

Original Research Article

Revisiting the Roles of Rooftop Landscapes in Iranian Cities Through Documentaries, Literary-Artistic Works and Case Studies

Ziya Hoseinzadeh*

M.A. in Landscape Architecture, School of Architecture and Urban Design Engineering, Shahid Rajaei Teacher Training University, Tehran, Iran.

Sarah Shokouh

M.A in Landscape Architecture, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Tehran, Iran.

Mohamad Reza Mehrabani Golzar

Assistant Professor, Faculty Member of Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, Imam Khomeini International University, Qazvin, Iran.

Received: 15/03/2021

Accepted: 21/04/2021

Available online: 22/12/2021

Abstract | Iranian cities as rich treasures reflect successful architectural and urban experiences. These cities comprise a myriad of components ranging from small to large. So far, most of these components have been the focus of researchers who have scrutinized their different aspects depending on the subject of research. Despite their numerous functions and potentials, especially in the field of landscape, rooftops (in Persian Baams) have been overlooked by researchers. This is surprising because they are the most important spaces in Iranian homes and cities. Therefore, this study uses document analysis to identify the forgotten and original roles of rooftop landscapes in Iranian cities. The authors of the current study believe that the roofs for Iranian houses do not just cover the lower spaces which merely serving structural function. Therefore, the present study seeks to answer this question: what roles have the rooftop landscapes had in Iranian cities and the lives of residents? This research employs content analysis to analyze documents and data related to roof space in literary texts, historical reports, visual arts associated works, and contemporary cinema. The analysis was based on the data gathered through bibliographic research and field surveys on existing Iranian houses. Roofs in Iranian cities and houses have had various functional patterns and rooftop landscapes and have been one of the most important factors contributing to the location of houses and the identity of cities, whose main roles can be identity-associated, social, or nature-related.

Keywords | *Landscape, Nature, Roof, Sky, Social.*

Introduction | Open and semi-open spaces have long been an inseparable part of Iranian houses. In most old houses, man was able to interact with the sky and infinite space at any time. The place where he lived was felt to be part of that infinite space. However, such opportunities are not available in most of the current houses, and in other words, Iranian houses are deprived of such space. This might explain why some people who live in apartments are somehow discouraged, wilted, depressed, and gloomy (Emami, 2011). Iranians from ancient times have always lived in spirit-evoking houses which have been in close connection and reciprocal interaction with

nature. These houses have contributed to the formation of shared memories and meaning, and every corner of them evokes memories and events for the residents of the house. Several components, however, have contributed to designs in Iranian houses, of which the courtyard, porch, moonlight, five-dimensional and three-dimensional rooms, and the roof of the house are the most important (Mansouri, 2009). It seems that the roof is one of the important spaces that has played a role in creating this situation. There are various words and proverbs in Persian and related to roof, *Harke bamash bish barfash bishtar¹*, *Yek baam va do hava²*, *Khorshid labe boom³*, and words such as *Bamdad is Dadeh sobh* or *Sobgahan* which means

*Corresponding author: +989125571342, z.hosseynzadeh@yahoo.com

morning time (Dehkhoda, 1998). *Bamgah* is *Gah Baam* or *Hengam-e- sobh* which stands for dawn *Baamneshin* means someone who lives on the roof (ibid.), *Baamrah* means the way going to the roof (Amid, 1996), *Sobhbaam* means early morning (ibid.), *Baamshad* was the name of a singer who used to play the musical instrument early morning in such a way that made people happy (Tatavi, 2007), *Haftbaam* means seven heavens (Moein, 2007). *Rokhbaam* refers to the edge of a roof, the boundary of a building, or a shell roof (Momeni, Attarian & Mohebian, 2020). Some other similar vocabularies are derived from Baam. In addition, different spaces and components such as the attic, the entrance to the roof, "*Fakhr o Madian*"⁴ as an element to ensure privacy and climate comfort on the roof, mosquito nets to create a space for sleep and rest, and many other examples show the great importance of this space in the lives of the people and the architecture of Iran. However, so far these issues have received less attention from researchers, especially in the field of landscape, and the different potentials of the roof in shaping the concept of housing have been overlooked. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the capacities of landscapes on the roofs in Iranian cities and answer the following question: what roles have the roof landscapes played in Iranian cities and the lives of residents?

Literature review

Research in this field has often dealt with the physical capacities of roofs and has not focused on their semantic aspects and capabilities. Ghanbari and his associates studied the effect of green roofs on reducing air pollution (Ghanbari, Chehrazar & Chehrazar, 2019), Piran and his colleagues examined the role of green roofs in energy storage (Jalil Piran, Mahmoudi Mandani, Hassani & Rahimi, 2019), and Moslemi and his research teammate investigated the role of roofs in the hydraulic response of an urban water basin (Moslemi & Azizi, 2016). In their study, they adopted a climatic approach and did not consider a social, aesthetic, and semantic perspective. In another study, Soltanzadeh examined the effect of geography and culture on the formation of roofs, the focus of his study was more on environmental and geographical factors (Soltanzadeh, 2013). A stream of studies has examined various elements of Iranian houses. Daeipour (2014) highlighted the importance of nature and greenery in Iranian houses and reported how they promoted the sense of belonging of people to nature and home. Bahrani and Sepehri Ahmadi (2018) mentioned the element of Shanashir in the houses located in historical context and expressed its functions. Karimi et al. highlighted the link between residents and housing and expressed the "readability of housing" and "inferential meaning of residents" as the solution to this important issue (Karimi,

Hojjat & Shahbazi Changi, 2018). Among these, only Mansouri in the preface of *Manzar* magazine made a brief reference to the semantic capacities and roof landscapes by using the phrase "Sky landscape" (Mansouri, 2019) while this issue requires more investigation. Therefore, the present study attempts to identify the role(s) of rooftop landscapes in Iranian houses.

Theoretical framework

To know the role of roof landscapes in Iranian houses, it is necessary to understand the role of roofs in the lives of residents and citizens through various documents. This requires answering the following questions: What do these documents include? and in what works have the roof elements been reflected? and through what cultural aspects have the roles of rooftop landscapes been manifested on a larger scale?

