

INSCRIPTIONS AND ROCK-ART OF
THE JAWA AREA, 1982
A PRELIMINARY REPORT

by
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with a contribution by Ann Searight

The Corpus of the Inscriptions of Jordan Project¹ returned to the Jawa area for its second season of field-work between 9th May and 19th July 1982. The Project is one of the research programmes of the Centre for Jordanian Studies of Yarmouk University, which provides the bulk of its finance and its permanent staff, and is run in close co-operation with the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. We are most grateful to the Director-General of Antiquities, Dr. Adnan Hadidi, and his staff, as well as to Professor Mahmud al-Ghul, Director of the Centre for Jordanian Studies, and Dr. Mu'awiya Ibrahim, Dean of Humanities and Science of the Yarmouk University, for their continuous help and support. We should also like to thank the Royal Jordanian Army not only for permission to work in the area, but also for their help in supplying us with water, in pitching and striking camp and in transport. In particular we are grateful to Colonel Awdah Abd al-Nabi al-Nahar, Major Abd al-Karim Majali, Major Arshid Ali Salam and the officers and men of Princess Basmah Battalion of Tank Brigade 92. Finally, I should like to express my

gratitude to my staff in the field for their tremendously hard and conscientious work in often very trying circumstances.²

Two days after we arrived at Jawa, the heavens opened and it rained for forty-eight hours virtually without stopping. Although this delayed our work, it was very exciting since it was the first time we had seen the wadi in full spate and we were able to photograph the water cascading over the waterfall (Pl. CXXIII, 1). Apart from the general interest of the event, it showed very clearly the relationship between the distribution of the inscriptions/drawings in the Wadi and the periodic presence of water (Pl. CXXIII, 2).

This year we were able to increase our contact with the *bedu* of the area and continue our study of local names, customs and genealogies. This was almost entirely the work of Miss King through whose tireless efforts we now have a rich fund of information on the place names of the region, the tribal divisions of the Ahl al-Jabal, their personal names and customs, etc. She also identified the authors (mainly still living) of almost all the Modern Arabic inscriptions, as well as

¹ For a description of the Project and its aims see the Preliminary Report on the 1981 season, in *ADAJ*, XXVI, (1982) p. 159-172 and Pl. L. Apart from minor misprints, consisting mostly of the omission of diacritical marks, there are a small number of errors in the text of this report as printed, which should be corrected as follows:
p. 167a: line 11: the *h* should have a dot under it
p. 168b: note 27: for p. 7 read p. 165.
p. 169a: note 28: delete entire sentence after *passim*

p. 170: caption to fig. 4: for *Drawings of human figures with "comb" head-dresses* read *Drawings of human figure with "comb" head-dress*.

² Apart from myself, the 1982 field staff was, in alphabetical order: Dr. Sabri Abbadi (Department of Antiquities) who helped record the Safaitic and Kufic texts; Mr. Mifleh Ghuraibeh (Department of Antiquities) whose

extensive contacts with the local people were invaluable to the Project; Miss Geraldine King (Yarmouk University) who tirelessly and meticulously searched out and recorded the majority of the inscriptions; Ms. Ann Searight (Yarmouk University) who, single-handed, continued the comprehensive rock-art survey; Mr. Isa Madi (Department of Antiquities) who helped record the *wusûm* as well as some of the Arabic texts; and Mr. Ibrahim Zuhbeh who was our Department of Antiquities Representative for the first three weeks. Our cook, 'Ajlouq, deserves special mention for his loyalty and the great interest he showed in our work. The team was completed by the University driver, Mr. Ahmad Maryn, our camp servant, Mr. 'Ali Khazali, and Mr. Khalaf Khreishi, now working for the University, who joined us from time to time in the first part of the season.

finding solutions to some of the lexicographical problems of Safaitic in local dialect usage.

Our increased contact with the *bedu* led to our receiving more reports of inscriptions and drawings in the surrounding area. We were able to investigate these at week-ends and some of the interesting discoveries made are discussed below in the Appendix.

The first part of the season was spent in finishing off work in Area A (Fig. 1), most of which had been covered in 1981, and re-photographing some of the inscriptions and drawings there. The value of our methods of recording the provenance of finds was again demonstrated by the ease with which we were able to re-discover even those texts on small stones in the midst of the basalt scatter.

After completing work on Area A, we went on to Area B (Fig. 1). This section stretches from the junction of the feed wadi with Wadi Rajil, half a kilometre upstream from Khirbet Jawa, to the downstream end of the site, where Wadi Jawa and Wadi Rajil meet, with a more or less narrow band along the "north" bank of Wadi Rajil and a much broader band along its "south" bank, taking in most of the course of Wadi Jawa as well as the Khirbah.³ Our work this year was concentrated on Wadi Rajil and we covered its whole course through Area B from its junction with the feed wadi to its confluence with Wadi Jawa. We continued to use the techniques described in last year's report, with considerable success, as may be seen from the fact that we made 890 finds this season. This together with the 1219 finds of last year means that within an area of roughly two and a half square kilometres we have found 2109 inscriptions, drawings and *wusum*. All this material is unpublished with the exception of six Safaitic inscriptions recorded at the end of the season at the point where Area B meets the western limits of Professor Winnett's 1951 survey, at the south-east

corner of the site. It was interesting to be able to study these inscriptions *in situ* and to photograph them, especially since the published copies of some of them are incomplete.⁴

Among the 314 Safaitic texts discovered this season were a number containing unusual words and phrases. For instance, we find in one text *w r'y h hwr̥t* ("and he pastured the unweaned camels") and in another *w t̥zr h 'jd w r'y h 'nh̥l* ("And he watched over the young male kids and pastured the valleys"). Both *'jd* and *'nh̥l* are previously unattested plurals as is *'zby* (gazelles) in another text. We also found two clear examples of the type of inscription where a statement appears between the author's name and that of his father,⁵ e.g. *l N. h dmyt bn N.* ("By N. - is the picture - son of N.") Among other finds was the first example of an author laying claim to *h 'tr* (usually interpreted as "the inscription") rather than recording that he found them, as well as several rather puzzling expressions on which further work will need to be done. There were a significant number of previously unattested names, many of which had unusual forms, and we also found inscriptions by different members, and successive generations, of the same families - something paralleled in the Modern Arabic graffiti of the area.

One of the features of this season's work was the discovery of many more Arabic inscriptions than last year, *viz.* 209 as compared with 65. Many of these were modern and added considerably to our stock of local names and genealogies, as well as providing information on inscribing techniques, the adaptation to stone-carving of a script habitually used on soft materials, and, in some cases, patina comparison. Among the Kufic inscriptions it was particularly interesting to find that some authors had left several texts in different parts of the area. Since this scatter of texts by one author is exactly what the Safaitic and modern *bedu* have left us, it is tempting to see the writers of

³ See the 1981 Preliminary Report, p. 162-163, for a more detailed description of the area.

⁴ As explained in the 1981 Preliminary Report (p. 160), it is the Project's policy to record previously

published texts in the context of new finds.

⁵ See F. V. Winnett and G. Lankester Harding, *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns*, Toronto, 1978, p. 15, paragraph 16, on this type of text.

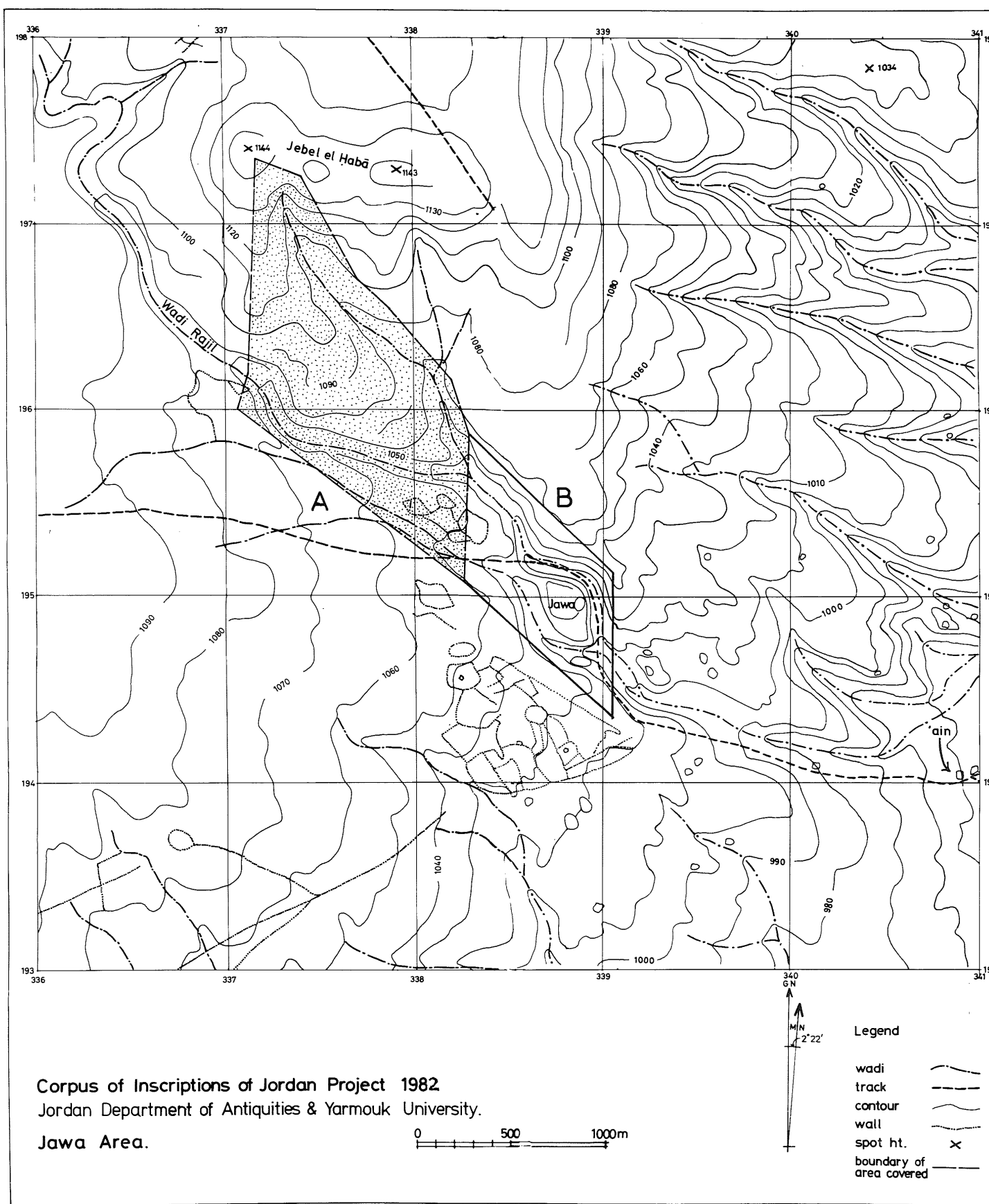


Fig. 1

the Kufic graffiti as residents of the area rather than travellers through it. After all, it takes some considerable time to inscribe basalt and some of these authors have left seven or eight neatly carved inscriptions of four or more lines within an area of one square kilometre. This implies, therefore, that, contrary to the general assumption, literacy continued among the *bedu* well into the Islamic period, and, indeed, may never have died out entirely.⁶ However, as Grohmann remarks,⁷ the "very simple, unadorned Kufic" of these texts is of "a more or less non-descript type" and therefore extremely difficult to date. *Prima facie*, it would seem likely that in the remote fastnesses of the *harra*, among the naturally conservative *bedu*, the old form of the script would remain in use far longer than elsewhere. But since it is extremely rare to find a date in these inscriptions, all this must remain conjecture. One thing, however, which these texts make very clear is the piety of their authors. Without exception they consist of prayers, quotations from the Qur'an, and pious statements.

Two groups of Greek graffiti were found, one on the "north" bank of Wadi Rajil, upstream from the Khirbah, and the other below the south-east corner of the site. The latter group was copied and photographed by Professor Winnett, but has never been published. The nine texts making up the two groups, consist entirely of names.

The 280 rock-drawings discovered this season will be discussed in Ann Searight's report below. Seventy-eight *wusum* were recorded, and Mr. Isa Madi and Miss King continued comparing them with those in use today. It should be noted that,

according to our *bedu* informants, the various sections of the Ahl al-Jabal (and presumably other tribes as well) each have two quite different *wusum*. One is used as a mark of ownership on animals, and need not necessarily be a brand. It can, for instance, consist in clipping parts of the ear.⁸ Moreover, the position of this mark on the animal's body is quite as important as its form,⁹ and two brands of identical form but on different parts of the body will be considered as totally distinct *wusum*. These two factors mean that the *wasm* used on animals is not suitable for use on other things. Hence each section has another *wasm*, which they call the *wasm* for graves,¹⁰ but which appears to be widely used to mark "immovable" property. We found them, for instance, not only on graves but over the mouths of caves which are used as animal pens during the winter months, near pools, and apparently indiscriminately on boulders within the grazing areas of each section.¹¹

The last two seasons at Jawa have shown how much can be learned from studying inscriptions and drawings *in situ*, without the constant pressure of limited time. Moreover, prolonged contact with a particular area and its inhabitants has allowed an understanding of the milieu in which the material was produced which it would be hard to gain in any other way. It is, therefore, greatly to the credit of the Yarmouk University and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan that they have understood this and have given the Project the time and the facilities needed to carry out its work as effectively as possible. To both institutions we are deeply grateful. We hope to continue the survey of the Jawa area in 1983.

⁶ A Grohmann, (*Arabic Inscriptions*, being *Expédition Philby-Ryckmans-Lippens en Arabie*, IIe Partie: *Textes Epigraphiques* Tome 1, Louvain, 1962, p. xx) had already questioned "the prejudice 'Arabs or bedu do not write or read'." I am most grateful to Professor A. F. L. Beeston for drawing my attention to this reference.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. xx-xxi

⁸ See H. Field, *Camel Brands and Graffiti from Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Iran, and Arabia* (Supplement to the Journal of the American Oriental Society No. 15, Baltimore, 1952), p. 29.

⁹ Dr. Field himself points this out (*op. cit.* p. 2),

although he does not follow up its implications for the marks found on stone.

¹⁰ Dr. Field, *op. cit.* p. 2-3, found many of his examples on graves.

¹¹ Failure to distinguish these two types of *wasm* may account for many of the discrepancies in Field's lists (see Field *op. cit.* p. 2). The theory that the same "property mark" would be branded on an animal, tattooed on a wife and hammered on a well-head (*ibid.* p. iv) is therefore untenable. Moreover, while each section of a tribe may have its own traditional tattoo patterns, these appear, in our experience at least, to bear no relation to either of that section's *wusum*.

THE ROCK-ART SURVEY 1982

by
Ann Searight

Although the finds of rock-drawings in the 1982 season were largely repetitious of those found in 1981, their distribution took on a different pattern.

Apart from the large outcrop of Khush'at al-Madhî, the finds were scattered and there were fewer areas with multiple compositions. This was probably due to the topography of the Wadi Rajil, whose sides became steeper in many places providing fewer points of access for watering flocks. There were fewer focus points, and those that existed contained scattered boulders or provided surfaces only large enough for a few drawings.

One of the most interesting techniques in engraving rock, last year found in connection with Safaitic drawings and inscriptions, was found again this year with a modern Arabic inscription and drawing. The "rocking blade" technique, producing a very narrow zig-zag outline was used to depict an equid, superimposed on an earlier scratched drawing of a horseman in combat with another. Although the inscription associated was only deeply engraved, both it and the drawing were in adjoining and similar cartouches with identical patina. The inscription was dated 1980. Lines of the earlier drawing could be seen in places where the later artist had decided to "improve" on the original (Pl. CXXIV, 1).

The practice of "cartouching" drawings has not been widely used at Jawa, but there was one particular drawing finely scratched by a devotee of the art. A simple Safaitic inscription with seven "magic" lines was written vertically in the central cartouche, flanked by separate cartouches containing, on one side a rayed sun disc, and on the other a stick man with his spear. The man had a bristly hairdo, and his limbs, projecting at right angles to

his body had accentuated fingers and toes thus producing more bristle effects.

The scratching technique continued to be used in our latest sequence of modern transport, with four finds of truck drawings: great care and attention was displayed in the chassis details and rope lashings.

Whilst researching and classifying some of the published material from this and other areas, it began to appear that there was a tradition of depicting female camels (referred to as *bkrt* in accompanying inscriptions) with their tails raised and curled up [Pl. CXXIV, 2]. Although only two of the inscriptions found this year at Jawa referred to female camels, and both had this characteristic, there were four at Wadi Irenbeh with references to *bkrt* and two at Sâja'.

The reverse also seems to be true. At Sâja' two drawings of camels with their tails hanging down were referred to as *jml* and *bkr* respectively, both male camels in the accompanying inscriptions.

Amongst the many other petroglyphs of interest at Sâja' was a drawing of two camels mating; one of a battle scene with stick men carrying shields and a variety of weapons; and one of a woman with arms upraised holding her long, flowing hair.¹²

At Jawa, one of the few references to specific animals with a drawing was that mentioned by M. C. A. Macdonald as the unattested plural of gazelles. Beside the inscription was a drawing of four gazelles accompanied by a line of seven "magic" dots. The drawing and inscription are scratched within a cartouche.

Since hyenas are still present in Wadi Rajil, and indeed were seen on several occasions close to where we were working, it was appropriate to find a possible representation on one of the boulders in

¹² Other examples of this figure appear beside no. 4351 in *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, Pars V, and more recently in Winnett and Harding, *op. cit.*, nos. 442 and 568. For a discussion as to



whether or not this represents a goddess, see F. V. Winnett and W. L. Reed, *Ancient Records from North Arabia*, University of Toronto Press, 1970, p. 75.

the area. Accompanied by drawings of ibex and caprovines, it was hammered carefully with the hyena's vertically striped markings, typical of the indigenous species of *Hyaena hyaena*. It is possible that some of the other representations of carnivores found here and elsewhere are also of this species.

Appendix

Incidental Finds

As mentioned above, several of our week-ends were spent exploring the desert around Jawa and following up reports of the presence of inscriptions. Our constant guide and companion in these excursions was our neighbour at Jawa, Shati Raja' al-Ja'riya, Abu Muhammad, who was a mine of information on all aspects of the area.

Of the many places visited, two were of particular interest.¹³ One was Wadi Irenbeh, at a point in its course where it is joined by a tributary which plunges down in a series of small waterfalls. Both the main wadi and the tributary run through relatively narrow gorges, the walls of which are covered in drawings and Safaitic and Kufic inscriptions. We found, for instance, texts by members of the tribe of *Hzy*, which seems to be confined to the Jawa/H5 area,¹⁴ and another by a member of the tribe of *Kkb*, which has left inscriptions over a wide area from Jebal Sais to Wadi Miqat. Another text is interesting for the unusual form of two of its letters: *w* appears as  as in some Thamudic texts, while *y* has the form , almost as if the author had tried to make it resemble a hand. Yet another inscription tells us that its author *nzr h my*, i.e., "guarded the water" which collects in the pools below the waterfalls. There was also a quantity of new names and some interesting new expressions.

The second place was even more exciting. It is called Şâja° and is a huge conical volcanic plug surrounded by wadis. As soon as we began to climb it we found inscriptions and drawings and, by the time we reached the summit, it was clear that the place was covered in hundreds of graffiti, many of exceptional interest. There is, for instance, in one small area, a sizeable group of texts starting *h rdw s°d...*, a type of inscription which is relatively rare,¹⁵ which raises the question of whether this place had significance in the worship of *Rdw*. It would certainly make an impressive "high place". Another text tells us that the author watched the heavens (*tzr h smy*), though this probably had more to do with the weather than with religious experience! There is also what appears to be an Arabic magical inscription rather similar to some of the charms carried about in the *hijâb* today. But perhaps the most exciting find was an inscription which reads *l N. w sty 'nzt nfr mn rm* ("By N. and he wintered at 'nzt while escaping from Roman territory"). In view of the fact that Şâja° is within sight of both Jebal 'Anâzah and Jebal 'Unaizah it seems highly probable that we have here the earliest reference to one or other of these mountains. Indeed the whole area may at that time have been known as 'Anâzah.¹⁶ It would certainly have been inaccessible enough to discourage pursuit (we found a text by another fugitive close by), but it must have been a bleak place to spend the winter.

We intend to return to both these places next year, for much longer periods, to complete the systematic recording of all the inscriptions and drawings. These, like last year's incidental finds, will be published in a separate monograph.

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¹³ Ann Searight deals with the drawings from these places in her report, above.

¹⁴ See the 1981 Preliminary Report, p. 166, note 15.

¹⁵ It has even been suggested (most recently by R. M. Voigt in *ADAJ*, XXIV, 1980 p. 82) that these texts may be more ancient than the other Safaitic inscriptions, though it is doubtful if the assumptions on which this view appears to be

based can be justified.

¹⁶ The Arabic 'anzah ("she-goat") is hardly appropriate in this context. It is worth noting that the name 'Anâzah presumably derives from Arabic 'anz meaning a black and rugged hill (Lane p. 2173/1 and cf. p. 73/2-3 s.v. 'akamah), an apt description of Şâja° itself.