

The North Mausoleum at Um Qeis

(Pls. XLVII — XLVIII)

The site of the North Mausoleum was cleared by the Department of Antiquities in 1969. It is located to the northeast of the Bath of Herakleides on the edge of the steep northern slope which goes down to the Yarmuk river. The building was constructed of fine-grained basalt blocks which were smoothly finished on the exposed faces and joining edges, but left rough on the hidden surfaces. The fact that many of these stones are strewn far down the steep slope indicates that the building tumbled in an earthquake. In addition, the northeast corner of the building has been completely removed in order to create access to a cave several meters under the foundation of the building. As a result of these destructions, only a small portion of the building stones are left *in situ*. With some effort, however, a large number of the tumbled stones could be recovered from the slope.

Two building phases are clearly evident. The original structure - the western portion of the building - consisted of a nearly square platform - 6.38 x 6.25 meters - on which the superstructure of the mausoleum was built. The platform was built up by means of a limestone foundation which extends 55 cm. beyond the wall on the lower (north) side. The platform consists of smooth basalt paving stones set on a three course high perimeter wall with the edges of the platform cantilevered 34 cm. beyond the perimeter wall and beveled on the bottom. Centered in the platform is a crypt for a single burial (2.14 x 1.15 m.). The bottom of the crypt is 1.74 m. below the platform; it is not clear from the remains how high it was built up.

The superstructure of the mausoleum was set on this platform with its outside dimensions matching those of the peri-

meter wall. Of this structure only two stones remain in place on the southeast corner of the original platform. The outside faces of these long stones are beveled along the top. The fact that the top faces of these stones are unfinished indicates that additional courses were set on them. Because traces of cement indicate that this wall was only 85 cm. thick, these additional courses must have had vertical faces up to the height of the roof. Not enough remains of this superstructure to give further reconstructive description. There is no evidence of an entrance or an access stairway connected with this phase of the building.

At a later date the platform was extended 2.70 m. to the east, including a four step 5.00 m. wide stairway. This extension was carefully joined to and matched with the original platform (cf. south elevation), although the stones in the perimeter are shorter and differ in thickness from those in the original. The stairway leads onto a rough limestone pavement.

Nearby are some basalt column fragments including an ionic capital with flat volutes. If this capital was used in the building, it would indicate a late Roman date. Several meters to the east of the stairs is a dated funeral inscription enclosed in a Roman cartouche on a large basalt stone. If the assumption that this inscription was originally a part of this structure is correct, at least one of the phases of the mausoleum can be dated accurately. (cf. Dr. Fawzi Zayadine's publication of this inscription in this issue).

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