Landscape is not only an objective element consisting of natural components, but also it is a mental and cultural element being formed in the minds of people with history, religious and mythological beliefs, climate, biological tradition, and the like (Mansouri, 2009). The language used by authors who are the intellectuals of the society represents the language of the society. This implies that their writings, which include descriptions, novels, and travelogues, are a suitable source for understanding the environment, landscape, and culture (Khademi, 2012). In addition, miniature and painting are among the Iranian arts whose language and expression have their unique features. Regardless of their different perspectives, many researchers have been followers of traditionalist and mystical approaches and sought the surreal ties of landscapes. However, in the absence of evidence from previous periods in various fields (e.g. architecture, gardening, urban planning, art, culture, and landscape) some researchers have examined landscapes through reading them, they have realized their stylistic features in each period (Kateb & Adelvand, 2014). Also, painting art as a complex composition is the result of recognizing man's relationship with nature and its surrounding landscape which is influenced by culture, worldview, and other temporal and spatial features (Amjadi Tarshizi, 2009).

Donald (1999) argues that cities are experienced through their images rather than through material spaces. Cinema, literature, television, and other cultural forms are considered "archives of urban ideas." That is why cinema, like many other mass media, is one of the factors through which part of our image of the city has been shaped and organized (Radvard & Mahmoudi, 2015).

According to what has been discussed, the resources used to identify, analyze and study the rooftop landscapes in this study are summarized in Table 1.

In the following section, documentaries, literary and

Table 1. Resources used in the current study to identify the role of rooftop landscapes. Source: Authors.

Documentation	References	Examples
Documentaries	Historical texts	Travelogues, Historiographies
	Literature	Poems, Novels
Literary and artistic works	Visual arts	-Paintings and works of contemporary painters from the roofs -Miniatures related to roof space events
	Contemporary cinema	Cinematic works related to roof space
Case studies	Iranian houses	Rooftops of houses in the city of Abarghoo

artistic works are examined, and finally, the features and roles of the forgotten rooftop landscapes are scrutinized in the case study of the current study, the roofs of the houses of Abarghoo city,

Reflection of the roles of the rooftop landscape in existing documents

• Documentaries

- Historiography

One of the first sources for gaining information about a particular period is the historical texts, reports, and writings written by historians. Through these documentaries, historians describe the various cultural, economic, political, and artistic conditions of each period. History plays an important role in revealing the forgotten existential factors of previous periods and just like our parents that can tell us about the habits and behaviors of our childhood affecting the development of our natures, its influence always continues, and even if these habits and behaviors disappear from our memories, the emergence of a new tradition will require a connection with the past (Mozayeni, 2009). Therefore, in this part of the research, the roles of rooftop landscapes in Iranian houses are examined through relevant historiographies. In his book, "Remembrance of the Past - Life and History of the Kurdish Jews of Iran", Khalili portrays the presence of the family on rooftops and describes nightmares, and habits of the residents as follows:

"After sunset, the weather was slowly cooling down, since the city of Sanandaj was built between two huge mountain ranges and those mountains prevented the wind from blowing and it was hot at night without cooling devices, people had to spend the nights on the roof and when it was getting dark, the mattresses which had been packed all day in the scorching sun, were spread and since the rooftop was being covered with "mud straw", it was cooling down at the sunset, that's why they rested easily on the carpet on the roof. The samovar and tea set was on the roof, and as usual, every night before dinner, each member of the family had a few cups of tea and then prepared dinner, and most of the families were interested in Abgoosht. Our house was located on the lower floor

and two people had to go to bring the pot of Abgoosht to the roof from the kitchen which was on the other side of the yard,... "(Khalili, 2004, 97).

Mahmoud, in a part of the book on "History of Political Relations between Iran and Britain" in the 19th Century, has stated: "Wherever Professor Brown entered a place, the subject of conversation was just religion, especially when the conversation went round to and came back to the subject of Babi and the Baha'is ... Then each of the audience crawled to a corner and fell asleep. Brown also left the gentlemen in that position, went to the roof, and rested under the starry sky of Kerman" (Mahmoud, 1999, 129).

In the book "From Dawn to Dusk", Katoozian describes the atmosphere of the last days of the Pahlavi regime in the 1950s and explains the reunion of people on the rooftops as follows: "People used this opportunity every night and went to the rooftops and shouted 'Allahu Akbar.' In doing so, they both declared solidarity with each other and brought the regime to its knees psychologically. "We used to do the same. All the neighbors used to go the rooftops and say Allah Akbar in the dark ..." (Katoozian, 2002, 57). Table 2 shows the role of rooftop landscapes cited in the historiographies.

- Travelogues

Travelogues somehow reflect the hopes and disappointments of urban identity. From this perspective, it is the subject of cultural studies of the city and somewhat echoes the culture and identity of a city. On one hand, Travelogues present a review of the condition of roads and, urban planning, architecture, squares, and urban furniture and on the other hand expresses the author's view of people, social relations, conversations, proverbs, and popular culture (Ameli & Akhavan, 2013). For this reason, parts of the travelogues including information about the roof and roof space have been reviewed and presented by the authors of this study. In the book "A Collection of Articles and Travelogues", Garmaroodi describes the city and its silhouette and portrays the roofs as follows: "In 20 miles, Dehuk, a village with impressive architecture and different houses, falls on the right side of the road, with trees and fields. .. And from here, the road splits in

two: from the left, it is 70 miles to Kerman and from the right, it is 12 miles to Tabas. On the way to Tabas, one or two miles past Dehuk, high but still dry and waterless mountains and plants appeared and among the twisting valleys of these mountains, I found only an old reservoir with a magnificent architecture (a dome placed on its top was in the shape of a half-mountaintop, and all sides were symmetrical, there was a hole, which the human's head and chest just could go through). I took a picture and I went past Two meters away, the city begins with tall oak flowers on the side of the street and lush palm trees and orange and tangerine trees ... with houses decorated with rough brick arches, domes, and thatch and from far away, what a unique view has these thatched domes of houses, in the palm trees, which, like many camels, are kneeling in a perpetual grove of ruminants ... "(Mousavi Garmaroodi, 1998, 115).

