

Jebel Khalid

August 1986

Sondage α 1986 season

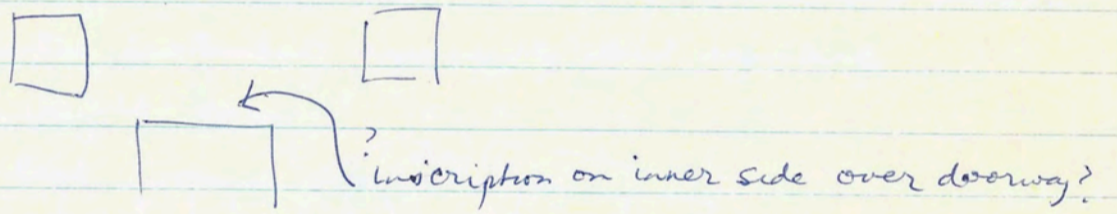
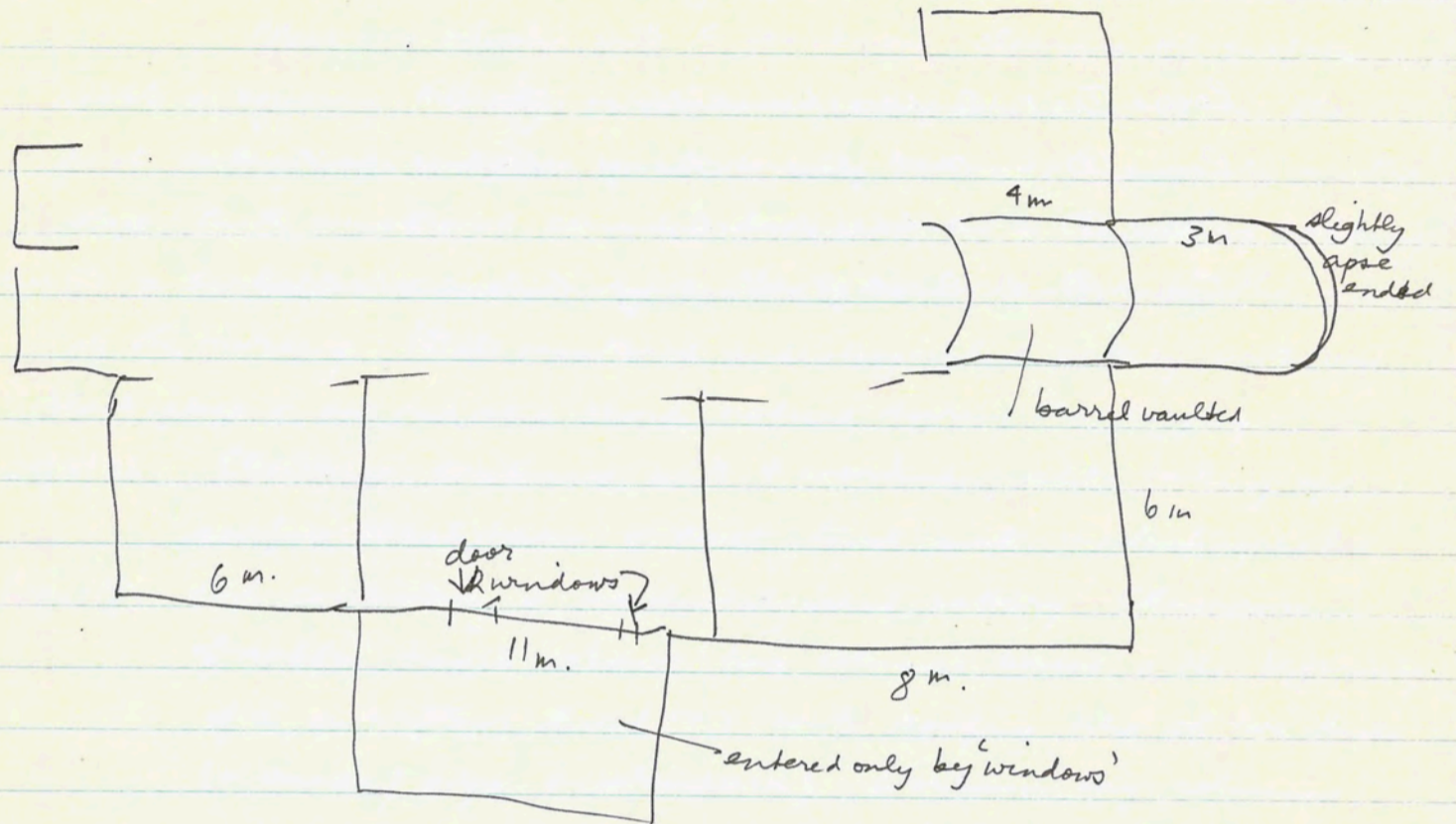
N.W. Tower 11/8

