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Urartian Chamber Tomb of Khāneqāh

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Abstract

The reign of the Urartian kingdom in Eastern Anatolia, spanning over two centuries, was marked by its dominance in a challenging landscape. Forming alliances with neighboring territories, such as Assyria and Phrygia, Urartu established itself as a significant power in the Iron Age II. Their influence extended over vast regions, including northwestern Iran, Anatolia, Armenia, and a small part of what is today Iraqi Kurdistan. The Urartians' hierarchical religious structure and military conquests played key roles in expanding their control. Various types of Urartian burials have been categorized by construction method, architecture, and materials, shedding light on social stratification. Rock-cut tombs and underground chambers reveal consistent burial customs and architectural features. Urartian burial sites in Iran present unique architectural elements, with discoveries of rock-cut tombs showcasing diverse room layouts and spatial contexts. A chamber tomb discovered during mosque construction features unworked limestone and sandstone blocks, with dimensions of 5×1.2 ×1.8 m. Large stone slabs form the walls, and a unique niche is present above the entrance. To prevent excessive weight on the lintel, this space is designed as a niche a common architectural technique. Resembling other Urartian tombs, it contains trefoil jugs and human bones, suggesting a Urartian attribution. Looting has hindered precise dating, but the pottery and architectural features align with Urartian sites near Lake Van. Similar tombs in Iran, such as those at Lor Balajuq and Bayazid Abad, underscore cultural connections. The tomb's original funerary context remains uncertain due to looting. The trefoil jugs, indicative of Urartian pottery, were likely used for water and funerary purposes, reflecting Urartian mortuary customs. The discovery of the Khāneqāh Chamber Tomb near the Iran–Turkey border, west of Lake Urmia, sheds light on Urartian burial practices. The tomb's architecture, associated objects, and regional context suggest it belonged to a local Urartian elite, showcasing the diversity of burial traditions within Urartian territory.

Keywords: Urartu, Chamber Tomb, Urmia, Khāneqāh.

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Introduction

The dominion of the Urartu kingdom (Biainili), which endured for over two centuries in the rugged terrain of Eastern Anatolia, characterized by challenging high plateaux, mountain ranges, and deep valleys, presents numerous intriguing facets warranting thorough exploration. Urartu stood as a formidable power in the Near East during the Middle Iron Age, fostering political and economic ties with contemporary realms. These included Assyria to the south, Late Hittite states like Melitia, Tablani, and Qumaha in the west, Phrygia in Central Anatolia, as well as Mannae in northwest Iran. Established in the capital of Tushpa (Van) on the eastern banks of Lake Van in the mid-9th century BC, Urartu exerted its influence over a vast territory extending from the Euphrates in the west to the Kars Plateau and Lake Sevan basin in the north, the Lake Urmia basin in the east, and the Taurus Mountains in the south (Köroğlu, 2011).

The narrative of Urartu's influence within Iran gains prominence with the ascension of Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC) to the throne of Assyria. His initial and subsequent military expeditions were aimed at Urartian territories within Iran. The zenith of Urartu's power spanned the 9th to 6th centuries BC, encompassing regions now comprising Iran, Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Nakhchivan, and Iraq. The Urartians adopted a hierarchical religious governance structure, with religious beliefs serving as a unifying force among the tribes, evident in their religious edifices. From the inception of the kingdom in the 9th century, Western Azerbaijan fell under Urartian dominion. Over the succeeding centuries, Urartu expanded its control eastward, conquering Eastern Azerbaijan and territories beyond the Araxes River during the 9th and 8th centuries (Kroll, 2011: 158). The landscape west of Lake Urmia was under Urartian rule from the kingdom's inception. The period between 820 and 810 BC witnessed a joint military campaign led by Ishpuini and Menua, targeting the southern region of Lake Urmia, including what is today Tepe Hasanlu and its vicinity. These campaigns led to the capture of cities, with the destruction of the Hasanlu IVB citadel by fire (Khatib Shahidi, 2006: 22). The allure of abundant natural resources, wealth, and advantageous geographical positioning spurred the Urartians to assert their authority through military conquests. While the absence of traditional Urartian fortifications in the eastern Lake Urmia basin suggests non-inclusion in the Urartian realm, evidence indicates Urartian presence from Marand towards the Araxes River (Biscione & Khatib-Shahidi 2006, 303). Urartu's southern border, neighboring the Lower Zab basin, linked northern Mesopotamia and the Ushnu-Solduz valley through various

mountain passes. The Sufian-Jaldian mountain pass in the northern reaches enabled access to Urartu, fortified from the Urartian side at Gerd-e Sureh (Binandeh, 2019).

