

# WADI JUDAYID EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY A PRELIMINARY REPORT

by  
Geraldine King

In 1986 and 1987 I conducted epigraphic surveys in the Ḥismā desert of southern Jordan. I would like to thank Dr. A. Hadidi, former Director General of the Department of Antiquities, for granting a permit and for his support for the project and Dr. A. Garrard and Miss A. McQuitty of the British Institute for their assistance in Amman. I am extremely grateful to Mr. Hugh Barnes who carried out the survey work and greatly contributed to both seasons' work.<sup>1</sup>

The aims of the first seasons were twofold: to locate suitable sites that could be comprehensively recorded and planned and to relocate and check the readings of the Thamudic texts already published from the Wadi Ramm area<sup>2</sup>. In 1987 during September and October we returned to Wadi Judayid below the Ras en-Naqb escarpment in the northern Ḥismā where we systematically searched for and recorded the epigraphic material from three sites along the eastern edge of the main wadi (Fig. 1).

## Methodology

The Ḥismā is a desert of sandstone block mountains dissected by wide open wadis. The slopes of the mountains and the escarpment descending from the Central Jordanian plateau are covered with scree which continues in the lower regions forming extensive rock fields that gradually thin out towards the sand beds of the wadis. The areas of boulder scatter, sometimes stretching for several kilometres, produce an 'epigraphic' environment not unlike

that found in the basalt fields of the ḥarra desert, and in attempting to record the epigraphic material in this area one is faced with problems similar to those encountered when dealing with the rock art and Safaitic inscriptions found in the deserts of northern Jordan. The large number of inscriptions and rock drawings and the haphazard distribution of the rocks on which they occur make the systematic location and recording of them extremely difficult. Because of the practical difficulties the approach of scholars has been often less than methodical, with a tendency to record a few examples of the epigraphic material from a particular spot and then to move on to new and fresh sites. While this approach provides us with linguistic and onomastic information a great deal of supplementary data is lost.

In 1981 and 1982 Michael Macdonald pioneered a method of systematically recording the epigraphic material in the area around the site of Jawa in northern Jordan<sup>3</sup>. He advocated that comparatively small areas defined by topographical features should be thoroughly searched and the epigraphic material (of all periods) comprehensively recorded and planned.

In recording the material from the Wadi Judayid area I followed Macdonald's basic principles. Of the three sites I chose, two constitute shallow bays in the escarpment (Sites A and B) and the third a wadi, Wadi Mi'zāniyah (Site C) with the adjoining rock field that fans out from the narrow confines of the wadi until it is blocked by Jebel Mi'zān in the west. Sites A and B cover approximately 0.25 square kilometres each

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1. I would also like to thank the project's sponsors. In 1986 the survey was funded by the British School at Amman for Archaeology and History; Central Research Fund (University of London); the Palestine Exploration Fund; the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of

London); G.A. Wainwright Fund. The 1987 season was sponsored by the British Institute at Amman for Archaeology and History.

