top left) gradually and organically developed – where the physical space was available (Figure 10.2, bottom left) – as a luxury storefront to showcase its very own handmade-carpets, while the noisy machines were at work, hidden in the Sarai (Figure 10.2, top right) behind the scenes. The Sarai housed the crucial but not so glamorous production activities such as classifying, clustering, purifying, processing, weaving, and dyeing the wool threads for carpets, a painfully meticulous yet repetitive, strenuous, cluttered, untidy, and malodorous process.

### **Location and Access**

Although the oldest core of Bazaar of Kashan dates back to Seljuks, it has been destroyed due to several high magnitude earthquakes throughout its history. The Bazaar as it stands today is what has been rebuilt and extended mostly during Safavid and Qajar eras. Although the location of the Bazaar within the city has remained almost intact, its development alongside its significance and socio-economic impact have gradually shifted from west towards east under both Safavid and Qajar Empires. This shift has mirrored

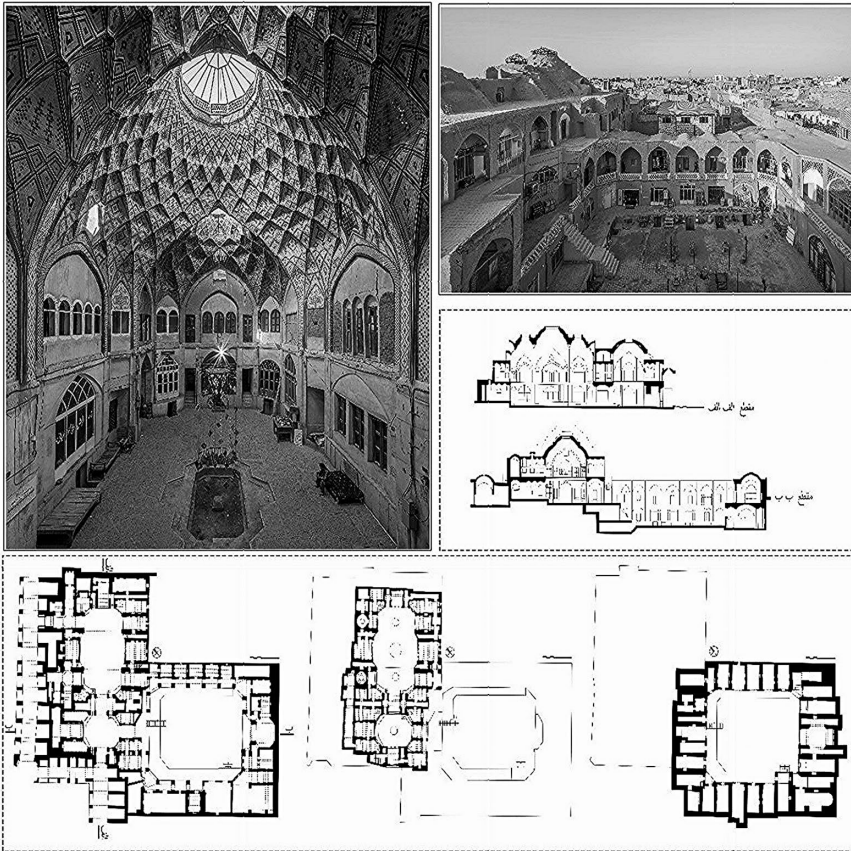


Figure 10.2 Top left: Timcheh Bakhshi. Top right: Sarai-e Bakhshi. Middle right and bottom: Sections and plans of Timcheh and Sarai-e Bakhshi (Photos: Courtesy of A.H. Pashaei; Drawings: Courtesy of Ganjnamah, Shahid Beheshti University Archive and Haji-Qassemi, 2004).

the weight and value of some of the most significant edifices in or around the Bazaar even as significant as Old Jameh Mosque along with Maidan Mosque and other Bazaar's financial and trade quarters (i.e., Sarais and Timchehs). Sarai and Timcheh Bakhshi were on the thriving side of the Bazaar and had therefore been most likely to enjoy the prosperity which drove the new extensions and developments in that section of Bazaar.

