

Survey in al-Khawd, Khur al-Daba', Muscat Municipality (Sultanate of Oman)

Survey 23.10.2018 interim internal report to Ministry of Heritage and Culture, 25.10.2018

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The Ministry of Heritage and Culture requested that we conduct a preliminary survey of the archaeological remains at al-Khawd/Khur al-Daba' c. 250 m S of LuLu al-Bandar (Fig. 6). Atop the two parallel limestone outcroppings tombs and other structures are visible of unknown antiquity. A mapping of the positions of the structures and their study is intended to reveal their importance. The place-name is curious and has the meaning the 'beautiful (wife) of the hyena'.

The vast majority of the 76 anthropogenic structures are hut tombs (Figs. 1 & 5), characteristic of the Early Iron Age (EIA). These are standing house-like burial structures. In most cases such tombs have a flat entrance at one end and opposite it the wall is rounded. The plan usually resembles a u-shape. Most of the tombs at Khur al-Daba' are of this kind, but some have no clearly visible entrance and are oval in plan. Unusual is the selection here of hill tops as a location for EIA hut tombs. This also holds for Bidbid/al-Sawda. Generally they are located in lowlands.

The site consists of two parallel longish mountains, oriented ESE-WNW, some 15 m in height and each about 350 m in length. At the ESE end they converge. The tombs are perched at the highest places. While at most Sharqiyyah sites EIA hut tombs stand alone, at Khur al-Daba' they often cluster, a sign of relations of the owners. 19 tomb clusters, small (2) and large (4), occurred, in addition to groups (one with 29 tombs) which are not strictly defined as clusters (Fig. 3).

The tombs are built of the local limestone. In a few of the tomb clusters black stones are built into the structure giving a colour contrast (Figs. 2 & 4). Most of these tombs lie toward the SE. The black stone derives from the valley between the two mountains. In three cases the tombs were built mostly of black stone.

The dimensions range greatly in size, also in accordance with the state of preservation. Most range from 3.00 to 3.90 m in length, and one reached even 4.90 m. In terms of width, most range from 2.10 to 2.70 m. What varies the most is the height because of the preservation, and 1.40 to 1.80 m are average.

No skeletons occurred, and it is unclear how many skeletons originally were interred in a given tomb. When small tombs agglutinate alongside larger ones, this may be taken as a sign of the burial of a child near its parent.

Orientation of the tombs: In more than half of the tombs, the entrance faces E, NE, SE and rarely other orientations occur. However, there is no general orientation rule for these tombs. Most show an identifiable walled-up entrance, outside either flat or rounded in plan. Nor do these entrances show a unified orientation. At al-Şalayli the outside entrances were nearly all flat. Inside the plan is somewhat oblong. Certain tombs at other sites contained extant EIA skeletons in contracted position. That means that the gaze of the individual would form an axis perpendicular to that of the tomb. It does not suffice to discuss the orientation of the entrance, which originally may have had no meaning for the then

population. There are four possible options for a discussion of the orientation: 1) the individual lying on its right side with the head toward the entrance, 2) the individual lying on its left side with the head toward the entrance, and 3) the head pointing toward or away from the entrance. The tomb entrances are influenced by those of positions of neighbouring tombs. The practices of how one would position his tomb in relation to previous ones requires further study.

These tombs are in relatively good condition and are near the capital area. They show the Early Iron Age in a concrete way. If they are to be developed as a tourist attraction, this will require the implementation of signs and a fence. The signs explain the importance of the tombs for the origins and identity of the country. The two mountains constitute a historical unit. If there were to be an entrance, then it should be on the side visible from the Lu Lu shopping centre. Likewise, refreshment stand could be opened on this side, but not in the middle between the two mountains. There must be receptacles for trash disposal. Some kind of watch should exist to protect the tombs.

Source:

Kh. al-Rasibī-P. Yule-M. Gaudiello, Survey of central Oman, 1-6 January 2018, Heidelberg University & Ministry of Heritage and Culture, 26.01.2018, 20 pages.

