THE CAMBRIDGE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE
World's Ancient Languages

Edited by

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Ancient North Arabian

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1. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

In the western two-thirds of the Arabian Peninsula, from southern Syria to Yemen, inscriptions testify to the use of a number of different ancient languages and scripts. In the southwest, these inscriptions may date from as early as the thirteenth century BC and continue up to the seventh century AD, while in central and north Arabia they seem to be concentrated in the period between the eighth century BC and the fourth century AD. Some languages, like Aramaic and, later, Greek, came to the region from outside, but the rest were indigenous tongues expressed in scripts developed locally.

Literacy seems to have been extraordinarily widespread, not only among the settled populations but also among the nomads. Indeed, the scores of thousands of graffiti on the rocks of the Syro-Arabian desert suggest that it must have been almost universal among the latter (see Macdonald 1993:382–388). By the Roman period, it is probable that a higher proportion of the population in this region was functionally literate than in any other area of the ancient world.

1.1 North Arabian

The ancient languages in the southwest of the Peninsula are known as Ancient (or Old) South Arabian (see Ch. 15), while those in central and northern Arabia and in the desert of southern Syria are classed as North Arabian. This latter category is divided into two subgroups. The first of these is *Arabic*, which is subdivided into (i) Old Arabic (that is Arabic attested in pre-Islamic texts which have survived independently of the early Arab grammarians, thus the Namārah inscription but not the "Pre-Islamic poetry," see Macdonald, forthcoming); (ii) Classical and Middle Arabic; and (iii) the vernacular dialects. The second subgroup is called *Ancient North Arabian*. The most striking difference between the two subgroups lies in the definite article, which is ʾal- in Arabic, but is *h*- or zero in Ancient North Arabian (see §4.3.1). Until recently, this division was largely unrecognized by linguists working outside the field, and Ancient North Arabian (which was sometimes misleadingly called "Proto-Arabic") was usually treated as a collection of early dialects of Arabic. However, it is now clear that Ancient North Arabian represents a linguistic strain which, while closely related to Arabic, was distinct from it (Macdonald 2000:29–30).

1.1.1 Arabic

Arabic, and thus by implication the North Arabian group as a whole, has traditionally been classified, along with the Ancient South Arabian, Modern South Arabian and Ethiopic

Figure 16.1 Pre-Islamic Arabia

languages, as *South West Semitic* (e.g., Brockelmann 1908–1913: i, 6). However, more recently, it has been grouped instead with Canaanite and Aramaic, under the rubric Central Semitic (e.g., Faber 1997; see Ch. 6, §2.3), and this classification is certainly more appropriate for Ancient North Arabian.

Old Arabic seems to have coexisted with Ancient North Arabian throughout north and central Arabia but, in contrast to Ancient North Arabian, it remained a purely spoken language. The earliest Old Arabic inscriptions in what we think of as the Arabic script (in fact the latest development of the Nabataean Aramaic alphabet) date from the early sixth century AD. Before that, Old Arabic was written only on very rare occasions and then, necessarily, in a "borrowed" script (Ancient South Arabian, Dadanitic, Nabataean, or Greek). At present, seven such documents in Old Arabic have been identified, and in a number of others, Old Arabic features occur in texts which are otherwise in Sabaic (an Ancient

South Arabian language), Dadanitic, Safaitic, Nabataean, and possibly East Arabian Aramaic (see Macdonald 2000:50–54 and forthcoming).

1.1.2   Ancient North Arabian

Ancient North Arabian is made up of a number of interrelated dialects, attested only in inscriptions. These are dated roughly between the eighth century BC and fourth century AD, after which the language disappears from the record. Well over forty thousand of these texts have been discovered so far and it is known that scores of thousands remain to be recorded. However, approximately 98 percent of these are graffiti, informal inscriptions the majority of which consist only of names. The amount of linguistic evidence they can provide is therefore relatively meager and our knowledge of the structure of these dialects is extremely fragmentary – a situation exacerbated by the nature of the writing systems used (see §2). Despite this, a surprising amount of information is to be found in these inscriptions, and more is being identified every year.

Ancient North Arabian was used by the settled peoples and nomads of central and north Arabia and by the nomads in what is now southern Syria and eastern and southern Jordan. It is attested in the following dialects (see Macdonald 2000:29–30, 32–36, 40–46): (i) Oasis North Arabian (ONA), consisting of Taymanitic, Dadanitic, Dumaitic, and Dispersed Oasis North Arabian; (ii) Safaitic; (iii) Hismaic; (iv) Thamudic B, C, D, and "Southern Thamudic"; and, possibly, (v) Hasaitic.
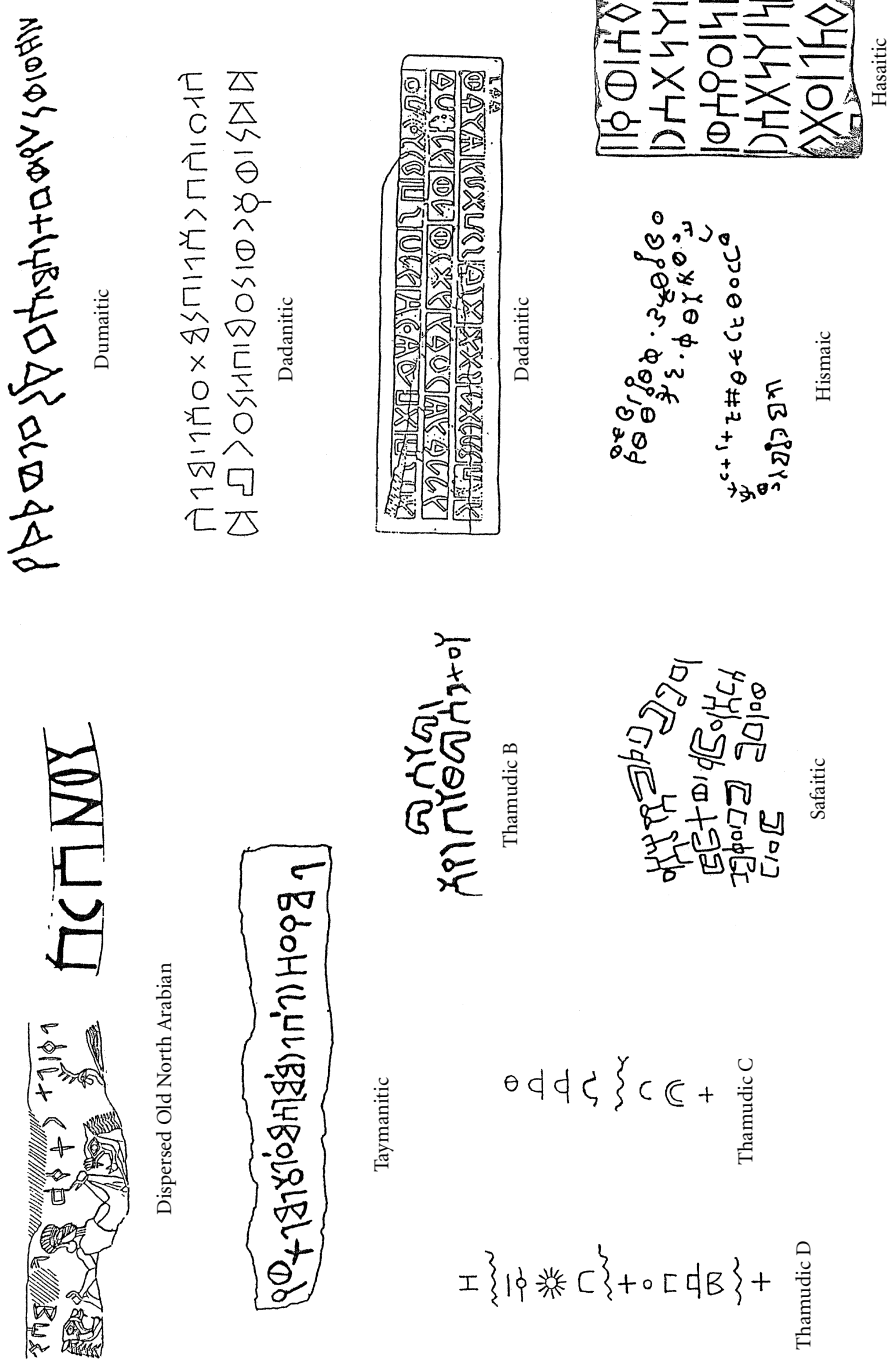
1.1.2.1   Oasis North Arabian

Of these dialects, the earliest attested are those belonging to the group known as *Oasis North Arabian.* From at least the middle of the first millennium BC, local dialects of Ancient North Arabian were spoken in the major oases of northwest Arabia: Taymāʾ, Dadan (modern al-ʿUlā; for the spelling Dadan, see Sima 2000 and Macdonald 2000, n. 1) and probably Dūmā (modern al-Ğawf); see Figure 16.1. The populations of these settlements were heavily involved in the trade in frankincense and other aromatics which were brought from South Arabia to Egypt, the Mediterranean coast, Syria, and Mesopotamia where there seems already to have been a considerable Arab presence. It is therefore not surprising that brief texts in scripts similar to those used in these oases have been found outside Arabia, principally in Mesopotamia. In the past they have been known by such misnomers as "Chaldaean" and "Old Arabic," but I have recently suggested that a better term would be *Dispersed Oasis North Arabian* (Macdonald 2000:33), a label which I hope emphasizes the fact that they are a heterogeneous collection of texts which have in common only the fact that they are written in varieties of the Oasis North Arabian alphabet and that they were found outside Arabia.

Dumaitic is so far represented by only three brief texts found near Sakākā in northern Saudi Arabia (Winnett and Reed 1970:73, 80–81 [WTI 21–23], 207, 216, where they are called "Jawfian"). They are in a distinctive variety of the Oasis North Arabian script (see Fig. 16.3) which differs in certain important respects from Taymanitic and Dadanitic. At present they are undatable, but they may be from the middle of the first millennium BC.

Taymanitic refers to the dialect and script used in the oasis of Taymāʾ and its surroundings, probably in the sixth and fifth centuries BC. It is represented by short inscriptions with very distinctive linguistic and orthographic features. The number of known Taymanitic texts has recently been doubled (from *c.* 200 to *c.* 400) by Kh. M. Eskoubi's edition of new texts, including two which mention *nbnd mlk bbl* "Nabonidus king of Babylon," who spent ten years of his reign 552–543 BC, in Taymāʾ (Eskoubi 1999: nos. 169 and 177; Müller and Said 2001).