### Morpho-Cultural Evolution: Bazaar as a Living Organism

Traditional Bazaar in the Middle East has been an amalgamation of a relatively broad spectrum of activities ranging from small-scale fabrication

and production activities to support services, and from logistics to direct business activities or trades in large- to medium-scales (wholesale). The dynamicity of the urban texture of the Bazaar of Kashan (Figure 10.1) is not unprecedented in old cities in the Middle East. What is unique about Bazaar of Kashan and more specifically about Timcheh and Sarai-e Bakhshi (Figure 10.2) is that this mechanism works in there with close resemblance to a living organism – a living culture whose evolution results in its incremental growth, and in doing so, perfecting its metamorphosis within its urban texture. This morphological growth is associated with maturing its culture not only in its broadest sense – as a way of life – but also in its biological sense – as the activity of breeding and/or growing particular living organisms – old or new, small or large – in order to maximise their produce – in this case, financial gain, or revenue. This, however, had a wider and deeper impact than just a purely financial relationship between the owner of Timcheh on the one hand, and the craftspersons, the highly specialised trade-workers and tradespersons who worked in Sarai (and Timcheh), on the other hand. Indeed, it provided a storefront to present the most presentable features of the carpet trade, the post-production and refinement of carpets, an immaculate, painstaking, and highly specialised trade that could showcase the delicacy and intricate nature of the carpet-making, deterring attention from the noisy, messy, and malodourous activities associated with subsidiary businesses and support services for hand-carpet-making. Timcheh was turned into the business quarter to welcome, provide some fascinating story yet clean and immaculate picture of the thriving carpet business; what was expected to help in sweetening the deal for business negotiations. In that sense the very morphological evolution of this section of Bazaar (Timcheh and Sarai-e Bakhshi) is closely woven into its very cultural identity, where culture does not bear only the weight and significance of a social construct but also in the existence and growth of a living (micro)organism; hence materialising the co-existence and interwovenness of ‘culture as the social construct’ with ‘culture as the life of an ever-evolving live entity’ of and (with)in the urban texture.

### **Vernacularity as Sustainability in Timcheh and Sarai-e Bakhshi**

Sustainable development, as known to us, was first coined in Brundtland Commission Report in 1987. The triple bottom-line of sustainability, however, is inherent in the vernacular architecture. But we argue that the concept of sustainability in vernacular architecture (at least in, but probably not limited to, Iran) extends above and beyond the mere three. Indeed, dating back to 500 BCE, vernacular architecture in Iran – as well as some other countries in the Middle East – have had close associations with the concept of sustainability where not only are the two – vernacular architecture and sustainability – not mutually exclusive but almost inseparable. Such

association is evident in Bazaar of Kashan and in Timcheh Bakhshi where the co-existence of the triple bottom-line of sustainability (Environmental, Social, and Economic) was developed, well beyond their mere implications in isolation, into their wider scope as Planet, People, and Profit (Prosperity), alluding to what mutual interactions of each two out of the three bottom-line may have to offer, namely, Viability (as an intersection between Economic and Environmental performance), Bearability (as an intersection between Social and Environmental performance), and Equitability (as an intersection between Social and Economic performance).