URL: <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/propylaeumdok/volltexte/2018/3885>

M. Gaudiello-P. Yule, Survey in Wadi Musfah, east of Ğebel al-Şalayli, Sharqiyah north province (Sultanate of Oman), Survey 17.-22.10.2018, interim internal report to Ministry of Heritage and Culture, 23.10.2018

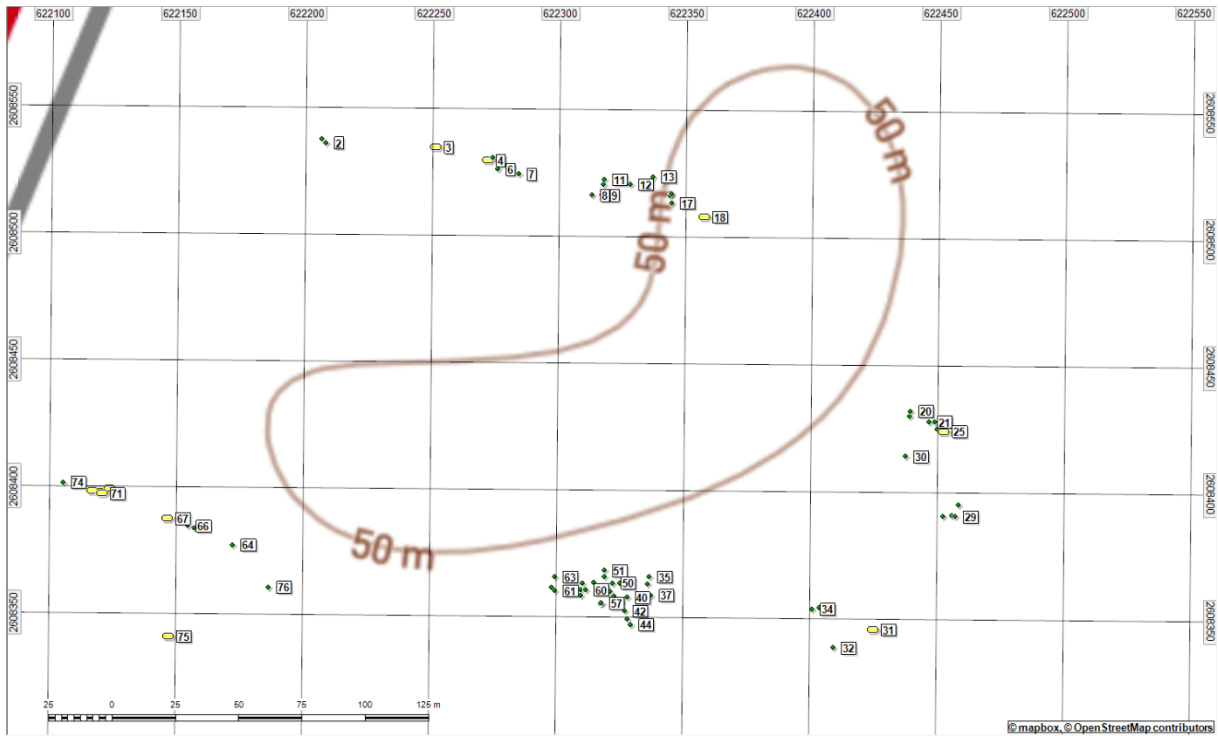


Figure 1. Map of the twin mountains al-Khawd/ Khur al-Daba'. The blue flags indicate EIA tombs. The yellow oblongs show recent shooting emplacements.