2. See Harding and Littmann 1952 and Winnett 1971, p. 443-448, Figs. 1-2 and Pls. I-III, 13.

3. See Macdonald and Searight 1982 and 1983.

### WADI JUDAYID EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY

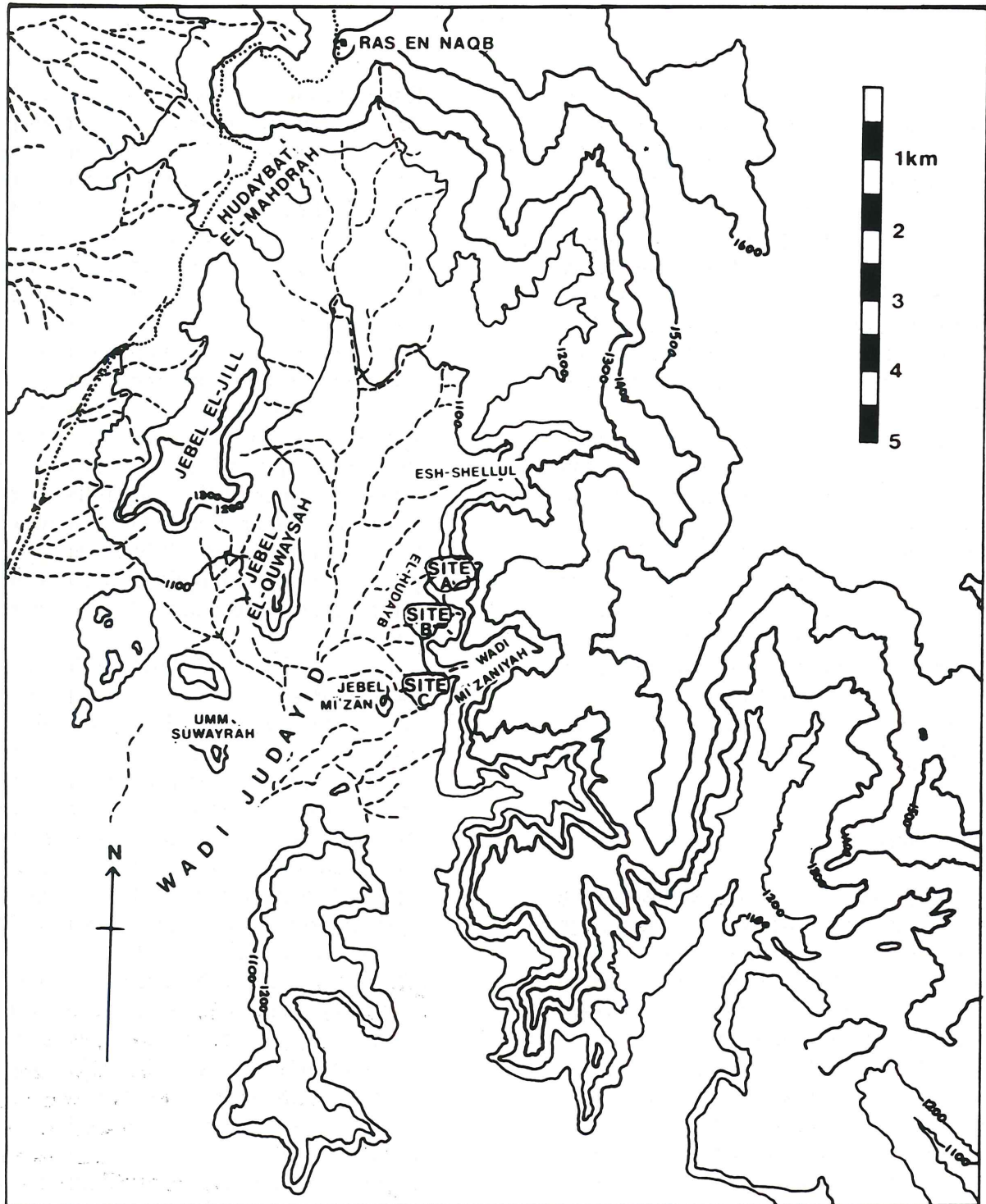


Fig. 1. The locations of Sites A, B and C in Wadi Judayid.

and Site C approximately 0.85 square kilometres. In the east all three sites are bound by steep slopes ascending to the escarpment. The ground is covered in rock debris that varies greatly in density and size of boulders (see Pl. XLIX, 1 and 2). There are areas of considerable depth of boulders, particularly in the upper regions, interspersed with areas of lightly scattered and often heavily eroded rocks. Depending on degrees of patination, the surfaces of the rocks are different colours of sandy brown or black. The latter provides highly attractive surfaces for inscribing, although it is not always the most popular.

The boundaries we placed on the areas searched were arbitrary, based on convenient natural features (such as a water course) or, where these did not occur around the edges, on the quantity and density of material that was being found. The search for the material began at the eastern and upper reaches of each of the sites. In order to cover the ground as thoroughly as possible, a small area was delineated by cairns and then systematically walked across with each boulder being checked for inscriptions or drawings<sup>4</sup>. When the material from the area had been recorded and planned a new area was marked out and so on until the whole site had been covered. Each boulder with epigraphic material was given a Roman numeral (to be used on the plan) and the individual drawings and inscriptions Arabic numerals. The inscriptions were copied and photographed in black and white and colour and additional information on technique of inscribing, patina and orientation of the rock face was recorded as well.

Where the density of finds was high the boulders were planned using a 50 metre (and in some cases a 30 metre) grid. The gridpoints were marked out with small cairns and measurements taken from these

to boulders with epigraphic material. Where the distances to be covered were very large, in the case of isolated finds in peripheral areas and in the rock field in front of Wadi Mi'zāniyah, laying out a grid proved impractical and time consuming and a plane table was used instead. In both cases a detailed sketch plan was made indicating the position of the survey points, relevant boulders, watercourses and variations in the density of rock scatter. A total of 692 boulders from all three areas were plotted in this way. The information provided enough detail to draw up a 1:1000 plan of each site (see Fig. 2 for an overall plan of Wadi Mi'zāniyah and Fig. 3 for a detail of the plan produced).

### The Material

The method of systematically searching the sites proved to be amply justified. During our exploratory visit to the sites in 1986, I had recorded 400 Thamudic texts and 40 drawings. After the 1987 season we had discovered and recorded 1302 Thamudic inscriptions and 586 drawings of various periods. We found one Nabataean text but no Arabic inscriptions except for modern graffiti.