The compact architecture of Timcheh reduces the external envelope directly exposed to the harsh climatic condition of hot and arid Kashan on the outskirts of Maranjab Desert in Iran (Bearability). Added to this are the thick fabric construct of walls and roofs (Viability) made out of high thermal mass adobe brick (Bearability), and a limited number and controlled size of openings (Bearability). The use of bluescape (as well as greenscape in confined inner courtyards throughout Bazaar) accompanied by 'integrated windcatchers'<sup>16</sup> improves indoor environment comfort levels through facilitating natural ventilation thereby enhancing air quality, moderating the indoor air temperature, adding to the indoor relative humidity content, and improving the indoor ambient light levels and quality (Environmental/Planet + Bearability). Moreover, the tendency to avoid any unnecessary futility – in architectural and spatial planning and design, use of materials, and spatial hierarchy – which is one of the principles followed in Persian Architecture according to Pirnia<sup>17</sup> (1990), is clearly evident moving from outside to the inside of Bazaar structure and subsequently into the Sarai and Timcheh Bakhshi. Needless to say, that this would have needed to be and have been achieved with the need to showcase a thriving business inside the newly designed and constructed Timcheh. This has resulted in a glorious space inside (Profit/Prosperity) with stunning triple-height central core space inside with very limited to minor manifestation from outside (Bearability). This environmentally-enforced modesty is even more palpable and profound when combined with the use of locally sourced prevailing materials that is mudbrick – on its own or in combination with burnt clay brick (Viability). Coloured ceramic tiles – used scarcely outside and abundantly inside – were used not only for their decorative and ornamental values but also almost always as a way of framing, glorifying or celebrating the structural forces' natural paths in and through the superstructure of the buildings of outstanding socio-cultural values.

### **Spatial and Organisational Analyses of the Lost Timcheh**

The organisational analysis of the Lost Timcheh is intertwined with its structural analysis. Use of naturally inspired (Viability + Bearability) and long-trialled forms most suited to build with locally sourced materials – mostly sourced from earth in the form of rammed earth and adobe brick



for structural/load-bearing elements of the buildings (Viability), and glazed, fired, and hardened in form of coloured ceramic tiles for decoration (Prosperity/Profit) while adding resistance against wear and tear (Viability) thereby adding to the building performance (Bearability), elongating its service life (Viability) and reducing the need for maintenance and repair (Profit) were the main building and construction technology strategies utilised for building the new Timcheh. The fact that the region is prone to the earthquake has not been of any help. This required more trialled but of course still, largely experiential methods to be able to build safely using the locally available/sourced materials and technologies (Viability). This problem, always very well-known in the region, was somewhat aimed to be rectified through utilisation of space hierarchy to allow for a more natural distribution of structural loads using the mass of the adobe bricks and burnt clay bricks (Viability). On the other hand, there was yet another aim to be achieved which would have put a new restraint on dealing with the delicate structural demands of a building of this scale (Viability); that was the spatial organisation of Timcheh Bakhshi (Bearability+Prosperity). According to Pirnia, human-centricity has always been at the heart of Persian Architecture (People). But the tribute to human beings as the users of space was celebrated even more, being promoted to another level of a publicly declared homage to the users of space; not only broadly but also more specifically in celebration of the specific purpose of the Lost Timcheh: a celebration of hand-carpet-making (People + Profit). In doing so the inner hierarchical order of the space equally compares and, in some respects, outranks its competitors (Prosperity). Pre-planned but phased development of Timcheh Bakhshi (Viability) provided some room for contemplation and allowed for an immaculate design that contains a ‘Hashti’ – entrance lobby – for the complex with its dedicated lockable gate for security and protection overnight (Prosperity/Profit), a triple-height central circular core space (Bearability) fully covered using most stunning pointed dome (Social/People), embraced in the middle by a series of Hojreh<sup>18</sup> spaces for shops or small workshops as trade units (Profit).

### **The Lost Timcheh’s Role in Land Economy: Interaction with and within the City and Beyond**

City of Kashan’s land economy – both urban and rural – was heavily dependent on, if not dominated by, agriculture, and within it, more specifically by animal husbandry and livestock farming for meat, milk, and fibre until the mid-twentieth century. While meat and milk had distinct purposes thereby relying on more dependable markets with a steady sustainable demand, fibre (wool) had a different story. Before industrialisation, the apparel industry in Iran was limited to local production facilities with low demand for cotton and wool to produce textile and fabric. Therefore, a big portion of the fibre produce remained unused and was traditionally