In the 1970s, archaeological exploration of Urartian sites expanded into northwestern Iran, with Kleiss's endeavors at Bastam notably prominent. A large number of Urartian sites have been identified in the northwest of Iran, including castles, settlements, water channels and other water constructions, rock chambers, rock graves, stelae, rock inscriptions, and building inscriptions. During the 2nd half of the 9th century BC, the first Urartian fortresses in the lake Urmia region were set up. They show a new way of construction that can be identified as typically Urartian. All buildings show carefully-laid foundations of stone walls, on which mudbrick walls were set (Kroll, 2011).

Surveys and excavations at Bastam anciently known as "Rusai. URU. TUR" or "Rusaipatari" have identified it as a major Urartian fortress, the largest in Iran during the first half of the 7th century BCE. The citadel is strategically located high above the modern village, on a steep mountain ridge on the left bank of the Aq Çay River, where it enters the wide, fertile plain of Qara Zia Eddin. In antiquity, several channels were diverted from the river to irrigate the surrounding plain. Due to its position on the western edge of the plain, the fortress not only controlled the agricultural area but also oversaw a major west–east route connecting the Urartian capital, Tushpa (modern Van), to Urartian territories in Azerbaijan and Armenia (Kroll, 2004; Kleiss, 1977).

Qalʿa-ye Esmāʿil Āqā, another major fortress, is located west of Lake Urmia, near the city of Urmia, and features cliff dwellings dating to the 8–7th centuries BCE, excavated by an Italian team (Pecorella & Salvini, 1984). Sangar, situated near Maku, is a fortified site occupying a strategic position. The site comprises the remains of a robust fortress with rock-cut architectural elements, an extensive settlement, a cultic area, a rock-cut tomb, an inhumation cemetery, a bridge, and a quarry. Limited excavations were conducted by Kleiss before the revolution, and in recent years, an additional season of excavation has been carried out (Binandeh, 2019). Archaeological evidence indicates that the main phase of occupation dates to the 7th century BCE and is associated with Urartian territorial expansion.

Bastam has been excavated more than other Urartian sites in Iran. Excavations were conducted by W. Kleiss and S. Kroll with a team of archaeologists and experts from Germany, Iran, Italy, the United States and other countries between 1969 and 1978. In 1999, an Iranian archaeological

team resumed work at Bastam under the direction of Hamid Khatib Shahidi. Kleiss also identified numerous other Urartian sites in northwestern Iran, particularly in the provinces of West and East Azarbaijan, and mapped several fortresses.

Urartian fortresses were surrounded by a network of medium- and small-sized fortified sites. All sites maintained line-of-sight communication with one another. The scale of these sites was also unprecedented. Fortresses such as Qalatgah, Ismail Agha, Bastam, Verahram, Livar, and Gavur Qal'eh on the Araxes occupying areas between 8 and 30 hectares had no equivalents in earlier periods. Significant information about Urartu in Iran comes from cuneiform inscriptions. Beginning with Ishpuini, the king of Urartu around 820 BC, it became customary to create large display inscriptions in royal buildings and to erect victory inscriptions on rocks or stelae following successful military campaigns in conquered territories. In Western Azarbaijan, particularly between Maku and Ushnu, Urartian inscriptions primarily commemorate peaceful endeavors, including construction inscriptions by Ishpuini and Menua (circa 800 BC) found at sites like Kelishin, Qalatgah, Ain-e Rum, and Siah Chesmeh. Subsequent rulers in the region also documented only peaceful activities through their inscriptions. In contrast, south of Lake Urmia, inscriptions by Ishpuini and Menua at Tashtepe and Taraqeh indicate conflicts with other kingdoms, such as Mannea. Further east, in East Azarbaijan, particularly in the Ahar region, the oldest inscription at Seqindel is a campaign inscription by Sarduri II, dating to around 750 BCE. Campaign inscriptions often also reference construction projects and fortresses intended to maintain control over newly conquered territories within the Urartian kingdom (Kroll, 2011). Following the Iranian Revolution, Urartian archaeological research predominantly relied on existing data, with surveys and excavations being quite limited; however, several important sites were identified that require further investigation, with Khatib-Shahidi's fieldwork at Bastam, Hasanlu, and more recently at Qalatgah serving as notable exceptions.