After examining N. wall along its length, work was started on the rounded-outside platform / Tower on the high ground which juts out on an outcrop of rock on the NW corner. This would provide visibility ^{along} ~~on~~ W.ern flank as well as to N. + overlook the area of the wall by which the Djebel can be most easily approached on the N. face ^(present path up). Quarry face for the stonework can be seen a little along on the W.ern side outside the wall. This NW corner was a little vulnerable as the stone outcrop can be scaled without too much difficulty but an overtowering structure would have strengthened the position immeasurably.

Note: the gully on the northern end is naturally defended. A guard post appears to have been stationed at its entrance (with some warning system?) but nothing else in the way of defence work is visible, nor probably needed as the climb up the gully from the river is slow + difficult. The guard-post consists of a sentry-box cut into the rock at the river-end of the gully. A cavern near by up the gully would have afforded shelter.

There appear to be military buildings traceable overlooking the northern entrance to the main gully on the river cliff as well as at the head of the northern gully arm. A further similar building could be traced overlooking the wall as it ran along the cliff edge to its conclusion at the southern side of the ravine.

'Tomb Complex' overlooking ravine on N side.



Locus ① = Surface two inches or so

Locus ② = next few inches of surface soil

Locus ③ = robber trench

Locus ④ = level of trench of limestone chips.

Artefact [1] = glass collected in robber trench.

Area Alpha

21/8/86: Sondage at gully head of robbed out area.

• Trench 4m x 5m, cutting across robber trenches.

• Clearance started with 4 workmen, clearing off surface rubble + squaring the edge. Weathered pottery sherds only in the first cutting of rubble + earth washed down presumably on the slope. Earth mixed with crumbed limestone as a result of robbing.

Locus ① = surface two inches or so. Most was cleared by the end of the morning. Well weathered undistinguished pottery with one black-glaze + one red slip sherd noticed during the digging.

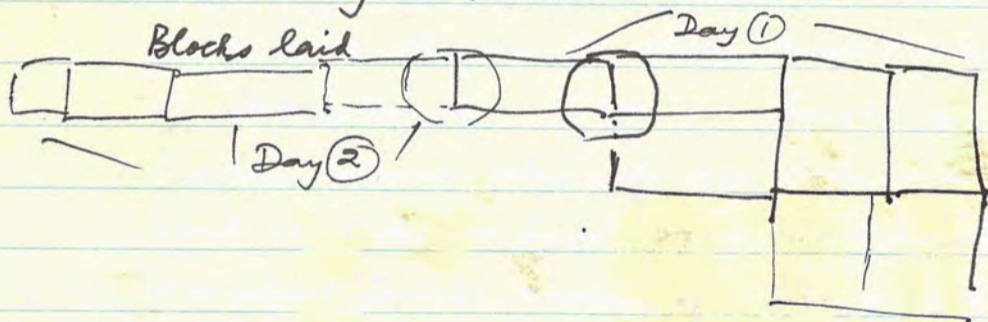
24/8/86: Clearance continues with 4 workmen, still taking off surface washdown + next level with undistinguished soil consistency + undistinguished pottery. Clearance of robber trench shows two column bases + the beginnings of a cut floor level (?) with roofing tiles of two kinds (= arched/edge + standard). Workmen say columns went all along + that money was found during the

Locus ③ robbing. This I called locus ③ with largely roof tiles but

Bag ① other pottery as well. Floor area is of limestone blocks

Bag ② now rather broken but apparently laid regularly.