Ensafpour, in a part of his book entitled "Iran and Iranians Research on one hundred travelogues of the Qajar period": "The roof is in the form of a terrace, which is why it will take some time to complete. In summer, people sleep on the rooftop or terrace around which a wall has been built" (Ensafpour, 1984, 257).

In a part of Dr. Wells' travelogue translated by Gholam Hossein Gharaghazloo, it is stated: "When the pigeons reach the rooftop, they sit on the roof one by one or a

few or so, and by showing excitement and making noise, they start eating the grain from the roof. All these pigeons are domesticated and interested in their owners and if they are being pointed, they will sit on his hands and shoulders" (Wills, 1989, 132). Table 3 shows the roles of roof landscapes extracted from the travelogues.

Literary and artistic works

• Literature

- Novels

City has an important place in literature. Both Literature, and especially novels, have a close connection with the city. Literature can well depict its socio-cultural geography and explain the experience and urban behavior by arranging places and spaces and portraying behaviors in these spatial features. However, the novel is not merely of material type to testify to the naked social reality; the novel, as a product of the novelist's synergy of words and thought flowing in the language of its protagonists, shows a special interpretation of reality. What the novelist writes is what he creates and his vision reflects experience in history and geography (Vafaie Daghigh, 2018). Therefore, in this section, the roles of roof landscapes are examined through novels.

In a part of the novel 'Kite' and the description of everyday life on the roof, Mehdizadeh writes: "In the summer, the

Table 2. The role of rooftop landscapes cited in the historiographies. Source: Authors.

Roles extracted from historiographies	Resource	Excerpt
Social	'Remembrance of the Past - Life and History of Iranian Kurdish Jews' by Khalili	From the early night, a samovar and a tea set were on the roof, and as usual, every night before dinner, each member of the family had a few cups of tea.
	'From Dawn to Dusk' by Katozian	People used this opportunity every night and went to the rooftops and shouted 'Allahu Akbar.' In doing so, they both declared solidarity with each other and brought the regime to its knees psychologically
Nature-associated	'History of Iran-Britain Political Relations' by Mahmoud	He left the gentlemen in that position, went to the roof, and rested under the starry sky of Kerman.

Table 3. The role of rooftop landscapes cited in the historiographies. Source: Authors.

The roles of Rooftop landscapes extracted from travelogues	The name of the travelogue	Excerpt
Identity- associated	A Collection of articles and travelogues'	with houses decorated with rough brick arches, domes, and thatch and from far away, what a unique view has this thatched dome of houses
Social	'Iran and Iranians: research on 100 travelogues of the Qajar period' by Ensafpour	summer, people sleep on the rooftop or terrace around which a wall has been built
Nature- related	Dr. Wells' travelogue translated by Gharaguzloo	When the pigeons reach the rooftop, they sit on the roof one by one or a few or so

whole crowd used to move to the rooftops, and we, kids, used to sit around and talk until midnight and sometimes used to fly kites. Since I was the only child in my family, I always played with the downstairs kids who were not very different from me in age.” and I was part of their family ... We also enjoyed making friendships and getting to know other neighbors because of sitting around on the roof on summer nights, and since the roofs were open to each other, we could sometimes watch the wedding held at the neighbors’ house. ...” (Mehdizadeh, 1997, 135).

In the novel ‘Believe’, Hosseini describes the interests and nostalgia of a young man whose events on the roof are parts of him:

“... I have loved the roof since I was a child. I spent all my summer vacations flying a kite on the roof and seeing pigeons and pigeon fanciers. I looked at my garden from the roof. It was very small. But it filled a big part of my heart ...” (Hosseini, 2019, 132).

In his novel “Blind in Heart”, Fasih describes such rooftop nights in the 1920s as follows: “... That was one of the nights of late May. For two or three nights, Rasool and Sadegh slept on the roof on animals’ waste. Each year, they started sleeping on the roof ten or twenty days ahead of the others. Rasoul had prepared his place and that of his brother, and they watched the starry sky from under the quilt after they had their evening prayers under the blue sky and the stars. Rasoul liked to pray under the sky and the stars and the moon on summer nights, because it had another purity; And sometimes Sadegh also scolded him, but he was not enjoying it as much as Rasoul. That night, there was no moon, but the night was bright and cool and calm ...” (Fasih, 1996, 85). Table 4 shows the roles of rooftop landscapes extracted from novels.

- Poems

One of the valuable and first-hand sources of arts contributing to understanding Iranian past architecture is Persian culture, of which poetry is one of the most prominent manifestations of its richness. The reason is that arts share many similarities in semantic levels and Persian language has been the most important factor in maintaining the identity and cohesion of Iranians in history. Persian poetry, one of the most powerful historical factors shaping the identity of the Iranian nation, has a

special place to recognize the meanings of what can be called the constantly drinking spirit of Iran (Farzin & Hashemizadegan, 2016). Therefore, in this section, the roles of roof landscapes are identified through the relevant Persian poems.

In the poem ‘Then after thunder’, Akhavan Sales describes his interaction and conversation with his wife in the form of chess playing on the roof of his house as follows:

“... I’m on the roof of the house with my wife, on the murky carpet

in that rain

I got surprised...

... Chess will lose

On the roof of the house on the carpet?

Those extensions are one-sided

Those cocoons and horses and towers and fortifications ...” (Kakhi, 1990, 501).

Also, in another part of his poems, Akhavan Sales describes the atmosphere of the roof and the presence of pigeons as follows:

“... the window is open,

The sky is seen, the opposite roof is seen

Now, Now, the sleepless man with vigilant eyes and heart, opens the coops for pigeons.

And those colorful and instructive priests,

On the broad roof,

Readers of “Qor Qo Baqo Raqo

With pride and joy of the skirts,

They play in the fullness of the morning.” (Hoghooghi, 2019, 135).

In a poetic description of the roof space and unlimited nature, Atashi also states:

“... Do you remember what night it was?

I drowned in that dewy on my roof

Got carried away with the dream of the pigeons of the distant tomb

Staring in deep blue painless water? ...” (Atashi, 2007, 53).