Urartian Burial Traditions

Various types of burials have been discovered in Urartian region, categorized based on construction method, architecture, materials used, and size, with suggestions made about the social status of the deceased. Various categorizations of Urartian tombs have been attempted: (1) based on architectural features including size, construction materials, building methods, and layout; (2) categorized according to societal status markers

of the deceased, such as royal burial sites, leaders' graves, common people's tombs, and so on. Urartian tomb structures share several common elements that allow for classification. Rock-cut tombs and underground burial chambers are widespread in the region. Consistent practices can be observed in both architectural forms and burial customs. Urartian multi-chamber tombs carved into rock formations follow a distinct developmental trajectory, reflecting the Urartians' expertise in rock-cut architecture. The most distinctive trait within citadels is the multi-chamber configuration, accessible via staircases. Monolithic structures and facades with platforms are more prevalent in the capital, with smaller versions likely built in rural areas by rulers connected to the central authority. Subterranean burial chambers represent the predominant burial type in Urartian territories, typically categorized as either stone-built or rock-cut. Stone-built chambers usually consist of a single rectangular room constructed with stone walls below the surface, whereas rock-cut tombs more frequently feature multi-chamber layouts. Specifically, some graves in Altıntepe, serving as the capital's burial ground, showcase scaled-down renditions of multi-chamber arrangements and underground rock-cut tombs. Urartian funerary customs are most distinctly evident through subterranean burial chambers. Excavated graves have yielded numerous artifacts, demonstrating how the Urartians honored their deceased. Multiple interments have been uncovered in these burial sites, with inhumation burials often placed in a fetal position. Certain graves also contain cremation burials. An array of jewelry and pottery was interred in the chambers as grave offerings; these artifacts serve as crucial dating evidence for such tombs, although attempts to date them solely based on specific artifact sets have been debated, emphasizing the importance of considering the entirety of the finds and their condition (Konyar, 2021: 205–207).

In Iran, there are notable archaeological sites that feature tombs with distinct architectural elements. At Ismail Aqa fortifications, two rock-cut tombs have been identified, each consisting of a structured room and its surrounding spatial context (Kleiss & Kroll, 1977). Additionally, there are two rock-cut tombs in Chehriq, near Selmas, as documented by Kleiss in 1980 (Kleiss, 1980: 40 Abb. 212). These tombs at Chehriq are characterized by a layout of three rooms, comprising a central room and two adjoining chambers (Kleiss, 1968). Furthermore, Hodar Castle also contains two tombs, described by Kleiss in 1974, situated close to Urmia (Kleiss, 1974). These tombs are intricately designed with two interconnected chambers featuring niches along their perimeters (Kargar, 1368). Moving south

to Urmia, the site of Seduk harbors a pair of tombs, one atop the other, within the rocky terrain (Shojadel & Khanmohammadi, 2013; Kargar, 1989). Another notable tomb worth mentioning is the rock-hewn sepulcher at Delik Dash in Chaldaran, characterized by an entryway leading into a rectangular chamber (Shojadel & Khanmohammadi, 2013). Moreover, a Shedi rock-cut tomb lies adjacent to one of the largest Urartian settlements near the Araxes River (Kroll, 2004). The accidental discovery of Sheikh Selo's tomb in northwest Iran, near the border with Turkey, provides new evidence for Urartian burials, at least in Iran (Binandeh and Karegar, 2023a). In Urartian territory, simple burials constructed as dugouts within the earth, often composed of rubble and stone casings, are prevalent. These burial practices, sometimes accompanied by offerings, are exemplified at sites like Sangar (Binandeh & Kargar, 2023b).

Given the various burial types found in the land of Urartu, particularly in the northwestern region of Iran, and considering their structural characteristics, architectural elements, and the artifacts discovered within them, a pertinent question arises: To which period do these burials belong, and can they be linked to the Urartians? To address this inquiry, we first constructed a detailed map of the burial site and compiled comprehensive architectural details of the tomb. We then examined the existing artifacts, along with preliminary descriptions of any missing items as recounted by witnesses. This data was subsequently compared with similar burial structures and artifacts from surrounding areas to draw meaningful connections.

Chamber Tomb of Khāneqāh

The serendipitous discovery of the Khāneqāh Chamber Tomb near the Iran-Turkey border offers compelling evidence of Urartian burial practices to the west of Lake Urmia. Located in the northwestern foothills of Iran, Khāneqāh Village lies approximately 35 km west of Urmia city and close to the Turkish border. In 2000, while villagers were preparing to construct a mosque, they inadvertently uncovered a stone structure that was later recognized as an Urartian tomb. Regrettably, by the time we arrived at the site, a significant portion of the artifacts within the tomb had already been looted.

