# NORTH ARABIAN (-THAMUDIC) INSCRIPTIONS & ROCK ART FROM THE 'AQABA-MA'AN AREA OF SOUTHERN JORDAN

by W. J. Jobling

## SELECTION I

I

The 'Aqaba-Ma'an Survey has been successful in locating, recording and photographing several thousand North Arabian (-Thamudic) inscriptions along the southern edge of the Old Edomite escarpment and in and around the HISMA which spreads S.East from the Sharah Mountains to Mudawara. 1 Examples of this epigraphic archaeological data have been reported or published with the reports of each season's fieldwork since 1980. As this epigraphic data has been located, techniques for recording, cataloguing and publishing have been investigated and developed and extensive research has been undertaken into the history and current state of the art of North Arabian epigraphy and paleography with a view to publishing a repertoire of inscriptions and rock art. While progress in this cataloguing and analytical linguistic and lexicographical research is well under way it has been decided to publish selections of this epigraphic data as soon as possible. Each panel and its constituent inscriptions and drawings have been recorded and photographed in black and white and in Ektachrome colour film. Microfiche and interactive videodisc editions of these records are in preparation. The inscriptions and rock drawings in Selection I are preliminary transliterations, translations and notes on the evidence for the linguistic and artistic objectifications of certain later stages in the pre-Islamic indigenous occupation of the 'Agaba-Ma' an area. 2

### Π

## Repertoire — Selection I

AM82/9B/15 Wadi Judaiyid (see Pl. XLVIII,1 and Fig. 1)

1. L. 'BD

2. L. NGM. BN. 'SLH ل نجم بن اسله

1. By 'BD

2. By NGM son of 'SLH

This small panel has a south easterly aspect. It is situated in the midst of Wadi Judaiyid close to Sad Raqa and south of Jebel el-Jill and north of Quweira. The panel is part of a large scatter of epigraphic data. This concentration of inscriptions and drawings is situated on one of the main tracks from the Hisma and Wadi Ramm to Ras en-Naqab.

In the centre of the rock face is a stylized drawing of the long horned caprid.

AM83/32B/10 Wadi el-Hafir (see Pl. XLIII, 2 and Fig. 2)

L. BNT. BN. ZD'L.  $\underline{D}.$  'L. 'MT

ل بنت بن زد ال ذ ال عمت

By BNT son of ZD'L of the tribe of 'MT

This is a well preserved inscription in which the letters, or graphemes, are carefully pecked. The graphemes are uniformly squarish and regular in their formation. The usual formula  $\underline{D}$ . L. prefaces the designation of the tribe name  $MT^3$ .

AM83/32B/7 Wadi el-Ḥafir (see Pl. XLIX, 1 and Fig. 3)

<sup>1 (</sup>i) W.J. Jobling, in D. Homes Fredericq and J.B. Hennessy (eds.), AKKADICA Supplementum III, Vol. I, Bibliography, Leuven, 1986, p.92-93.

<sup>(</sup>ii) W.J. Jobling, The Fifth Season of the 'Aqaba-Ma' an Survey 1984, ADAJ, XXVIII, 1984, p. 191-202.

Cf. P.L. Berger and T. Luckman, The Social Construction of Reality, Pelican P/B, 1984, p.51ff et passim.

see G.L. Harding, An Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions, 1971 (=HIn.) p.2.

L. MR. BN. 'THD By MR son of 'THD ل مر بن أ**ط**خد

This is a clear and well preserved inscription and probably relates to the drawing of a camel pecked on the rock face to the left side of this inscription. The letters of the inscription are incised into the patina. The lettering and shape of each grapheme reflects a reasonably steady control of the medium. The patronymic proper name 'THD would appear to be new. The shape of the antepenultimate grapheme may also be read as H in Thamudic C and D according to Winnett's taxonomy. 4

AM83/32B/15 Wadi el-Hafir (see Pl. XLIX, 2 and Fig. 4)

L. GRM
 L. 'RŠ. BN. FLT
 ل ارش بن فلط
 L. DR
 ل ضر
 ل نهم بن دقل

These four inscriptions occur on the lower left hand corner of a large rock face which is situated on the flat of the wadi bed. A variety of rock drawings are preserved on the same rock face. Except for the hunting scene to the immediate left of the fourth inscription most of these drawings have a lighter patina and appear to be by other hands. The hunting scene to the immediate right of the inscriptions has been drawn over and to some extent obliterated.

Two graphemes occur in these inscriptions which now appear to have different phonemic values than previously attributed to them. In the first inscription the first grapheme in the proper name GRM has been previously read as having the phonetic

value Tha'  $(I = -5)^5$ . The concurrence of lexical with graphic data now suggests that in the 'Aqaba-Ma' an area of Southern Jordan this grapheme represented the Gîm phoneme (G = 5).

In the third inscription the first grapheme in the proper name DR has had a variety of readings. In Study V of his Studies in Thamudic Professor Winnett has suggested that this grapheme has variously the values Dad (ضُ) in Thamudic 'E' (or Tabuki) and Gim ( $\gtrsim$ ) in other areas. The late G. Lankester Harding attributed to this grapheme the value gim for inscriptions from the Wadi Ramm area7. Professor Winnett has drawn my attention to G. King's proposal that this grapheme represents the phoneme Dad (ض) in Tabuki. 8 While more evidence and scholarly exchange will need to take place before the phonetic equivalences of this grapheme has been assured, the accumulation of examples of this grapheme in the 'Aqaba-Ma'an survey and research leads me to prefer King's proposal for this grapheme for this area.

AM83/36B/26 Wadi el-Hafir (see Pl. L, 1 and Fig. 5)

As noted in the next inscription (AM83/36B/29) the proper name SSRT occurs frequently in this area and is often written with the second grapheme in reverse. In this particular case the patronym 'RŠ is also given. The proper name 'RŠ is well attested in North Arabian (see HIn. p. 37). In both inscriptions the lettering is well formed and neatly executed. 9

<sup>4</sup> F.V. Winnett, A Study of Lihyanite and Thamudic Inscriptions, Toronto, 1937, Plate X.

<sup>5</sup> vide F.V. Winnet, op. cit.

 <sup>(</sup>i) E.A. Knauf, Südsafaitich, ADAJ, XXVII, 1983, p. 587-596.