Column height: 40cm.



25/8/86 Continued work on surface area, getting down to less surface soil, but still not at any noticeably different level. Three workmen only (Agla went off sick). Stones being removed as unconnected but top of column emerging + some dressed stone. After level of earth then distinct change to hardened limestone chips. It does not appear to be floor but destruction elements of compacted + broken limestone. In robber-pit at N. end at very base

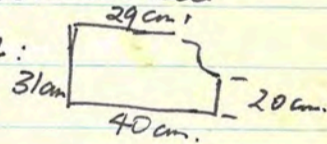
Artefact ① fragments of glass were found, still in locus ③

The new level of the trench I have called locus ④

Continued clearance of robber pit revealed continuation of paved flooring until end of trench. The remaining

blocks are sitting on limestone chippings which extends beyond suggesting further blocks were in place, now robbed away. Blocks of irregular size c. 30cm. in depth, upto 103cm in length but most smaller, width 52cm. regularly where measurable. The floor appears to continue into unexcavated area undamaged. At this stage it cannot be determined whether the column elements emerging are in situ or fallen from elsewhere.

26/8/86. With five workmen work continued on the remaining robbed out area (still locus ③) producing apart from a small lamp + fragment of Parthian glaze-ware. On the trench itself stones were removed as we cut into the rocky fill, presumably created by the building's collapse, fragmentation of the limestone + subsequent hardening. Very rocky producing little in the way of pottery. Robber pit was cleared out to foundation level revealing a packed earth foundation, then a fill of field stones as foundation for the piers of the paved flooring. The stone fill is 50cm. deep. The one column element that appears in place was cleared to show socket-hole + dimensions of diameter of 77cm, height of 42cm. Broken column elements are coming into view. The one next to it at its best preserved height is 45cm high + a slight larger radius of 42cm = 84 diameter. A broken column element was removed (128cm round + cm) 5 deep. + 45cm across. A worked but broken block was also removed, squared:



Bags ④ + ⑤ 20cm in height.

of locus ④ 'chipped area'. There appears to have been a stepped level into our present podium floor, one element + the edge of its rest being apparently in place. 82cm broad + 84cm height of step = at base of higher blocks.

27/8/86

Work continued on clearance of building rubble, to reveal the tumble of building elements. Work also continued clearing the final part of robber pit to base level of dark brown friable earth. Locus 4 continued to produce

Bag 6

largely roofing tiles + broken building blocks 20 cm x 25 cm x 20 cm deep + 36 cm x 25 cm x 20 cm deep.

Locus 3 (robber pit), (Bag 5), was last to be cleared of robbed area to ground. Some exploration of the robbed out area showed a floor-level built up on a high podium, possibly on the same level as the floor cleared in the trench. Excavation at the N. end of the trench revealed further flooring + a column apparently still in situ and a block of stone shaped for dovetailing or a door-way. Column element on its side at North end measures c. 78 cm in diameter + is 38 cm thick.

Column at angle against one in situ is 42 cm. high + has diameter of 82 cm.

Column piece apparently still in situ at NW corner of trench has height of 46 cm. + appears to have a radius of c. 42 cm with a triangular (instead of square) socket. But the stone is fractured. Altogether 7 column drums survive in part or whole.

The dressed stone has measurements



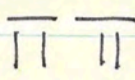
Column (broken) at ground (present) level has 30 cm height + diameter of c. 82 cm.

60 cm x 72 cm x 50 cm. were the dimensions of a dressed building block.

Tomb Chamber

Inscriptions:

Left Hand arcosolium, right side of arch.

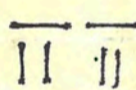
Ε 6 sarcophagi 

ρ
M regular confident
H deep cut letters 10 cm high
C length of inscription

Over Central arcosolium, right side of arch.
No doubt of reading

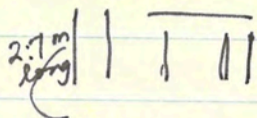
← 27cm → Β ✓ Beta βαρὰχδθαι
Α ✓ alpha
ρ rho? can't be another letter.
Α ✓ alpha Α
Χ Kappa? or Chi more likely: all arms at angles
Α ✓ alpha
Θ ✓ theta
Α alpha? cross stroke faintish
C ✓ sigma: possibly omicron but pretty clearly sigma.