Our knowledge of Thamudic texts from the Ḥismā desert of Jordan is still largely based on those published by Harding and Littmann 1952<sup>5</sup>. The great majority of the texts belong to the type of Thamudic which Winnett classified as Thamudic E (and later Tabuki Thamudic),<sup>6</sup> although as one would expect there are occasional examples of other types of Thamudic more usually found further south, Thamudic B (Najdi Thamudic) and C and D (Hijazi Thamudic). The texts are graffiti, in most cases simply giving names (sometimes with an extended genealogy), but also on occasion the authors write

4. See Macdonald and Searight 1982, p. 164. The method of searching was similar to that outlined there.

5. For other smaller collections, see Winnett, *op. cit.*; Savignac 1934, p. 579-581, Figs. 4-5; Savignac and Horsfield 1935, p. 269-270; Knauf 1980, p. 169-173, Pls. 12-13. Dr. W.J. Jobling has

done several seasons' work recording inscriptions and rock drawings between 'Aqaba and Ma'an. For his preliminary reports, see Jobling 1982, 1983(a), 1983(b), 1984, 1985, 1986(a) and the bibliography in Jobling 1986 (b) p. 247.

6. See Winnett 1937, p. 42-49 and Pl. VII and Winnett and Reed 1970, p. 70.

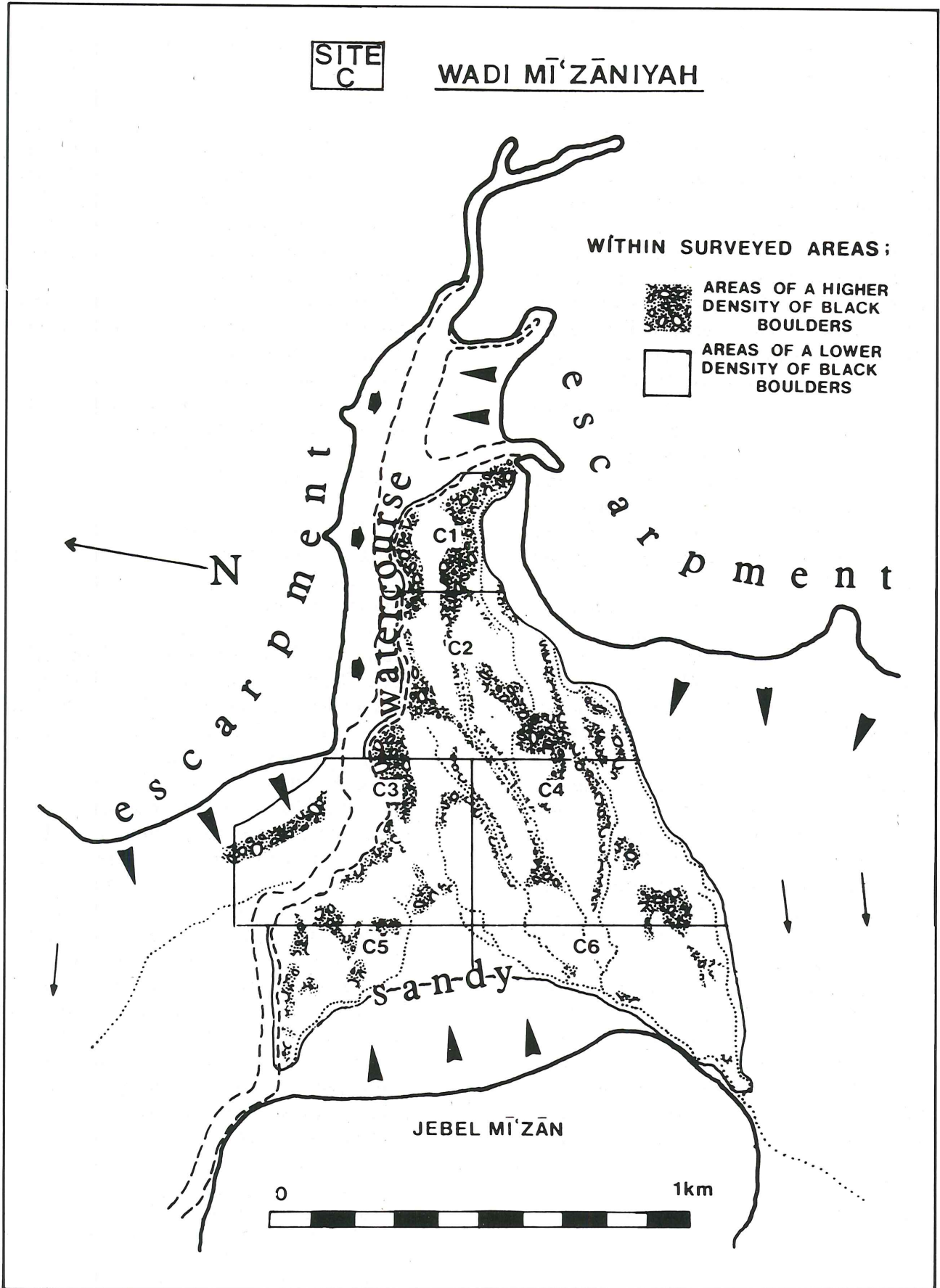


Fig. 2. Overall plan of the areas surveyed in Site C, Wadi Mi'zaniyah.