absorbed by hand-carpet-making workshops/industry. A few businessmen were quite successful to introduce new economic cycles to reform – mostly unknowingly – the hand-carpet-making industry into a more organised business and in return managed to also enhance the economic cycles associated with it. Malek-ot-Tojjar – among few others – was one of successful businessmen who managed to do so. As a result of his initiatives, hand-carpet-making started to find a key role in the economy of the city of Kashan and its associated and dependent rural areas more than ever before. As mentioned earlier, the planning and building of Timcheh Bakhshi was a response to the growing need for accommodating and showcasing Malek ot-Tojjar's prospering hand-carpet-making trade. Streamlining (but not necessarily modernising) the hand-carpet-making was easily manageable in Sarai-e Bakhshi. The Sarai could properly house all the extremely strenuous, untidy, and stinking processes. This included collecting, sorting, cleaning and sanitising, processing, preparing, and weaving the wool, preparing the colour mixes, colouring the wool, stabilising the colour through boiling the coloured wools with natural ingredients in massive pots on open fire, then hanging the wool to dry and finish off the process using a traditional quality control/assurance procedure, carried out by highly experienced carpet tradespersons and experts. This process, once streamlined, created a sustainable thread of entrepreneurship (People, Profit/Prosperity and, at their intersection, Equitability). As a centre for entrepreneurship and trade, Sarai bridged the gap between the rural and urban economies and Timcheh served to further develop this aspect of a trade by providing a very presentable front for showcasing the post-production fine-tuning/refinement of carpets, which provided a more steady and sustainable opportunity to present the business to national and sometimes international businessmen and buyers (expanding on profit/prosperity aspect of sustainability). The new and proactive role of Sarai and Timcheh Bakhshi as two complementary elements in full architectural spatial harmony with one another, gave the carpet a pivotal and reliable role to redefine the economic relationship between the urban and rural areas around the city and establish a flow to reinvigorate the land economy within and across the city and its associated rural areas. This also led to the day-to-day dissolution of the hierarchy in a social class structure during the working hours, even though temporarily (Equitability).

### **The Lost Timcheh as 'A' Lost Cause or Lost Timcheh vs. 'The' Lost Cause**

Despite its eminence, Timcheh Bakhshi, has traditionally been overshadowed by Timcheh Amin od-Dolleh due to political reasons, personal and professional influences, religious connections, and morphology and location-related causes; hence the Lost Timcheh. The state of being lost may have had a double-edged nature. It may have deterred the (wrong) attention from Timcheh Bakhshi in the past, helping preserve its original characteristics

and impeding any major alteration to those original features. This theory, confirmed by the field surveys some of which have been carried out by the authors of this chapter, means that the Lost Timcheh has well been preserved to date and is ready to be receiving the proportionate level of attention and considerate course of actions to help it revive at present and live through to a more promising future. On the other hand, and on a less positive note, if this state of ‘Lostness’ is going to resume, Timcheh Bakhshi may lose opportunities for a duly revival, rehabilitation, or restoration of its architectural merit. Right interventions will enable it to independently continue its morpho-cultural evolution into the future. Once the Lost Timcheh, Timcheh Bakhshi is now at a critical turning point in its history to either continue as ‘a’ lost cause or reprimand its status as ‘the’ lost cause with an intent to rebrand and prepare itself for a new life. In the case of the latter, there are some challenges ahead that need to be considered if versed decisions are intended to be taken.

### **Traditional Trade Structures in the Industry 4.0 Era: Sustainability vs. Sustainability**

The Bazaar’s physical setting has traditionally served as the backbone of a long-established trade structure deeply rooted in many economies across the Middle East. Recent technological advancements have furnished the way for new paradigms in business and trade. Bazaar as a centralised administrative core for business and trade at the city, regional, national, and international levels has already started losing the ground to the technology-driven era in finance and trade. Bazaar of Kashan and even more so the Lost Timcheh are no exceptions. Any long-term decision for the future of Timcheh Bakhshi hinges on a critical balance between the concept of sustainability – as it is intended nowadays – and one more tailored towards a rather more digitally centred future if those decisions are to stand the test of time. In that sense, Timcheh Bakhshi stands at a critical point where it has a great opportunity to leap over many challenges the immediate future might have for it into a more sustainable long-term future awaiting it. This vision heavily depends on how sustainability is seen: as a by-product of Industry 2.0 or 3.0 – what we would call a ‘vulnerable sustainability’ – or alternatively as a paradigm devised, equipped, programmed, and customised for Industry 4.0; what can be termed a ‘sustainable sustainability’. While this requires a comprehensive feasibility study before any firm recommendations are made, what seems to be the way forward for Timcheh Bakhshi is a multivariate scenario approach where there is a high versatility to absorb, adopt, and morpho-culturally adapt to what the future might have in store for the Lost Timcheh.