Dadanitic is a new term which covers the inscriptions in the local language and script of the oasis of Dadan. These were formerly divided into "Dedanite" and "Lihyanite," following

Dumaitic

Dadanitic

Dadanitic

Hasaitic

Hismaic

Dispersed Old North Arabian

Thamudic B

Safaitic

Taymanitic

Thamudic C

Thamudic D

Figure 16.2 Examples of the Ancient North Arabian scripts

the nomenclature of successive kingdoms in the oasis, but, needless to say, linguistic and paleographical developments did not necessarily parallel political changes, and this particular subdivision has proved misleading. Dadanitic is the only Ancient North Arabian dialect and script in which large numbers of monumental inscriptions were written. These are concentrated in and around the oasis, with only occasional examples found elsewhere. In addition, there are hundreds of Dadanitic graffiti in and around the settlement. There is no firm dating evidence for the inscriptions of Dadan, though dates ranging from the sixth century BC through the first century AD have been proposed. Dadan was also the site of a South Arabian (Minaean) trading station and there are numerous monumental inscriptions and graffiti in Maḏẖābic, the South Arabian language used by the Minaeans (see Ch. 15). The prosperity of Dadan may have been eclipsed in the first century AD by the neighboring oasis of Ḥegrā (modern Madāʾin Ṣāliḥ), some twenty kilometers to the north, which became an important city of the Nabataean kingdom.

1.1.2.2   Safaitic

This is the language of most of the graffiti found in the deserts of black, broken-up lava in southern Syria, northeastern Jordan, and northern Saudi Arabia. The vast majority were written by the nomads who lived in this area between roughly the first century BC and the fourth century AD. So far, some twenty thousand Safaitic inscriptions have been recorded, and there are many times this number still awaiting study, as can be seen by any visitor to these desert areas.

1.1.2.3   Hismaic

Hismaic was the language of the nomads of the Ḥismā sand-desert of southern Jordan and northwest Saudi Arabia, and some of the inhabitants of central and northern Jordan. They were contemporaries and close neighbors of the Nabataeans, whose capital, Petra, was not far away from the northern end of the Ḥismā in Wādī Ramm, southern Jordan. Thus, they probably date to the first centuries BC/AD and possibly a little later. In the past, Hismaic has been called "Thamudic E" (see below), and misleadingly "Tabuki Thamudic" and "South Safaitic." The last-mentioned is a complete misnomer since the dialect and script are quite distinct from those of Safaitic.

1.1.2.4   Thamudic

Thamudic is not the name of a dialect or script but of a sort of "pending" category into which are placed all texts which appear to be Ancient North Arabian but which are not Oasis North Arabian, Safaitic, or Hismaic. Both Taymanitic (formerly "Thamudic A") and Hismaic (formerly "Thamudic E") were originally included in this category until the advent of properly recorded texts and intensive studies made it possible to define them as distinct dialects with their own scripts (see Macdonald and King 1999). The rubrics "B," "C," "D," and "Southern Thamudic" represent relatively crude subdivisions of those texts still in this "pending" category. There is no way of dating most of these inscriptions, though one Thamudic B inscription (Ph 279 aw) appears to mention a "king of Babylon" and so presumably dates to a time before the fall of the Babylonian Empire in 539 BC. By contrast, a Thamudic D inscription (JSTham 1) at Madāʾin Ṣāliḥ (ancient Ḥegrā) gives a summary of an adjacent Nabataean tomb inscription which is dated to AD 267. The vast majority of the Southern Thamudic texts remains unpublished, but for an excellent summary presentation see Ryckmans 1956.

1.1.2.5   Hasaitic

This term refers to the language of a number of inscriptions, almost all gravestones, most of which have been found in northeastern Arabia. They consist almost entirely of genealogies

and exhibit very few linguistic features. The language is regarded (provisionally) as Ancient North Arabian because of certain characteristic expressions such as _d'l_ "of the lineage of" (see §3.1.1). They are written in the Sabaic (Ancient South Arabian) script, with certain minor adaptations.

1.2 Sources of Ancient North Arabian

A large number of the Safaitic, and the vast majority of the Thamudic, inscriptions published so far, were recorded in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and are known only from hand copies, often by copyists who could not read the script. Many of these copies are inaccurate, and, in the case of the texts classed as Thamudic, this has proved a major obstacle to their successful interpretation. It is only since large numbers of texts have been photographed that the study of Taymanitic, Safaitic, and Hismaic has been placed on a secure footing.

The dialects of Ancient North Arabian on which we have most information are Dadanitic and Safaitic. The discussion below will therefore concentrate mainly on these, with details from the others where they are available.

The principal resource in the interpretation of the Ancient North Arabian inscriptions has always been the grammar and vocabulary of Classical Arabic and this has been both a blessing and a curse. On the credit side, Classical Arabic has provided a model against which the linguistic phenomena attested in Ancient North Arabian can be evaluated, though there is always a temptation to interpret the, often enigmatic, data in such a way as to make them fit this model, thus obscuring real differences (as is the case in Caskel 1954). Moreover, it should never be forgotten that, unlike most languages, Classical Arabic represents a conscious choice and amalgam of dialects and, to a greater or lesser extent, a systematization of grammatical structures by Arab scholars of the eighth and ninth centuries AD.

Similarly, it should be remembered that the concept of a descriptive dictionary of a living language is no older than the nineteenth century. Prior to that, the purpose of a dictionary was prescriptive, fixing the language in what was considered to be its most "correct" form. Thus, even the immensely rich vocabulary of Classical Arabic represents a choice by the grammarians and lexicographers of what was available to them, and much that might have helped in the reconstruction of Ancient North Arabian was no doubt excluded. Arabic dictionaries can anyway be a trap to the unwary, since they contain meanings which have developed over a wide geographical area and many centuries of intense literary activity, but with little or no indication of when and where a particular sense is first attested. Moreover, as in all languages, words can have meanings which are restricted to certain contexts, and, unless these are quoted (as they are in the great Arabic-Arabic lexica, but not in shorter European compendia), a completely false interpretation can be given. The widespread misapprehension that Ancient North Arabian texts can be read simply by using an Arabic dictionary has led many astray and has resulted in a far greater degree of uncertainty in the interpretation of Ancient North Arabian than in most other ancient languages.

One further point should be noted. In the past, some discussions of Ancient North Arabian grammar have sought to identify linguistic features in the personal names found in Ancient North Arabian inscriptions and have then treated these as if they represented the language of the texts (e.g., Littmann 1943:xii–xxiv; Caskel 1954:68–71; and even sporadically in Müller 1982). Not surprisingly, this has led to confusion, with marked differences appearing between the apparent linguistic features of the names and those of the language used by their bearers. It is important to remember that a name does not "mean" anything except the person, group, place, and so forth to which it refers. It is usually only in exceptional

circumstances that parents invent one (e.g., the seventeenth-century English Puritan called "Praise-God Barebones"). Names often continue in use over a very long period and can travel extensively, so the vast majority of names available to parents in any particular society at any particular time have been inherited, often from a linguistic environment very different from their own. The etymology of a name, while interesting in itself, is therefore linguistically irrelevant to the text in which it appears.

In this chapter, the following conventions will be used: /d/ = the etymological phoneme; [d] = the sound; *d* = the letter in a particular script. Letters between { } are doubtful readings. Many Ancient North Arabian texts have been reread or reinterpreted since their original publication, so in some cases the readings and interpretations quoted here will differ from those in the original editions. All examples quoted have been checked on photographs whenever these are available.

2.   WRITING SYSTEMS

It is generally held that the Semitic consonantal alphabet was invented in the first half of the second millennium BC (see Ch. 12, §2.2). Later in the same millennium, two separate traditions developed out of the proto-alphabet, each with its own letter-forms, letter-order and (possibly) letter-names. One was the Phoenico-Aramaic (or Northwest Semitic), from which are ultimately derived almost all traditional alphabetic scripts in use today. The other was the Arabian (or South Semitic) alphabetic tradition, which was used almost exclusively in Arabia in the pre-Islamic period and which was the basis of the Ethiopic syllabary (see Ch. 14, §2), the only form in which it survives today (Macdonald 2000:32).

The Arabian alphabetic tradition is subdivided into two families: (i) the Ancient South Arabian, of which Sabaic is the most famous and from which the Ethiopic syllabary was developed; and (ii) the Ancient North Arabian. While the Ancient North Arabian scripts are clearly related to each other and to the Ancient South Arabian, the exact relationship has not yet been established. One problem is the lack of securely dated texts from both North and South Arabia; a second has already been touched on – the fact that so many Ancient North Arabian inscriptions are known only from unreliable hand copies. However, the major obstacle to a paleographical analysis of the Ancient North Arabian inscriptions is the fact that the vast majority of them are informal texts written by innumerable individuals who learned to write, not in schools, but casually from a companion, and whose letter-forms were not therefore part of a slowly evolving tradition, but represent a multiplicity of individual choices (Macdonald 1993:382–388; 2004a).

An indication of this is provided by the four Safaitic abecedaries which have been discovered so far. Each is in a different letter-order and none of them bears any relation to the inherited orders of the Northwest and South Semitic alphabets. The letters have simply been arranged according to the writers' differing perceptions of similarity in their shapes (see Macdonald 1993:386 and Macdonald *et al.* 1996:439–443). By contrast, the only known Dadanitic abecedary is in the South Semitic letter-order, while the unique Hismaic example more or less follows the Northwest Semitic order, but with significant differences which suggest that it was unfamiliar to the writer (Macdonald 1986:105–112).

The alphabets of Dadanitic, Hismaic, and Safaitic are each made up of twenty-eight letters. This is probably also true of Thamudic B, C, and D and Hasaitic, though some signs have yet to be identified in these scripts. Taymanitic seems to have had a slightly different phonemic repertoire from the other Ancient North Arabian dialects (see §3.1.2), and only twenty-six or twenty-seven letters have been identified with certainty.

Figure 16.3 shows the most common letter-forms in the different Ancient North Arabian scripts. With the exception of the sign for *ġ* and the leftmost sign for *f*, the forms in the Hasaitic row are those of the South Arabian alphabet. It will be noted that the forms of some letters are remarkably stable throughout all the scripts: for example, *ʾ*, *ʿ* *t*, *w*, and *y*. On the other hand, in some cases the same, or very similar, shapes are used in different alphabets to represent quite different phonemes. Thus, the sign used for *g* in Hismaic is identical to that for *ṯ* in Thamudic B, Safaitic, and South Arabian/Hasaitic; while the sign for *ḏ* in South Arabian (and Hasaitic) is used for *ḍ* in Thamudic B, C, and D and in Safaitic, but for *ṯ* in Hismaic. The reasons for this are not yet understood.

In the scripts used by the inhabitants of the great oases, namely, Dumaitic, Taymanitic, and Dadanitic, the direction of writing is almost always right-to-left. In Taymanitic, texts of more than one line were often, but by no means always, written boustrophedon (i.e., continuously, with the lines running in alternate directions). However, the practice of breaking at the end of the line and placing the beginning of the next line under that of the one before is also quite common in Taymanitic and is the norm in Dadanitic. Texts were written without spaces between the words, but word-dividers are the norm in Dadanitic monumental texts and are commonly, though not consistently, used in Dadanitic graffiti and in Taymanitic and Dumaitic. Hasaitic is written either in separate lines or boustrophedon and, since it uses the South Arabian script, employs word-dividers.

By contrast, the scripts used primarily by nomads (Thamudic B, Hismaic, and Safaitic) can be written in any direction (left to right, right to left, downwards, upwards, in a circle or coil, etc.). They meander across the uneven surfaces of the rocks on which they are carved, over the edge onto an adjacent face and occasionally onto an adjacent rock. They are written continuously without word-dividers (Macdonald 2004c). This absence of word-dividers applies equally to Thamudic C and D, which were probably also written by nomads, though these show a marked preference for writing in vertical columns.

In common with all Semitic alphabets, the letters of the North Arabian scripts represent consonants only. However, in contrast to most of the Northwest Semitic scripts, none of the South Semitic alphabets, with the exception of Dadanitic, developed *matres lectionis*, letters which, in addition to their consonantal values, can in certain contexts represent a long vowel. It has been suggested that in Safaitic the letters *ʾ* *w*, and *y* were occasionally used to represent long vowels (Winnett and Harding 1978:12; Robin 2001:553), but this is incorrect and the handful of examples quoted can all be more convincingly explained in other ways.

However, in Dadanitic, final /a:/ was usually represented by -*h* (as in Hebrew) and final /u:/ by -*w*, though the evidence for other *matres lectionis* is less convincing (Drewes 1985). In contrast to the Northwest Semitic scripts, the letter *ʾalif* does not seem to have been used to mark a vowel in Ancient North Arabian.

The diphthong /ai/ is represented in final position in Dadanitic (*pace* Drewes 1985:170–171), though the representation of final /au/ is much less certain. However, diphthongs (if they existed) are rarely if ever represented in the other Ancient North Arabian scripts. Thus, in Safaitic the word for "death" appears as *mt* (cf. Arabic *mawt*), that for "raiding party" as *gs²* (cf. Arabic *ġayš*), and so forth. Littmann claimed that Greek transliterations of names apparently similar to those found in the Safaitic inscriptions showed that the diphthongs /ai/ and /au/ had been monophthongized to [e:] and [o:] respectively (1943:xiii). However, by the Roman period, there were no appropriate diphthongs left in Koine Greek with which to transliterate any which may have existed in Safaitic, so the question must remain open.

As in all Semitic alphabets, doubled consonants are written singly in the Ancient North Arabian scripts (e.g. *ʾumm* "mother" appears as *ʾm*). However, it has been suggested

Figure 16.3 *Letter-forms in the Ancient North Arabian scripts*

N.B. There are no chronological implications in the order in which the scripts are arranged. The numbers above the letter-forms in the "Dispersed ONA" row refer to the photographs of the inscriptions in which they occur, published in Sass 1991.

that doubled /l/ and /n/ are occasionally expressed in writing. This is based mainly on the spelling *kll* "all" (cf. Classical Arabic *kull*) which is found in Dadanitic, Hismaic, and Safaitic (Littmann 1943:xiii). But it is perfectly possible that the word was pronounced with a short vowel between the two *l*'s (e.g., *kulil). The other supposed examples of this feature are also capable of alternative explanations (see §4.2.1) and at present the hypothesis must be regarded as not proven.

3. PHONOLOGY

3.1 Consonants

Given the nature of the sources, our knowledge of the phonology of the dialects of Ancient North Arabian is necessarily fragmentary. Most dialects appear to have had a consonantal phonemic repertoire of roughly twenty-eight sounds. Unless there is evidence to the contrary, these are usually assumed to have been similar, though not always identical, to their equivalents in Classical Arabic. They are presented in Table 16.1 using the Roman letters with which Ancient North Arabian texts are conventionally transliterated, rather than phonetic symbols, to emphasize that this is a purely hypothetical schema based partly on the traditional pronunciation of the cognate phonemes in Classical Arabic, as described by the early Arab grammarians (eighth century AD), and partly on reconstructions (see below).

The phonemes /b, /d/, /<u>d</u>/, /h/, /k/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /t/, /ṭ/, /w/, /y/, /z/ were probably pronounced more or less like their equivalents in Classical Arabic. There is no way of telling whether certain phonemes had aspirated allophones (the so-called "bghadhkphath"), as, for example, in Masoretic Hebrew and Aramaic of the Christian era. The phoneme shown here as /f/, could have been pronounced [p] in some or all positions (as in Ugaritic, Hebrew, Aramaic, Akkadian, etc.) or as [f] throughout, as in Arabic. It is worth noting that in Safaitic (as also in early Arabic) the letter *f* is used to transliterate both Greek φ and π (e.g., *flfṣ*

Table 16.1 The consonantal phonemes of Ancient North Arabian

Manner of articulation	Place of articulation									
	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Inter-dental	Dental/ Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyn-geal	Glottal
Stop										
Voiceless				t			k	q		ʾ
Emphatic				ṭ						
Voiced	b			d			g (?)			
Fricative										
Voiceless		f	t	s^3	s^1	y		<u>h</u>	ḥ	h
Emphatic			ẓ	ṣ						
Voiced	w		<u>d</u>	z			ġ		ʿ	
Emphatic			ḍ							
Trill				r						
Lateral cont.										
Voiceless				s^2						
Voiced				l						
Nasal	m			n						

for Φίλιππος), the well-known confusion of [b] and [p] in Arabic being a much later phenomenon.

3.1.1   Stops

In Hismaic, there is a small amount of evidence for the occasional confusion of /d/ and /ḏ/, probably under the influence of the Aramaic used by the neighboring Nabataeans: for example, *d-s²ry* for the divine name *ḏ-s²ry*; *dkrt* for *ḏkrt*; and *d ʾl* "he of the lineage of" for *ḏ ʾl* (Macdonald 2004d). However, there is no evidence for the supposed alternation of /t/ and /ṭ/ in this dialect. On both these, see King 1990:69–70. However, in Dadanitic the numerial "three" is found as *ṯlṯt*, *ṯlt*, and *tlt* (see §4.4.1 and Table 16.2) which might suggest a weakening of the distinction between these two sounds in this dialect, though it may equally have been confined to the phonetic conditions of this particular word.

It is impossible to tell whether /g/ was pronounced [g], as in some Arabic dialects, or [ǰ] as in Classical Arabic, or even [ž] as in some dialects of Syria and Southern Iraq. It is also impossible to determine whether /k/ had an allophone [č] in certain positions, as in many dialects in Syria, Iraq, Arabia and the Gulf Coast.

The phonemes /ḥ/ and /ġ/ were probably realised as [x] and [γ] respectively as in Arabic. The consonant transcribed /q/ in Table 16.1 may have been a uvular stop as in Classical Arabic, or, alternatively, an "emphatic" correlate of /k/ (i.e., /kʾ/), as in Hebrew and Aramaic. Whatever its exact pronunciation it appears generally to have remained distinct since only one instance has so far been identified in which it is confused with another phoneme. This is in an unpublished Safaitic text in which the author spells the word *qyẓ* "he spent the dry season" as *ʾyḍ* in an unequivocal context. This is the earliest attestation of a pronunciation in which the etymological phonemes /q/ and /ẓ/ had fallen under / ʾ/ and /ḍ/ respectively, a feature of modern urban Arabic in such cities as Damascus, Jerusalem, and Cairo.

In the orthography of the Ancient North Arabian scripts, the letter ʾ represents a phonemic consonant in all contexts and never the equivalent of Classical Arabic *hamzat al-waṣl*, that is, a prosthetic glottal stop, the sole function of which is to carry an initial vowel and which disappears when the latter is assimilated to a preceding vowel. Thus *bn* ("son," in all positions) as against Classical Arabic *(ʾ)ibn*. This contrasts with Old Arabic personal names found in Nabataean orthography (for instance in the Nabataean inscriptions of Sinai), where ʾis regularly written in *ʾbn* (e.g., the name *ʾbn-ʾl-qyny*). For a discussion of this phenomenon see Macdonald, forthcoming. There are a few personal names in Safaitic texts written with two successive ʾs, e.g., *ʾʾs¹d* (cf. Classical Arabic *āsud* < *ʾaʾsud*; see Littmann 1943:xii–xiii), but as yet no examples in words have been identified, so we do not know whether this was a living feature of the language or merely a fossil inherited in particular names.

Very occasionally, ʾ is found unexpectedly in medial position and it has been suggested that this may represent a medial /aː/ (Winnett and Harding 1978:12). However, this is highly unlikely and the few examples cited are all capable of other explanations.

The ending which in Arabic appears as *-ah* in pause but *-at* before a vowel (i.e., *tāʾ marbūṭah*), is always written as *-t* in Ancient North Arabian, implying that it was pronounced **-at* in all contexts.

3.1.2   Fricatives

The voiceless nonemphatic sibilants in Ancient North Arabian, Ancient South Arabian, Old Arabic, and Classical Arabic up to the ninth century AD, present a complex problem (see

Beeston 1962). Proto-Semitic had a voiceless dental fricative */s/, a voiceless palato-alveolar fricative */š/, and a third sibilant, conventionally written */ś/, the exact nature of which is uncertain but which may have been a lateral dental fricative [ɬ]. While the Ancient (and Modern) South Arabian languages (in common with Hebrew and early Aramaic) retained all three, in Arabic and, with one possible exception, the Ancient North Arabian dialects they were reduced to two:

(1)   The voiceless nonemphatic sibilants in Ancient North Arabian

Proto-Semitic	Ancient North Arabian (except Taymanitic)	Proto-Semitic	Taymanitic
*/š/ ⎫		*/š/ $\longrightarrow$	[š] (written s^1)
⎬ $\longrightarrow$ [š] (written s^1)			
*/s/ ⎭		*/s/ $\longrightarrow$	[s] (written s^3)
*/ś/ $\longrightarrow$ [ɬ] ? (written s^2)		*/ś/ $\longrightarrow$	[ɬ] ? (written s^2)

We know from the phonetic descriptions by the early Arab grammarian Sibawaihi (died *c.* AD 796) that in early Classical Arabic, س the reflex of Proto-Semitic */s/ + */š/, was pronounced something approaching [š], and that ش the reflex of Proto-Semitic */ś/, was pronounced something approaching [ɬ]. It was only subsequently that the pronunciation of س shifted to the [s] (*sīn*), and that of ش to the [š] (*šīn*) of later Arabic. This can be tabulated as follows:

(2)   The voiceless nonemphatic sibilants in Arabic

Proto-Semitic	Arabic before the 9th century AD	Arabic after the 9th century AD
*/š/ ⎫		
⎬	$\longrightarrow$ [š] (written س)	$\longrightarrow$ [s] (written س)
*/s/ ⎭		
*/ś/	$\longrightarrow$ [ɬ] (written ش)	$\longrightarrow$ [š] (written ش)

This means that Ancient North Arabian /s^1/ (which is cognate with later Arabic س *sīn*) was actually pronounced like something approaching [š], while Ancient North Arabian /s^2/ (which is cognate with later Arabic ش *šīn*) was probably pronounced something like Welsh -*ll*- [ɬ]. These findings are confirmed by the treatments of loans from Aramaic. Thus, for example, the Aramaic name of the great Syrian sky-god, Baʿal-Šamīn "lord of heaven," was borrowed into Dadanitic and Safaitic as *bʿls¹mn*, that is, with Aramaic /š/ represented by Ancient North Arabian *s¹*, not *s²*.

It follows from this that Ancient North Arabian (and Arabic before the ninth century AD) had no [s]. However, there is one possible exception. Taymanitic appears to have had a letter, graphically related to South Arabian *s³* (= [s]), which seems to represent [s] in transliterations of the name of the Egyptian god Osiris occurring in two personal names. Rather different forms of what is probably the same letter have been identified in two other Taymanitic texts (see Müller and Said 2001:114–116) and there is one further example on a seal of Babylonian design, but in a context which raises considerable difficulties. Since, at present, only a little over four hundred Taymanitic inscriptions are known, and few of them are more than twenty letters long, no firm conclusions can be drawn from this until more evidence appears. However, it seems unlikely that the Taymanitic alphabet would have employed a letter to represent a sound which did not exist in the Taymanitic dialect, and

so there is certainly a possibility that, at some stage in its history, Taymanitic used all three voiceless nonemphatic sibilants (see Macdonald 1991).

In Taymanitic, Thamudic D, and possibly Thamudic C, it seems that /d̠/ had probably merged with /z/ (as in Hebrew), since the *z* sign is used for both phonemes.

3.1.3   Emphatics

The etymological phonemes /ṣ/, /ṭ/, /ḍ/, and /ẓ/ are emphatics. In most Semitic languages /ṣ/ is the emphatic correlate of [s]. However, since there was no [s] in Safaitic and Hismaic, *ṣ* is often used in these dialects to transliterate Greek *sigma* (e.g., *qṣr* for καῖσαρ ["Caesar"]; *flfṣ* for Φίλιππος ["Philip"]; etc.) and in the Hismaic abecedary *ṣ* is put in the position of Phoenico-Aramaic *samek* (= [s]). It is not certain whether this implies a weakening of the "emphatic" quality or whether it was simply felt to be the nearest equivalent to the foreign sound. The fact that in other transliterations the letter *s¹* (approximately [š]) was used for Latin *s* (e.g., *tts¹* for *Titus*) and Greek *sigma* (e.g., *grgs¹* for Γεωργός [George]), points perhaps to the latter (see Macdonald 1992b).

The phoneme /ṭ/ was almost certainly the emphatic correlate of /t/, and /ḍ/ was, at least in origin, that of /d/. However, the Akkadian transliteration of the Ancient North Arabian divine name *rḍw* as *Ruldaiu* points to a strongly lateralized pronunciation of /ḍ/, at least in North Arabia in the seventh century BC. It has also been suggested that the god Ὀροτάλτ, who Herodotus says was worshiped by the Arabs in eastern Egypt in the fifth century BC, represents a garbled transliteration of a similar pronunciation of the divine name *rḍw*, though this is more speculative. On the other hand, in the Roman period, Greek transcriptions of names which include /ḍ/ always represented it by *sigma* (e.g., Σαιφηνος for *h-ḍfy,* "the Ḍayfite", Macdonald 1993:306). In Nabataean, native Aramaic words show the cognate of North Arabian /ḍ/ as /ʿ/ ([ʕ]) (e.g., Nabataean *ʾrʿ* against Safaitic *ʾrḍ* "earth, land"), as is normal from Imperial Aramaic onwards. However, in loanwords and transcriptions of names which are linguistically North Arabian, /ḍ/ is consistently represented by *ṣ* (e.g., Nabataean *ṣryḥʾ* from Arabic *ḍarīḥ* "trench, cist," or the name *rṣwt* as against Safaitic *rḍwt*). Kofler quotes examples of the confusion of /ḍ/ and /ṣ/ in early Arabic dialects and suggests that /ḍ/ may have been pronounced more as a fricative than a stop (1940–1942:95–97). There is no example in Safaitic and Hismaic of a confusion of /ḍ/ and /ṣ/, so the two sounds seem to have remained distinct in these dialects. However, if /ḍ/ was pronounced as the emphatic correlate of /d̠/ (rather than of /d/), i.e., as an emphatic interdental fricative, as it is in all modern Bedouin dialects, it would have shared its place of articulation, emphatization, and fricative release with /ṣ/, and the two sounds would have been sufficiently similar for /ḍ/ to be transcribed by /ṣ/ in scripts such as Nabataean Aramaic which had no letter for /ḍ/ (I owe this interesting observation to Professor Clive Holes).

The conventional symbol *ẓ* (originally taken over from the Cairene pronunciation of Classical and Modern Standard Arabic) is unfortunate since the phoneme it is intended to represent was probably the emphatic correlate of an interdental (/t̠/, or perhaps /d̠/), and not a dental sibilant. The former would be more likely, at least in Hismaic and Safaitic, if, as suggested above, /ḍ/ was pronounced as the emphatic correlate of /d̠/. In Dadanitic, Hismaic, and Safaitic, /ẓ/ is clearly distinguished from other phonemes except in the one example of *ʾyḍ* for *qyẓ* mentioned above. It has been suggested that, in Dadanitic, /ẓ/ might have fallen under /ṭ/ (as in Aramaic), but no conclusive evidence has yet been presented for this shift and the two phonemes appear to be represented by distinct letter-forms. A sign for *ẓ* has not yet been identified in Dumaitic, Taymanitic, Thamudic B, C, and D, or in Hasaitic, but since it is a relatively rare phoneme, it is, at present, impossible to determine whether this is significant.

3.1.4 The sounds /w/ and /y/

In Safaitic, there is considerable alternation of /w/ and /y/, which when represented in the Ancient North Arabian scripts are always consonants, not vowels (Robin 2001: 553 is incorrect on this point). This variation is found in all positions, e.g., *wrḫ*/*yrḫ* "month"; *ts²wq*/*ts²yq* (unpublished) "he longed for"; *s²ty*/*s²tw* (CSNS 324) "to winter." In each case, the first item in these pairs is the common form and the second a much less frequent variant. Given the difficulty of dating most of the texts, it is impossible to say at present whether these variations represent chronological developments or synchronic dialectal differences.

However, forms with *-w* and *-y* are almost equally common in the divine name *rḍw*/*rḍy* in Safaitic inscriptions. This deity is also found in Dumaitic and Thamudic B texts, but there only as *rḍw*. The Dumaitic, and at least some of the Thamudic B inscriptions, are considerably earlier than the Safaitic, and this might seem to suggest that the form *rḍw* is the older and that the advent of *rḍy* marks a change of pronunciation. However, the Akkadian transliteration *Ruldaiu*, which is securely dated to the early seventh century BC, implies a pronunciation *ruḍayu (i.e., *rḍy*), and it therefore seems more likely that the two spellings represent dialectal (?) differences. It is not yet possible to tell whether the same is true of the other cases of *w*/*y* variation.

In a number of other cases, Safaitic and Hismaic have /-y/ where Classical Arabic has /-a:/ or /-a:ʔ/, thus Safaitic *s¹my* "sky, clouds," as against Arabic *samāʔ*; or Safaitic and Hismaic *bny* "he built" and *byt* "he spent the night," as against Arabic *banā* and *bāta*. In some of these cases, there is evidence that Dumaitic and Thamudic B agreed with Arabic. Thus, the divine name *ʿtr-s¹m*, which occurs in Dumaitic and Thamudic B texts and in which *s¹m* is the word for "heaven," implies a pronunciation *s¹amā (in which the /-a:/ would not appear in the consonantal script), as opposed to Safaitic *s¹my* (*s¹umiyy ?), see Macdonald *et al.* 1996:479–480.

Conversely, there are some words in which final /-a:/ is written with a *-y* in Arabic, but which in Ancient North Arabian did not end in consonantal /y/. These are most notably the prepositions which in Safaitic, Hismaic, and Thamudic B appear as *ʔl* (cf. Arabic *ʔilā*) "towards, for," and *ʿl* (cf. Arabic *ʿalā*) "on, over, against." In Dadanitic, both *ʿl* and *ʿly* are found, though the former is more common. This implies that the final sound may have been a diphthong *-ay* (/-ai/), which would have been left unwritten in all the Ancient North Arabian scripts, except Dadanitic (see §2), where it would appear as *-y* (*pace* Drewes 1985, who believes diphthongs had been monophthongized in Dadanitic and that final *-y* represented [e:]). The forms without *-y* in Dadanitic may then represent either an uncertainty about writing diphthongs or a pronunciation with a final short vowel, as in some modern Arabic dialects (i.e., *ai > *ā (as in Classical Arabic) > *a).

3.1.5 Nasal assimilation

As in Hebrew and Aramaic, but in contrast to Arabic, vowelless /n/ is frequently assimilated in most Ancient North Arabian dialects. This is particularly common in Safaitic and Hismaic where, for example, *mn* (cf. Arabic *min*) "from" and *mn* (cf. Arabic *man*) "whoever" are sporadically reduced to *m* (though curiously not in *mn ngd* "from high ground," CSNS 381). Thus, the plural of *nfs¹t* ("funerary monument") sometimes appears as *ʔfs¹* (< *ʔanfus¹), and the verb *intaẓar ("to wait for") always appears as *tẓr* (= *ittaẓar ?). Similarly, in Taymanitic, Thamudic B, Hismaic, and Safaitic (though rarely in Dadanitic), *bnt* ("daughter") is occasionally spelled *bt*. However, this feature has not yet been identified in Hasaitic, where we find *bnt* (*passim*) and *ʔnṯt,* "wife" (CIH 984a) compare Dadanitic and Thamudic B *ʔṯt*, though

the corpus of Hasaitic texts is as yet so small that no firm conclusions can be drawn from this.

Assimilation of vowelless /n/ would also account for a feature characteristic of Taymanitic, that is the reduction of *bn* to *b* ("son of") in genealogies, which contrasts with *bn* (= *banī, lit. "the sons of") where the /n/ is followed by a vowel (Macdonald 1992a:31).

3.2 Vowels

Little of substance can be said about the vowels of Ancient North Arabian. The vowel inventory is assumed to have consisted of both short and long /a/, /i/, and /u/, but there is no evidence for or against this, except for final /a:/ and /u:/ in Dadanitic (see §2). Attempts to show that the diphthongs /au/ and /ai/ had been monophthongized to /o:/ and /e:/ respectively (as in many spoken Arabic dialects) are not convincing, though they cannot entirely be refuted either (see, again, §2).

4. MORPHOLOGY

Since Safaitic and Dadanitic are by far the best attested of the Ancient North Arabian dialects, the morphological descriptions below will concentrate on them, with information from the others when it is available.

It should be noted that several unusual forms have been attributed to Dadanitic on the basis of their apparent occurrence in JSLih 71 (= CLL 91). However, it is now recognized that, with the exception of the article *hn-* in the tribal name, the language of this text is Old Arabic, not Dadanitic. See Beeston *et al.* 1973:69–70 and Macdonald 2000:52–53 and forthcoming.

As in all Semitic languages, the morphology of the Ancient North Arabian dialects is based on the triliteral root, found in its simplest form in the third singular masculine of the suffix-conjugation (often known as the "perfect").

The fact that, in most dialects of Ancient North Arabian, final *-y* is written in words such as *bny* "he built," *s¹my* "sky, clouds" and the gentilic ending (e.g., Safaitic *h-nbṭy* "the Nabataean" which in Arabic would be *al-nabaṭī*) suggests the presence of final short vowels, since without them the /-y/ would have become a long vowel [i:] or a diphthong [ai], and would not then have been represented in the orthography of any of the scripts, except in the case of the diphthong, that of Dadanitic. By contrast, the tiny amount of evidence available suggests that final short vowels may not have been present in the forms of Old Arabic represented in the documents so far identified (see Macdonald, forthcoming).

4.1 Nominal morphology

Nouns, adjectives, and pronouns will be discussed in this section. The purely consonantal Ancient North Arabian scripts must often conceal distinctions of number and possibly of case which would have been marked by changes in vowels. As in Arabic, the endings of nouns and adjectives can vary according to whether they stand alone ("in pause," "pausal forms") or are annexed to another noun or to an enclitic pronoun ("in construct"), see §5.1.3 below and Ch. 6, §3.3.2.1.

4.1.1 Gender

The normal feminine singular ending in all Ancient North Arabian dialects is *-t* (even in pause; see §3.1.1): for example, *mr'ṭ* "woman," Dadanitic (JSLih 64/2); *frs¹t* "mare,"

Thamudic B (e.g., HU 494); *bkrt* "young she-camel," Safaitic (e.g., WH 344). Participles (see §4.2.6) are also marked for gender, and the feminine singular takes the *-t* ending of the nominals, as in *rġmt* (*raġīmat) "humbled" (fem.), Safaitic (NST 2).

The word *ym "day" (attested only in the dual *ymn* and the plural *ʾym*) appears to have been treated as feminine in Dadanitic and Safaitic, as it is in Jibbālī and Mehrī, though it is masculine in most other Semitic languages (see §4.4.1).

4.1.2 Number

Nominals in Ancient North Arabian have three numbers, singular (unmarked), dual and plural. On "external" (§4.1.2.2) and "internal" (§4.1.2.3) plurals in Semitic, see Chapter 6, §3.3.2.4.

4.1.2.1 Dual

Clear evidence of the dual is found only in Dadanitic, Thamudic B, and Safaitic.

"In pause" (see §4.1), the normal ending of the dual is *-n* (cf. Classical Arabic *-āni*): for example, Dadanitic *h-mṯbr-n* "the two tomb-chambers" (JSLih 45/3); Thamudic B, *h-gml-n* "the two camels" (HU 296/2); Safaitic, *h-bkrt-n* "the two young she-camels" (e.g., WH 402, beside a drawing of them), *ym-n* "two days" (CSNS 796 and see p. iii).

A curious, and as yet unexplained, form of the dual in pause is found in one Safaitic text (LP 305), where *ḍll-y* "lost" (i.e., "dead") refers to two people and is contrasted with *ḍll-n*, referring to three, in the same text (see §4.1.2.2). *Ḍll-y* is similar to the form of the dual which, in Classical Arabic, would be used in the oblique case "in construct" (see §4.1), namely *ḍalīlay*. However, in LP 305, while it would be in the oblique case (if this existed in Safaitic), it is clearly in pause and one would anyway not expect *y* to be used to represent a diphthong in the Safaitic script.

In Classical Arabic the *-n* of the dual is dropped in construct, leaving a long vowel (*-ā*), in the nominative, or a diphthong (*-ay*) in the oblique case. In Dadanitic, the only dialect with an orthography that represents some *final* long vowels and diphthongs, the ending seems to be a diphthong, represented by *-y*, regardless of case (if, indeed, this existed); thus, "nominative" *kbry s²ʿt h-n{ṣ}*, "the two kabirs of the company of H-NṢ" (JSLih 72/3–4; cf. Arabic *kabīrā*); "oblique" *b-ḥqwy kfr*, "on two sides of a tomb" (JSLih 77/7; cf. Arabic *ḥaqway*). As yet, there are not enough examples to assess the significance of this. Compare the situation in the modern spoken Arabic dialects where the dual ending in nouns is always *-ē(n)* (presumably <**ay(n)*) regardless of whether the noun is grammatically in the "nominative" or "oblique" case. Again, this is a feature found in the early Arabic papyri (see Hopkins 1984:98–104).

When the second element of the construct was a pronominal suffix, the diphthong (*-ay) was considered to be *medial* and was therefore not represented in the Dadanitic script. The result is that the form *ʾẖw-hm* (JSLih 79/3) could represent either the dual "their two brothers" (*ʾaẖaway-hum, cf. Classical Arabic *ʾaẖawā-hum*, since the context requires it to be in the nominative) or the plural "their brothers" (cf. Classical Arabic *ʾuẖuwwu-hum*).

A similar problem is found in Safaitic, where one of the few examples of the dual in construct yet identified is *ʾẖw-h* "his two brothers" (see LP 386, where the two persons are named). However, in C 657 *ʾẖw-h* is followed by the names of three persons, and in the other examples the numbers are not specified. It therefore appears that the form *ʾẖw* in Safaitic probably represents both the dual (*ʾaẖaway) and the plural (*ʾuẖuww) as in Dadanitic. The supposed plural *ʾẖwn* (in C 2534, 2779, 2955, cf. Arabic *ʾiẖwān*) should almost certainly be read *ʾẖwl* (plural of *ẖl* "maternal uncle").

The form *bny-h* in Safaitic has also been regarded as a possible dual (e.g., in C 3365, WH 1249, 3838, cf. Arabic *ibnay-hi* "his two sons," oblique case). However, since Safaitic orthography does not show diphthongs, it is more likely that *bny-h* represents a diminutive (cf. Arabic *bunayyi-hi*, "his little son"), as it must do in C 4076, where it refers to only one person.

4.1.2.2   External masculine plural

In pause this is formed by adding *-n* to the singular and is thus indistinguishable in the purely consonantal script from the regular form of the dual in pause. In construct the *-n* is dropped:

(3)   A.   Dadanitic
          In pause   *ʾṣdqn* "rightful heirs[?]" (CLL 65/2)
          In construct   *bnw s¹ʿdʾl* "the sons of S¹dʾl" (AH 1/2–3, see Sima 1999:35–36)
       B.   Safaitic
          In pause   *ẓbyn* "male gazelles" (CSNS 550 beside a drawing of six,
                                  cf. Ar. *ẓabyān*)

Participles (see §4.2.6) are similarly marked: thus, *ḍll-n* "lost" (i.e., "dead" in LP 305, referring to three people, cf. Arabic, oblique case, *ḍalīlīn*).

4.1.2.3   Internal masculine plural

In Arabic, this type of plural is often marked by changes in vowels within the word, and such changes would be invisible in the Ancient North Arabian consonantal scripts. Still, a few types have forms which show up even in the Ancient North Arabian orthographies, such as the following:

(4)   Pattern   Dadanitic
       ʾafʿāl   *ʾym* (sg. *ym, "day," e.g., JSLih 68/4, 349, cf. Ar. *ʾayyām*)
                       ʾẓll (sg. *ẓll*, "ẓll-ceremony", U 43, 115, etc. see Sima 1999: 95–96)
                       ʾẓl (sg. *ẓll*, "ẓll-ceremony", U 50/3)
       ʾafʿilat   *ʾẓlt* (sg. *ẓll*, "ẓll-ceremony", U 32/3–4 and see Wright 1896–1898: i, 212)
       fiʿlat   *ẓlt* (sg. *ẓll*, "ẓll-ceremony", U 13/3, and see Stiehl 1971:6 and
                           cf. Wright 1896–1898: i, 209, XII/4 for the form)
       fuʿāl   *ḥgg* (sg. *ḥg, "pilgrim", JSLih 6/4, cf. Ar. *ḥuǧǧāǧ*)

Note also Dadanitic *ʾ*ḫ*w-hm* ("their brothers," JSLih 79/3, **ʾu*ḫ*uww* as in Safaitic, see §4.1.2.1).
       Pattern   Safaitic
       ʾafʿāl   *ʾs²yʿ* (sg. *s²ʿ, "companion," cf. Ar. *ʾašyāʿ*)
                       *ʾ*ḫ*wl* (sg. *ḫl*, "maternal uncle," e.g., HCH 71, cf. Ar. *ʾa*ḫ*wāl*)
       fuʿūl   *ḫṭṭ* (sg. *ḫṭ, "line, carving," cf. Ar. *ḫuṭūṭ*)

Note also Safaitic *ʾ*ḫ*w-h*, see §4.1.2.1.

4.1.2.4   External feminine plural

This is *-t*, and so is identical in appearance to the singular (see §4.1.1), the change presumably lying in the vowel of the ending (cf. Arabic sg. *-ah/at*; pl. *-āt*); thus Safaitic *ẓbyt* "female gazelles" (WH 3373, the plural confirmed by the accompanying drawing); and Hismaic *nʿrt* "girls" (unpublished).

4.1.2.5 Collective nouns

These are represented in Safaitic by *ʾbl* ("camels," cf. Arabic *ʾibil*), and *mʿzy* ("goats," cf. Arabic *miʿzan*). It is not clear whether they are grammatically feminine, as in Classical Arabic.

4.1.3 Case

Since the Safaitic script shows no vowels, it is impossible to be certain whether case endings existed. However, by the same token, the spelling of such nouns as *mʿzy*, *ẓby*, and the gentilic (see §4.1.6) – for example, *h-yhdy*, "the Jew" (which in Arabic would be *al-yahūdī*) – imply that the final *-y* was pronounced with a short vowel, since, if it were not, it would itself become a long vowel and so would not be shown. Beyond this, little can be said with certainty at present. The same applies to Dadanitic.

4.1.4 State

Caskel argued that the expression *h-{ṣ}lmn* (CLL 19/3–4 = JSLih 62/3–4) indicates that, at an early period, a *determinate state*, marked by a suffixed *-n*, existed in Dadanitic, as in the Ancient South Arabian languages (1954:68). However, such an explanation would mean that the word was doubly defined (with a prefixed article *h-* and the suffixed *-n*), and Caskel's attempt to explain the former as a demonstrative is unconvincing in view of the fact that elsewhere in Dadanitic the demonstrative adjective always follows the defined noun, thus *h-{ṣ}lmn hḏh* (JSLih 82/1). It is much more likely that *ṣlmn* is a dual or an external plural, or perhaps a diminutive (see Brockelmann 1908–1913: i, 394), with a specialized meaning such as "statuette" as opposed to "statue" (cf. Aramaic *ṣlmnytʾ* which seems to mean "small female idols" in *Israel Exploration Journal* 29 (1979), p. 119).

4.1.5 Determination

There is no visible mark of indetermination (comparable to *tanwīn* in Arabic), and had *tanwīn* been present it would have been represented in the Ancient North Arabian scripts. Determination is marked by the definite article (see §4.3.1) or annexation either to another noun or to a pronominal suffix.

4.1.6 Diminutives

If diminutives were formed in Ancient North Arabian in the same way as in Arabic, by use of the fuʿayl form, they would be invisible in the Ancient North Arabian orthographies. Only exceptional forms such as *ʾḫyt* (cf. Arabic *ʾuḫayyat* "little sister", C 893) and *bny* (cf. Arabic *bunayy* "little son", WH1249) can be identified.

4.1.7 Adjectives

These follow the noun and agree with it in gender, number, and determination: for example, in Safaitic *h-gs² h-rdf* (*ha-gays² h-radīf) "the rear guard" (LP 146); or *kll ʿs²r ṣdq* "every true kinsman" in Safaitic (HCH 191) and Hismaic (MNM 6).

As in Arabic, an adjective referring to a noun in the plural signifying nonsentient beings is put in the feminine singular, thus *rtg {q}ds¹t* (cf. Arabic *rutuǧ qadīsah*) "sacred portals" (CLL 85/3).

A gentilic adjective (Arabic *nisbah*) is formed with *-y*: for example, *h-rmy*, "the Roman." For demonstrative adjectives, see §4.1.8.4.

4.1.8   Pronouns

Independent and enclitic personal pronouns are attested in Ancient North Arabian, as are relative and demonstrative pronouns.

4.1.8.1   *Independent personal pronouns*

Only three independent personal pronouns are so far securely attested in Ancient North Arabian:

1. First singular *ʾn*: There is only one certain example in each of Safaitic (WH 1403b) and Dadanitic (JSLih 347/2). It is found occasionally in Hismaic (unpublished) and Thamudic D (e.g., JSTham 637), and is frequent in Thamudic B and C. It has not yet been found in Hasaitic.
2. Second singular *ʾt*: two possible examples are known so far, both in Thamudic B (HU 796 and 627?).
3. Third plural masculine *hm*: known from only one example in Dadanitic (JSLih 79/3).

4.1.8.2   *Enclitic personal pronouns*

Enclitic personal pronouns can be attached to verbs representing the object (e.g., *qtl-h* "he killed him") or to nouns indicating possession (e.g., *ʾb-h* "his father") or to prepositions which govern them (e.g., *l-h* "for him"). Those so far attested on verbs in Ancient North Arabian are shown in **1** through **4**.

1. First singular or plural *-n*: If the enclitic pronouns of the first persons singular and plural on verbs were similar to those in Classical Arabic (i.e., *-nī* = "me," *-nā* = "us") they would be indistinguishable in all Ancient North Arabian scripts except Dadanitic, where no certain example of either has yet been found. Thus, in Safaitic *ʿwd-n* "protect me/us" (unpublished); in Hismaic *dkrt-n lt* "may Lt be mindful of me/us" (unpublished); and in Thamudic B, where it is best attested, as in *flṭ-n* "deliver me/us" (LP 495).
2. Third singular masculine or feminine *-h*: This occurs in Dadanitic: for example, *rḍ-h w-sⁱ d-h* "favor him and help him" (e.g., U 4/4); *rḍ-h w-ʾḫrt-h w sⁱ d-h* "favor her and her descendants and help her" (U 6/4–5). It is surprisingly rare in Taymanitic and Thamudic B, C, and D, but is found in both Safaitic – thus *yʿwr-h* "he will scratch it out" (e.g., LP 329), *qtl-h* "he killed him" (LP 385, etc.); and in Hismaic: for example, *ḫṭṭ-h* "he inscribed it" (JSTham 665).
3. Third dual *-hmy*: Several examples are found in Dadanitic, such as *sⁱ ʿd-hmy* "help both of them" (U 69/5–6). This presumably represents a diphthong *-humay in contrast to Classical Arabic *-humā*.
4. Third plural *-hm*: This is found in Dadanitic *rḍ-hm* "favor them" (of four persons, AH 1/5 [see Sima 1999:35–36]).

On nouns and prepositions, the following enclitic personal pronouns are found:

5. First singular: If the enclitic pronoun of the first person singular was *-ī on nouns and prepositions, as in Arabic and most Semitic languages, one would not expect it to show up in any of the Ancient North Arabian orthographies. However, there are a

handful of possible examples in Thamudic B: for example, *wdd-y* "my beloved" (HU 736), *s¹mˤ l-y* "listen to me" (HU 713). Since, the orthography of Thamudic B does not represent vowels in other cases, as far as we can tell, it would seem that the enclitic pronoun may have been pronounced *īya or *ayya, as when in Classical Arabic it is attached to a word ending in a long vowel, a diphthong, or *ʾalif maqṣūrah*.

6.   Second singular *-k*: Safaitic *ˤwḏ-k* "your protection" (referring to one deity, unpublished) and Thamudic B *b-k* "in you" (e.g., HU 207, WTI 25, etc.) are attested. It is not yet identified in Dadanitic, Thamudic C and D, Hismaic, or Hasaitic.

7.   Third singular masculine and feminine *-h*: This is common in Safaitic *ʾb-h* "his father" (e.g., WH 1275), *l-h* "for him" (e.g., WH 3420), "for her" (e.g., CSNS 412). The frequent omission of the definite article *h-* immediately after the third singular enclitic personal pronoun (e.g., *l-h rgm* "the cairn is his/hers," as in the examples above) suggests that the suffix may have been pronounced *-uh (masc.) / *-āh (fem.), as in many Arabic dialects, rather than *-hu (masc.) / *-hā (fem.), as in Classical Arabic. The /h/ of the article may have been assimilated to that of the enclitic pronoun, leaving only its vowel and the possible reinforcement of the initial consonant of the following word (see §4.3.1), thus *l-uh ha-(r)rugm > *l-uh-a-(r)rugm "the cairn is his." See also *s¹ˤd-h-rḍw* for *s¹ˤd h rḍw* "help him O Rḍw" (CSNS 2), though this could also represent an optative perfect *s¹ˤd-h rḍw* "may Rḍw help him." In Hismaic we find *kll-h* "all of it" (unpublished), *b-h* "in it" (unpublished); and in Dadanitic *ml-h* "his winter crop" (e.g., U 35/5), "her winter crop" (U 6/3). In Hasaitic there is *ʾẖt-h* "her sister" (Ja 1046). The nature of the texts in Taymanitic and Thamudic B, C, and D means that no certain examples of this suffix have yet been identified.

8.   Second dual *-km*: In Safaitic there is *ˤwḏ-km*, "your protection" (referring to two deities, unpublished); compare Classical Arabic *-kumā*.

9.   Third dual *-hmy*: This is found only in Dadanitic: *t̲mrt-hmy* "their fruit-trees" (U 69/4); compare Classical Arabic *-humā*.

10. Third dual *-hm*: In Dadanitic there are also examples of *-hm* being used to refer to two people. This could represent a difference in orthography or in pronunciation, or could simply be the use of the plural instead of the dual (see §5.2). Thus *ml-hm* "their winter crop" (referring to a man and a woman, following a verb in the dual U 19/5); *ml-hm* (referring to two men but following a verb in the 3rd pl. masc., U 36/4). In contrast to Dadanitic (cf. **9**), this is the form which would be expected in the Thamudic B and Safaitic orthographies which show neither vowels nor diphthongs. There is one possible example in Thamudic B, {h-}gml-n kl-hm "both the camels" (HU 160) and one in Safaitic, *ˤl-hm* "on account of both of them" (HCH 34, referring to two persons).

11. First plural *-n*: Safaitic provides *ʾlh-n* "our god" (C 2526), *l-n* "for us" (C 2840). Hismaic has *ʾs²yˤ-n* "our companions" (unpublished); *wqˤ-n* "our inscription" (MNM 6).

12. Third plural masculine *-hm*: Examples include Dadanitic *ʾẖrt-hm* "their descendants" (referring to three persons, U 90/5); Thamudic B: *kl-hm* (?) "all of them" (HU 160); Safaitic *ʾẖ-hm* "their brother" (LP 413); Hismaic *kll-hm*, "all of them" (unpublished).

13. Third plural feminine: At present there is no certain evidence for this, though Caskel sought unconvincingly to restore one, *-[h]n*, in CLL 69/1, 2.

4.1.8.3 Relative pronouns

1.   *mn/m* "who, whoever": Compare Arabic *man*. In Safaitic this relative pronoun occurs in the very common curse *ˤwr m(n) yˤwr* "blind whoever scratches out [the writing],"

and in Hismaic in the expression *kll mn yqry* "anyone who may read" (MNM 6). No certain example of *mn* has yet been found in the other dialects. There is no example in Ancient North Arabian of *mn* or *m* used as an interrogative pronoun, but this is probably due to the nature of the texts.

2. *mh* "which, that which": So far this has been found only in Dadanitic: for example, *m{h} ʾhd* "that which has been taken" (CLL 82/2–3); and *m-l-hm* "that which [belongs] to them" (U 19/5, where the three elements are treated as one unit and the *ā* of *mh* is not shown by a *mater lectionis* since it is no longer in final position).

3. *d̠* "who, whoever, which, that which": Compare the relative pronoun *d̠ū* which was particularly characteristic of the early Arabic dialect of the tribe of Ṭayyiʾ (Wright 1896–1898:i, 272–273; Kofler 1940–1942:259–260; Rabin 1951:203–205). In Safaitic, this relative pronoun has so far been found only with reference to people, thus in the very common *ʿwr d̠ yʿwr h-sˡfr* "blind whoever scratches out the writing," or *ʿyr m-d̠ qtl-h* "recompense from him who killed him" (LP 385). In Dadanitic, however, *d̠-* is found referring to both people and things. Thus, *d̠-kn l-hm b-bdr* "that which [belongs] to them at Bdr" (U 73/4–5) which parallels *m-kn l-h b-d̠tʿl* "that which [belongs] to him at D̠-tˢl" (U 59/3–4). There are as yet no certain occurrences in the other dialects.

4. *d̠* followed by the name of a social group is the normal way of expressing group affiliation in Dadanitic (cf. **5**), as in South Arabian (e.g., AH 1/1–3 [see Sima 1999: 35–36]: N *w*-N *w*-N *w*-N *bnw* N *d̠*-N.Trib., see also JSLih 197/2, 216/2).

5. *d̠ ʾl*: This phrase is used as one of three ways of expressing affiliation to a social group in Safaitic and is the only method used in Hismaic and Hasaitic. There is no certain example of *d̠ ʾl* in Dadanitic, where *d̠-* plus the ethnicon is the norm (cf. **4**, the apparant example in AH 19/2 [= U 47/2] has been reread from the photograph as *d̠ ʾlh* and interpreted as an error for *d̠ ʾhl* (?) in Sima 1999:19, 84–85). It is not found at all in Taymanitic, where *ʾl* is simply placed after the last name in the genealogy (see Macdonald 1992a:31, 40, n. 74). There is also no certain example in any of the types of Thamudic. The phrase *d̠ ʾl* is made up of a particle *d̠* + *ʾl*, a noun meaning any social group from immediate family to nation (cf. Arabic *ʾāl*). It is placed before the name of the group, thus *d̠ ʾl ḥẓy* "of the lineage of Ḥẓy." The masculine *d̠* seems to have been considered an inseparable particle, since in texts employing word-dividers it is always attached to *ʾl*, in contrast to the feminine *d̠t*, which is always separated from *ʾl*. The feminine, *d̠t ʾl*, is found in Safaitic (e.g., CSNS 412), Hismaic (unpublished), and Hasaitic (e.g., *Atlal* 6, 1982:139, lines 6–7). Here the ʾ is consonantal, in contrast to Classical Arabic *d̠āt* (perhaps < *daʾt* [?]; cf. the Hebrew feminine demonstrative *zōʾt* < *zāʾt*?). A possible plural is found in Safaitic *d̠w ʾl yẓr* "members of the ʾl Yẓr" (C 2156); compare Classical Arabic *d̠awū*. Littmann (1943:xvi) compared this particle *d̠* to Classical Arabic *d̠ū* "possessor of" (< "he of . . . "?). This is probably also the case with *d̠* (without *ʾl*) in Dadanitic (see **4**). The exact relationship of this particle to the relative and demonstrative pronouns (§4.1.8.4) is not yet clear.

4.1.8.4 Demonstrative pronouns

A demonstrative pronoun, *zn* (or perhaps *d̠n*) is found in Thamudic D (*zn N*, "this is N") and is used for both masculine and feminine: thus *zn ġnm bn ʿbdmnt* "this is Ġnm son of ʿbdmnt" (JSTham 584); and *zn rqs²bnt ʿbdmnt* "this is Rqs² daughter of ʿbdmnt" (JSTham 1, and another example in 219). It has been suggested that another demonstrative pronoun, *zt*, is attested in Thamudic C, but this is highly questionable. No demonstratives have yet been identified in Taymanitic or Thamudic B.

The only evidence at present for a demonstrative pronoun in Dadanitic is the adverb *b-ḏh* "here", literally "in this", (Jshih 279). Caskel (1954:64) suggested that some Dadanitic inscriptions begin with a demonstrative pronoun *ḏ*, "this": for example, *ḏ / ms¹lmh* "this is Ms¹lmh" (CLL 102); *ḏ ʿlm ʾfkl lt* "this is ʿlm priest of Lt" (CLL 104). However, the *ḏ*-sign at the beginning of these graffiti is almost certainly an apotropaic sign (perhaps *ḏ* for the deity *ḏ-ġbt*); see JSLih 284, where it occurs at the beginning and the end of the text and 297, where these signs are excluded from the cartouche around the name.

4.2 Verbal morphology

The different dialects of Ancient North Arabian contribute fragmentary evidence on verbal inflection for three persons (first, second, and third), three numbers (singular, dual, and plural) and two genders (masculine and feminine), at least in the third-person singular in which the vast majority of these inscriptions are couched. The various verb-stems (see §4.2.2) are inflected in two conjugations – one suffixed, the other prefixed (see §4.2.3). The verb appears in active and passive voice, though the morphology of the latter is difficult to identify, as discussed in §4.2.4. In a similar fashion, modal distinctions are obscured by the orthography; see §4.2.5.

A notable difference between Arabic and Ancient North Arabian lies in the treatment of verbs in which the third radical is /w/ or /y/. In Arabic, even in the pre-Islamic period, verbs of the form *šatawa* ("to pass the winter") and *banaya* ("to build") appear to have been contracted to *šatā* and *banā* respectively, since in purely consonantal scripts (e.g., Sabaic) they appear with no final radical (e.g., *bn* for *banā* in the ʿIgl bn Hfʿm inscription from Qaryat al-Faw, see Beeston 1979b:1–2) and in those which use *matres lectionis* (e.g., Nabataean) they appear with final -ʾ (= -ā). However, in Ancient North Arabian the third radical is always retained, thus *s²tw* (more commonly *s²ty*, see above) and *bny* (see Macdonald, forthcoming).

This feature is also found in verbs which have a middle radical /w/ or /y/. In Classical Arabic, this is commonly reduced to -ā- when between two short vowels: for example, *ḥawara* > *ḥāra*, and *bayata* > *bāta*. But in Safaitic, these verbs are written with the middle radical intact, both in the base stem (cf. Arabic Form I), for example *ḥwr* "he returned," *byt* "he spent the night," etc.; and in the ʾ-prefix stem (cf. Arabic Form IV), for example, *ʾʿwr* "he blinded in one eye" (MSTJ 11, cf. Arabic *ʾaʿāra* but also *ʾaʿwara*). It has been suggested that verbs of this type are sometimes found in a contracted form in the base stem (e.g., Safaitic *ṣf* [supposedly representing *ṣāfa*] for *ṣyf* "he spent the early summer"), and that the forms with medial *w* or *y* represent the equivalent of the Arabic Forms II (faʿʿala) or III (fāʿala), where the middle radical has a consonantal value (for Dadanitic, Caskel 1954:67; for Safaitic, Littmann 1943:xvii–xviii). However, the only plausible case of such contraction yet identified in an Ancient North Arabian text is *kn* (cf. Arabic *kāna* "he/it exists") in the Dadanitic phrase *ḏ kn-l-h* "that which is to him" (i.e., "is his," e.g., in U 85/3). In most cases, the sense requires the verb written with medial *w/y* to be the equivalent of Classical Arabic Form I rather than Forms II or III, though it should be noted that in most modern Arabic dialects forms I and II of many verbs are used interchangeably with little discernible difference in meaning (I am most grateful to Professor Clive Holes for this information).

There appears to be an interesting difference between Safaitic and Hismaic as regards verbs which (in Arabic) have ʾ as their third radical. Thus, *yqrʾ* "he may read" (C 4803) in Safaitic (and Classical Arabic) as against *yqry* in Hismaic (MNM 6). On this root's significance for

the etymology of Classical Arabic *qara'a* (meaning "to read") in Ancient North Arabian, see Macdonald, forthcoming. See also Safaitic *ks¹'* "a track" (C 523, cf. Arabic *kus'* "rear, behind") as against Hismaic *ks¹y*, "pursuing" (unpublished, cf. Arabic *kas'*). It is also possible that this '/y contrast is sometimes found in medial position. In one Hismaic text (CTSS 3) we find *dyl* for *d 'l*, the normal marker of affiliation to an ethnic or social group. However, this example is so far unique, and elsewhere in Hismaic we find *d 'l*, as in Safaitic. All in all, there are at present too few examples of this apparent '/y contrast to be sure that it is really a dialectal feature.

In certain cases, Safaitic has a geminate verb where the equivalent in Classical Arabic has w or y as the third radical. Thus Safaitic *ġzz* "to raid" as against Arabic *ġazā* (root ġ-z-w, see Beeston 1979a:134).