The extracted roles of rooftop landscapes based on the poems are detailed in Table 5.

• Visual Arts

- Paintings and works of contemporary painters

Visual documents are among the most important documents in the study of history, especially when it comes

Table 4. The roles of rooftop landscapes extracted from novels. Source: Authors.

The roles of rooftop landscapes extracted from novels	The name of the novel	Excerpt
Nature-associated	“Believe” by Hosseini	I spent all my summer vacations flying a kite on the roof and seeing pigeons and pigeon fanciers.
	“Blind in heart” by Fasih	They watched the starry sky from under the quilt.
Social	“Kite” by Mehdizadeh	We also enjoyed making friendships and getting to know other neighbors because of sitting around on the roof on summer nights.

to reviewing the background of architecture. There are various types of visual documents, among which painting is quite important. However, their capabilities are not well recognized and are less used in architectural research. Paintings are among the most important documents in reviewing the history in general and the background of architecture in particular. The reason is that they narrate the past or things happening in the real world, or the imaginations of its painter and its intended audience. Images convey what texts cannot. Though written documents are of great importance, are not sufficient to replace visual documents. In studying architectural history, visual documents such as paintings differ in type, validity, and importance due to their characteristics. The lack of written sources in the field of architectural history highlights the double importance of visual documents for researchers in this field though we have not used them much in the study of architectural history (Heidarkhani, 2015).

Examining the existing paintings on the subject of architecture reflects the prominent roles of form and image of the rooftops. Rooftops, due to their important contribution to the form and body of houses, the skyline, and, on a larger scale, the landscape and silhouette of cities play a key role in creating a mental image and common understanding of people and artists of the city.

The silhouette of the city (blacklist) is a general image of the city devoid of any details seen in the context and background of the city. The silhouette of the city also includes the skyline (Rastegari & Mansouri, 2010). The

skyline is one of the most important elements of the urban landscape and is a strong factor for the identity of the landscape (ibid.). In Iranian cities, most of the roofs (shape of the roofs) have been affected by climatic, social, and cultural factors and the norm of roof formation in different parts of the country was in full harmony with the urban. However, it has been unique and different from other parts of the country. This phenomenon has brought order to the mental structure of the inhabitants, formed the physical identity of the city, created a meaningful and common image of the city for successive generations, and strengthened the sense of belonging of the citizens to their city (Figs. 1 & 2).

Table 6 presents the extracted roles of landscapes from paintings.

Miniatures related to rooftops

Painting is one of the ways through which the principles in Iranian-Islamic architecture can be understood and revived. Miniatures are now undoubtedly an outstanding reflection of our past culture. These paintings through which buildings and architecture of all eras are portrayed transfer the understanding of the painters about architectural spaces. Among the dominant spaces in the paintings, we can refer to the drawing of gardens and buildings of the same period serving as an important part of the history of Iranian architecture today (Janipour, Mohammadi & Rezaei Mirghaid, 2020).

Among the miniatures related to the roof space, we can refer to the miniatures of Zal and Rudabeh, as well as

Table 5. The roles of rooftop landscapes extracted from poems. Source: Authors.

The roles of rooftop landscapes extracted from poems	The name of the poem	Excerpt
Nature-associated	"Do you remember what night it was?" by Atashi	Got carried away with the dream of the pigeons of the distant tomb Staring in deep blue painless water?
	"A poem describing a roof" by Akhavan Sales	The sky is seen, the opposite roof is seen Now, Now, the sleepless man with vigilant eyes and heart opens the coops for pigeons.
Social	"Then after thunder" by Akhavan Sales	I'm on the roof of the house with my wife, on the murky carpet in that rain I got surprised...

Table 6. The roles of rooftop landscapes extracted from paintings. Source: Authors.

The roles of rooftop landscapes extracted from paintings	The name of the painting	Examples
Identity-associated	A painting of the desert city by Kalantari	The general image and silhouette of one of the desert cities
	A painting by Piastski from Rasht	An image of the rooftops and silhouette of Rasht

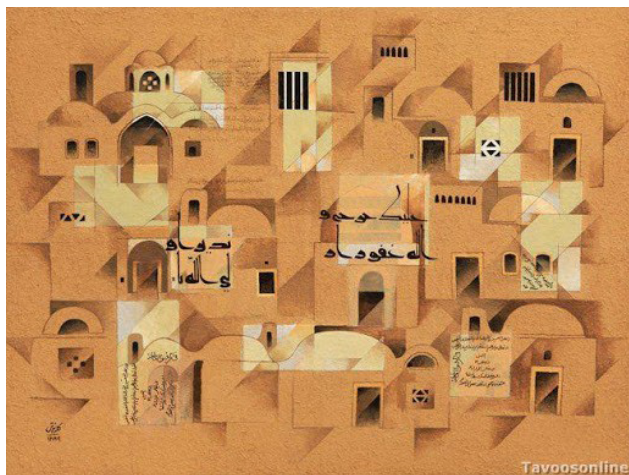


Fig. 1. Emphasis on the form of room and a harmonious image of the whole city in a painting by Kalantari from one of the desert cities. Source: www.khatmag.ir.domains.

Zahak and Kaveh Ahangar. In the miniature of Zal and Rudabeh, Rudabeh is depicted on the rooftop with his attendants and Rudabeh has hung her hair from the roof for Zal to pull him up (Bani Asadi, 2014). The presence of Rudabeh and his attendants and the action happening between Zal and Rudabeh on the rooftop space shows the social role of the rooftop. At the same time, a close connection can be seen between the roof space with the surrounding nature such as trees, green space, and infinite sky (Fig. 3). In the second miniature, which portrays the story of Zahak and Kaveh Ahangar, a large number of people are on the roofs or terraces and the surrounding nature is in close connection with the roof space (Fig. 4). In addition, in both paintings, attention to the roof space has been shown by portraying the roof ledges and the roofed space for resting and staying. This

means that roofs play an important role in forming the identity image of the city along with other roofs.

Table 7 presents the extracted roles of landscapes from miniatures.