### **The (Un)Foreseen Future Scenarios for the Lost Timcheh**

If a sustainable route to a long-term sustainability is intended for Timcheh Bakhshi, that will need to be an all-inclusive and versatile solution; one

which provides the Timcheh Bakhshi and its associated complex with a relatively high level of independence to enable them to adopt and adapt to a broad and diverse range of needs, necessities, and requirements foisted upon them by different scenarios for the future. Therefore, while renovation, rehabilitation, restoration, or refurbishment of any building or site of such architectural and heritage merit lies within the national and provincial heritage authorities in Iran like many other countries around the world, unlike many other sites and buildings of cultural heritage value in Iran, Timcheh Bakhshi has a greater chance to trek towards a more guaranteed long-term sustainability while still complying with all norms, standards, requirements, and visions set out or mandated by corresponding authorities. This is due to its unique history, the spatial functionalities associated with it, and socio-cultural capacities attributed to it. While reviving the traditions in and around Timcheh and Sarai-e Bakhshi are highly desirable and attractive for tourists, full and mere restoration of the Timcheh and Sarai from their indolent even idle state and bringing its life or state of full consciousness back to it may or may not be enough, as no longer does any industry – tourism included – seem to be steady and reliable enough to be able to single-handedly provide for a cultural heritage of such scale. Therefore, a more diverse compound exhibiting the traditions of hand-carpet-making on the one hand while providing some creative, innovative, and futuristic insights into how and what this traditional craftsmanship can potentially develop into in the future would look more like an alternative capable of preparing Timcheh and Sarai-e Bakhshi for the future. This core will need to be accompanied by some supporting and backup facilities, services, and functions such as restaurants, cafes, micro-hotels, small interactive art galleries and workshops either in an open-plan setting of the Timcheh Bakhshi cultural complex or segregated yet connected to it. Meanwhile the most prominent and noble cause for its very existence – showcasing the most exhibitable front of hand-carpet-making with an aim to support and boost the trade nationally and internationally – should not be forgotten; the very feature whose remembrance and celebration may eventually put an end to the state of ‘Lostness’ of the Lost Timcheh.

## **Conclusion**

It was discussed that Timcheh and Sarai-e Bakhshi have had a unique history which has both rendered them as the Lost Timcheh/Sarai and yet potentially provided them with a unique opportunity to step up towards some future-proof scenarios as a national cultural heritage in Iran. Discussing the ontological origins of the principles of sustainability (both in its original and extended forms) rooted in vernacular architecture in the region, we discussed more specifically how those principles were achieved within the Lost Timcheh (in interaction with its immediate and remote contexts: Bazaar and City of Kashan). It was also argued epistemologically for a

morpho-cultural existence of the Lost Timcheh and that it is mutually intertwined with its very vernacular survival strategies by means of the first and second tiers of sustainability three bottom lines. Finally, it was hypothesised that acknowledging, understanding, and nurturing this theoretical frame of reference can lead the way in shedding some light on the ways the Lost Timcheh and Sarai can take into the future if a more sustainable, healthy one is intended for them.