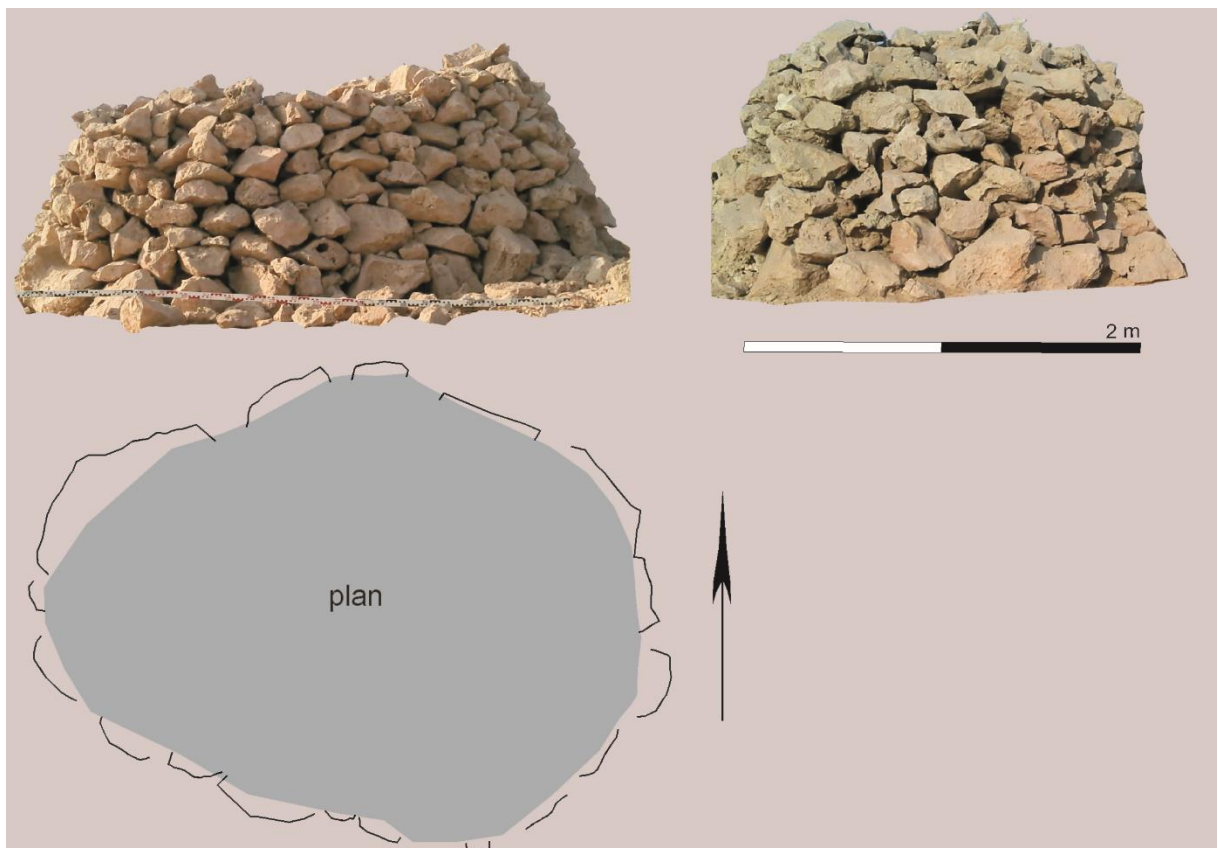


Figure 2. Tomb 7. Above left is the N side, above right is the E side, below the plan is ovoid.



Figure 3. Tomb group at al-Khawd/ Khur al-Daba' photographed toward the E.



Figure 4. Tombs at al-Khawd/ Khur al-Daba' which built with both white and black stone.



Figure 5. Tombs at al-Khawd/ Khur al-Daba' aerial image prior to the widening of the motorway.