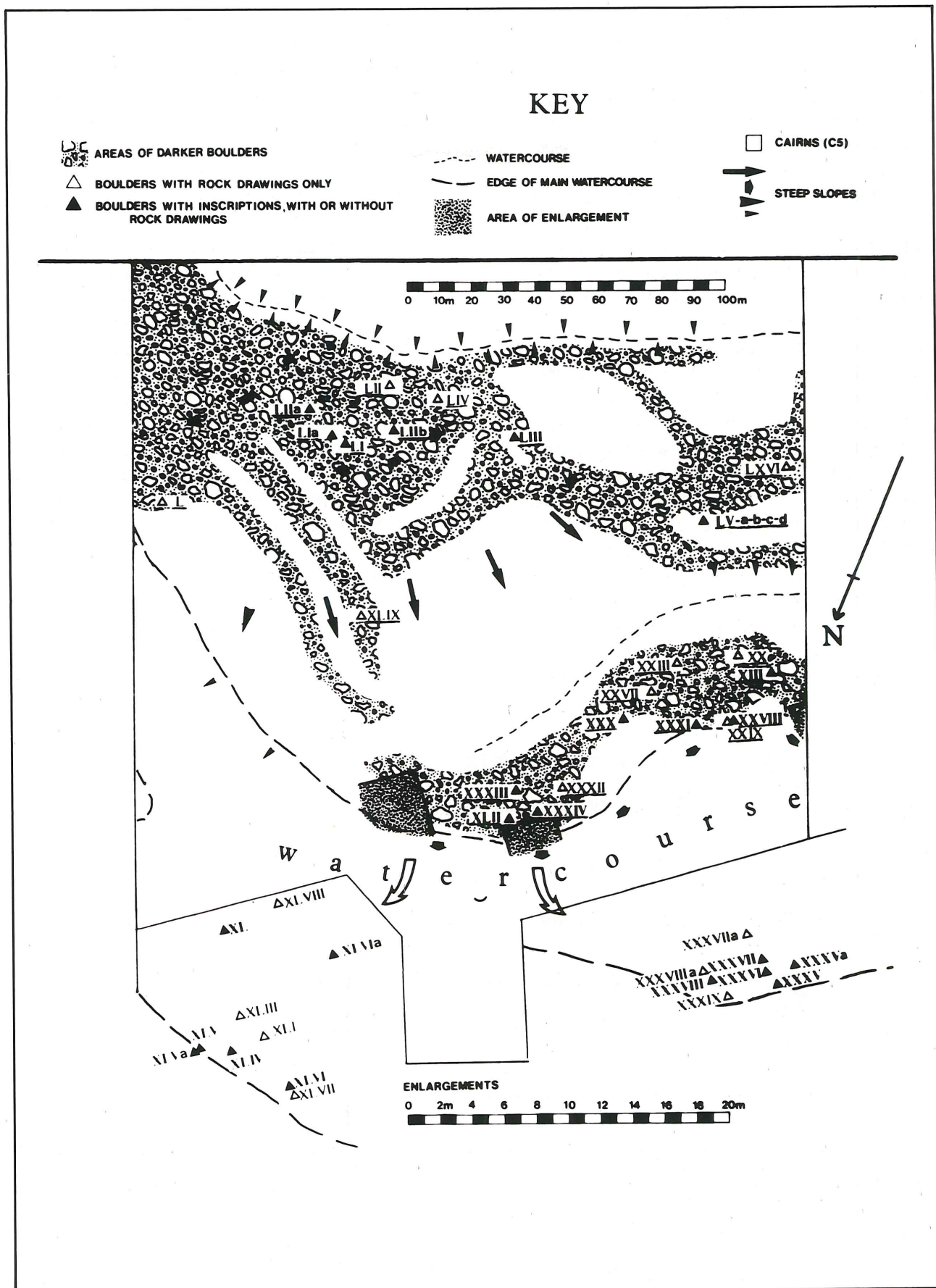


Fig. 3. Detailed plan of Section C1, Wadi Mi'zaniyah.

prayers, statements of simple activities or claim the authorship of accompanying drawings. The inscriptions recorded from Wadi Judayid have added many new names to the Thamudic E onomastic list, new types of prayers, formulae of expression and vocabulary.