Architecture

Today, the chamber tomb in question is situated beneath the village mosque, a unique circumstance that highlights both the historical significance of the site and its integration into the local community. The village itself is nestled

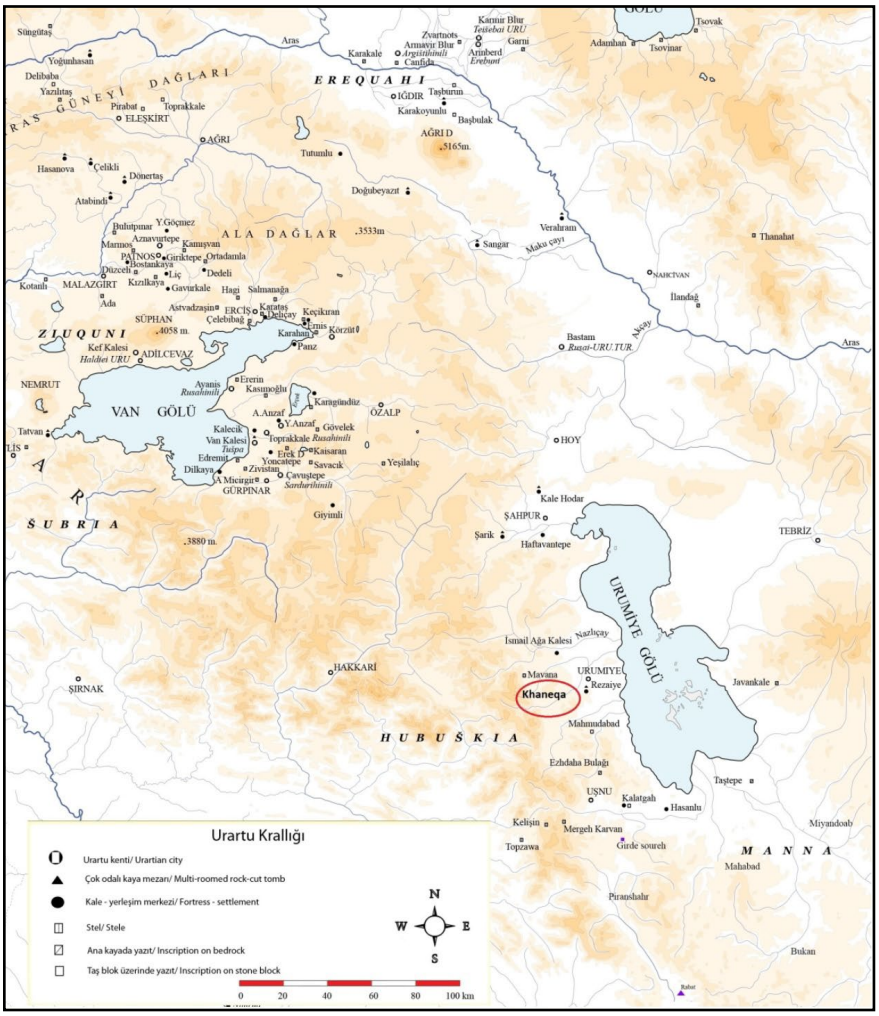
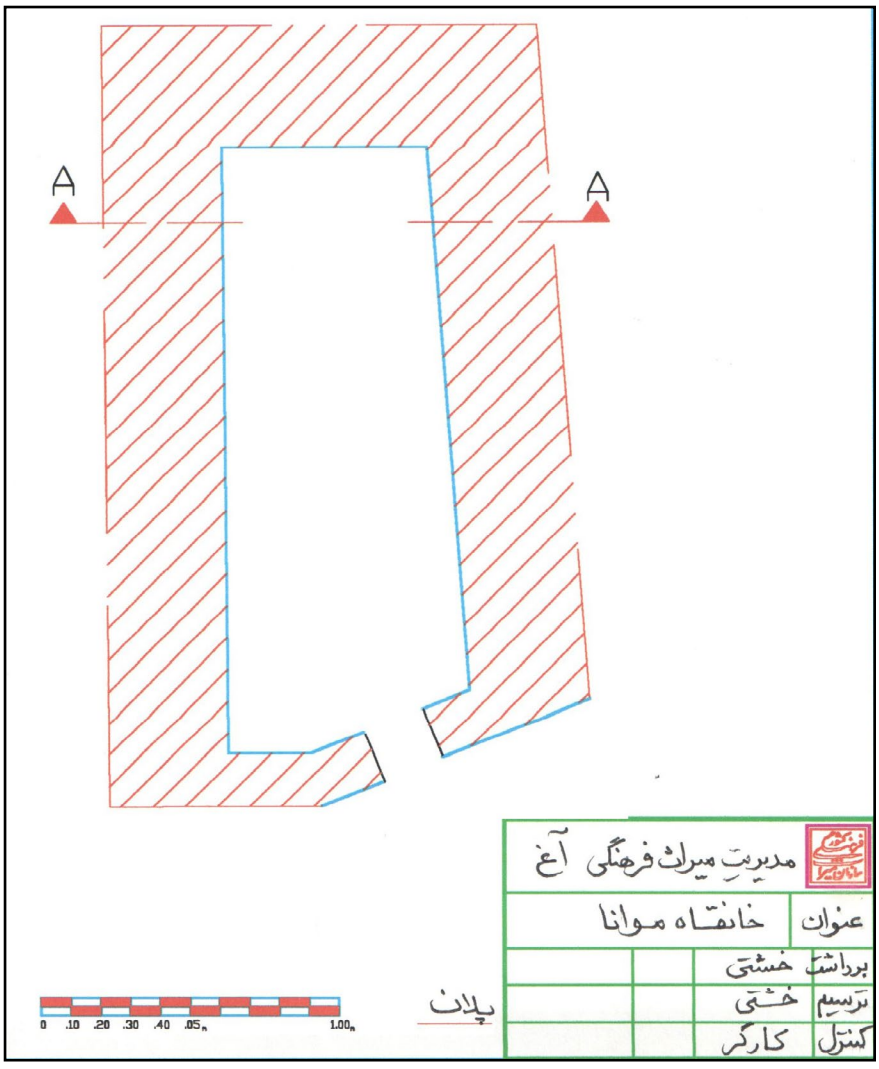