 <sup>(</sup>ii) E.A. Knauf, A South Safaitic Alphabet From Khirbet Es-Samrā', Levant, XVII, 1985, p. 204-206.

<sup>(</sup>iii) R. M. Voigt, Some Notes on South Safaitic, ADAJ, XXVIII, 1984, p.311-314.

<sup>(</sup>iv) W.J. Jobling, Preliminary Report of the

Sixth Season of the 'Aqaba-Ma'an Epigraphic and Archaeological Survey, *ADAJ*, XXIX, 1985, p.211-219.

<sup>7</sup> G.L. Harding, Some Thamudic Inscriptions from the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan, Leiden, 1952, p.3, and Plate XXVI.

<sup>8</sup> G. King, Some Inscriptions from Wadi Matakh, Memorial Volume for Mahmoud Ghul (forthcoming).

<sup>9</sup> A separate study of all the recorded occurrences of this name is in preparation along with a comparative study of the style and content of the panels of rock drawings on which this signature occurs.

AM83/36B/29 Wadi el-Ḥafir (see Pl. L, 2 and Fig. 6)

L. SSRT. HTT By SSRT he drew (it)

This well preserved drawing of a bridled horse and owner is graced with the signature of the artist. The proper name SSRT is new, though it occurs frequently in the Wadi el-Hafir Wadi Rabiq complex (see AM83/36B/26). The curious procedure of inscribing the second grapheme in reverse also occurs frequently with this signature and may be an ideosyncracy of script consciously employed by a particular individual or artist. Preliminary study of the several panels to which this name and the formula SSRT HTT is affixed suggests a common style and method of drawing.

AM85/71B/30 Wadi el-Hafir — Jebel 'Amud (see Pl. L1, 1 and Fig. 7)

- 1. L. HRB. BN. QRH. BN
- 2. L. Š'LH
- 3. W.  $'\underline{H}'B$ . BN. 'N'L.  $\underline{H}TT$ . KLL

ل هرب بن قرح بن ل شعله و اخ اُب بن عنال خطط کلل

- 1. By HRB son of QRH son of ...
- 2. By Š'LH
- 3. And 'H'B son of 'N'L (he) drew all (of it).

Both weathering and subsequent hammerings have interfered with the preservation of the drawings and inscriptions on this rock face. The central panel and focus to which the inscriptions seem to relate features a hunting scene. In this scene the object of the hunt appears to have been a bovid. This animal has a humped back. A later artist has clumsily added horns more appropriate to an ibex or caprid. Dogs and hunters appear to be moving in for the kill and several darts and arrows are depicted in flight. The figure next to the second inscription may be the representation of a woman. Thus the scene preserves details of an important aspect in the life of the North Arabian indigenes and may also indicate that hunting was not a role restricted to any

one gender.

In the second panel on the bottom right hand side of this rock face there is preserved the scene involving a horse-like animal. The human figure to the left and behind the horse is armed with a bow and may well represent the stylized form of a woman. The human figure in front of the horse is armed with a round shield and is brandishing what appears to be a sword which has a straight blade. The well drawn dog in the top left hand corner would appear to be assisting by holding the horse at bay. The patronym in the second inscription is difficult to read because of later hammerings which have weathered away the patina: the ductus of the middle bar of the final grapheme is difficult to discern.

AM85/99B/21 Wadi Judaiyid (see Pl. LI, 2 and Fig. 8)

- 1. L. ŠN'T
- 2. [L]. [S]'DN. BN. NG'T

ل سعدن بن نحات

- 1. By **Š**N'T
- 2. By S'DN son of NG'T

This rock has a south easterly aspect. Although the script preserved on this rock face is quite clear, the rock face has been severely weathered on the top left hand corner with the result that the initial graphemes of the second inscription are not preserved. The script is well formed and deeply incised through the patina of the rock face.

AM85/83B/19 Wadi el-Ḥafir (see Pl. LII, 1 and Fig. 9)

L.  $L\underline{T}.$  BN. 'SLM By  $L\underline{T}$  son of 'SLM

This inscription has a southerly aspect. Although the second grapheme in the proper name  $L\underline{T}$  has previously been ascribed the phonetic value /D/(=-), Professor Winnett has drawn my attention to a recent study by Geraldine King in which she advo-

cates that this grapheme should be given the phonetic value of  $\underline{T}$  ( $\dot{-}$ ) in Thamudic E.  $^{10}$  The proposed vocalization of this grapheme would seem to be corroborated by other onomastic and lexical data in the 'Aqaba-Ma'an area and is tentatively accepted here. The root  $L\underline{T}$  is attested in Classical Arabic.  $^{11}$ 

AM85/87B/14 Wadi el-Hafir (see Pl. LII, 2 and Fig. 10)

1. L. KHLT.

ل كهلت

2. L. 'SWR. BN. SR

ل اسور بن سر

- 1. By KHLT
- 2. By 'SWR son of SR

These brief inscriptions have a north westerly aspect. With the exception of the area around the Lam Auctoris at the beginning of the first inscription this rock face is well preserved. The script is clear and the graphemes are well formed. The second inscription appears to have been written around the first inscription. The size and clarity of incision in the patina make this ordering of the inscriptions quite feasible. A hammering occurs on the right side of this rock face. This may be the beginning of an unfinished inscription.

AM85/97B/8 (see Pl. LIII, 1 and Fig. 11)

L. 'ÅFLH. BN. NHQ. BN. 'BŠLH

ل أرفله بن نهق بن أبشله

By 'RFLH son of NHQ son of 'BSLH

Although this inscription is quite well preserved there is some difficulty in reading the second and third graphemes of the proper name 'RFLH. The  $R\bar{a}$ ' could be read as  $B\bar{a}$ ' though the three instances of this grapheme in this inscription do not compare well in the proportions of the letterings. The  $F\bar{a}$ ' is poorly preserved and is obscured by a later mark. It could be read as  $sh\bar{t}n$ . Given the frequency of papponymy attested in other inscriptions in this area I

AM85/83B/27 Wadi el-Hafir (see Pl. LIII, 2 and Fig. 12)

W. TM. BN. W'L. HTT

و تم بن وعل خطط

And TM son of W'L drew (it)

There are three drawings on this rock face. The drawing situated above the inscription may well have been the drawing related to the inscription. The evidence of patina and comparative weathering suggests that the cruder camel and anthropoid drawings to the left of the inscription appear to be later additions to this rock face.