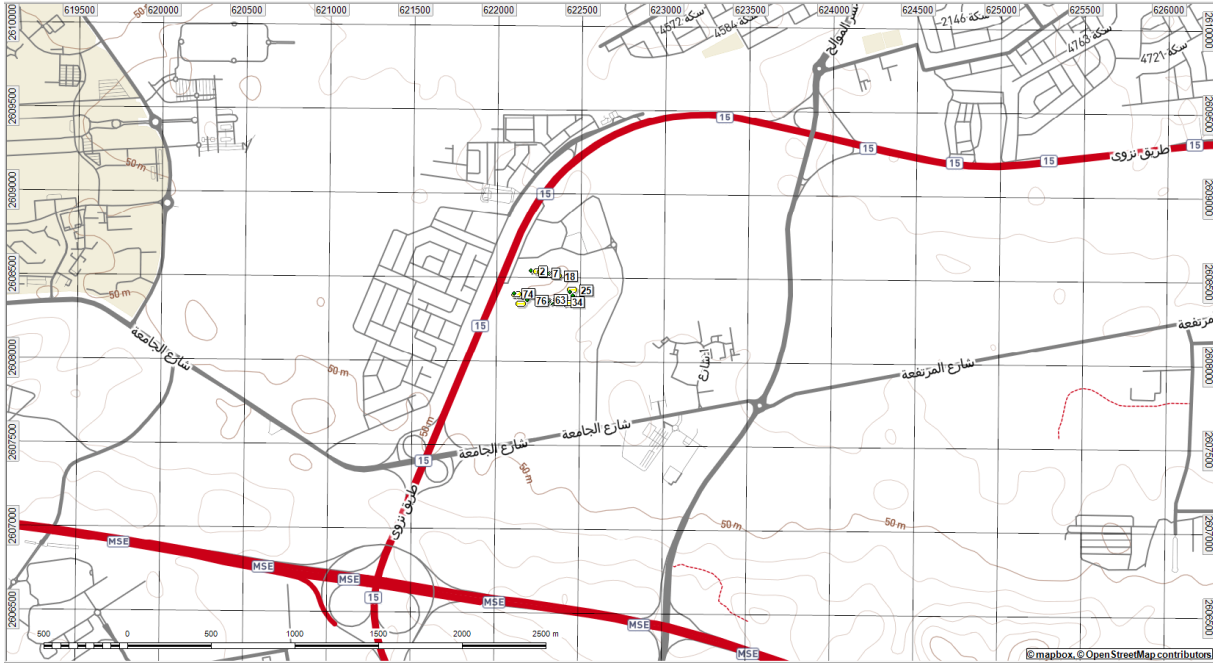


Figure 6. Tombs at al-Khawd/ Khur al-Daba', location of the site.

| structure | easting     | northing      | elevation m | waypoint |
|-----------|-------------|---------------|-------------|----------|
| 1         | 622.206.385 | 2.608.537.406 | 46.053      | 240      |
| 2         | 622.208.031 | 2.608.535.870 | 55.577      | 241      |
| 3         | 622.251.317 | 2.608.534.460 | 58.182      | 242      |
| 4         | 622.271.873 | 2.608.529.539 | 59.083      | 243      |
| 5         | 622.273.904 | 2.608.530.663 | 58.595      | 244      |
| 6         | 622.275.678 | 2.608.526.027 | 58.672      | 245      |
| 7         | 622.284.165 | 2.608.524.105 | 58.633      | 246      |
| 8         | 622.313.117 | 2.608.516.042 | 60.595      | 247      |
| 9         | 622.316.790 | 2.608.516.073 | 59.672      | 248      |
| 10        | 622.317.572 | 2.608.520.287 | 60.462      | 249      |
| 11        | 622.317.759 | 2.608.522.282 | 60.014      | 250      |
| 12        | 622.327.980 | 2.608.520.485 | 59.936      | 251      |
| 13        | 622.337.038 | 2.608.523.551 | 60.239      | 252      |
| 14        | 622.344.237 | 2.608.517.078 | 61.183      | 253      |
| 15        | 622.343.736 | 2.608.515.966 | 62.019      | 254      |
| 16        | 622.344.546 | 2.608.516.748 | 62.646      | 255      |
| 17        | 622.344.575 | 2.608.513.205 | 62.803      | 256      |
| 18        | 622.357.480 | 2.608.507.887 | 63.307      | 257      |
| 19        | 622.438.761 | 2.608.430.056 | 60.123      | 258      |
| 20        | 622.439.256 | 2.608.431.943 | 60.800      | 259      |
| 21        | 622.446.639 | 2.608.427.797 | 60.129      | 260      |
| 22        | 622.448.884 | 2.608.427.816 | 60.364      | 261      |
| 23        | 622.451.149 | 2.608.425.509 | 61.350      | 262      |
| 24        | 622.449.727 | 2.608.424.722 | 60.276      | 263      |
| 25        | 622.452.590 | 2.608.424.082 | 58.758      | 264      |
| 26        | 622.452.360 | 2.608.390.638 | 60.270      | 265      |
| 27        | 622.456.031 | 2.608.391.001 | 59.957      | 266      |
| 28        | 622.458.447 | 2.608.395.007 | 59.863      | 267      |
| 29        | 622.457.261 | 2.608.390.457 | 59.615      | 268      |
| 30        | 622.437.364 | 2.608.414.099 | 53.083      | 269      |
| 31        | 622.425.282 | 2.608.345.673 | 64.592      | 270      |
| 32        | 622.409.421 | 2.608.338.453 | 64.672      | 271      |
| 33        | 622.403.778 | 2.608.354.130 | 63.168      | 272      |
| 34        | 622.401.128 | 2.608.353.665 | 61.540      | 273      |
| 35        | 622.336.828 | 2.608.365.861 | 61.175      | 274      |
| 36        | 622.336.239 | 2.608.363.088 | 60.694      | 275      |
| 37        | 622.337.604 | 2.608.358.559 | 60.749      | 276      |
| 38        | 622.325.317 | 2.608.363.328 | 62.337      | 277      |
| 39        | 622.327.062 | 2.608.362.125 | 62.921      | 278      |
| 40        | 622.328.018 | 2.608.357.593 | 61.372      | 279      |
| 41        | 622.326.093 | 2.608.355.915 | 62.657      | 280      |
| 42        | 622.327.144 | 2.608.352.270 | 62.049      | 281      |
| 43        | 622.328.191 | 2.608.349.178 | 61.408      | 282      |
| 44        | 622.329.638 | 2.608.346.976 | 63.018      | 283      |
| 45        | 622.323.350 | 2.608.354.453 | 62.874      | 284      |
| 46        | 622.322.225 | 2.608.354.665 | 63.202      | 285      |