Fig. 1: Location of Khāneqāh Chamber Tomb and Urartian sites (base map Köroğlu, 2011). ▶

in the foothills of the surrounding region, providing a picturesque backdrop to this remarkable archaeological find. The chamber tomb was uncovered during the construction of the village mosque, revealing a fascinating glimpse into the burial practices of the Urartians. It is oriented in a north-south direction, a detail that may hold cultural or spiritual significance. The tomb was constructed within a pit excavated into the earth, showcasing the building techniques of its time. The primary materials used were unworked limestone and sandstone blocks, predominantly rectangular or square in shape (Fig. 2). This choice of local stone reflects the availability of resources in the region and demonstrates an understanding of the materials that would endure over time. The dimensions of the chamber tomb are striking: it measures approximately five meters in length, with a width of 120 centimeters at one end and 180 centimeters at the entrance. Its height reaches up to 180 centimeters from the inside, providing enough space for an individual to enter comfortably (Fig. 3). The design elements of this

◄ Fig. 2. The local stone blocks used at Khāneqāh Chamber Tomb (Authors, 2024).



◄ Fig. 3. The plan of the chamber tomb (B. Kheshti, 2000).

tomb, as depicted in accompanying figures, reveal a robust and practical approach to burial construction. The structural integrity of the chamber tomb is noteworthy. The side walls consist of large, irregularly shaped stone

slabs, which are filled with smaller stones to reinforce the overall stability of the structure. The thickness of the longitudinal walls measures about 50 centimeters, indicating a strong foundation. Remarkably, these walls are dry laid, meaning they were constructed without the use of mortar, a technique that illustrates the skill of the builders in ensuring that the stones fit securely together.

Access to the tomb is provided through an entrance located in the southeastern part. The design of the entrance is quite intriguing; the wider side of this section is almost sloping, creating a natural transition into the tomb. The entryway itself is relatively narrow, measuring less than 50 centimeters in width. Flanking the entrance are two vertical, smooth stone slabs, each approximately 100 centimeters high and 50 centimeters wide, which serve as sturdy markers of the entrance. Above these vertical slabs lies a horizontal stone slab that is 35 centimeters thick, adding another layer of structural support. To complete the entrance, several large stones have been laid atop the structure, extending all the way to the roof, which further reinforces the chamber (Fig. 4).