In a paper I read at a symposium in memory of the late Mahmoud Ghul, I suggested that the grapheme formed by a grid represented etymological /t/ in this dialect of Thamudic and that of two concentric circles etymological /d/. My argument for this identification developed out of F.V. Winnett's discussion of the grapheme of two concentric circles as either /d/ or /g/ and E.A. Knauf's suggestion that the grapheme of a straight line with a circle at either end represents etymological /g/.<sup>7</sup> My analysis of the graphemes representing etymological /t/ and /d/ is confirmed by all the Thamudic E texts containing these signs from these sites. In inscription 1 published below as an example, the penultimate letter is the grid

sign, although the protruding lines are rather indistinct, and the name reads 'bdhrtt. In inscription no. 4 below the final letter is the sign of two concentric circles and the reading of it as g would be unacceptable, whereas bgd is well-attested as a name in Safaitic. Knauf's identification of the grapheme of a straight line with a circle at either end is confirmed in all occurrences as well. The etymological values of these three graphemes in Safaitic and Thamudic E is demonstrated in Fig. 4.

The texts from these sites add to the deities attested as theophoric elements in the names of Thamudic E. El-'Uzza occurs without the definite article in the name 'bd'zy<sup>8</sup>; Manāt, already attested in some of the texts published in Harding and Littmann, 1952, and by Jobling<sup>9</sup> occurs in 'bdmnt and mr'mnt; qm, which is attested in Nabataean compound names, occurs in zdqm (see inscription no. 3 below); 'hwr occurs in whb'hwr and in 'bd'hwr (see inscription no. 2 below) and hwr written with the definite article lam occurs in

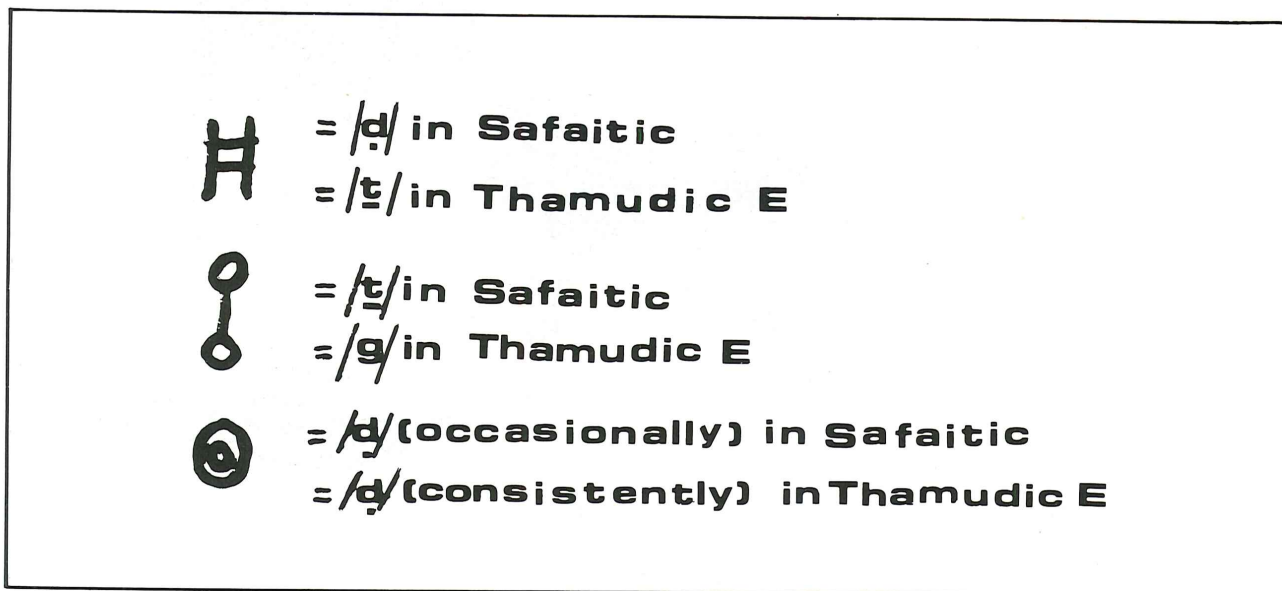


Fig. 4. The graphemes for etymological /g/, /t/ and /d/ in Safaitic and Thamudic E.

7. See King 1988; Winnett 1982, Study VB; Knauf 1980, 1983 and 1985. There is a very clear account of Knauf's arguments in Macdonald 1986, p. 105-107.

8. mr' zy occurs in a photograph published by Jobling but not read by him, see Jobling 1985, Pl. XLIV. Ryckmans 1956, p. 11 lists several

names with el-'Uzza as a theophoric element in other types of Thamudic - mr't zy, hn' zy, r' zy and tym'zy. In Safaitic mr' zy occurs in WH 621 and 627.

9. 'smnt occurs in TIJ 83 and 131 and zdmnt in a text published by Jobling 1986 (b) AM 85/96B/ 16,5, Figs. 98, 99 and p. 243.

*tmlḥwr*<sup>10</sup>. *'bdt* and *ḥrṭt* are attested as elements in the names *'bd'bdt* and *'bdḥrṭt* (see inscription no. 1 below). The former occurs in an unpublished Safaitic text from Jathum<sup>11</sup> and both names occur frequently in Nabataean.