Letters get progressively smaller & cramped to accommodate to space
88cm long. 18 letters 12cm. last letter 5cm

six sarcophagi 

two pairs each with ^{pair}loculus at right angles along back of arcosolium.

Right hand arcosolium



would serve multiple burials?

On right hand side of arch.

weathered

clear M A ~~MM~~

after alphav. faint + broken

K O C

clear

crossbar faint O Y ~~MM~~

MM most likely mu

O C

cramped to squeeze it in?

A K E

{ Kappa has lower leg broken away

B A C

{ letter rather like | but enough there to make reading certain

flaky limestone: no squeeze possible

practicable.

Letter heights variable

Entrance sq. approx 3m square

arcosolium c. 2.70metres deep.

is it μαρκος θυμος one person?

and κκεβας

or 3 different persons?

two people would make better sense of the different arrangement of the loculi. Two v. lengthy ones side by side (for multiple burials?) and the remaining four arranged together 3 parallel + the fourth at right angles to them



Photos: colour print film ①

6/8 7, 8, 9, 10 N. Wall ~ J-H ~ East End

7/8 13, 14 " " " " Double Courses

8/8 15-19 } " " " "
} foundation in bed-rock at NE Corner

film ② 10/8

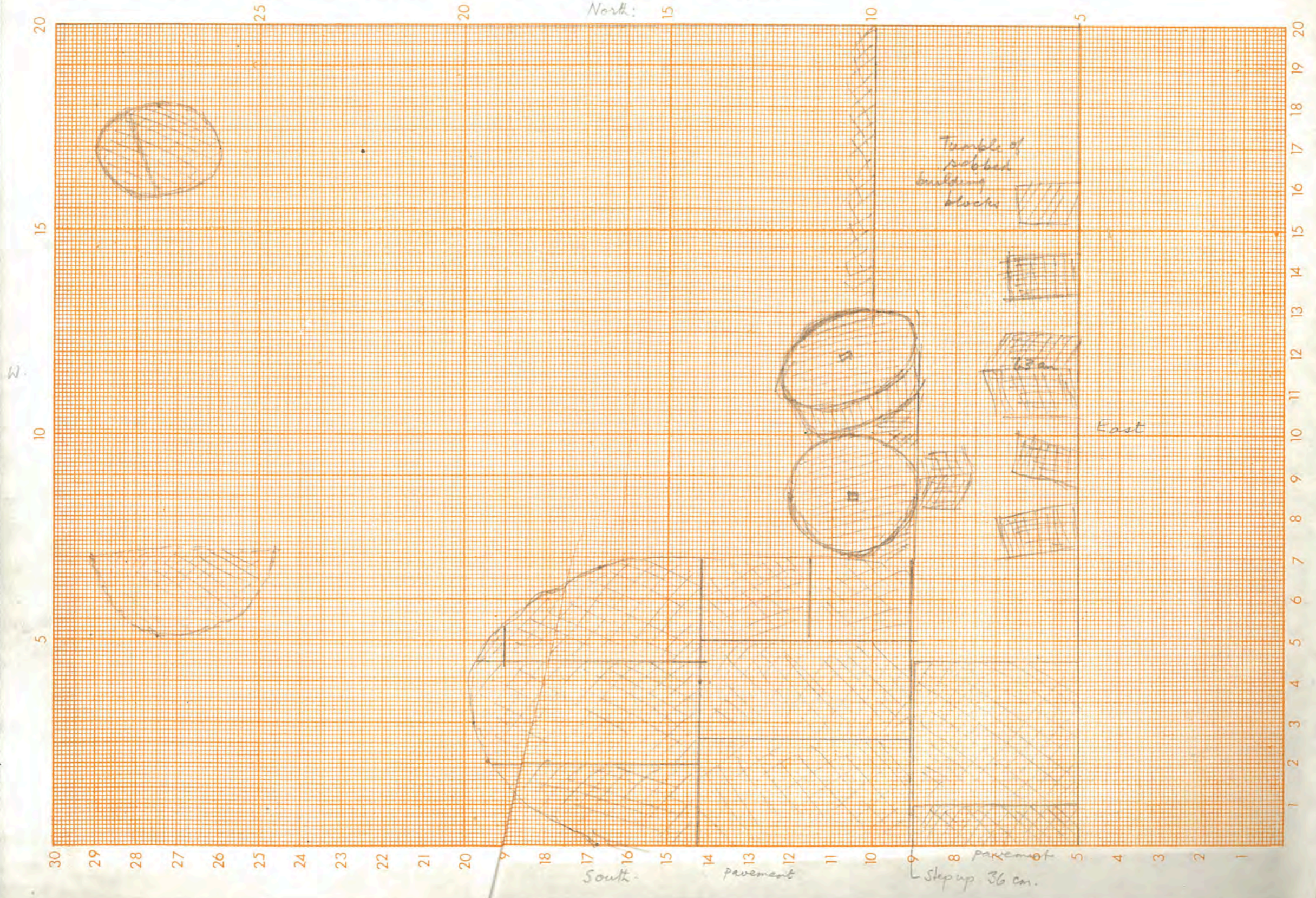
1-5 details of ending of wall cut into bedrock at NE Corner
then follows details of tower in NW corner plus cutting into bedrock
+ quarry nearby the NW Tower (overlooked by an interval tower)