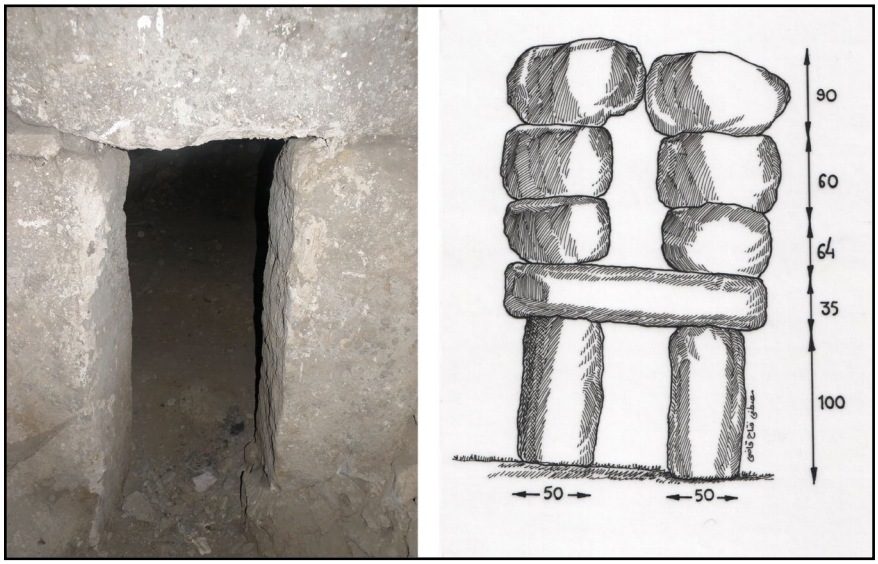


Fig. 4. The entrance of the chamber tomb (Authors, 2024). ▶

The tomb is capped with six large stone slabs that are nearly uniform in size, each extending up to 220 centimeters in length (Fig. 5). This uniformity suggests a deliberate selection of stones for the purpose of creating a stable roof, protecting the interior from the elements while also providing security for the objects within. Among the distinct features of the tomb is a niche that, at first glance, may not seem to be a niche at all. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes apparent that the space above the entrance likely served as a niche, which may have held significant artifacts or offerings. This feature adds an element of intrigue to the tomb, as it raises questions

◄ Fig. 5: Large stone slabs covering the tomb's roof, viewed from the interior (Authors, 2024).

about the burial customs and the practice of the Urartian people. The presence of such a niche could indicate a place for the display of items of personal or ritual importance. Most likely, the space above the entrance is a niche. In Early Iron Age and Urartian chamber tombs although rare in the former niches were often constructed in the long side walls (Kuvanç et al., 2016: 153). To avoid placing excessive weight on the stone above the door, this space was designed as a niche, a common architectural technique. As the exterior of the tomb is currently inaccessible and not visible, it is not feasible to definitively ascertain the presence of a dromos, a feature commonly found in other tombs of a similar nature.

Burial

Prior to the notification and arrival of the cultural heritage office personnel, a substantial portion of the grave's contents had been looted. Within the tomb, various human bones, such as skulls, femur and hand bones, were found scattered on the floor (Fig. 6). The precise original positioning of these bones could not be conclusively determined. As a result, the burial status of one or more individuals within the tomb remains undetermined.

Finds

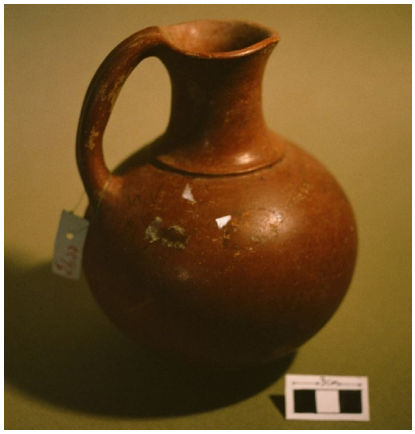
During the visit to the tomb, most of the objects inside had already been looted. Inside the tomb, pieces of human bones, including skulls and hand bones, were scattered across different areas. The most significant type of pottery that was recovered was a trefoil jug (Fig. 7). This Jug is with

Fig. 6. Human remains on the surface of Khāneqāh Chamber Tomb site (Authors, 2024). ▶

a trefoil rim, round body and flat base, has an embossed band under its neck and has a handle. Wheel-made, light red fabric with a dark red slip, brightly burnished and well-fired, it does not have any decoration. This proves that trefoil jugs were also inspired by metal pieces. The same forms could be found among the metal samples, especially those made of bronze (Binandeh & Kargar, 2023). Find conditions and Urartian reliefs show that such jugs were used for carrying and pouring water, as burial gifts and urns in graveyards, and as votive offerings (Emre, 1969: 283). Samples of this type were reported in many Urartian sites (San, 2005).