|    |             |               |        |     |
|----|-------------|---------------|--------|-----|
| 47 | 622.322.911 | 2.608.358.104 | 64.124 | 286 |
| 48 | 622.321.261 | 2.608.360.083 | 64.127 | 287 |
| 49 | 622.319.173 | 2.608.365.713 | 62.996 | 289 |
| 50 | 622.322.459 | 2.608.363.304 | 63.986 | 290 |
| 51 | 622.318.948 | 2.608.368.147 | 63.351 | 291 |
| 52 | 622.315.832 | 2.608.362.474 | 65.025 | 292 |
| 53 | 622.314.905 | 2.608.363.463 | 64.815 | 293 |
| 54 | 622.310.314 | 2.608.363.203 | 63.366 | 294 |
| 55 | 622.318.138 | 2.608.355.184 | 64.148 | 295 |
| 56 | 622.317.630 | 2.608.354.959 | 65.235 | 296 |
| 57 | 622.318.035 | 2.608.355.294 | 64.196 | 297 |
| 58 | 622.309.846 | 2.608.358.216 | 65.438 | 298 |
| 59 | 622.309.724 | 2.608.360.540 | 64.835 | 299 |
| 60 | 622.311.765 | 2.608.360.557 | 64.216 | 300 |
| 61 | 622.299.726 | 2.608.360.124 | 65.345 | 301 |
| 62 | 622.298.288 | 2.608.361.219 | 65.542 | 302 |
| 63 | 622.299.476 | 2.608.365.548 | 64.654 | 303 |
| 64 | 622.172.515 | 2.608.377.109 | 69.333 | 304 |
| 65 | 622.157.254 | 2.608.383.515 | 70.591 | 305 |
| 66 | 622.154.797 | 2.608.384.380 | 72.459 | 306 |
| 67 | 622.146.506 | 2.608.387.301 | 73.469 | 307 |
| 68 | 622.123.648 | 2.608.398.958 | 72.138 | 308 |
| 69 | 622.119.678 | 2.608.397.707 | 72.190 | 309 |
| 70 | 622.116.919 | 2.608.398.127 | 72.079 | 310 |
| 71 | 622.120.705 | 2.608.396.940 | 72.547 | 311 |
| 72 | 622.109.449 | 2.608.400.500 | 72.963 | 312 |
| 73 | 622.110.267 | 2.608.400.286 | 72.269 | 313 |
| 74 | 622.105.258 | 2.608.401.241 | 71.686 | 314 |
| 75 | 622.147.303 | 2.608.340.798 | 59.635 | 315 |
| 76 | 622.186.739 | 2.608.360.507 | 59.364 | 316 |

Table 1. The structure numbers at al-Khawd/ Khur al-Daba', their 3D UTM coordinates (zone 40 Q).