12/8 then tomb near Jusuf Pasha followed by

13/8 guard-post overlooking ravine on N. end and
then 'tomb' complex overlooking " " " "

quarry inside wall Syriac inscription in a cave complex on N side of ravine

Sondage Alpha: Jebel Khalid 27/8/86: View from Top at end of sondage.



to have been laid to the same depth as the fieldstone podium: in one place three levels of blocks were still in situ). See illus. *

The few surviving column drums are all unfluted (their diameters are either 78 cm. or c. 82 cm. but their heights vary from between 38 and 46 cm.): the limestone blocks that were measured were uniformly c. 24 cm. in height but varied otherwise in length and width. Broken roof-tiles abound, suggesting that we are seeing here the mutilated remnants of what once was a roofed ambularium. One ^{Doric} column capital only was rescued from the stone-robbers when caught in flagrante delicto

* (illus.) and it clearly implies that there had been at least some fluted column elements originally: the diameter of the column is c. 51 cm. whereas the ^{abacus} block to which the capital is affixed is c. 75 cm. square. The column terminated with an unelaborate decoration of ~~triple-grooved band~~ ^{necking grooves and echinus.}

Nearby there lie on the open ground three elements that may conceivably be associated with this building complex. A few metres from the north-east corner of the robbed area, protruding from a robber trench, is a length of column, unfluted, diameter at one end 62 cm. (though it appears to taper somewhat towards the other end which is still partly buried), and being just over one metre in length (101 cm.). And some 10 m. to the south of the robbed area there appears to be the remains of a (now very severely weathered) limestone column capital, octagonal in shape (each side of the octagon c. 40 cm.) and decorated with simple festoons of a knobbed or beaded frieze (protruding visibly c. 1 cm.) in the register between the end of the column and the octagon (column diameter is a very approximate 70 cm. +:

2/ * see illus.). A third element is a rather battered column length lying in a shallow excavated ditch a short distance from the south-east corner of the robbed area: it is some 83 cm. in length with a

Sondage Alpha

One of the outstanding topographical features of Jebel Khalid is the ravine which deeply gouges into the Jebel on its river (eastern) flank. As it cuts into the Jebel it forks into two arms. The more southerly arm is eventually terminated by a retaining wall (some of its fine worked blocks are still visible): at the northern end of this wall a flight of steps (eleven risers survive), cut through an archway of living rock, gave access up onto the Jebel itself. There, the visitor as he emerged would have been confronted by a major building, now alas! so severely robbed for its stonework that it is beyond accurate reconstruction. An area, roughly some 15 metres square, has in very recent years been completely dug out for the dressed limestone blocks and limestone column drums that it produced in quantity - only then to be broken up for local building materials. A scatter of limestone blocks and unfluted column drums remain littered on the site as surviving evidence. To judge from what remains visible there had clearly been laid a raised podium of packed fieldstones to create a level surface on the sloping ground (at the eastern end this was at least two metres high): a thick layer of crushed limestone (at least several cm. deep throughout and in some places it measures up to 28 cm. deep) then levelled off this fill. It is possible that this floored area may not have been paved: it remains relatively undisturbed by the robbers. In all probability it formed an hypaethral courtyard.¹