It is noted that this inscription preserves the syntax usually associated with the authorship of rock drawings. Phrases such as this, which begin with Waw, are usually embedded in a larger context (cf. AM85/74B/23 & 73B/15). However the example may suggest that the Waw particle introduced a brief formula of authorship which could stand alone. 12

AM85/96B/15 Wadi el-Hafir (see Pl. LIV, 1 and Fig. 13)

1. *L. BNN* 

ل بنن

2. L. DBN

ل ضبن

3. W. H. DSRY. R. M'Z

و هد د شری ر معز

- 1. By BNN
- 2. By DBN
- 3. And Oh Dushares see (the) goats

This rockface faces west and is situated on a scree close to the junction of the Wadi Hafir and Wadi At-Tfeif.

The prayer to Dushares on this rockface may be related to the rock drawings which depict a hunting scene in which a

am inclined to suggest that given this context the first proper name should be read as 'BŠLH' which is already attested in North Arabian.

<sup>10.</sup>G. King, op. cit.

<sup>11.</sup> E.W. Lane, An Arabic English Dictionary, 8 vols, London, 1863-1893, p. 2649ff.

<sup>12</sup> W. Fischer (ed.), Grundriss der Arabischen Philologie, Weisbaden, 1982, p.22, 85.

long horned caprid has been pierced by an arrow. Curiously the hunter, armed with a bow is depicted facing away from the pierced caprid.

The situation of the second and third inscriptions suggests that it may be possible to posit that *DBN* was the author of this prayer to Dushares.

AM85/74B/23 Wadi el-Hafir (see Pl. LIV, 2 and Fig. 14)

- 1. L. WTR. BN. 'M
- 2. L. BN. HRB را الله على الل
- 3. *L.* 'KBR
- 4. W. L. NST. BN. RMN ل عكبر
- ول نصت بن رمن 5. L. KTLH
- 6. L. SKRN. BN. MB'LN ل سكرن بن مبعل
- 1. By WTR son of 'M
- 2. By the son of HRB
- 3. By 'KBR
- 4. and by NST son of RMN
- 5. By KTLH
- 6. By SKRN son of MB'LN

This rockface has a south westerly aspect. The inscriptions range around the drawing of a camel. Later hammerings despoil the original definition of this rock drawing and obscure the final graphemes of the first inscription.

In the fourth inscription there appears to be a ligature connecting Waw and Lam. In the sixth inscription the last two graphemes are difficult to read.

AM85/65B/14 Wadi el-Hafir (see Pl. LV, 1 and Fig. 15)

1. L. 'LYN. BN. QNT. BN. N'MY ل علين بن قنت بن نعمي

BN. RBQT. BN. 'RK. BN. 'BD بن ربقت بن عرك بن عبد

- 2. L. SMDT. BN. ZDLH. BN. HN'LH
- 3. SM'T. DSRY. KLLH

سمعت ذ شری کلله

ل سمدت بن زدله بن هنله

- 1. By 'LYN son of QNT son of N'MY son of RBQT son of 'RK son of 'BD
- 2. By SMDT son of ZDLH son of HN'LH

3. May you hear O Dushares, [all of it (?)]

This panel faces upwards towards the sky and contains a prayer to the deity Dushares. The final graphemes in the third inscription (the prayer to Dushares) are not well preserved and render this reading as provisional for the moment. While the letters LL are reasonably clear the lettering of the initial K and final H are disputable. There are also hammerings or marks following these letters. They do not appear to be graphemes. The style of lettering and the patina of the third inscription differentiate it from the other inscriptions on this rock face.

AM85/73B/15 Wadi el-Ḥafir (see Pl. LV,2) and Fig. 16)

- 1. L. WTR. BN. FHT. BN. Z...
  - ل وتر بن فهت بن ز
- 2. L. SKMLH. BN. S'D. BN. NG M من سعد بن نجم ل شكمله بن سعد بن الجم
- ال مسلم وسلم L. MSLM. W. SLM
- كرت لت العن 4. DKRT. LT. 'L'N و وتر خطط W. WTR. HTT
- 5. L. MR. BN. ZR'LH. D'L. MZN

ل مر بن زرعله ذال مزن

- 6. L. FGT. BN. SD. 7. L. SLM. BN. NHO
  - ل فجت بن شد ل سلم بن نهق
- 1. By WTR son of FHT son of Z...
- 2. By SKMLH son of S'D son of NG M
- 3. By MSLM and SLM
- 4. May LT remember 'L'N and WTR drew (it)
- By MR son of ZR'LH of the tribe of MZN
- 6. By FGT son of SD
- 7. By SLM son (of) NHQ

This rock face has an easterly perspective and is quite weathered. However the drawings and inscriptions are quite well preserved.

The first grapheme in the proper name *FHT* in the first inscription is difficult to read. It could possibly be read as *Dal* thus giving the proper name DHT.

The final grapheme in the proper name NGM in the second inscription is usually constructed and is difficult to construe. Its formation is somewhat irregular for the style reflected in the scripts of this area.

In the fourth inscription the prayer to

the goddess Al-LT follows a frequently recurring formula. <sup>13</sup> It should be noted that *WTR* whose genealogy is given in the first inscription claims authorship of this invocation.

The first two graphemes of the sixth inscription are difficult to read because of the imposition of the back legs of the camel drawn above this inscription by a later artist. However both shape and context would suggest that the first grapheme is the LAM ( $\cup$ ) of the LAM AUCTORIS while with less certainty the second grapheme would appear to be the grapheme FA'. ( $\dot{\circ}$ )

#### TTI

This brief selection of inscriptions and rock drawings from the 'Aqaba-Ma' an Survey repertoire reflects but a small aspect of the epigraphic data so far recorded. The transliterations and preliminary translations and notes are tentative and will no doubt need to be revised in the light of new data and further experience in this area of North Arabian research. For the present however it would appear to be possible to assert that these new data provide valuable insights into certain aspects of the social stock of knowledge common to the North Arabian indigenes who lived in this area some two thousand years ago.

# LEXICON<sup>14</sup>

'L. WH. p. 629
SM'. WH. p. 639
R'. C1338; C5263; Clark, p. 300;
Wright, p. 374; Thatcher,
p. 186.