The deities invoked in the texts include Lāt (*lt*), Dushara (written most commonly as *dšry* but also spelt *dšr* and in the Aramaicized form *dšr* and *dšry*) and for the first time Kutbā', (*ktby*) who is attested in the Lihyanite texts and in a Nabataean inscription from 'Ain Shellaleh<sup>12</sup>. Lāt is asked to remember, *dkrt lt*, a person or several people, a prayer which is well-attested in the texts published by Harding and Littmann 1952 and in Thamudic E from other areas<sup>13</sup>. In some of the texts from these sites Lāt is asked to remember 'our companions' *'šy'n* (cf. Ar. *šay'* pl. *'ašyā'*). Lāt and Dushara are also asked to 'call' or 'summon' people, *d't lt/d' dšry* where perhaps the deities are being asked to single out or bear in mind a person (see inscription no. 6 below). The prayer occurs in TIJ 299 although the text was interpreted differently by the editor.

A common prayer in this corpus of texts makes an implicit request to a deity. It occurs in the formula *h.N. div. l N - O N. div. [grant ?]* to N. In all the attested

examples the verb 'grant' is not expressed and in most cases, but not all, the substantive denoting the object of the request is omitted as well. In inscription no. 7 published below *'gd* asks Dushara to grant him good fortune. In other examples requests are made for *ngy*, 'deliverance' (cf. Ar. *nagā'*), *ḡny*, 'freedom from want' (cf. Ar. *ḡanā'* and *try*, 'sufficiency' (cf. Ar. *tarā'*).

Several of the inscriptions record hunting activities and a comparatively large number of them are love texts. On a rock at Site A a group of individuals has recorded boasts of amorous exploits. Some of the texts use the verb *wdd*, 'he loved' (cf. Ar. *wadda*) which occurs in Thamudic C texts although always followed by the particle *f*<sup>14</sup>. Both *nk* and *nyk*, 'he had sexual intercourse' (cf. Ar. *nāka*) occur frequently in this context as well.

Some of the rock art is contemporary with the Thamudic inscriptions but there are drawings that are probably earlier, and more recent and modern material as well. The drawings depict camels, ibex, horses, felines, ostriches, hunting scenes and men in combat. In all periods the most popular subject is the ibex. Among the Thamudic rock art there are scenes of ibex and ostriches being attacked by *seluqis*, drawn with a distinctive light body and curling

10. cf. Ar. *al-ḥawar*, 'the third star, that next the body, of the three in the tail of Ursa Major' (Lane). The name *tmlḥwr* also occurs in TIJ 434 which reads *w s'd bn tmlḥwr bn 'ys* 'and s'd b. *tmlḥwr* b. *'ys*'. Harding reads the text as beginning with the *l* in the middle of the compound name. This leaves a large and unnecessary gap between the first and last part of the inscription. The beginning of a text of simple authorship with *w-* is unusual but not unknown, see, for example, TIJ 129. For occurrences of *l* as the definite article in names in other types of Thamudic, see, Ryckmans 1956, p. 11.

11. I am very grateful to Michael Macdonald for pointing this out to me and for other useful comments on this report.

12. See JS Lihyanite 55; Savignac 1934, Nabataean No. 17, and Strugnell 1959. The deity is previously attested in Thamudic E in the compound name *tmktby* (TIJ 285 as read by Jamme 1974,

p. 119 n.6) and *tmktb*<sup>o</sup> occurs in SIAM 43. *'bd'ktb* occurs in Naveh TJB A. For a discussion of *tymlktb'* in Nabataean, see Milik and Starcky 1975, p. 116-119.

13. See, for example, MNM B 6, C 7, CSP 2, CTSS 1a, 2a, 3. A similar prayer occurs in Nabataean *dkrt 'lt(w)*, see Savignac 1933, Nabataean nos. 3,7,8 etc.

14. A love text of this type occurs in TIJ 295 which was read *w šl mr'lh rlmt* by the editor (see also Jamme 1968, p. 82-83 n. 30). The reading *wdd mr'lh ḡlmt* 'mr'lh loved a young girl' is fairly clear in the published photograph. The loop of the first *ḡ* faces up and that of the second down; the letter which is read as *r* by Harding has a tail and reads *ḡ*. For *ḡlmt* cf. Ar. *ḡulāmah*, 'a young girl', the word occurs frequently in this context in the inscriptions from Wadi Judayid. For examples of *wdd f* in Thamudic C, see JS Thamudic 3,4,7.

tail, and surrounded by hunters armed with bows and sometimes swords<sup>15</sup>. The artists name the subjects depicted: *bkr̄t*, a young female camel; *bkr*, a young male camel; *w'l*, an ibex; *klb* (and the female *klbt*); a dog; *frs*, a horse (or possibly a horseman), and they frequently 'sign' their work with the formula *w N ḥṭṭ* - And N drew (it), a phrase that is only attested in this type of Thamudic (see inscription no. 10 below).