To judge from the robbing activity there is no doubt that this (presumed) open area was surrounded on all sides by a colonnade built upon a deep foundation of limestone ashlar blocks (the blocks appear

- (a) (i) 77 cm. in diameter and 42 cm. high
- (ii) 78 cm. in diameter and 38 cm. high
- (b) (iii) 84 cm. in diameter and 45 cm. high
- (iv) 83 cm. in diameter and 43 cm. high
- (v) 82 cm. in diameter and 30 cm. high (rather broken)
- (c) (vi) 90 cm. in diameter and 45 cm. high
- (vii) 90 cm. in diameter and 55 cm. high
- (viii) 90 cm. in diameter and 57 cm. high

Where measurable the column elements in (c) have triangular-shaped central sockets whereas all others are squared.

Whilst none of these elements appeared to be lying in situ it was distinctly clear that several columns had collapsed across the paving with the roofing coming down on top. Shattered roof tiles were found in great abundance and at least two socketed building-blocks are readily identified as roofing elements for holding roof-beams. Over the top of this tumble had washed down or blown in several centimetres of surface soil mixed with some crumbed limestone and weathered pottery sherds (including one black-glaze and one high-gloss red 'Pergamene' sherd) but not far below this characteristically greyish surface soil roof-tiles, hardened limestone chips and compacted and shattered (but once dressed) limestone pieces form one continuous stratum until the paving is reached. The paving itself shows two rough grooves in the south-west corner of the trench but they could be due to fracturing of the stone-work rather than for any functional purpose (see Plan).

The impression is that at least in this section of the building valuables had been removed. The pottery and glass fragments recovered appeared to be detritus left at the floor level (some fine ware black glaze fragments as well as red high-gloss ware).

diameter of c. 51 cm. No stucco work, antefixes or other decorative or architectural elements were observed in a survey of the robbed area. Under these circumstances the general impression that there had once been a colonnaded courtyard structure had to remain strictly hypothetical.

It was therefore decided to open a trench immediately adjoining the robbed out area (4 m. x 5 m.) on its western side. The objectives were to determine whether the building complex had continued in this direction and to see whether more information might be gleaned about its construction, its function and its dating. Most of the work was carried out in the 1986 season and it was completed in the 1987 season. ^{3/}

Whilst excavation was made difficult by the presence of compacted and shattered column drums and crushed limestone building elements what emerged was clear enough. At this point a fieldstone foundation had been laid on dark brown friable earth, to all appearances virgin soil. Here the podium, at this western side of the robbed area, was ^{f/} only some 50 cm. high. If this building complex, therefore, continued very much further up the slope it would have been necessary to have it rise in a stepped tier - or at least have a cutting into the hillside. A limestone slurry had then levelled off this fieldstone in-fill and ashlar limestone blocks had been laid on top. They are (where measurable) a regular 30 cm. in height but vary in width (but many are 52 cm. wide) and length (up to 103 cm.) forming a rather irregular paved flooring. Across this flooring lay a tumble of building blocks (many shattered) and column drums. Many of the column elements were too broken for useful measurements but there were eight relatively well preserved column lengths (all unfluted): they fall into three groups:

1. For hypaethral courtyards at Seleucia on the Tigris, left unpaved but with plastered floor, in Temples A and B see C. Hopkins, Topography and architecture of Seleucia on the Tigris, Ann Arbor, 1972, 120, 124f.

3 7. 1986 Season: G.W. Clarke; 1987 Season: G.W. Clarke & B. Raworth.

2. For fourth-century octagonal Doric columns see A.W. Lawrence, Greek Architecture, 1973 ed., 246 (Cassope).