13. (i) W.J. Jobling, Desert Deities: New Epigraphic Evidence for the deities Dushara and Al-LAT from the 'Aqaba-Ma'an area of Southern Jordan, Religious Traditions, Vol. 7-9, 1984-1986, p.32ff

V.A. Clark, A Study of New Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan, (UMI), Ann Arbor, 1984, p.126ff.

#### 14 Abbreviations:

AM Aqaba-Ma'an
F.V. Winnett and W.L. Reed, Ancient
Records from North Arabia, Toronto,
1970.
C Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum
V.A. Clark, A Study of New Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan, (UMI), Ann
Arbor, 1984.
Hava J.G. Hava, Al-Faraid, Arabic-English
Dictionary, Beirut, 1970.

D. WH. p.636
 HTT. WH. p.635
 KLL. WH. p.644
 M'Z. WH. p.646

# Index of Proper Names

'BŠLH possible new name. cf. Lane p. 206-207. H'BHIn. p. 29 see JS 12 'RS HIn. p.37 RFLHsee 'RFL. HIn. p.38 'SLM *HIn.* p. 45 'SLH HIn. p.45 'SWR HIn. p. 47 'THD (?) possible new name L'Nsee 'L' HIn. p.68 BNTHIn. p.119 BNNHIn. p.121 TMHIn. p. 136 GRMsee TRM. HIn. p.144. cf. TIJ. 44, 113, 198, 219 et passim HRBHIn. p. 182 DQLHIn. p. 241 <u>D</u>ŠR Y WH. p. 575; Clark. p. 128 RBQTsee RBQN - RBQ. HIn. p. 267 RMNHIn. p. 288 ZD'LHIn. p. 296 ZR 'LH see ZR'. HIn. p.297 ZDLHHIn. p. 297 SRHIn. p. 814-815 S'DHIn. p. 318 **SKRN** HIn. p. 323 SLMHIn. p. 325 SMDTsee SMD. HIn. p. 327 ŠD HIn. p. 343

Hin G.L. Harding, An Index and Concordance of Pre Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions, Toronto, 1971

JS A. Jansson and R. Savignac, Mission archéologique en Arabie, I (Paris, 1909), II (Paris, 1914)

Lane E.W. Lane, An Arabic-English Dictionary, 8 vols, London, 1863-1893.

Thatcher G.W. Thatcher, Arabic Grammar of the Written Language, New York (UNGAR reprint)

TIJ G. L. Harding and E. Littmann, Some Thamudic Inscriptions from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Leiden, 1952 WH F. V. Winnett and G. L. Harding, Inscrip-

tions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns, Toronto, 1978.

Wright W. Wright, A Grammar of the Arabic Language, Cambridge, 3rd edn., 1967.

БLH	HIn. p. 351	KHLT	HIn. p. 506
ŠKMLH	see <i>ŠKM. HIn.</i> p. 354	LT	Clark p. 126
ŠN' T	see ŠN', WH. p.587	$L \underline{T}$	possibly a new name, see Lane
ŞŞR T	possible new name		p. 2649
DBN	(or WBN, see WBNHN, WH	MB' $LN$	possible new name (cf. B'L.
•	p. 621		HIn. p. 111)
DR	(or WR, see WH p.622	MR	HIn. p.536
'BD	HIn. p. 396	MZN	HIn. p. 543
'RK	HIn. p.416	MSLM	HIn. p. 545
'KBR.	HIn. p. 428	NGM	HIn. p. 582
$^{\prime}LYN$	HIn. p. 434	NST	see <i>N.S. HIn.</i> p. 590
' <b>М</b>	HIn. p.434	N'MY	HIn. p. 595
$^{\circ}MT$	HIn. p. 435	NHQ	possible new name (see Hava.
N'L	HIn. p.444		p. 804
FGT	possible new name (see Lane	NHM	HIn. p. 602
	p. 2339)	HRB	HIn. p. 612
FL $T$	HIn. p. 471	HN'LH	HIn. p. 626
FLŢ <b>F</b> HT	HIn. p. 472	WTR	HIn. p. 633
QRH	HIn. p. 479	W'L	HIn. p. 645
QNT	HIn. p.489		F. C. C.
$K\underline{T}LH$	possible new name (see Lane		W.J. Jobling
	p. 2591)		The University of Sydney

