

wise wholly barren valley. From there I proceeded, on November 27th, to visit the ruined hill fastness of *Ghāla-kōh*, of which I had first heard from my host, the Naib of Dastgird. It proved a distinctly interesting site of undoubted antiquity. Starting from our camp near the southern end of the oasis at an elevation of about 4,000 feet, we moved SE. up the gentle scrub-covered gravel glacis of the range for about $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the foot of the bold isolated peak of *Ghāla-kōh*. It had stood out as a conspicuous landmark throughout the previous day's march. Ascending by a steep rocky path above the narrow gorge through which the much-eroded slopes drain southward, we arrived, half a mile farther on, at a small spring just below the steep NW. scarp of the mountain, at an elevation of about 4,800 feet. From there the ascent, made trying by the steepness of the slope and the masses of loose rubble covering it, leads up, as the sketch-plan in Pl. 51 shows, towards the northern end of the rugged crest. At a point about 400 feet above the spring our guide, an old herdsman familiar with the ground, first pointed out remains of a walled-up bridle-road which had once led up to the top. Higher up we came upon frequent traces of well-graded terraces over which this road had been carried. In places the outer revetment wall still stood to a height of about 8 feet.

Ruined
stronghold
of *Ghāla-
kōh*.

Where this track, recalling the so-called 'Buddhist roads' across the Malakand and other passes into the Swāt valley, reaches a narrow terrace on the northern extension of the mountain top at a height of about 5,800 feet, we passed a small cistern, about 8 feet across, excavated from the red sandstone rock. From here the track zigzags up above precipitous cliffs to the rocky crest, and follows this right up to the northern wedge of the triangular top of the mountain. Along this last portion of the ascent the slope is thickly strewn with loose stones, the remains of disintegrated rough masonry. On the top, for which the aneroid indicated a maximum height of about 6,200 feet, the remains of ruined structures are found in three groups as shown by the sketch-plan in Pl. 51.

Approach to
hill-top.

These structures are all composed of small rooms arranged mostly on a quadrangular plan. They are built throughout of rough stonework set in plaster of cement-like hardness. The best-preserved portion is a complex of quarters near the western angle of the area, i, comprising a number of rooms, from about 11 to 12 feet square, and a large rock-cut cistern within the court formed by them. The outer walls to the east and north are here intact to about 5 feet from the present ground level and show carefully arranged courses of masonry 1' 8" high, divided by layers of hard plaster 2" thick. The thickness of the walls is 1' 8". In the court here, and also in other places, there were found hard-burnt bricks, 8-9" square and 2" thick, lying among the stone debris. They may possibly have served to collect and drain rain-water into the cistern. This is of oval shape, about 18 feet along its longer axis and 12 across. Its rock-cut sides were originally faced with cemented stonework and an outer layer of hard plaster. Its present depth does not exceed 7 feet, but is obviously reduced by the accumulation of debris. Smaller cisterns were traced also in two other places, ii, iii. A line of quarters stretching along the southern face of the top, iv, was less clearly traceable, perhaps owing to the steepness of the slope on which they were built. At the highest point the foundations of what appears to have been a square tower, v, could be made out. At the bottom of a small gully draining the plateau top to the NE., vi, a hollow, measuring about 21 feet by 15, has been excavated in the rock, probably for use as a reservoir to hold water. But as there is no masonry facing, this could never have been finished for use.

Ruined
structures
on *Ghāla-
kōh*.

The very precipitous rock walls with which the mountain top falls off on all sides make *Ghāla-kōh* a natural fastness easy of defence. But the difficulty of access and still more the comparative rarity of pottery fragments to be found there suggest that it probably served only as a temporary place of refuge and not as a place of permanent occupation. I had occasion to make the same

Antiquity
of strong-
hold.