## Notes

- 1 Qanāt, (Arabic) also spelled kanat, Persian karez, Berber Arabic foggara, ancient type of water-supply system, developed and still used in arid regions of the world. A qanāt taps underground mountain water sources trapped in and beneath the upper reaches of alluvial fans and channels the water downhill through a series of gently sloping tunnels, often several kilometres long, to the places where it is needed for irrigation and domestic use. The development of qanāts probably began about 2,500 or 3,000 years ago in Iran, and the technology spread eastward to Afghanistan and westward to Egypt. Although new qanāts are seldom built today, many old qanāts are still used in Iran and Afghanistan, chiefly for irrigation (see: <https://www.britannica.com/technology/qanat>).
- 2 Maidan-e Kohneh (the Old Square) District which is also the home to the Seljuk Jameh Mosque is a perfect example of such settlements dating back to pre-Islamic era (Neglia, 2018: 63).
- 3 Sough (or Souk) means Bazaar.
- 4 Fin Garden (Bagh-e Fin), located near Kashan, is a historical Persian garden.
- 5 For example, the New Jameh Mosque Complex.
- 6 For example, New Dolatkhaneh, the Governors' Quarter.
- 7 For example, New Residential Districts and Quarters.
- 8 Chahar-Sough is an important intersection of two main Rasteh (=Orders) in Old Persian Bazaars. Chahar-Sough is usually fully covered by dome-shaped structures higher than the roof structure of the two Rasteh leading to it.
- 9 End of C 4th AH.
- 10 Safarnameh or Safarname is a Persian word which means 'Book of Travel', 'Voyage Memoirs' or 'Travellers' Observations'.
- 11 From a translation to Farsi.
- 12 From a translation to Farsi.
- 13 From a translation to Farsi.
- 14 Also spelt as Madrasa.
- 15 Mostly in Persian/Farsi, e.g., *Mer'āt ol-Ghāsān* (A History of Kashan) by Abdol Rahim Kalāntar Zarrābi (1827–1890 CE), among others.
- 16 A great exemplar of 'integrated windcatchers' can be found in Borujerdi-ha House in central Kashan.
- 17 From a 1991 author's interview with Mohammad Karim PIRNIA (1920–1997), a prominent academic and historian of Persian Architecture.
- 18 Not to be confused with small student study/live places in Madreseh, old traditional schools in the Middle East region.

## References

- Birashk, S. (1996). *Chegūnegī Ravand-i Tose'eh va Takāmol-i Shahr-i Kashan dar Bastar-i Tārīkh*. Proceedings of the Congress of the History of Architecture and Urban Planning of Iran, Volume III. Tehran: Cultural Heritage Organization.

- Birashk, S. (2020). *Kashan, Ravand-i Sheklgīrī va Tose'eh-yi Kashan dar Bastar-i Tārīkh*. Tehran: Sāzemān-i Omrān va Behsāzī Shahrī.
- Bode, C. (1845). *Travels in Luristan and Arabistan*. Abebooks.
- Chardin, J. (1963). *Journal du voyage du chevalier Chardin en Perse & aux Indes Orientales, par la Mer Noire & par la Colchide: qui contient le voyage de Paris à Ispahan*. Wentworth Press.
- Ghirshman, R. (1938). *Fouilles de Sialk près de Kashan 1933, 1934, 1937 1 1*. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Geuthner.
- Haji-Qassemi, K. (2004). *Ganjnāmah: farhang-i āsār-i mi'mārī-i Īslāmī-i Īrān, Vol. 10*. Tīhrān: Rowzaneh.
- Narāqī, H. (1966). *Tārīkh-i ijtimā'ī-yi Kāshān*. [Tīhrān]: Mu'assasah-i Muṭāla'āt va Tahqiqat-i Ijtima'i.
- Neglia, G. (2018). *Water Channels, Routes and Urban Landscape. Interpreting the Urban Fabric of the Traditional City of Kashan*, in *Kashan: An Iranian City in Change*. Ed. By Heinz G., Neglia G., Attilio Petruccioli A., Rafī'pu'r F. Berlin: EB-Verlag.
- Olearius, A., translated to English by Davies J. (1669). *The Voyages and Travels of the Ambassadors Sent by Frederick Duke of Holstein, to the Great Duke of Muscovy, and the King of Persia*, John Starkey and Thomas Basset Publishers.
- Pīr'niyā, M. (1990). *Shīvah'hā-yi mīmārī-i Īrānī*. Tehran: Mu'assasah-i Nashr-i Hunar-i Islāmī.
- Kalāntar Zarrabi, A. (Suhayl Kashani) (1999). *Tārīkh-i Kāshān*. Tīhrān: Mu'assasah-i Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr.