

РОССИЙСКАЯ АКАДЕМИЯ НАУК
Институт востоковедения
МОСКОВСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ им. М.В.Ломоносова
Факультет мировой политики
Институт стран Азии и Африки

Arabia Vitalis

*Арабский Восток, ислам,
древняя Аравия*

Сборник статей,
посвященный 60-летию
В.В. Наумкина

Москва
2005

MICHAEL C.A. MACDONALD
(Oxford)

Of rock-Art, “desert kites” and *meşāyid*

Much has been written about the origin and purpose of the series of long walls and enclosures in north-eastern Jordan, southern and central Syria, Sinai, and elsewhere, which have come to be known as “Desert kites”¹. These enclosures take a number of different forms² and it is by no means clear either that any of them have retained their original shape, or that they were all built for the same purpose. At whatever period(s) they were originally built, it seems likely that they may have been adapted and used for different purposes at various times from prehistory until the early twentieth century³.

An interesting sidelight on these structures is provided by a number of rock-drawings which appear to show enclosures of various sorts, some of which bear a strong resemblance to some types of “kites”⁴. However, far from offering solutions to the difficulties of interpreting the structures, the rock-drawings only bring another set of problems to the debate.

For example, a fundamental point of disagreement in the interpretation of these structures is over whether they were built as – or were later used as – hunting traps or as herding pens. Unfortunately, very few of the rock-drawings of enclosures which could be interpreted as “kites” show them being used, and those that do can be misleading. Thus, Betts and Helms published a drawing of a more-or-less oval enclosure with smaller ovals (“logettes”)⁵ attached to its outer edge. They describe this as “a ‘kite’ ... with one arm visible and a complete enclosure with closed necks and six ovoid hides” (1986. P. 71 and pl. 1, drawing no 3; and *Fig. 1* here). Inside the enclosure are five ostrich and a Safaitic inscription (of which they did not provide a reading). They think that “the animals may ...

© Michael C.A. Macdonald, 2005

¹ See, recently, the thoughtful article by Échallier & Braemer (1995), which gives a résumé of the debate and proposes new and convincing conclusions, and the discussion in Betts et al. 1998, which includes a chapter (1998. P. 207–223) by V. Yagodin on comparable structures in the Aralo-Caspian steppe. The whole subject has been thoroughly discussed by G. Fowden (1999) in a most interesting article which answers convincingly a number of the questions raised in previous studies.

² See: Helms & Betts. 1987. Figs 8–14; Échallier & Braemer 1995. Figs 3–4, 7–8, 10–13, 15–23.

³ See: the conclusions of Échallier & Braemer. 1995. P. 60–62 and the counter argument in: Betts et al. 1998. P. 204–205; and for example, on prehistory: Helms & Betts. 1987; Betts et al. 1998. P. 191–205, 229; on the Roman period: Harding. 1953. P. 29–31, no. 73; *ibid.* 1956; Beeston. 1954; Meshel 1974. P. 139–140; and below; on the early nineteenth century: Burckhardt. 1831, i: P. 220–221; Wright 1895. P. 42; and on the early twentieth century: Musil. 1928a. P. 26–27; 1928b. P. 3–4 (kite-like traps used by the *fellahin* to catch herds of gazelle, just east of Dmeir in southern Syria).

⁴ See: Betts & Helms. 1986.

⁵ This useful term, which does not presuppose a particular purpose for these structures, is used by Échallier and Braemer (1995. 37ff).



Fig. 1. A rock-drawing of an enclosure, possibly a kite, within which five ostrich and a Safaitic inscription have been carved. (From Betts & Helms. 1986. Pl. 1, no. 3).

be contemporary with the kite⁶ but imply that the Safaitic inscription is not. However, the Safaitic inscription reads *l 'mr h-wmt* "By 'mr are the ostriches [*na'āmāt*]". Thus, the drawings of ostriches would seem to be contemporary with the inscription (i.e. from the Roman period) but there is no way of telling if the ostriches and the inscription are contemporary with drawing of the enclosure⁷.

Different problems arise with the famous – perhaps notorious – drawings beside the inscription HCH 73 from the Cairn of Hani⁸, in north-eastern Jordan (Harding. 1953. P. 29–31; and *Figs 2 and 3* here). These are two scenes on adjacent faces of a stone, one (on Face A, *Fig. 2*) showing an enclosure with stick-figure animals with short horns and upright tails being driven into an enclosure⁸ by three men, and the other (on Face B, *Fig. 3*) showing a

⁶ They add "but this is impossible to prove".

⁷ Unfortunately, there is no inscription with the ostriches in: Betts & Helms' drawing no. 6.

⁸ As Harding points out (1953. P. 30, 31), the fact that the walls leading to the enclosure are narrower at the entrance than at the point where they join the enclosure (i.e. the exact opposite of the disposition of their equivalents in real life, where the walls have the form of a funnel, starting off far apart and converging as they approach the entrance to the enclosure) is the result of the shape of the stone on which the drawing is carved and the artist's decision to run these walls along the edges of the face. See: Échallier & Braemer. 1995. P. 57, who also conclude that this shape is of no
(продолжение сноски см. на след. стр.)

different type of animal with three men and three hounds on a leash⁹. The inscription, which starts on Face A and runs over onto Face B, states that the author drew two things. Unfortunately, though the reading of the first word as *s²ht* is unequivocal, its interpretation is not very secure, while the second word is capable of various readings, and none of those so far suggested has produced an immediately obvious description of either drawing¹⁰.

The only viable solution so far offered for the first word (*s²ht*) is that it is related to a verb *Šaḥat* in an (unspecified) Syrian dialect meaning “to drive animals”¹¹, though it should be noted that there are uncertainties with this derivation¹². If, *faute de mieux*, we accept it, I would suggest that *h-s²ht* represents a *mašdar* meaning “the driving of animals”, rather than a word meaning “pen or enclosure” as suggested by Littmann (*apud* Harding. 1953. P. 31). Naturally, the driving of animals can be used in the context both of hunting and of herding.

significance. They also point out that, in fact, the arrangement whereby the funnel walls do not end at the entrance to the enclosure but at its corners, is attested in several “kites” on the ground (*loc.cit.*).

⁹ For the identification of the leash see: Beeston 1954.

¹⁰ Harding's first instinct was to read this last word as *'bb*, but felt that it “makes no sense”, and so suggested *'s¹jb* which he connected (in a way which he did not state) with Arabic *sā'ibah* (pl. *suyyab*) “any beast that is left to pasture where it will” (Lane. 1481c). Apart from the reading, with which I disagree (see below), the problem with this interpretation is that the drawing does not show animals left to pasture where they will, but animals being driven into a specific enclosure. Beeston (1954), sensing this, returned to the reading *'bb* which he took to refer to the hunting scene on Face B and translated “prairie, open pasture-land”, comparing Arabic *'abb* and Hebrew *'ābīb*, and commenting that “the two words designate the localities where the two scenes are respectively set”. However, it would be unique in Safaitic rock-art for a scene of activity to be identified in the inscription by its locality (especially one so vague as “prairie, open pasture-land”) and so this proposal is also not very convincing. Mahmud al-Ghul (*apud* Ward. 1969. P. 208, note 1) returned to Harding's reading, *h-s¹b*, and suggested translating it by “the fence”. E.A. Knauf's suggestion (*apud* Helms and Betts. 1987. P. 56) that the word could read *'s¹r* “capture” would be persuasive if it were possible to read *'s¹r* here, but unfortunately Knauf had not had the opportunity to see the stone or a photograph when he made this suggestion and so was working from Harding's facsimile which, I would agree, does not show all the possibilities. From all this it will be seen that it is not the case that “le texte de l'inscription ... fait sans ambiguïté référence à une scène pastorale” (Échallier and Braemer 1995. P. 58).

¹¹ *Teste* Seton Dearden and Littmann, *apud* Harding. 1953. P. 31.

¹² Denizeau (1960. P. 270) reports that the verb *Šaḥat* means “chasser qqn”. in an [almost certainly *urban*] dialect of Syria. He gives this on the authority of Harfouche (1923. P. 418, line 16) and notes that Barthélemy (1935–1969. P. 380) gives this sense to *Šaḥat* (i.e. with a / *ṭ* /) in the dialect of Lebanon and Beirut. It should be noted that Harfouche specifies that the word means “chasser *quelqu'un*” and gives the Syrian Arabic for “chasser le gibier” as *tašā'iyad* (1923. P. 418, line 14). Thus, the meaning given by Seton Dearden and Littmann is significantly different from that given by Harfouche. The latter was almost certainly recording an urban dialect, and it is possible that in some Bedouin dialects of Syria / Jordan / Arabia *Šaḥat* has the meaning recorded by Seton Dearden and Littmann, but as yet I can find no evidence for this. Meshel's speculations on a Hebrew origin for *s²ht* all founder, as he admitted, on the fact that the phoneme realized in North-West Semitic as / *s* / is realized in Ancient North Arabian and Arabic as / *s¹* / and / *s* / respectively, not as / *s²* / and / *š* / (1974. P. 140, and n. 12). Eissfeldt's attempt to link it to an Ugaritic word *šht*, itself of unknown meaning (1955. P. 119), is irrelevant for the same reason.

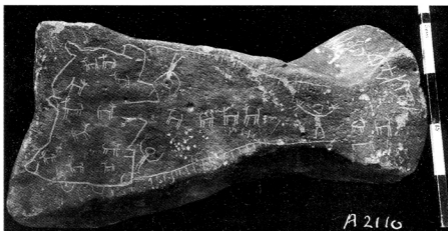


Fig. 2. HCH 73, Face A. (Photograph courtesy of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan).



Fig. 3. HCH 73, Face B. (Photograph M.C.A. Macdonald).

On Face B of the stone (*Fig. 3*), it will be seen that the last word of the text turns downwards and then back on itself. This can only have been occasioned by the pre-existence of the drawing on this face, and, in particular, of a line running from the right hand of the man apparently lying on his stomach, to the animal on his right¹³. It is unfortunate that a photograph of Face B has not been published until now, since so far all commentaries after the *editio princeps* have had to rely on the published facsimile. This, quite properly, shows what Harding saw on the stone without what he regarded as extraneous marks. It will be seen from the photograph of this face (*Fig. 3*) that the ρ of the

¹³ I am at present unable to interpret this line. The animal is clearly not a hound since it is shown with a tufted tail (unlike the hounds behind it), so the line cannot be a leash.

final word seems to be followed by a *n* and then a *f* facing downwards,¹⁴) and then turns for the final letter, which I would read as a *r* facing left. This makes the final word *h-nfr*. In Arabic, the verb *naḡara* is used of an animal becoming frightened and running away and the IV Form, *ʿanḡara*, means “to cause an animal to be frightened and flee”. This is the action required to flush out game so that it can be driven towards a trap or waiting hunters. In modern hunting parlance, it is “beating”. I would suggest that the word here represents the *maḡdar* of the IV Form, *inḡār*.

Thus I would read and translate the inscription HCH 73 as follows:

l mnʿt w bny ʿl hnʿ w dmy h- sʿht w h-nfr

“By Mnʿ and he built [the cairn] over Hnʿ and he drew the driving and the beating.”

As I have remarked elsewhere, in Arabian rock-art there is a tendency to emphasize the most obvious distinguishing characteristics of the subjects as a shorthand method of ensuring that they are recognizable, however crude the drawing. Thus, in the picture on Face B (Fig. 3), I would suggest that the animals being hunted are not oryx (as suggested by Beeston 1954), because these are invariably shown in rock-drawings with very long straight horns rising *vertically* from the animals' heads, and almost always with the distinctive small hump behind the head¹⁵. By contrast, in this drawing, the lines projecting from the heads are fairly short, and are vertical on one animal and point backwards on the other two. It therefore seems more likely that they are onagers, which are characterised by long stalk-like tails ending in tassels,¹⁶ and ears which are slightly longer than those of a horse. Ears, of course, can change position in a way that horns cannot, and it may not be fanciful to note that the animals being pursued by the hounds have put their ears back, as equids do in flight, while the one which is being approached by the man has its ears pricked up¹⁷. An interesting, though unfortunately badly damaged, parallel is provided by the wall-paintings at Quṣayr ʿAmrah, in Jordan (Almagro *et al.* 1975. Pls. 29, 31, 32) which shows the pursuit of onagers by hounds. Two points are worth noting. One is the length of the ears of the onagers in this painting and the other is their relative size in comparison to the hounds (see particularly: Almagro *et al.* Pl. 29a). In both respects, the crude drawing on Face B of HCH 73 is accurate in portraying the onagers with longish ears, pressed back when in flight, and pricked up when at bay, and in making the onagers only slightly larger than the hounds¹⁸.

It is also worth re-examining the figure of the man apparently lying on his stomach facing the onager with its ears pricked. His position is clearly not accidental or due to clumsiness on the part of the artist, since the man holding the hounds on a leash is shown

¹⁴ The right stroke of the *f* runs along the line between the man's hand and the animal, and is thicker than it. A short extraneous line, which is even thicker and of a lighter patina, crosses horizontally the line running from the man's hand, and almost reaches the animal's chest.

¹⁵ See, for instance, SIJ 244 (Winnett 1957. Pl. IV, no. H 81), CSA B1, SIAM 26 (which gives the Safaitic word for oryx, *dṣy*), ISB 427 (where note that even in a stick-figure drawing the distinctive hump behind the head is shown), etc.

¹⁶ See: Moorey. 1970. p. 37 on the distinctive features of the onager known in the ancient Near East.

¹⁷ Harding also regarded these as ears rather than horns (1953. P. 30). It was Beeston (1954) who first described them as horns and he was followed by Eissfeldt (1955. P. 118).

¹⁸ Their necks are perhaps over long in the rock-drawing, but compare the necks on: Almagro *et al.* Pl. 31.

upright. Nor, from the way he is holding them, can the objects in his hands be a bow and arrow or a spear and shield (Harding. 1953. P. 30). I would suggest that what he is doing is crawling towards the onager with a stick and something to strike it on, in order to startle the animal into flight, as part of the process of "beating". This would certainly account both for his position and for the way in which he is holding the objects¹⁹. This may also be what the third man (a faint figure with raised arms in front of the left onager) is doing. It is difficult to decide whether he is lying down or standing up, but his raised arms would suggest the latter.

On Face A (Fig. 2), the stick-figure animals which are already in the enclosure, those being herded into it, and those escaping, are quite different from those on Face B. They are all shown with backward-pointing horns of varying lengths and short tails uniformly pointing upwards. In the *editio princeps*, Harding assumed that the scene was one of herding rather than hunting, but did not identify the animals (1953. P. 30–31). Later, he accepted advice from a zoologist that they were likely to represent oryx leucorynx, and so reinterpreted the drawing as a hunting scene (1956). The first to suggest that these animals were gazelle seems to have been Henry Field (1960. P. 130, followed by Meshel 1974. P. 139). However, as Échallier and Braemer point out, this identification is based not on the characteristics of the animals but on the fact that they are assumed to be in a hunting-trap, and they could just as easily be goats (1995. P. 57). Unfortunately, however, they give no reasons for identifying them as goats and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that their identification is based on their argument that the drawing represents a herding (not a hunting) enclosure, rather than on the characteristics of the animals themselves.

We know from those drawings of animals identified as gazelle (*zby*) in accompanying inscriptions,²⁰ that the identifying characteristics of gazelle in North Arabian rock-art are relatively short backward-pointing horns and very short straight tails which stick out behind them horizontally, or occasionally vertically. This emphasizes the most easily reproducible physical characteristics of the gazelle and a distinctive feature of its behaviour, i.e. that the short tail points straight out behind it (and possibly sometimes straight up) when it is frightened.

Unfortunately, to the best of my knowledge, no rock-drawings of domestic goats or sheep, identified as such in accompanying inscriptions, have yet been found in Arabia, so it is impossible to make an exact comparison of the animals shown here with drawings known to be representations of them. However, the most distinctive features of a domestic goat are surely its horns and its short tail which permanently sticks up vertically.

¹⁹ A thicker line with a lighter patina crossing his right arm must be a later extraneous scratch.

²⁰ See, for instance, WH 2342 (where the tail sticks out diagonally as can clearly be seen on the photograph kindly left to me by Professor Winnett, though alas the drawing was not reproduced on the published facsimile); WH 3151 (where the tail of one sticks straight out (the other seems to be tailless), clearly seen on the photograph kindly left to me by Professor Winnett, but not well reproduced on the facsimile), CSNS 550 (known only from a facsimile, where the animals all have backward-pointing horns and short tails sticking upwards in one case and straight out behind the other five); ISB 70 (again a poor facsimile, but the animals have backward-pointing horns and the upper gazelle with a very short horizontal tail). I also know of a number of unpublished drawings and in most which the tails are horizontal, with only one or two examples of it sticking upwards.

An excellent example of this can be seen in an Assyrian relief²¹ from the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) which shows sheep and goats (Fig. 4), where the two are very clearly distinguished, and the goats all have short vertical tails.



Fig. 4. A relief from the palace of Tiglath-Pileser III at Nimrud showing sheep and goats. (Reproduced with the permission of the Trustees of the British Museum).

Thus, while what are known to be schematic representations of gazelle occasionally show them with vertical rather than horizontal tails, one would expect domestic goats always to be shown with them, since this is their position in real life. Every animal in the drawing of the enclosure has an erect tail and while one cannot exclude completely the possibility that they were intended to represent gazelle, the most likely interpretation must surely be that they are domestic goats. If this is so, then the enclosure is indeed being used as a herding pen (as argued by Échallier and Braemer)²² rather than a hunting trap. If the interpretation of the word *s²ht* as “driving” is correct, it could, of course, apply equally to herding as to hunting. However, as Échallier and Braemer point out, if it showed hunting activities one would expect the presence of weapons²³.

One other small point. In their interesting treatment of this drawing, Échallier and Braemer make the point that the position of the two human figures on either side of the

²¹ British Museum ANE I18881.

²² “Nous avons sans doute là l'image de bergers rentrant un troupeau (de chèvres ?) et les parquant dans un enclos de pierre comme cela se fait encore de nos jours dans les mêmes régions” (Échallier and Braemer. 1995. P. 58), Betts et al. (1998. P. 205) leaves open the question of whether the drawing represents hunting or herding.

²³ Échallier and Braemer. 1995. P. 57. However, as will be apparent from the discussion above, I disagree with their statement “or, l'autre partie de la gravure le montre, l'artiste sait parfaitement dessiner un chasseur armé d'un arc”.

entrance is difficult to explain in the context of a gazelle-hunt, since their presence at this point would be likely to frighten the animals and make them turn back, rather than entering the enclosure. Instead, they see these men as positioned at these points to count the goats as they enter. But would two people be needed to do this? I would suggest that, regardless of whether the scene shows hunting or herding, the construction of the "funnel" in which the guiding walls end some considerable distance from the entrance to the enclosure, would require the presence of a man in each corner to give the animals no alternative but to pass through the entrance. Without the men in this position, the animals, whether domesticated or wild, would tend to congregate in the corners formed by the junctions of the walls of the funnel and those of the enclosure.

Finally, there is one feature of the drawing of the enclosure, which does not seem to have been noted in any of the published discussions. This is the fact that, of the nine logettes, only two are shown abutting the *exterior* of the enclosure wall, the other seven being hollows within this wall and open to the interior of the pen (Fig. 2). Of these seven, three²⁴ are completely open to the interior, while in the other four the entrances have been narrowed by converging walls. This contrasts with all the other drawings of such structures and, apparently with most of those on the ground,²⁵ where the logettes are on the exterior of the enclosures. It seems clear that the distinction between the three kinds of logettes shown in this drawing is deliberate, but at present I cannot suggest what their function may have been²⁶.

In view of all this, I would suggest that the two drawings accompanying HCH 73, show the two activities described in the inscription, viz.: respectively the "driving" (*s²ht*) of domestic goats into a "kite-like" enclosure (Face A), and "beating" (*nfr*) to flush out onager in preparation for hunting them (Face B). However, it is clear that, even if this interpretation of the use of the enclosure is correct, it does not affect the debate on the original purpose of the kites. It simply illustrates one use made of them (or a structure like them) at a particular period.

Another rock-drawing,²⁷ Drawing 1 here, shows a very different kind of trap (Fig. 5). This appears to match in almost every detail the gazelle traps called meşāyid (or meşāyīd)

²⁴ There is a thin line across the opening of the logette opposite the entrance to the enclosure, but this seems to be an extraneous scratch.

²⁵ Échallier and Braemer say of "kites" on the ground that "on a pu observer ... en Syrie centrale qu'il n'y avait pas de communication visible entre l'enclos et la logette qui a toujours un mur indépendant et tangent à celui de l'enclos" (1995. P. 59). They describe the only openings between the logettes and the enclosure as being "fenêtres trop petites pour laisser le passage à un animal" and "trop profonde pour permettre [aux chasseurs] de voir l'intérieur de l'enclos et d'y exercer une action de chasse efficace" (*idem*). On these grounds, they reject the theory that they were hides for hunters, or that the logettes enclosed the "pits" into which, according to the nineteenth and early twentieth descriptions of the meşāyid (see below), the gazelle were induced to hurl themselves. See: Betts et al. 1998. P. 204 for an interesting explanation for the lack of pits in the kites in the *harrah*.

²⁶ It seems unlikely that they were intended to represent hides from which archers would have shot the animals, since they are all shown as empty. It is conceivable that some represent the pits of a meşāyid, but, if so, it is unclear which are the pits, and what is the function of the others.

²⁷ This rock-drawing was discovered by A. Betts in the region of Burqu^c, north-eastern Jordan, and was published by her with a facsimile but no photograph in: Betts *et al.* 1998. P. 155–156, and fig. 7.13. I am most grateful to her for sending me the photograph of this drawing and allowing me to publish it here.

described by nineteenth and early twentieth century travellers²⁸. It consists of a double enclosure like a “figure of eight” which Musil describes being used to trap gazelle in al-Manāẓer, an area east-north-east of Damascus and running to the Euphrates.

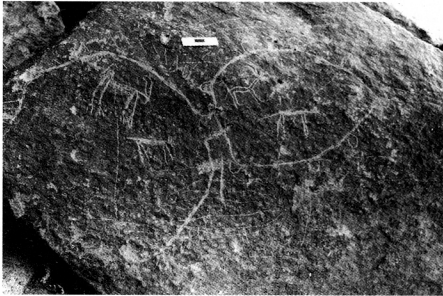


Fig. 5. Drawing 1, apparently representing a *meşâyid* similar to those described by Musil and others. (Photograph courtesy of Alison Betts).

“In al-Manāẓer the gazelles are driven into extensive enclosures. A wall about one and a half metres high, shaped like a figure eight, is built of stone without mortar. The lower loop is only half finished. Where the two loops meet, a narrow opening, *tenijje* (or *zenž*), is left. At several places portions of the wall enclosing the upper loop are a little lower than the rest of the wall. At each of these places a hole two or three metres deep is dug outside the enclosure. The flock of gazelles is cautiously driven into the lower uncompleted loop. This is soon accomplished, because the two walls are about a thousand paces distant one from another. The gazelles at first advance quietly, but later on, becoming scared, they run along the two walls and try to penetrate as rapidly as possible through the narrow opening into the upper and completely closed loop. As soon as they run through, the narrow opening is blocked up and a greyhound, *sluke*, attacks the gazelles. The frightened animals run round the wall, jump across it where it is lowest, and fall into the pits that have been dug outside” (Musil 1928b. P. 26–27)²⁹.

²⁸ See the long quotations from some of these sources in: Meshel. 1974. P. 134–135, and résumés of these descriptions in: Échallier & Braemer. 1995. P. 56–57. Betts et al. 1998. P. 201; Fowden quotes other interesting descriptions.

²⁹ The connection between this drawing and this passage from Musil was first made by Alison Betts (Betts et al. 1998. P. 156).

It is possible that, in this drawing, the sub-circular projections on the circumference of the inner enclosure (the "logettes") represent the pits described by Musil. However, it should be noted that such protrusions are found on all drawings of enclosures known so far, though none of the others has the form described by Musil. Moreover, logettes also occur on the majority of "kites" on the ground where, as Échallier and Braemer have shown, they are not pits³⁰.

In this drawing, the narrow passage between the two enclosures is shown as closed and a horned animal and a hound (?) are shown in each, perhaps illustrating two different stages of the hunt. The horned animal in the outer enclosure is particularly bizarre since, apart from the cross-hatching on its body, it appears to have claws rather than hooves! However, the raised tail and the back-ward pointing horns (although rather long) suggest that it may have been intended to be a gazelle. The horned animal in the inner enclosure is of a more orthodox form for a gazelle.

As Échallier and Braemer point out, the structures described by Musil and other nineteenth and early twentieth century travellers, do not share the characteristics of the structures identified on the ground as "kites"³¹ and should be excluded from the discussions of the latter (1995. P. 56–57).

This drawing therefore provides the first illustration of a "figure of eight" trap, of the type described by Musil. Unfortunately, since it is not mentioned in an accompanying inscription, we have no means of dating the drawing.

Finally there are two other drawings from north-eastern Jordan of what look like "kites" to be added to the "corpus"³².

Drawing 2 (*Fig. 6*)³³ shows an oval enclosure with logettes attached to its circumference, and three "funnels" at its right side, two closed at the entrance to the enclosure and one with its gate open. There is an amorphous area of direct hammering in the centre of the kite, which may be intended to represent an animal, but if so it is unidentifiable.

Drawing 3 (*Fig. 7*) shows a large oval enclosure drawn around the very edge of the face of the stone. The logettes are shown either as inside the walls of the enclosure, or half in and half out. However, none of them are open to the interior of the enclosure and it seems likely that this arrangement is simply the consequence of the artist having left himself no space to place them on the exterior of the enclosure wall. Unfortunately, the right side of the drawing has been omitted from the photograph and no "funnel" into the enclosure can be seen. An unidentifiable animal is shown in the far left of the picture.

³⁰ "Les puits mentionnés dans les récits modernes sont toujours absents dans les structures anciennes. La profondeur des logettes, dans les cas où elles sont accessibles librement depuis l'enclos et où elles ne sont pas plus élevées que celui-ci, est presque toujours trop faible pour qu'elles aient pu constituer des chausse-trappes efficaces pour ces animaux" (Échallier and Braemer. 1995. P. 59).

³¹ See the shapes in the typologies of Betts and Helms (1987. Figs. 9–14) and of Échallier and Braemer. 1995. P. 42–56, and fig. 13, in neither of which does anything resembling this type of trap figure. This drawing shows that Helms and Betts were incorrect in regarding the type of trap described by Musil as "reminiscent of" their type F (1987. P. 63).

³² Drawings 2 and 3 were discovered by William and Fidelity Lancaster at Ghadīr al-Wisād, in the *harrah* of north-eastern Jordan. I am most grateful to them for kindly sending me photographs and allowing me to publish them.

³³ Compare the facsimile of another "kite-drawing" from the Wādī Rājil, in north-eastern Jordan, published in: Betts et al. 1998. P. 157, fig. 7.12.



Fig. 6. Drawing 2, possibly representing a "kite". (Photograph courtesy of W. and F. Lancaster).

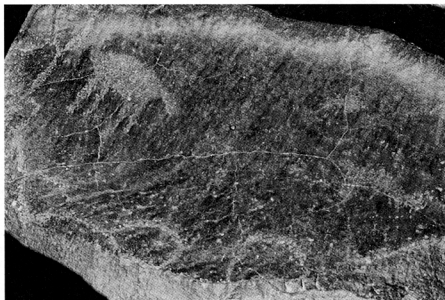


Fig. 7. Drawing 3, possibly representing a "kite". (Photograph courtesy of W. and F. Lancaster).

At the beginning of this article, I noted that these drawings can contribute little to the debate on the date and purpose of "kites" and similar structures, or to the relationship between the meşāyid described by the early travellers to Syria and the walls and enclosures studied by archaeologists in the same area. While Drawing 1 here appears to provide our first illustration of the meşāyid, it is, alas, undatable and so more a source of frustration than a help. If my interpretation of HCH 73 is correct, then it shows that structures of a "kite-type" could be used in the Roman period for the herding of goats, as already suggested by Échallier and Braemer (1995. P. 58). But this does not mean that all such structures were used for this purpose – at this period or at any other. Échallier and Braemer's subtle and meticulous paper has set the discussion of these structures on a very productive course. The present article, like its subject, is in the nature of graffiti in the margins of this debate.

Sigla

CSA	Safaitic inscriptions and drawings in Clark 1984–1985.
CSNS	Safaitic inscriptions and drawings in Clark 1979 [1983].
HCH	Safaitic inscriptions and drawings in Harding 1953.
ISB	Safaitic inscriptions and drawings in Oxtoby 1968.
Lane	Lane 1863–1893.
SIAM	Safaitic inscriptions and drawings in Macdonald 1979.
SIJ	Safaitic inscriptions and drawings in Winnett 1957.
WH	Safaitic inscriptions and drawings in Winnett and Harding 1978.

References

- Almagro M., Caballero L., Zozaya J., & Almagro A. 1975. *Qusayr 'Amra. Residencia y baños Omeyas en el desierto de Jordania*. Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Árabe de Cultura.
- Barthélemy A. 1935–1969. *Dictionnaire Arabe-Français. Dialectes de Syrie : Alep, Damas, Liban, Jérusalem*. Paris: Geuthner.
- Beeston A.F.L. 1954. A Safaitic Hunting Scene. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 16. P. 592.
- Betts A.V.G. & Helms S. 1986. Rock Art in Eastern Jordan: "Kite" Carvings? *Paléorient* 12. P. 67–72.
- Betts A.V.G., Colledge S., Martin L., McCartney C., Wright K. & Yagodin V. 1998. *The Harra and the Hamad. Excavations and Explorations in Eastern Jordan*. Volume 1. With contributions by L. Cooke, A.N. Garrard, J. Hather, C. McClintock, W. Lancaster and D.S. Reese. (Sheffield Archaeological Monographs, 9). Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Burckhardt J.L. 1831. *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahābys, Collected during his Travels in the East*. Edited by W. Ouseley. Published by Authority of the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior of Africa. (2 volumes). London: Colburn & Bentley.
- Clark V.A. 1979 [1983]. *A Study of New Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan*. PhD thesis, Department of Middle Eastern Studies, University of Melbourne. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International.

Clark V.A. 1984–1985. New Safaitic Inscriptions from Sakaka and Azraq. *Abr-Nahrain* 23. P. 14–21.

Denizeau C. 1960. *Dictionnaire des parlers arabes de Syrie, Liban et Palestine*. (Supplément au Dictionnaire arabe-français de A. Barthélemy). (Études Arabes et Islamiques. Études et Documents, 3). Paris: Maisonneuve

Échallier J.-C. & Braemer F. 1995. Nature et fonctions des «Desert Kites»: données et hypothèses nouvelles. *Paléorient* 21. P. 35–63.

Eissfeldt O. 1955. Noch ein safatenisches Bild vom Grabmal des Hani[?]. *Forschungen und Fortschritte* 29 / 4. P. 118–119.

Field H. 1960. *North Arabian Desert Archaeological Survey 1925–1950*. With contributions of E.W.K. Andrau, D. Garrod and E. Schroeder. (Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 2). Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum.

Fowden G. 1999. "Desert kites": ethnography, archaeology and art. P. 107–136 in J.H. Humphrey (ed.), *The Roman and Byzantine Near East. Some Recent Archaeological Research*. 2. (Journal of Roman Archaeology: Supplementary Series, 31). Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology.

Harding G.L. 1953. The Cairn of Hani[?]. *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 2. P. 8–56.

Harding G.L. 1956. Hani[?] Text No. 73. *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 3. P. 82.

Harfouche J. 1923. *Le drogman arabe. Guide pratique de l'Arabe parlé pour la Syrie, la Palestine et l'Égypte*. Quatrième Édition revue et augmentée par le P.E. Ley. Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique.

Helms S.W. & Betts A.V.G. 1987. The Desert "Kites" of the Badiyet esh-Sham and North Arabia. *Paléorient* 13. P. 41–67.

Lane E.W. 1863–1893. *An Arabic-English Lexicon, Derived from the Best and Most Copious Eastern Sources*. London: Williams & Norgate.

Macdonald M.C.A. 1979. Safaitic Inscriptions in the Amman Museum and Other Collections. I. *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 23. P. 101–119.

Meshel Z. 1974. New Data About the "Desert Kites". *Tel Aviv* 1. P. 129–143.

Moorey P.R.S. 1970. Pictorial evidence for the history of horse-riding in Iraq before the Kassite period. *Iraq* 32. P. 36–50.

Musil A. 1928a. *The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins*. (Oriental Explorations and Studies, 6). New York: American Geographical Society.

Musil A. 1928b. *Palmyrena. A Topographical Itinerary*. (Oriental Explorations and Studies, 4). New York: American Geographical Society.

Oxtoby W.G. 1968. *Some Inscriptions of the Safaitic Bedouin*. (American Oriental Series, 50). New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society.

Ward W.A. 1969. The supposed Asiatic campaign of Narmer. *Mélanges de l'Université St. Joseph* 45. P. 205–221.

Winnett F.V. 1957. *Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan*. (Near and Middle East Series, 2). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Winnett F.V. & Harding G.L. 1978. *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns*. (Near and Middle East Series, 9). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Wright W. 1895. *An Account of Palmyra and Zenobia with Travels and Adventures in Bashan and the Desert*. London: Nelson.