Discussion

The architectural features of chamber tombs from the Early Iron Age and the Urartian era reveal significant insights into their construction techniques and cultural significance. One notable aspect is the niche located above the entrance of these tombs. Although niches are relatively rare in Early Iron Age examples, they are a hallmark of Urartian burial architecture. These niches, typically placed in the long side walls, serve not only an aesthetic function but also a structural one. By distributing weight more evenly and alleviating pressure on the stones above the door, this design reflects a refined understanding of construction principles (Kuvanç *et al.*, 2016: 153). Such architectural choices underscore the importance of stability in the design of these enduring structures. However, it is crucial to note that the current inaccessibility of the tomb's exterior prevents us from verifying whether a dromos a sloped corridor that often



▲ Fig. 7. Red burnished Trefoil jug from the chamber tomb (Authors, 2024).

precedes the entrance of tombs exists in this case. Dromoi are common features in chamber tombs, serving both functional and symbolic roles by guiding the deceased into the afterlife. The lack of visibility means our comprehension is inherently limited, compelling researchers to rely on comparisons with other, more thoroughly documented tombs. Within the region of Iran, various chamber tombs resembling those found in monastic settings have been identified. For instance, the Ushno Tomb, while smaller than the Khāneqāh, exhibits structural similarities that suggest a shared architectural tradition. The artifacts found at Ushno indicate its association with the Iron Age, providing evidence for cultural continuity and evolution through time (Khanmohammadi, 2013). Similarly, the Lor Balajuq Tomb, located near Urmia, reflects dimensions and a structure comparable to the Khāneqāh. Unfortunately, due to looting, many artifacts that could provide further contextualization have been lost, obscuring the full narrative of this site. Dating back to the first millennium BC, the tomb's design presents challenges for archaeological interpretation, particularly concerning the socio-cultural practices of the time (Khanmohammadi & Sadraei, 2022).

Another key site in this discourse is the Bayazid Abad Tomb, which was discovered during road construction. This tomb has emerged as a comprehensive example of chamber tomb architecture, revealing significant similarities in both structure and size to the Khāneqāh. The diverse collection of artifacts recovered from Bayazid Abad enriches our understanding of the socio-economic contexts within which these tombs were constructed and utilized (Amelirad & Khanmohammadi, 2016). Underground chamber tombs are indeed the predominant form of burial architecture in Urartian territory. They can be classified into three distinct categories: underground stone-built tombs, rock-cut tombs, and hybrid variants that integrate both designs (Konyar, 2011: 218). While the absence of certain objects complicates dating efforts, the architectural styles and pottery discovered within these tombs provide crucial information. For instance, the striking resemblance of trefoil jugs found within these tombs to those from other Urartian sites suggests not only a shared material culture but potentially similar funerary practices across the region. Furthermore, the architectural and structural designs of these tombs align closely with those from the Lake Van area, which has been documented in previous studies (Konyar, 2011; Kuvanç *et al.,* 2016). Given that this region was a core part of the Urartian heartland, it stands to reason that these tombs are integral to our understanding of Urartian identity and burial practices. With each archaeological finding, we further unravel the complexities of past

civilizations, revealing how architecture and artifacts together narrate the stories of those who once inhabited the land.

Conclusion

The territory under Urartian rule was extensive, encompassing various ethnic groups - a diversity reflected in burial traditions. The variation in funerary practices, or the coexistence of different customs within a single region, indicates the population's ethnic and social diversity (Konyar, 2011). The excavations of Karagündüz, Dilkaya, Ernis-Evditepe and Höyüks have presented considerable evidence. These necropoles consisted primarily of chamber tombs containing collective burials and grave goods such as pottery and metal weapons. They are highly significant for understanding the socio-political structures and transformations during the formation process of the Urartian state (Işikli, 2021: 85). From the beginning of Urartu's formation, the Lake Urmia basin - particularly its western sector - held great significance, as evidenced by the construction of numerous fortresses of varying sizes. The Ismail Aqa fortress and several other Urartian fortresses, located near Khāneqāh, served to administer and control the region. Burial traditions in the land of Urartu have been very diverse. Unfortunately, looting and the destruction of tombs at the time of their discovery have resulted in only fragmentary artifacts being recovered, leaving us without information regarding the precise positioning of skeletal remains and associated objects. These types of tombs span an extensive chronological period and became increasingly common beginning in the Bronze Age. The architectural structure and material assemblage of the Khāneqāh Tomb are entirely consistent with Urartian style, dating to the 7th century BC, with the deceased individual most likely belonging to Urartu's local elite class. As archaeological investigations continue, the site maintains significant potential for further discoveries that promise to provide deeper insights into Urartian cultural practices and societal organization.

Acknowledgments

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Observation Contribution

This research is based on the fieldwork of Ebrahim Kharazi, who explored and collected materials. Ali Binandeh supervised the findings and prepared the original draft

Conflict of Interest

The Authors, while observing publication ethics in referencing, declare the absence of conflict of interest.

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چکیده

پادشاهی اورارتو به‌مدت بیش از دو قرن بر قلمرو وسیعی حکم‌رانی می‌کرد. این دولت جایگا خود را به‌عنوان یکی از قدرت‌های اصلی عصر آهن تثبیت کرد و وسعت سرزمینی خود را گسترش داد که قسمت‌های وسیعی از شمال‌غرب ایران، آناتولی و ارمنستان و بخش کوچکی از کردستان عراق کنونی را دربر می‌گرفت. در این بین، انواع مختلفی از تدفین در سرزمین اورارتو گزارش شده که بیشتر براساس نوع، شیوهٔ ساخت، معماری و مصالح به‌کار رفته و اندازهٔ آن‌ها دسته‌بندی می‌شود؛ بر این‌اساس، جایگاه اجتماعی متوفی نیز مشخص می‌شود. مقبره‌های صخره‌ای و اتاقک‌های زیرزمینی با معماری خاص نیز از انواع سنت‌های رایج تدفین در این دوره است که در شمال‌غرب ایران نیز نمونه‌های متنوعی از این نوع گزارش شده است. «مقبرهٔ خانقاه» در روستای به‌همین نام، نزدیکی ارومیه، به‌طور اتفاقی و حین انجام فعالیت عمرانی مربوط به ساخت مسجد کشف شد. ابعاد مقبره قابل‌توجه است، طول آن حدود ۵ متر و عرض آن در یک‌طرف ۱۲۰ سانتی‌متر و در سوی دیگر ۱۸۰ سانتی‌متر و ارتفاع آن از درون تا سقف به ۱۸۰ سانتی‌متر می‌رسد. متأسفانه، به‌دلیل جابه‌جایی و آسیب‌های انسانی، نوع و تعداد دقیق تدفین‌ها در این مقبره نامشخص است و اکثر گورنهاده‌ها و اشیاء ارزشمند آن در دسترس نیست؛ با این‌حال، معدود قطعات سفالی به‌دست آمده از نمونه‌های شاخص سفالگری دورهٔ اورارتو به‌شمار می‌روند. داده‌های این پژوهش عمدتاً از طریق فعالیت‌های میدانی و رویکرد کیفی جمع‌آوری شد. این فعالیت‌ها شامل بازدید از: محل، کاوش اضطراری و جمع‌آوری دقیق یافته‌ها (هم در بستر اصلی و هم در نمونه‌های جابه‌جا شده) بود. مهم‌ترین پرسش‌ها و فرضیه‌های متناظر با آن در پژوهش حاضر عبارتند از: ۱. مقبرهٔ خانقاه مربوط به چه بازهٔ زمانی است؟ و ۲. این نوع سنت تدفین گورنهاده‌ها مربوط به چه طبقهٔ اجتماعی است؟از نظر ساختاری، این مقبره شباهت‌های قابل‌توجهی با مقبره‌های لور بالاجوق و بایزیدآباد در حوضهٔ دریاچهٔ ارومیه دارد که همگی به عصر آهن تعلق دارند و نشان از گسترش این نوع تدفین دارند؛ هرچند کمبود یافته‌ها، تاریخ‌گذاری دقیق را دشوار کرده، اما سفال‌ها و ویژگی‌های معماری خانقاه با مقبره‌های اورارتویی ایران و حوضهٔ دریاچهٔ وان مشابه است. معماری مقبره، اشیاء مرتبط و موقعیت آن نشان می‌دهد که احتمالاً این مقبره به یک نخبهٔ محلی اورارتویی تعلق داشته و تنوع سنت‌های تدفین در قلمرو این پادشاهی را به‌نمایش می‌گذارد.

کلیدواژگان: اورارتو، مقبره، ارومیه، خانقاه.

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