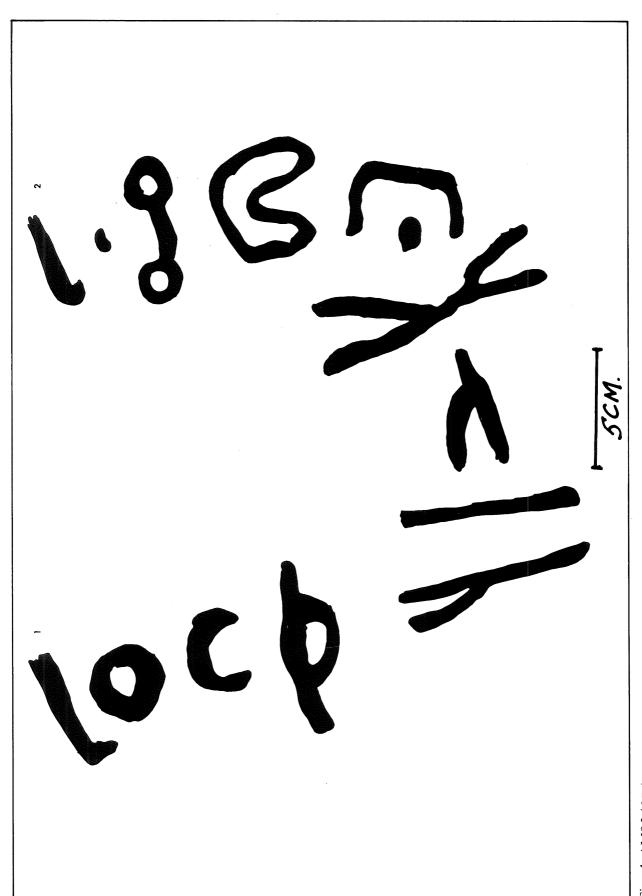


Fig. 1 AM82/9B/15

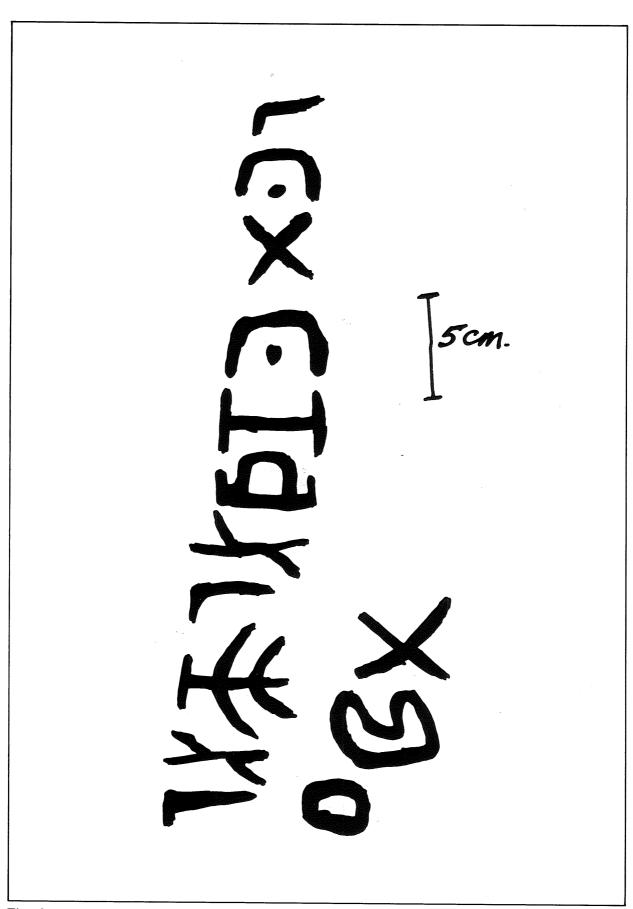


Fig. 2 AM83/32B/10

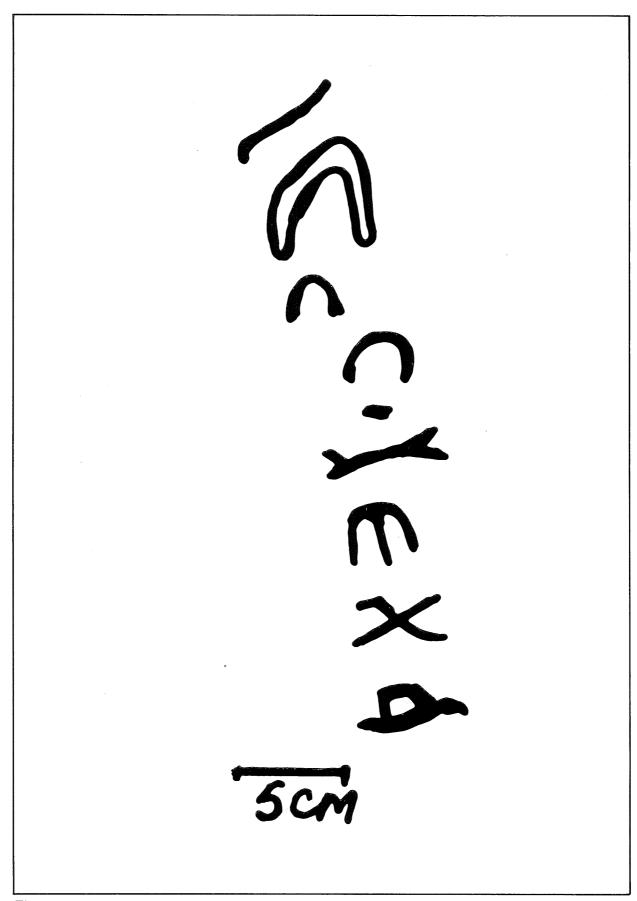


Fig. 3 AM83/32B/7

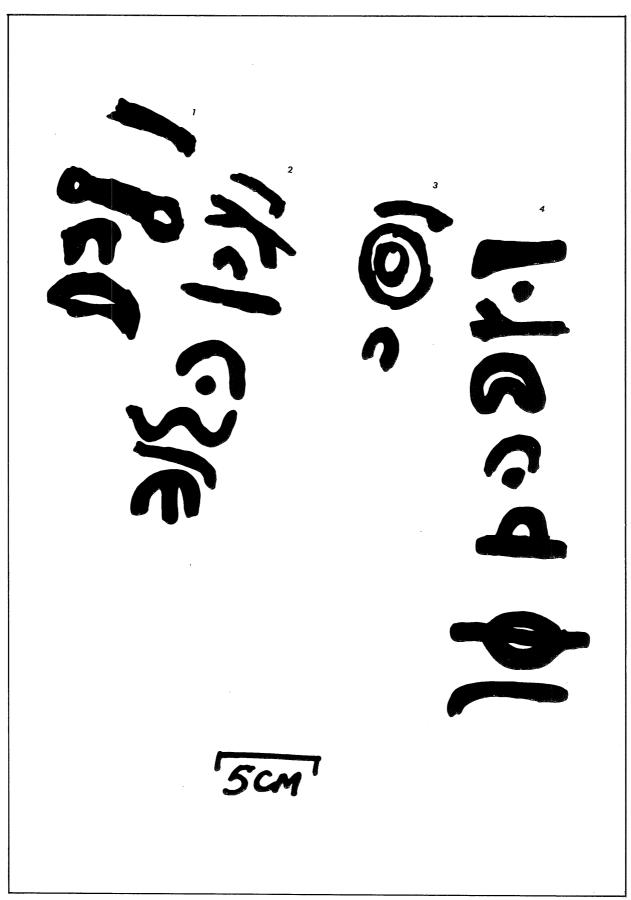


