



DĀRĀB (2) II. HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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The modern town of Dārāb, the center of the Kamsa tribe of Fārs (Oberling, pp. 123-70), lies on a slightly elevated plateau at the foot of the northern mountains (see i, above) and is separated from the plain to the south by a low mountain ridge (*Gazetteer of Iran* III, pp. 183-84, 372; Gītā Šenāsī).

There is an unusual Friday mosque, possibly of the 17th century; in contrast to the typical Persian courtyard mosque, with porticos, *ayvāns* (q.v.), and domed sanctuary, it is freestanding with four corner towers and a rectangular prayer room surrounded by open porches (Mošṭafawī, pp. 493-94; tr., pp. 332-34, 354-57; Pohanka, pp. 265-69). About 7 km southwest of the town, in the middle of the plain, are the remains of the ancient city of Dārābgerd/Dārābjerd (Nöldeke, p. 146), now called Qal'a or Kandaq-e Daḥīa after an Islamic shrine outside the fortifications (Forṣat Šīrazī, p. 92). In medieval reports a certain Dārā, perhaps either an Achaemenid king or a local ruler, is named as founder of the city (Ṭabarī, I, p. 692; Ebn al-Balkī, p. 55; Barbier de Meynard, p. 226; *Nozhat al-qolūb*, pp. 124, 138; Markwart, *Provincial Capitals*, p. 19; see [DĀRĀ\(B\)](#)). According to Ṭabarī (I, p. 815), Ardašīr Bābakān (Ardašīr I, q.v.; 224-40) was educated in Dārāb by the permission of Gōzehr, king of Ešṭakr, whom Ardašīr's father, Bābak (q.v.), later assassinated on his son's orders. From Dārāb Ardašīr is reported to have launched his first territorial



conquests. Later, however, he built the town of Ardašīr-Ḳorra (q.v.; Gūr) as his residence.

The importance of Dārāb in early Sasanian history is underscored by the nearby rock reliefs (see iii, below), as well as by a splendid mud-brick building with rich stucco decoration of the time of Šāpūr II (309-79) in the adjacent Ḥājīābād plain (Azarnoush, pp. 159-76). Some authors have suggested that the circular wall of Dārāb was the model for the circular plan of Ardašīr-Ḳorra (Schwarz, *Iran*, p. 94; Stein, p. 193). Ḥamza Ešfahānī (I, p. 37; cf. Creswell, II, p. 21 n. 3), however, reported that the original layout of Dārāb was triangular and that its circular defensive wall was built in the 8th century by a governor of Fārs under Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf. Although Dārāb was eventually surpassed in size and wealth by Fasā, it remained the capital of a large district throughout most of the Middle Ages. It was particularly known for the manufacture of textiles, jasmine oil, and mineral salts of different colors. Its most famous product was *mūmīā*, a rare bituminous mineral oil used as a medicine; it was collected in a rock cave, whether in the city itself or in the nearby mountains, and formed the most precious part of the tribute to the governor of Fārs (Schwarz, *Iran*, pp. 95-97; Ouseley, pp. 117-21). The reputed unhealthy climate and bad water may have contributed to the total abandonment of Dārāb in about the 12th century or perhaps later (Ebn Ḥawqal, tr. Kramers, II, pp. 268, 273-74, 294; *Nozhat al-qolūb*, ed. Le Strange, p. 139; tr., p. 138).

Unlike the layout of Ardašīr-Ḳorra, that of Dārāb was not geometrically perfect; instead the course of the wall traces an irregular circle about 1,900 m in diameter. The four gates are not located on perpendicular axes, nor do the insignificant ruins within the city reveal a radial or concentric street system. At the north gate are the ruined piers of an aqueduct. The city center is a rocky outcrop with three peaks of different sizes. On the highest, at about 85 m, are the ruins of a citadel, which was enlarged and reinforced at least three times. A rock-cut passage below does not appear to be connected to it (Stein, pp. 191-94). A number of other fortresses are located on the mountains bordering the plain in the north. The most important is Qaṣr-e Šāhnešīn, or Gār-e Sīāh, northwest of Dārāb, where the ceramic finds included prehistoric sherds. Below are the ruins of a *čahār-tāq*, called Golābī, Pesar o Doḳtar, or Oḡlan Qiz (> misunderstood Urlangaz), the dome of which was still standing in the 19th century (Ouseley, pl. 36; Forṣat Šīrāzī, pp. 101-02 fig. 10; de Miroschedji, pp. 157-60).

The rock reliefs at Naqš-e Rostam are located on the southern precipices of the



mountain ridge between modern Dārāb and the plain. In addition to the reliefs already known (see iii, below), in 1990 another small relief, measuring 65 cm high, was found when the lake was drained; on it is depicted a king facing right and stabbing a lion standing on its hind legs. Farther east is Masjed-e Sangī, also known as Qaṣr-e Doḡtar, a rock-cut mosque of cruciform plan (Fasā'ī, II, pp. 200-01; Stein, pp. 196-99; Ball, pp. 103-07; Bier, pp. 117-30). Donor inscriptions dated 652/1254-55 include a name that has been debated, most recently read as Moḡammad b. Mobārez b. Ḥasan (S. Blair in Bier, p. 117). This building, together with a water-supply system, seems to have been a pious foundation connected with the nearby ruins of Jannat Šahr. A number of other settlements, reaching back to the Neolithic period, were surveyed by Sir Mark Aurel Stein (pp. 183-200), who also dug soundings in several of them.

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