### Illustrative Texts

1. *w ḍkrt lt 'bdḥrtt*

And may lt remember 'bdḥrtt

(See Fig. 5 and Pl. L) The prayer is attested in TIJ 45, 58 etc. The *ḥ* is an unusual shape for Thamudic E where the prongs on the whole face in the direction of the text and the tail is not so pronounced (see TIJ Pl. XXVI). The penultimate letter is a grid sign and reads *t*; 'bdḥrtt is new in Thamudic E, see Cantineau II, p. 126 for occurrences in Nabataean. Some further letters, a *d* and a *t*, are written in a different hand to the left to the text.

2. *l 'bd'ḥwr*

By 'bd'ḥwr

(See Fig. 5 and Pl. L) The name is previously unattested although *tm'ḥwr* occurs in TIJ 323; cf. Ar. *al-'aḥwar*, 'the planet Jupiter' (Lane).

3. *l tnn bn hn' bn zdqm*

By tnn b. hn' b. zdqm

(See Fig. 5 and Pl. L) There is a chip over one end of the crossbar of the *t*; *zydqmw* occurs in Nabataean, see Cantineau II, p. 142.

4. *l bḡd*

By bḡd

(See Fig. 5 and Pl. L) This is one of

several texts that support the reading of the sign of two concentric circles as *ḡ*. *bḡd* is well-attested in Safaitic (HIn, p. 112).

5. *l mlgn*

By mlgn

(See Fig. 5 and Pl. L) The name is new in Thamudic E, however, HIn, p. 563 lists it as occurring in Minaean. For the reading of the penultimate letter as *g*, see p. 312-313 and the references to Knauf in fn. 7.

6. *w d' dšry tnn*

And may dšry call tnn

(See Fig. 5 and Pl. L) For the translation of *d'*, cf. the Arabic root *d'w*, *da'ā*, 'call' or 'summons'; the prayer is expressed in a similar formula to prayers using *ḍkr*, being introduced by the conjunction *w*-followed by the verb in the perfect with an optative sense. It is the first attestation of the deity's name spelt with a *ḡ*.

7. *h ḡšry l 'gd s'd*

O ḡšry grant to 'gd good fortune

(See Fig. 5 and Pl. LI) *l* here has a dative force, 'to'; 'gd occurs in Safaitic in WH 1053, 1796 (the reference in HIn is a mistake) CSNS 301, 321. For *s'd*, cf. Ar. *sa'd*, 'good fortune'.

8. *l knn*

By knn

(See Fig. 5 and Pl. LI) The shape of the *k* is unusual (see TIJ Pl. XXVI) and occurs in a similar form in the same name in other texts from these sites. *knn* is previously unattested in Safaitic and Thamudic E although it occurs in South Arabian (HIn, p. 505).

9. *l 'mn*

By 'mn

(See Fig. 5 and Pl. LI) The name is

15. The drawings are similar in style to some of those published by Jobling; see for instance, Jobling 1983, Pl. XL and 1985 Pl. XLIII and Pl.

XLVI. For other rock drawings from the area, see Harding and Littmann 1952 and Campetti and von Lowenstern 1983.



attested in Safaitic and Thamudic E (HIn, p. 77).

10. w d'b btt  
And d'b drew (it)

(See Fig. 5 and Pl. LI) For *h̄tt*, see TIJ 134, 251 etc. *d'b* has drawn an ostrich being attacked by a *seluqi*.

Geraldine King (London)

