

IRANIAN ART & ARCHAEOLOGY: ACHAEMENID DYNASTY
DOKKÂN-E DÂWÛD

By: Hubertus Von Gall

Dokkan-e Davud, Dokan-e Davood Dakhmeh Davud (lit., "shop of David"), rock-cut tomb of the Achaemenid period in the Zagros range a few kilometers southeast of Sar-e Pol-e Dohâb, in the province of Kermânshâh. It was discovered by Henry C. Rawlinson in 1836 (pp. 38-39), but, owing to its position high on the rock face (12 m above a recess, which is in turn 10 m above the foot of the cliff; cf. Hüsing, p. 15), a plan of the interior of the monument drawn by Pascal Coste in 1840 (Flandin and Coste, IV, pl. 211) remained the sole source of information until 1972, when some details of the plan were corrected by the present author (von Gall, 1974, p. 147, fig. 3; Figure 1). The tomb consists of an antechamber 9.60 m wide at the double frame of the entrance (Plate 1) and 7.32 m wide at the back; it is 1.95 deep on the floor and 2.60 m high. Of the two columns in the antechamber (not rectangular pillars, as shown in Flandin and Coste, IV, pl. 211) only the bases and the capitals, of abacus form, are preserved. The bases are of simple shape, with plinths 0.83 m² topped by remains of round parts (cf. the columned hall on the Tall-e Takht at Pasargadae; Stronach, pp. 147-49, pls. 111-12). The surfaces of both bases have been smoothed, including an elevation like a pivot on the left one, suggesting that broken column shafts may have been repaired and replaced (in stucco?) in antiquity (von Gall, 1974, p. 147 fig. 4). In the middle of the back wall a door (1.50 m high, 1 m wide) leads into a rectangular, barrel-vaulted tomb chamber (2.31 m deep, 2.83 m wide, 2.18 m high), with five small niches probably intended for lamps (cf. Flandin, I, pp. 462-63). On the left side of this chamber a cavity like a trough extends the full depth of the room; its floor is 70 cm lower than that of the chamber. This cavity is the sole provision for a burial in the tomb (von Gall, 1988, pl. 29c; Figure 1).

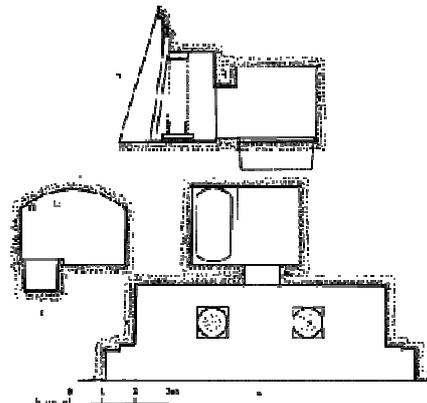
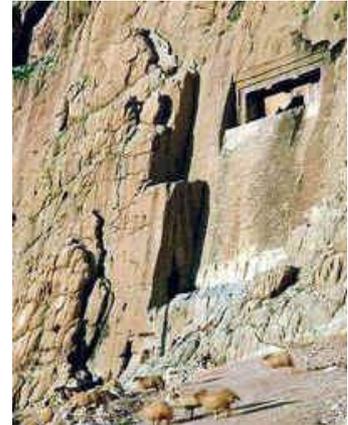


Figure 1. Dokkân-e Dâwûd, plan and sections. a. Plan. b. Longitudinal section. c. Cross section through vaulted tomb chamber.

Dokkân-e Dâwûd is one of several rock-cut tombs in northwestern Persia and Iraqi Kurdistan that were identified as "Median" by Ernst Herzfeld (Sarre and Herzfeld, pp. 122-23; Herzfeld, 1920, p. 13; idem, 1940, p. 208). "Median" is to be understood in the geographical, rather than the historical sense (von Gall, 1966), however, as details at similar but more elaborate rock-cut tombs like that of Kizkapan (von Gall, 1988) and Fakhrîka (Huff, 1971) clearly exclude a dating before the Achaemenid period. In the interiors of the latter two tombs the cavities are too short to have permitted burial in an extended position; they were probably *astôdâns*

(q.v.), as was first argued by A. Shapur Shahbazi (pp. 131-34) and Hubertus von Gall (1974, p. 142; cf. idem, 1988, pp. 562-63; see DEH-E NOW). If the appearance of *astôdâns* was a later development from monumental Median tombs with columns in the antechamber, then Dokkân-e Dâwûd and the larger tomb at Sahna (Herzfeld, 1920, pp. 8-10; von Gall, 1966, pp. 21-23), with their cavities measuring more than 2 m, appear to represent this older type.



Plate

1. Dokkân-e Dâwûd general view

About 8 m below Dokkân-e Dâwûd there is a small bas-relief (1.50 m x 0.90 m), known as Kel-e Dâwûd (Kurd. "tombstone of David"), carved out of an earlier and wider panel that was originally intended to be extended higher but was unfinished (Plate 2). This relief represents a priest with a *barsom* bundle and a headdress that projects forward as does the headdress in the images of the Fratarâka kings on coins of Persis (beginning with Wahbarz; Alam, pls. 17-18), suggesting that Kel-e Dâwûd probably belongs to the early Hellenistic period, considerably later than the tomb above it. The image of a priest, presumably representing a funeral guard of magi, as was recorded on the tomb of Cyrus the Great (q.v. v; Arrian, *Anabasis* 6.29.4; cf. von Gall, 1972, p. 280 n. 98), suggests the importance of Dokkan-e Dâwûd in antiquity. The name Dâwûd may represent more than a fanciful connection with a biblical and koranic hero: A modern cemetery below the rock monument belongs to the Ahl-e Haqq (q.v.), who consider Dâwûd one of the helper angels and the Dôkkân-e Dâwûd a holy place (Gabriel, p. 17, pp. 35-36).



Plate

2.

Relief known as Kel-e

Dâwûd

, below

Dokkân-e Dâwûd

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(For abbreviations found in this bibliography, see "Short References.")

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