



ḤABAQUQ, TOMB OF

ḤABAQUQ (or Habakkuk), TOMB OF. According to local traditions, the tomb of the prophet Ḥabaquq (*boq'a-ye Ḥabaquq* [sometimes written: Ḥayaquq]) is situated in a monument located 1 km south of Tuyserkān in western Persia. The monument itself, which serves as a local pilgrimage destination, is also referred to simply as Ḥabaquq (Sotuda, p. 6189; [Figure 1](#)).

This brick monument, the overall shape of which is comparable with the tomb of Amir Timur in Samarqand, consists essentially of an octagonal tower topped by a conical roof (see fig. 1). Each of the eight sides of the roughly 7 meter high tower is embellished with the design of an inset arch. The conical roof has been formed out of 16 columns arranged in a circle and leaning towards its center, where they converge, about 5 meters above, to create its peak.

Inside the monument there is a marble gravestone with, according to some sources (Moqaddam, p. 134; Mizrāhi, p. 166), a wooden chest placed over it. On either side above the gravestone there is a menorah, with a Star of David placed between the pair (Sotuda, p. 6189). Beneath these religious symbols, are inscribed verses in Hebrew and Persian. The Hebrew verses (according to Mizrāhi, p. 166, they are inscribed on the cloth covering of the chest) are from the Book of Ḥabaquq, 3:1,2 “Prayer of Ḥabaquq the prophet upon *shigionoth*; O Lord, I heard your speech and was afraid, O Lord!” (Miz-rāhi, p. 166). The Persian inscription (Sotuda, p. 6189) is a free translation of the following verses: “And the just shall live by faith (2:4); the Lord is in His Holy Temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him (2:20); I will rejoice in the Lord, I will



delight in the God of my salvation (3:18).”

Ḥabaquq, a minor Biblical prophet who is believed to have served at the Temple of Solomon, lived probably in the 7th century B.C. There is no evidence that would explain his presence in Iran and his burial in Tuyserkân. Accounts to the effect that he was among the Israelites exiled to Babylon (Moqaddam, p. 129; Anon. p. 433) have no historical basis. The legend of “Bel and the Dragon” in the Septuagint tells us that: “Daniel was cast into a lion’s den: on the sixth day of his imprisonment, Habakkuk was taking food to the reapers in the field in Judea, when he was seized by the hair and miraculously transferred to Babylon, where he gave the food to Dan-iel” (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. “Habakkuk”).

Due to its isolated location, few travelers have visited the site. David d’Beth Hillel, who visited Persia during the reign of Fath-‘Ali Shah (ca. 1824), gives a favorable account of Tuyserkân and its surroundings as a fertile and prosperous region. He devotes a short passage to the tomb: “About half an hour’s distance from the town is a little circular tower. The Israelites say that there is buried the prophet Habakkuk.” He was told many stories about it by the local Jewish population, but he did not believe them. Neither did he find any sepulchre inside the monument (Hillel, p. 104).

The famous court physician, Jean-Baptiste Feuvrier (1842-1926), visited the site in July 1892. He includes a photograph of it in his famous travelogue, *Trois ans à la cour de Perse*. In contrast to Hillel’s account some sixty years earlier, Feuvrier found the area depopulated and in ruins apart from the tomb itself, which he compared in appearance to a cone-shaped Savoyard cake (p. 396). The monument is found today a built-up area, as the focus of a public square. The tomb of Ḥabaquq is sacred to both Jews and Muslims and many stories are told by locals about the miracles performed by this prophet for members of both communities (Mizrâhi, p. 167).

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