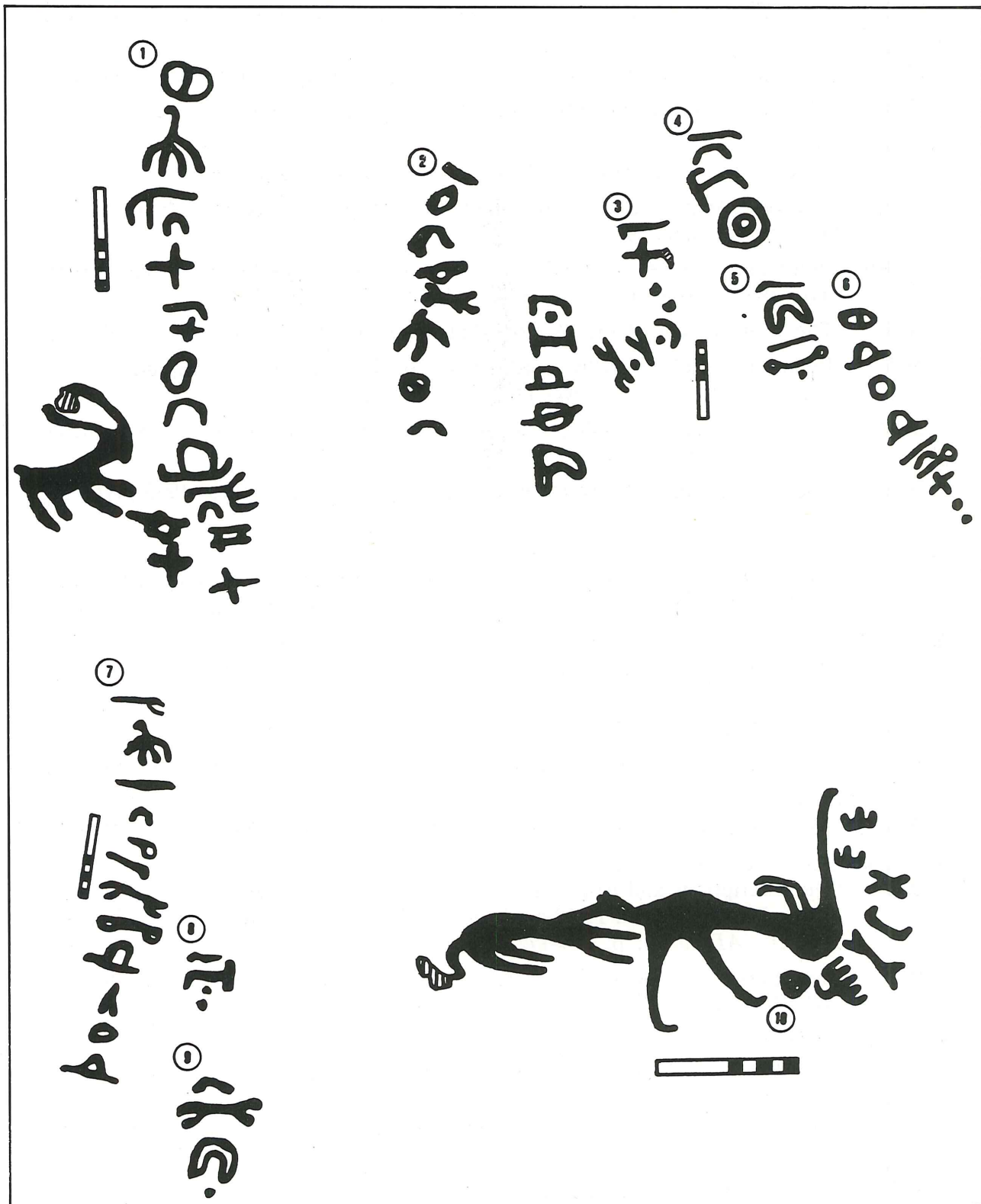


Fig. 5. Thamudic E inscriptions from Wadi Judayid. (The scale represents 10 cm.)

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### Abbreviations

ADAJ	Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan
AfO.	Archiv für Orientforschung
Ar.	Arabic.
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
Cantineau	J. Cantineau, <i>Le Nabatéen</i> , Vols. I and II, Paris, 1930, and 1932, reprint, Zeller, 1978.
CSNS	Inscriptions published in V.A. Clark, <i>A Study of New Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan</i> , Ann Arbor, MI, University Microfilms International, 1983.
CSP	Inscriptions published in V.A. Clark, 'Some New Pre-Islamic Arabian Inscriptions from Northern Arabia', <i>Abr-Nahrain</i> 17, (1976-1977), p. 35-42.
CTSS	Inscriptions published in V.A. Clark, 'Three Safaitic Stones from Jordan', <i>ADAJ</i> 24 (1980), p. 125-128.
HIn	G. Lankester Harding, <i>An Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions</i> , Toronto, 1971.
JS	Inscriptions published in A. Jaussen and R. Savignac, <i>Mission Archéologique en Arabie</i> , Paris, 1909, 1914.
Lane	E.W. Lane, <i>An Arabic-English Lexicon</i> , Parts 1-8, reprint, Librairie du Liban, Beirut, 1980.
MNM	Inscriptions published in J. Milik, 'Nouvelles inscriptions sémitiques et grecques du pays de Moab', <i>Liber Annuus</i> (1958-1959), p. 330-358.
N	Proper Name
N. div	Divine name
Naveh TSB	Inscriptions in J. Naveh, 'Ancient North Arabian Inscriptions on Three Stone Bowls', in <i>Eretz-Israel</i> 14, (1978), p. 178-182.
SIAM	Inscriptions published in M.C.A. Macdonald, 'Safaitic Inscriptions in the Amman Museum and other collections, II', <i>ADAJ</i> 24, (1980), p. 185-208.
TIJ	Harding and Littmann 1952 and the inscriptions published there.
WH	Inscriptions published in F.V. Winnett and G.L. Harding, <i>Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns</i> . Toronto, 1978.