Fig. 4 AM83/32B/15

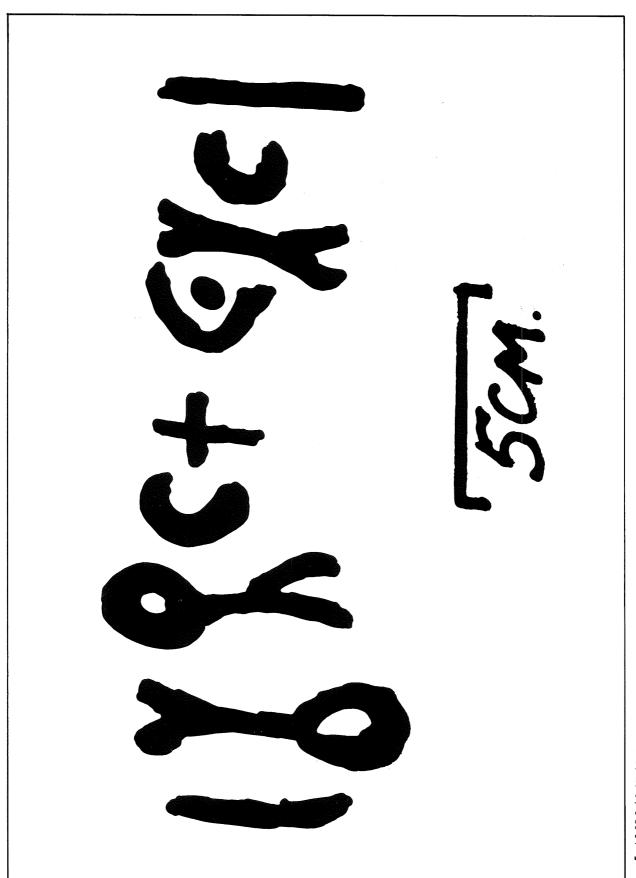


Fig. 5 AM83/36B/26

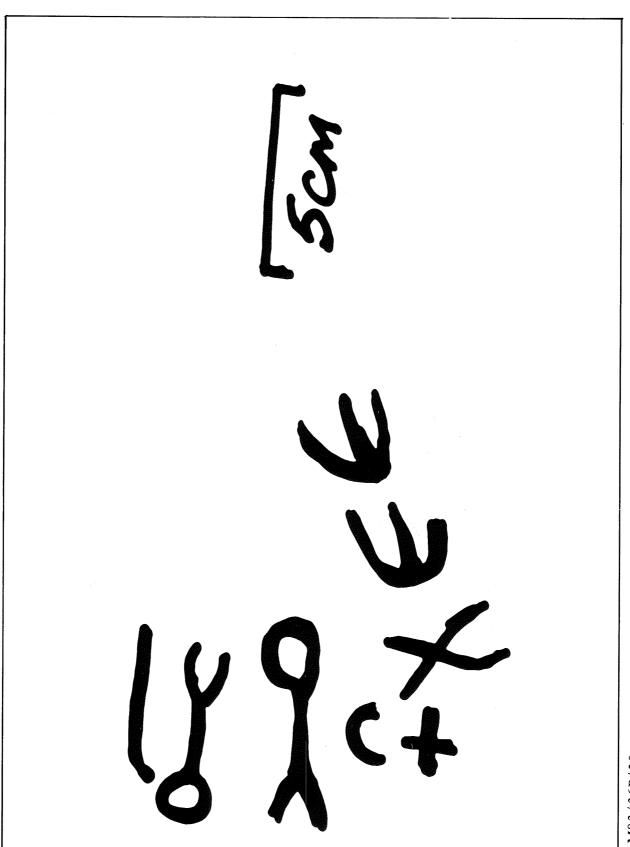


Fig. 6 AM83/36B/29

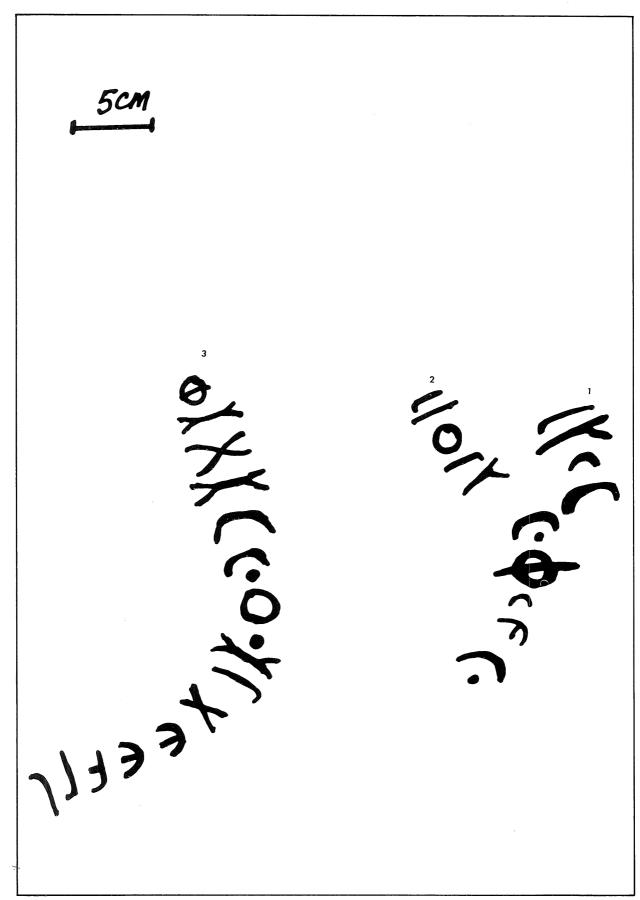


Fig. 7 AM85/71B/30

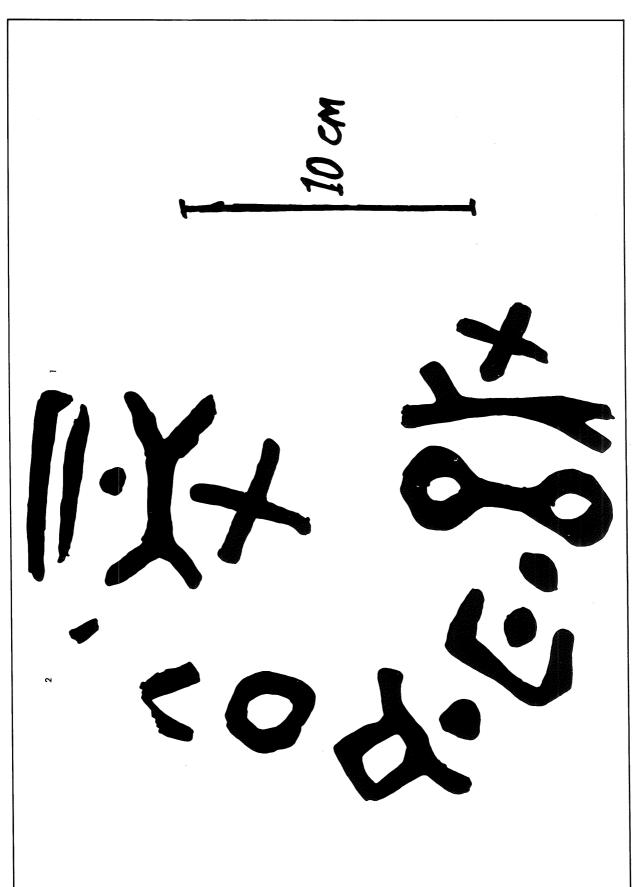


Fig. 8 AM85/99B/21

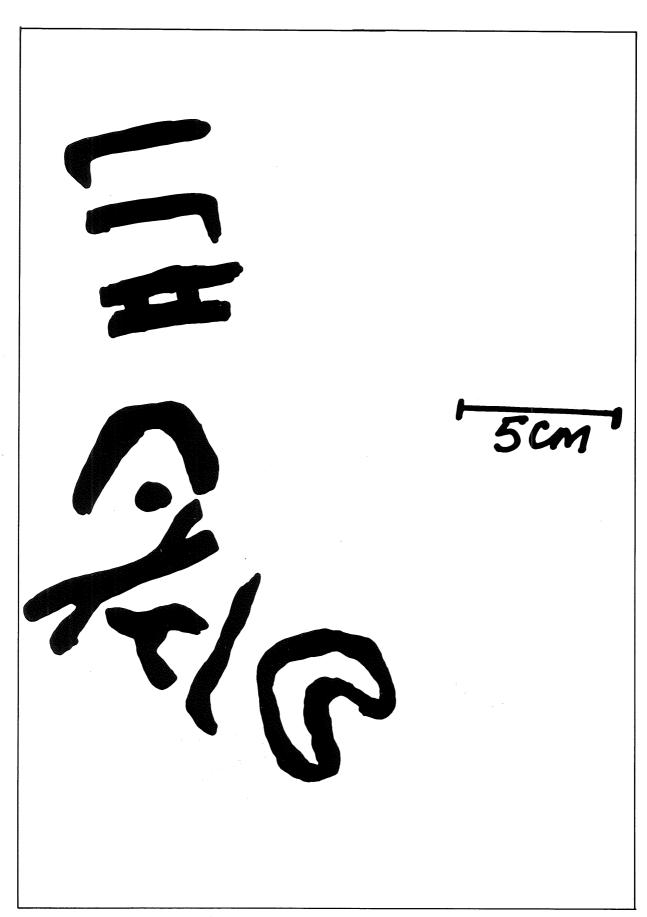


Fig. 9 AM85/83B/19





Fig. 10 AM85/99B/21

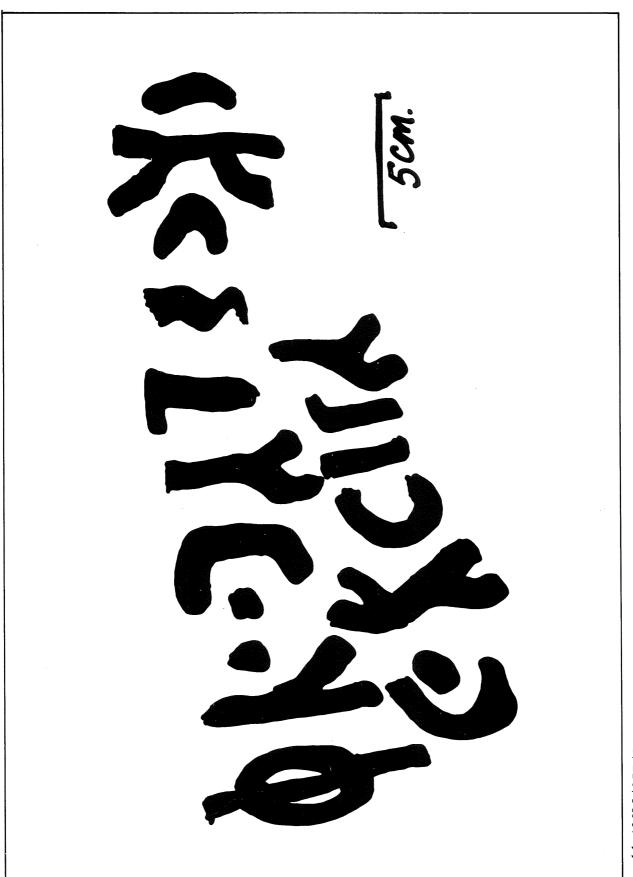


Fig. 11 AM85/97B/8

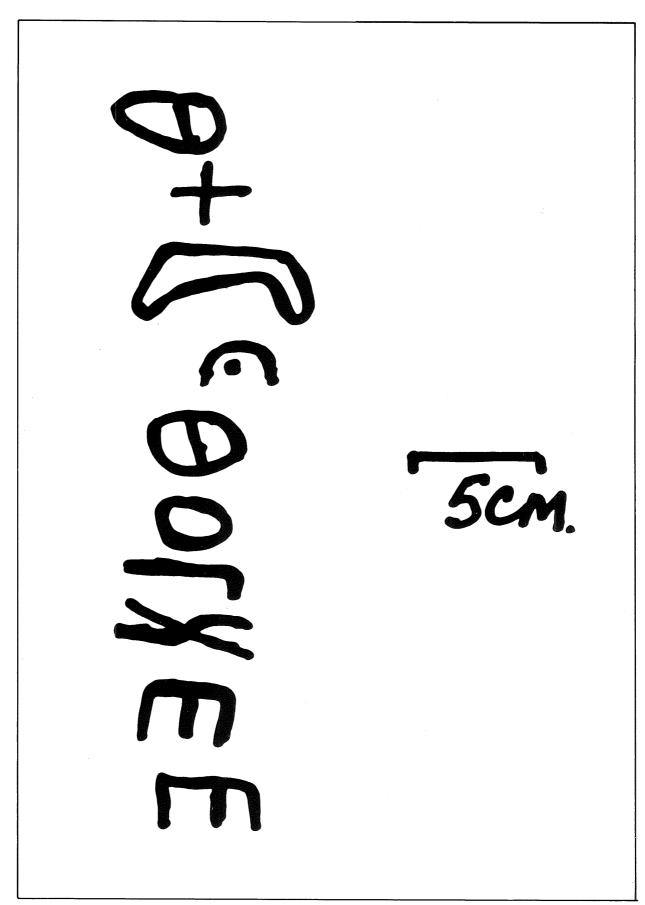


Fig. 12 AM85/83B/27

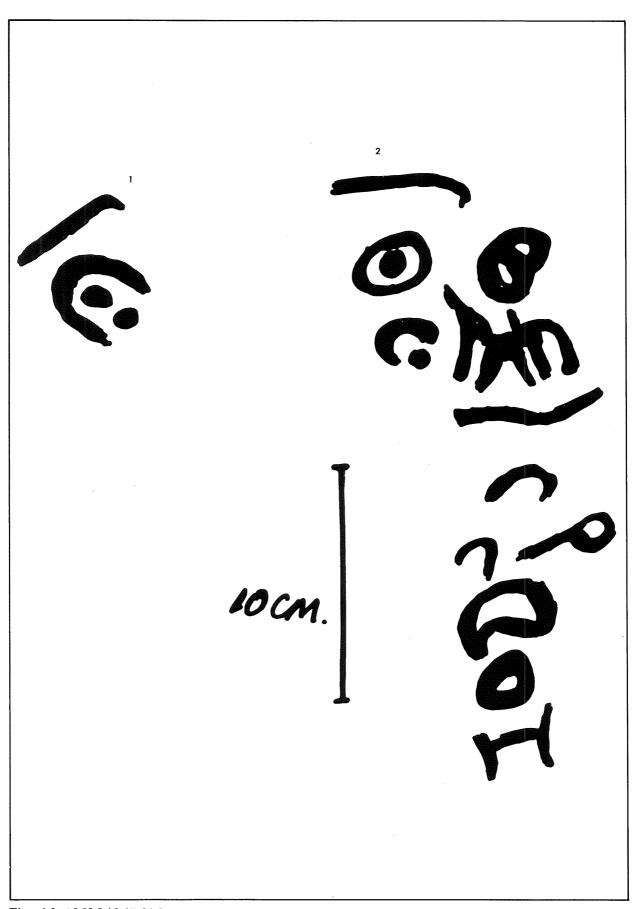


Fig. 13 AM85/96B/15

Fig. 14 AM85/74B/23

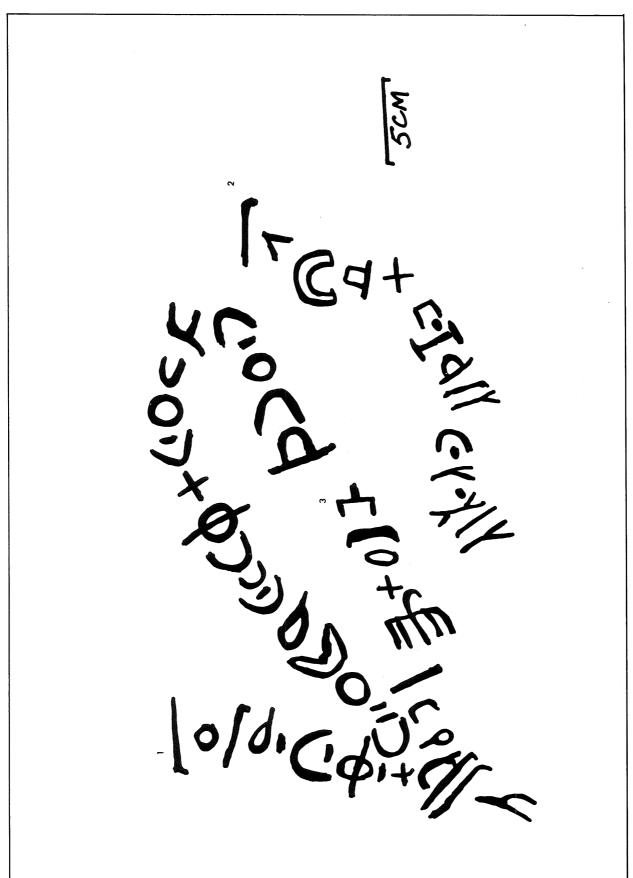


Fig. 15 AM85/65B/14

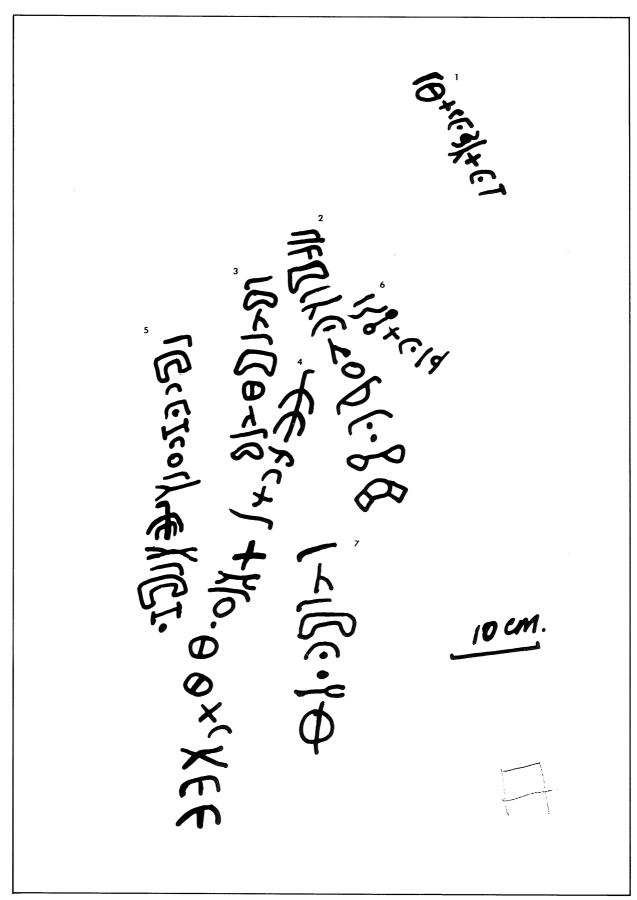


Fig. 16 AM85/73B/15