• Contemporary cinema

In the perception process, cinema has always played an important role in reflecting elements such as architecture (Noghrehkar, Hamzehnejad, & Bagheri, 2014). The city is experienced through images and imagination rather than material spaces (Donald, 1999), and in fact cinema, literature, television, and other cultural forms are considered “archives of urban ideas.” This is why cinema, like many mass media, is one of the factors through which part of our imagination about the city is formed and can organize our imagination about the city (Radvard & Mahmoudi, 2015). Therefore, one of the most important sources for recognizing the roof space and its plans in Iranian cities and people’s daily lives is contemporary cinematic works, because many of them have been related to people’s public life and current events in their homes. Many movies have focused on the home space, especially the roofs of Iranian houses in contemporary Iranian cinema, some of which such as Toghi, Gharibeh and Kako have been studied in this study. Among the recurring scenes in these films, some scenes are showing a flock of pigeons flying over the roof or portraying the connection of the inhabitants of the house with pigeons. This shows the naturalism-associated role of the roofs in Iranian houses (Figs. 5 & 6). Other examples of the role of rooftops in these films include having social interactions, having dinner, and supper (Fig. 7), sleeping at night under mosquitoes nets (Fig. 8), and finally a general understanding of the city image through the rooftops and creating a shared image



Fig. 2. Emphasis on the form and color of the roof and the harmonious image of the city in a painting by Piatsky, a Russian painter from Rasht. Source: www.herfeh-honarmand.com.

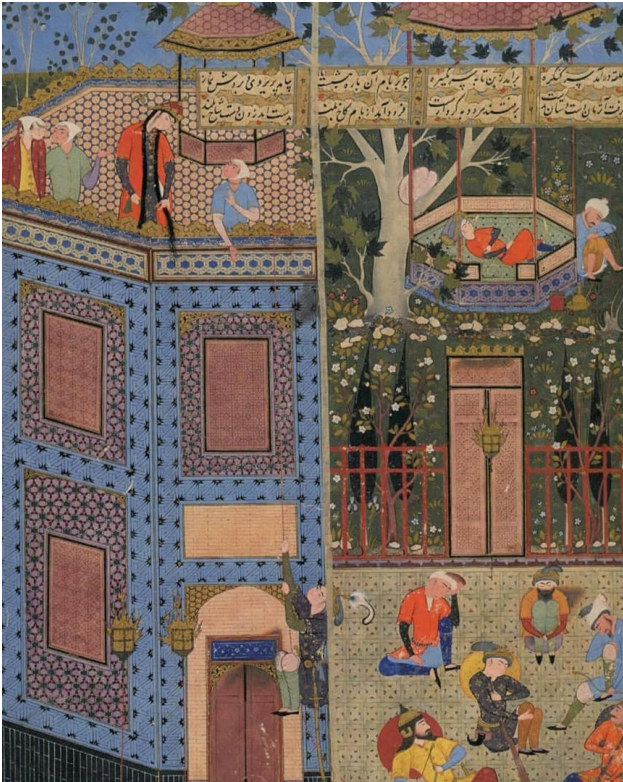


Fig. 3. Depicting the story of Zal and Rudabeh from Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, Rudabeh on the roof. . Source: www.aparat.com.



Fig. 4. Depicting the story of Zahak and Kaveh Ahangar from Ferdowsi Shahnameh. Source: www.alamy.com.

Table 7. The roles of rooftop landscapes extracted from miniatures. Source: Authors.

The roles of rooftop landscapes extracted from miniatures	The name of the miniature	The subject of the miniature
Nature-associated	Zal and Rudabeh	The close connection between the rooftop with the trees, the green space, and the infinite sky
	Zahak and Kaveh Ahangar	The close connection of the roof with the trees, the moon, the stars, and the infinite sky
Social	Zal and Rudabeh	Accompaniment of Rudabeh and his attendants on the roof and her interaction with Zal
	Zahak and Kaveh Ahangar	The collective presence of people on the roof
Identity-related	Zal and Rudabeh	Paying attention to the roof space with roof ledges and roofed space for rest and stay on the roof
	Zahak and Kaveh Ahangar	Paying attention to the roof space with roof ledges and roofed space for rest and stay on the roof

in the mind of the citizens and the creation of a clear identity of the city (Fig. 9).

Table 8 shows the extracted roles of rooftop landscapes from movies.

Analysis of the Case Study

Undoubtedly, one of the best sources for reviewing and analyzing the functions and roles of the rooftops is referring to the roofs of Iranian houses. However, due

to the instrumental limitations and cultural features of Iranian cities, currently, visual documentaries and evidence showing current activities on the rooftops were not available. Therefore, it was logical to examine the evidence in the space of existing Iranian rooftops and houses and analyze their spatial qualities, designs, functions, and spatial characteristics. Abarkuh Yazd is one of the Iranian cities that has preserved significant parts of its old texture and could be analyzed different



Fig. 5. A rooftop serving as a platform through which residents get connected with nature, a sequence from Toghi (Director: Ali Hatami - Year of production: 1970). Source: Screenshot from Toghi movie.



Fig. 6. Pigeons flying in the sky and over the rooftops, a sequence from Kako (Director: Shapur Gharib - Year of production: 1971). Source: Screenshot from Kako movie.



Fig. 7. A rooftop as a space for interaction and eating together, one of the scenes in Stranger (Director: Shapur Gharib - Year of Production: 1972). Source: Screenshot from Stranger movie.



Fig. 8. Setting up a mosquito net and sleeping on the roof by family members, a sequence from Toghi (Director: Ali Hatami - Year of production: 1970). Source: Screenshot from Toghi movie.



Fig. 9. The position of the roofs in the image of the city in one of the scenes of an old movie named Kako (Director: Shapur Gharib - Year of production: 1971). Source: Screenshot from Kako movie.

spaces of houses, their relationship with neighboring buildings, and urban texture, (Fig. 10). Therefore, in the following section, a part of the texture of this city exemplifying Iranian cities are analyzed.

• Roof space of Abarkooh houses

By examining a part of the old texture of Abarkooh city, the following features can be detailed as follows:

- Multiple entrances to the roof space: Multiple entrances

Table 8. The roles of rooftop landscapes extracted from miniatures. Source: Authors.

The roles of rooftop landscapes extracted from movies	The name of the movie	The sequence shown
Identity- associated	" <i>Toghi</i> " by Hatami	The relationship of house dwellers with pigeons
	" <i>Kako</i> " by Gharib	Watching Pigeons flying in the sky off the rooftops
Social	" <i>Gharibeh</i> " by Gharib	Having a group dinner on the roof
	" <i>Toghi</i> " by Hatami	A group of family members having dinner and sleeping in the same place under mosquito nets set up by them
Nature-related	" <i>Kako</i> " by Gharib	A shared and identifiable image of the city by residents from the roofs of houses

to the rooftops in different places show the importance, frequent use of the rooftops by the residents.

- Rooftop space details : In these houses, the roofs are sometimes designed and built in a much more detailed way compared to other spaces in the house and they have become the most prominent part of the house. This highlights the role of the rooftop as one of the most important and widely used spaces in the house. It also presents an identifiable image of the city, which is being portrayed along with the roofs of other houses.

- Adjacency of open and closed spaces: The roof space in these houses is not a smooth, uniform, and abandoned surface that only covers the space below, but it has been combined with many closed, semi-closed, and semi-open spaces such as Mahtabi⁵, vertical extension of the living space, windbreaks, Khishkhan⁶ (Roof ventilators), multiple stairs and so on.

- Equality levels of roofs: The roof of each house is level with that of the neighboring building at least at one of their heights. This indicates the close interaction and communication between neighbors. This issue has also led to structural unity and a coherent and integrated connection of the urban fabric.

- Unlimited horizons: The view boundaries related to the city space in front of the roofs (the horizons around nature, and the sky) are not obstructed or disturbed by an element that is disproportionate to the texture of the city in terms of height. Therefore, the roofs in this city and other cities of Iran have played a very important role in strengthening the residents' relationship with the infinite nature and creating an urban identity in the minds of the residents.

- Flexible spaces: Apart from paying attention to the qualities of space, such as providing good access to the roof, equipping rooftop spaces with windbreaks and roof ventilators, the spaces need to be flexible enough to let families easily carry out different activities, such as having dinner, chats, night talks, entertaining guests, sleeping, etc. While relatively high shelters contribute to the privacy of this space during sleep, in most cases, Fakhr o Madian

makes it possible for residents to communicate with neighbors.

These features and many others can't be covered in this article due to the space limit. However, all are not accidental and must have some functions. In addition, avoiding futility is one of the main principles of Iranian architecture (Memarian, 2014), and paying attention to such a space signifies its important use and function. According to the characteristics mentioned in this section, the roof can be considered to serve three roles, identity-associated, nature-related, and social-interaction promoters (Figs. 10 & 11), (Table 9).

Discussion

In the first part of the research, the role of rooftops in historical reports, travelogues, literary and artistic works such as poems, novels, paintings, miniatures, and cinema were examined and evaluated. In the second part, the roof space of one of the Iranian cities was examined and analyzed based on observation data. According to the available evidence, its features and roles were identified. At the end of each section, landscape roles were extracted and tabulated. Examining the extracts show that in Iranian cities there are three main roles for roofs which are identity-related, social, and nature-associated (Fig. 12).

Conclusion

Open and semi-open spaces have long been part of Iranian houses, of which roofs have had a myriad of scenic potentials. In response to the question posed in this study (What have been the role of roof landscapes in Iranian cities and residents' lives?), research findings identified three main roles: social, identity-associated, and nature-related (Table 10). The social role of rooftops is reuniting the members of the house together, having dinner together, chatting and talking to the residents, interacting with the neighbors, sleeping at night, and the like. From the identity perspective, the roofs also play a role in generating a common image resulting from

the general harmony created by the city's appearance. Through the lens of naturalism, the role of the roof can be defined in the close relationship of this space with elements of nature such as the infinite sky, moon, stars,

the presence of birds, and especially pigeons. Therefore, in addition to their primary goal of providing shelter, Iranian houses have also met individual-social needs such as self-esteem, friendship, social participation, etc.

Table 9. The roles of rooftop landscapes extracted from the analysis of the rooftops of Abarghoo houses. Source: Authors.

The roles of rooftop landscapes	Spatial analysis	Spatial possibility
Nature-related	Unlimited vision	Watching unlimited natural horizons, the sky, moon, and stars
	Flexible space	Possibility of performing different group activities such as having dinner, chats, and night talks entertaining guests and ...
	Possibility of entering the residents repeatedly and from different spaces of houses to the rooftops	Multiple entrances to the roof space
Social	All residents use the roof space frequently.	The adjacency of outdoor and indoor, all residents use the roof space frequently.
	Equality level of each roof with its neighbor	Interaction between neighbors through the rooftop.
Identity-associated	Equipping rooftop space with elements such as a windbreak, a khishkhan, and a dome	Common and identifiable image of the city by residents based on the rooftops of houses.
	Evoking an integrated, harmonious, and common image of the whole city in the minds of citizens.	Frequent use of the roof space by all residents.

Table 10. Forgotten roles of rooftop landscapes in Iranian cities. Source: Authors.

Roles	Examples
Social	Bringing the members of a family together and strengthening relationships through high space gravity
Nature-associated	Strengthening the relationship between residents with nature because of their direct connection with nature and the night sky
Identity- related	Creating a coherent, unified and unique mental image of the city in the minds of citizens through creating a harmonious and identical skyline, consisting of houses' rooftops (city silhouette)

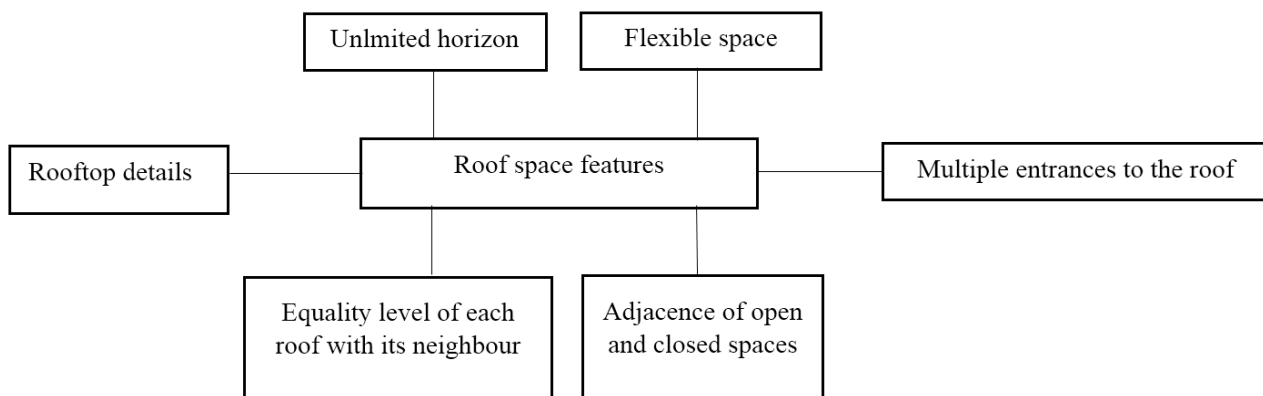


Fig. 10. Roof spatial features indicating identity-associated, social, and nature-related roles of rooftop landscapes. Source: Authors.



Fig. 11. Spatial qualities of the roof; Part of the residential texture of Abarghoo city. Source: www.irantrawell.com.

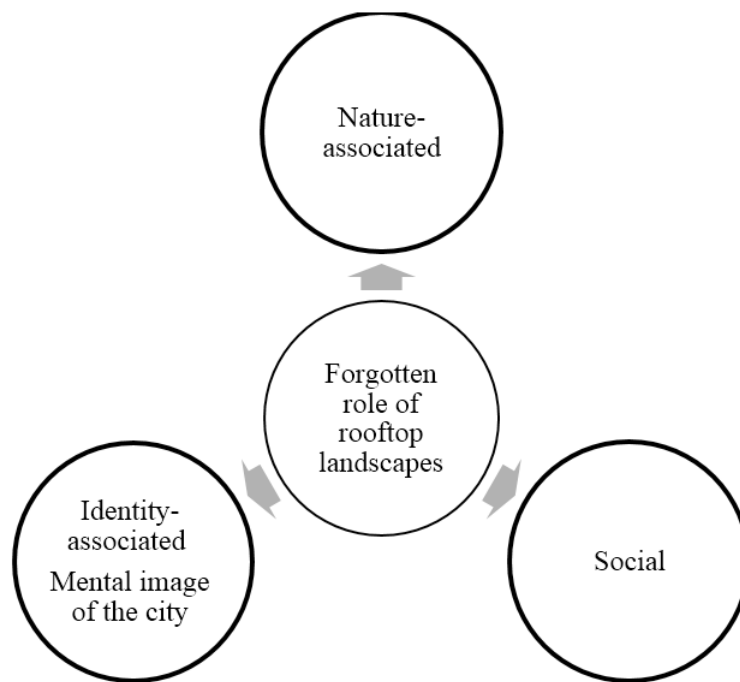


Fig. 12. Three main roles of rooftop landscapes in Iranian cities. Source: Authors.

Endnote

1. A great ship must have deep water.
2. Double Standard.
3. His number is up.
4. It originally means empty full, it also refers to a brick network, brick lattice
5. It is an open space located at a higher level than the area and has a visual and physical connection.
6. It refers to Khishkhane or vents on the roof of the cottage or a house, which is covered with mats, pottery, or shrubs and on which some water has been sprinkled to draw cool air in when the wind is blowing.

Reference list

- Ameli, S. S., & Akhavan, M. (2013). Representation of Identical City Elements in Travel Writings: A Comparative Study of Tehran and Other cities in Tehran Province. *Motaleaat va Tahghigh Ejtemayee dar Iran*, 1(4), 75-100.
- Amid, H. (1996). *Farhang-e Amid* [Amid Dictionary]. Tehran: Amirkabir Publishing Institute.
- Amjadi Tarshizi, S. (2009). *A Comparative Study of Naturalism in Iranian Paintings with Chinese and European ones* (Unpublished Art Research Master Thesis). Faculty of Visual Arts, University of Tehran, Iran.
- Atashi, M. (2007). *Majmo'eh ash'ar-e Manoucher-e Atashi* [Manouchehr Atashi Poetry Collection]. Tehran: Negah.
- Bahrani, H. & Sepehri Ahrami, A. (2018). Recognition and investigation of the existential cause and functional role of Shanashir in the historical context of Bushehr. *Bagh-e-Nazar*, 15(58), 77-88.
- Bani Asadi, M. A. (2014). Studying the miniatures of the story of Zahakin Tahmasbi Shahnameh from the point of view of illustration. *Negareh*, 9(32), 4-25.
- Daeipour, Z. (2014). The relationship between the presence of nature and the increase in the sense of belonging in traditional Iranian houses. *Bagh-e- Nazar*, 11(30), 49-58
- Dehkhoda, A.A. (1998). *Loghat-Nama* [Dictionary of Dehkhoda]. M. Moein & J. Shahidi (Eds.). Tehran: University of Tehran.
- Donald, J. (1999). *Imagining the modern city*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota press.
- Emami, S. H. (2011). Peyvand-e me'mari-ye sonata ba hekmat [The link between traditional architecture and wisdom]. *Ettealat Hekmat va Marefat*, 6(5), 4-8.
- Ensafpour, Gh. (1984). *Iran va Irani be Tahghigh dar 100 Safarname-ye Khareji (Marbot be Doran-e Ghajarian)* [Iran and Iranians: Research on one hundred travelogues of the Qajar period]. Tehran: Zavareh.
- Farzin, A. A., & Hashemizadegan, S. A. (2016). Interpretation of Garden Position in Saadi's Poems. *Journal of Art and Civilization of the Orient*, 4(13), 3-14.
- Fasih, E. (1996). *Del Koor* [Blind in Heart]. Tehran: Alborz.
- Ghanbari, M., Chehrazar, F., & Chehrazar, Y. (2019). Barresi-ye naghsh-e bam-ha-ye sabz dar kahesh-e aloodegi-ye hava-ye shahri [The role of green roofs in reducing urban air pollution]. *The 4th International Conference on New Horizons in Agricultural Sciences*, Natural Resources and Environment, Tehran, Iran.
- Wills, J. (1989). *In the land of the lion and sun, or Modern Persia: being experiences of life in Persia during a residence of fifteen years in various parts of that country from 1866 to 1881* (Gh. Gharaguzloo Trans.). Tehran: Ighbal.
- Heidarkhani, M. (2015). Iranian painting as a source of the history of Iranian architecture. *Journals of Iranian Architecture Studies*, 4(7), 151-163.
- Hoghooghi, M. (2019). *Poetry of Our Time: Mehdi Akhavan Sales*. Tehran: Negah.
- Hosseini, Kh. (2019). *Bavar Konid* [Believe]. Tehran: Sherkat-e Ketab.
- Jalil Piran, A., Mahmoudi Mandani, F., Hassani, M. & Rahimi, K. (2019). Naghsh va amalkard-e bam-e sabz dar zamine-ye hezf-e energy ba roykard-e me'mari-ye paydar [The role and function of green roof in the field of energy conservation based on a sustainable architecture approach]. *The Third International Conference on Innovation and Research in Engineering Sciences*, Georgia, Tbilisi.
- Janipour, B., Mohammadi, N. & Rezaei Mirghaid, G. (2020). The convergence of Iranian architecture with painting. *Bagh-e- Nazar*, 17(90), 81-92.
- Kakhi, M. (1990). *Roshantar az khamooshi, bargozide-ye she'r-e emroz-e Iran (1921-1978)* [Brighter than Silence: Selected Poetry of Today's Iran (1921-1978)]. Tehran: Agah.
- Karimi, M., Hojjat, I. & Shahbazi Changi, I. (2018). The Relationship between the dweller and the dwelling revisited. *Bagh-e Nazar*, 15(61), 5-16.
- Kateb, F. & Adelvand, P. (2014). The aesthetics of windows in Safavid painting. *MANZAR*, 6(29), 12-19.
- Katoozian, K. (2002). *Az sepideh ta sham* [From Dawn Till Dusk]. Tehran: Abi.
- Khademi, Sh. (2012). Tehran landscape in literary stories. *MANZAR*, 2(11), 66-71.
- Khalili, El. (2004). *A Remembrance of the Past - The life and history of the Kurdish Jews of Iran*. Los Angeles: Sherkat Publications.
- Mahmoud, M. (1999). *Tarikh-e ravabet-e siasi-ye Iran va Englis dar gharn-e 19 miladi* [History of Iran-Britain Political Relations in the Nineteenth Century] (vol 6). Tehran: Ighbal.
- Mansouri, S. A. (2009). Landscape and housing. *MANZAR*, 1(2), 3.
- Mansouri, S. A. (2019). Rooftop landscape, life in the heart of the sky. *MANZAR*, 11(48), 3.
- Mozayeni, M. (2009). *Space, Time, and Architecture*. Tehran: Elmi va Farhangi.
- Mehdizadeh, P. (1997). *Badbadak* [Kite]. Virginia, the University of Virginia.
- Memarian, Gh. H. (2014). *A look at the theoretical foundations of architecture*. Tehran: Soroush-e Danesh.
- Moein, M. (2007). *Farhang-e Mo'ain* [Moein Dictionary]. Tehran: Zarrin.
- Momeni, K., Attarian, K. & Mohebian, M. (2020). Recognizing the identity of Islamic culture in the architecture of input facades (Case Study: Old Texture Houses of Dezful). *Journal of Architectural Thought*, 4 (7), 14-28.
- Moslemi, M. & Azizi, M. (2016). Analysis and examination of green roof and the possibility of its creation in urban space and the study of Mazandaran province from this perspective. *The fourth national conference on sustainable development in geography and planning, architecture, and urban planning*, Mehr-e Arvand, Tehran, Iran.
- Mousavi Garmaroodi, A. (1998). *Ghalam andaz, majmo'e maghalat, safarname-ha va naghd va barrese* [Ghalam andaz: Collection of Articles, Travelogues, and Criticism]. Tehran: Soroush.
- Nabavi, E. (2016). *A fascinating trick: The life of Nouredine ZarrinKalk*. London: H&S Media.
- Nogrehkar, A., Hamzehnejad, M. & Bagheri, H. (2014). Sociability in court of the Iranian home (recognition of reinforce ingredient attendance in the court, method analysis scene of cinema). *Iranian Architecture and Urbanism*, 7, 45-56.
- Radvard, A., & Mahmoudi, B. (2015). Imagination of Tehran: Study of "Mindscape of the City" through 1340s and 1350s Iranian Cinema. *Iranian Journal of Cultural Research*, 8(4), 53-90.
- Rastegari, Z., Mansouri, S.M. B. (2010). The Silent Dimension of Manzar (Tehran Plastic in Three Scales). *MANZAR*, 2(11), 44-49.
- Soltanzadeh, H. (2013). The role of geography and culture in the formation of roofs in residential units. *Human Geography Research Quarterly*, 2(46), 449-464.

- Tatavi, M. A. R. (2007). *Farhang-e Rashidi* [Rashidi Culture]. Tehran: Sima-ye Danesh.
- Vafaie Daghigh, Z. (2018). *Tasvir-e shahr-e Tehran dar roman-ha-ye Farsi* [The Image of Tehran in Persian Novels]. The third international conference on literature and linguistics, Hamandishan-e mobtaker-e Radman, Tehran, Iran.

COPYRIGHTS

Copyright for this article is retained by the authors with publication rights granted to Manzar journal. This is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Hoseinzadeh, Z., Shokouh, S. & Mehrabani Golzar, M.R. (2021). Revisiting the Roles of Rooftop Landscapes in Iranian Cities (Through Documentaries, Literary-Artistic Works and Case Studies). *MANZAR*, 13(57), 38-51.

DOI: 10.22034/MANZAR.2021.277423.2122

URL: http://www.manzar-sj.com/article_134219_en.html