4.2.1   Verb patterns

Arabic grammar knows fifteen possible *forms* or *patterns* of the verb (conventionally illustrated by the verb *fa'ala*), of which only the first ten are common. Several of these are distinguished by vowel lengthening or by doubling of the second or third radical. Since vowels and doubled consonants are not expressed in the Ancient North Arabian scripts (apart from some final long vowels in Dadanitic which are irrelevant in this case), it would be impossible to distinguish between the equivalents of Arabic Forms I (fa'ala), II (fa''ala), and III (fā'ala), all of which would appear simply as **f'l*, except possibly in the case of geminate verbs (see below). Similarly, V (tafa''ala) and VI (tafā'ala) would both appear as **tf'l*. This means that there is no way of telling whether Ancient North Arabian had a structure of verbal Forms similar to that of Classical Arabic. It therefore seems more prudent to describe the stems simply by the ways in which they appear in the texts.

It might be thought that the geminate verbs would be an exception to the above, since one would expect the equivalent of the Arabic Form I to appear as *ḥl* (**ḥalla*), and the equivalent of the Arabic Form II to appear as *ḥll* (**ḥallala*). However, the *ḥl* form is rare in Safaitic and is always found in exactly the same contexts as *ḥll* with no apparent difference in sense between the two. Similarly, the verb *wdd* "he loved," which is very common in Thamudic B, is rarely, if ever, found as *wd*. In Dadanitic, there is no clear example of the *ḥl* form in the base stem, though there is considerable variation in the '-prefix stem, namely: *ʾẓll* (U 14/2, etc.) as against *ʾẓl* (U 18/4, etc.); *ʾẓllt* (U 68/4, etc.) as against *ʾẓlt* (U 6/2, etc.); *ʾẓllw* (U 119/5, etc.) as against *ʾẓlw* (U 90/3, etc.) – where Arabic would have *ʾaẓalla, ʾaẓallat, ʾaẓallū*, respectively. Similarly, in Dadanitic, the active participle *'rr* (HE 1) implies a pronunciation such as **'ārir*, in contrast to Arabic *'ārr*. This suggests that in most contexts the second and third radicals of geminate verbs were separated by a vowel in Ancient North Arabian (at least in the pronunciation of some speakers), thus **ḥalal, *'ārir, *ʾaẓlal*, and so forth, in contrast to Classical Arabic where they were not, thus *ḥalla, 'ārr, ʾaẓall*. These verbs cannot therefore be used as evidence of a fa''ala (Form II) in Ancient North Arabian.

4.2.2   Verb-stems

Before presenting the Ancient North Arabian verb-stems, three things must be noted. First, because in Arabic, verbs which contain one or more of the phonemes /'/, /w/, or /y/ behave somewhat differently from those which do not, examples of such verbs in Ancient North Arabian are listed below with the form of the cognate verb in Classical Arabic given for comparison. Second, reconstructions of the vocalized and unassimilated forms of Ancient

North Arabian verbs are purely hypothetical and are based on the equivalent forms in Classical Arabic. They represent only one of several possible realizations of the forms found in the texts, and should not be taken as anything more than a working hypothesis. Finally, references to texts are usually given only for unique or unusual occurrences.

4.2.2.1 Safaitic verb-stems

(5) Base Stem fˁl (cf. Arabic Forms I, II, and III)

Radicals	Safaitic	cf. Arabic
	ḏbḥ "he sacrificed"	*ḏabaḥa*
I = ʾ	*ʾhd* "he took possession of"	*ʾaḫaḏa*
I = ʾ, III = y	*ʾty* "he came"	*ʾatā*
I = w	*wgm* "he grieved"	*waǧama*
I = y, II = ʾ	*yʾsˡ* "he despaired" (SIJ 118)	*yaʾisa*
II = w	*ḥwr* "he returned"	*ḥāra*
II = w, III = y	*nwy* "he migrated with the whole tribe"	*nawā*
II = y	*byt* "he spent the night"	*bāta*
III = ʾ	*dṯʾ* "he spent the season of the later rains"	
III = w	*s²tw* "he spent the winter"	*šatā*
III = y	*bny* "he built"	*banā*
II = III	*ḥll* "he camped"	*ḥalla*

Three derived stems can be identified in Safaitic: (i) the ʾ-prefix (ʾfˁl) stem (cf. Arabic Form IV *ʾafˁala*); (ii) the *t*-prefix (tfˁl) stem (cf. Arabic Forms V *tafaˁˁala* and VI *tafāˁala*); and (iii) the *t*-infix (ftˁl) stem (cf. Arabic Form VIII *iftaˁala*). These are illustrated below.

(6) ʾ-prefix stem ʾfˁl (cf. Arabic Form IV)

Radical	Safaitic	cf. Arabic
	ʾs²rq "he migrated to the inner desert"	*ʾašraqa*
I = y, II = ʾ	*ʾyʾsˡ* "it drove to despair" (root y-ʾ-sˡ, WH 1022)	*ʾayʾasa*
II = w	*ʾˁwr* "he blinded in one eye" (root ˁ-w-r, MSTJ 11)	*ʾaˁāra / ʾaˁwara*
III = y	*ʾˁly* "he raised up" (root ˁ-l-y, WH 1696)	*ʾaˁlā*

Note that *ʾyʾsˡ* presents a rare occasion when a diphthong may have been expressed in Safaitic (*ʾayʾasa), unless a short vowel or, more likely, a *shewā* was inserted to ease the transition to the second ʾ.

Safaitic *t*-prefix stems are illustrated by the following:

(7) *t*-prefix stem tfˁl (cf. Arabic Forms V and VI)

Radical	Safaitic	cf. Arabic
I = n	*tnẓr* "he looked out for" (root n-ẓ-r, WH 3294)	*tanaẓẓara*
II = w	*ts²wq* "he longed for" (root *s²-w-q)	*tašawwaqa*

(8)   *t*-infix stem ft⁽l (cf. Arabic Forms VIII)

Radical	Safaitic	cf. Arabic
	qttl "he died mad" (root q-t-l, MHES p. 286)	*iqtatala*
I = *n*	*tẓr* "he waited" (root n-ẓ-r)	*intaẓara*
I = *y*, II = ʾ	*tʾsˡ* "he despaired" (root y-ʾ-s¹, LP 679)	*ittaʾasa*

On the assimilation of *ntẓr to *tẓr*, see §3.1.5.

4.2.2.2   Dadanitic verb-stems

The Dadanitic base stem can be illustrated by *nḏr* "he vowed" (U 10/2). Examples of base stems with ʾ, w and y radicals and with geminate radicals are presented in (9):

(9)   Base stem f⁽l (cf. Arabic Forms I, II and III)

Radical	Dadanitic	cf. Arabic
	nḏr "he vowed" (U 10/2)	*naḏara*
I = ʾ	*ʾḫḏ* "he took possession of" (JSLih 45/3)	*ʾaḫaḏa*
I = ʾ, III = *w*	*ʾgw* "he made provision for, attended to" (?) (U 71/2), see Müller in Stiehl 1971:566	
I = *w*, III = *y*	*wdy* "he erected" (?) (JSLih 40/5)	
II = *w*	*kn* "it is" (e.g., U 73/4)	*kāna*
III = *y*	*bny* "he built" (CLL 74/1)	*banā*
II = III	*ʿrr* "he dishonored" (HE 1/4–6)	*ʿarra*

Regarding *ʾgw*, note, however, that Sima (1999: 93–94) takes this as an ʾ-stem of a verb *ngw which he interprets as "to clear out [an underground water channel]."

Dadanitic is the only Ancient North Arabian dialect in which there is clear evidence of a *h*-prefix stem (10) and even here it coexists with the ʾ-prefix (11) which is the norm in Safaitic. There are insufficient clear examples of verbs in the other dialects to draw any conclusions:

(10)   *h*-prefix stem hf⁽l

Radical	Dadanitic
	hmtʿ meaning uncertain (*hamtaʿa, root *m-t-ʿ, JSLih 7/3)
I = *w*	*hdqt* "she offered" (*hawdaqat, root *w-d-q, JSLih 62/3)
	hwdqw "they offered" (*hawdaqū, 3rd pl., JSLih 49/5–6)

The retention of the initial *w* of the root in *hwdqw* may reflect uncertainty about representing diphthongs in the Dadanitic script.

(11)   ʾ-prefix stem ʾf⁽l (cf. Arabic Form IV)

Radical	Dadanitic	cf. Arabic
I = *w*	*ʾdq* "he offered" (root *w-d-q, CLL 62/3)	*ʾawdaqa*
I = *w*, III = *y*	*ʾfy* "he accomplished" (root *w-f-y, U 4/2)	*ʾawfā*
II = III	*ʾẓll* "he performed the ẓll-ceremony" (root *ẓ-l-l, e.g., U14/2)	*ʾaẓalla*
	ʾẓl "he performed the ẓll-ceremony" (root *ẓ-l-l, e.g., U 18/2)	

It is possible that *tqṭ* (e.g., in JSLih103) represents a **t-infix stem (ft⁽l)** in Dadanitic. Caskel interpreted this as a metathesized *t*-infix stem of *qṭṭ*, thus *iqtaṭṭa > *itqaṭṭa (CLL

p. 64). However, this is improbable. More likely it represents the *t*-infix stem of a root *wqṭ (*ittaqaṭa), or of a root *nqṭ (*intaqaṭa which, with the expected nasal assimilation (§3.1.5), would become *ittaqaṭa).

Caskel sought to identify one verb with an *n*-prefix (equivalent to the Arabic Form VII) and another with a *st*-prefix (equivalent to the Arabic Form X), but in both cases the interpretations are very uncertain (Caskel 1954:64–65).

4.2.3   Verb conjugations

Two conjugations are identifiable in Ancient North Arabian, one in which person, number and gender are indicated by suffixes and one in which these are indicated by prefixes (and in some persons suffixes as well). If two prefix-conjugations existed, as in some Semitic and Hamitic languages, the Ancient North Arabian writing system, which shows neither vowels nor doubled consonants, has rendered them indistinguishable. On the uses of the suffix- and prefix-conjugations see §§5.3.1 and 5.3.2.

4.2.3.1   Safaitic verb conjugations

Examples of those forms which are attested for the suffix-conjugation in Safaitic are listed in (12).

(12)   The suffix-conjugation in Safaitic

Base stem

Person	Radical	Safaitic		cf. Arabic
3rd sg. masc.		*dbḥ* "he sacrificed"		*ḏabaḥa*
	I = ʾ III = *y*	*ʾty* "he came" (e.g., NST 3)		*ʾatā*
	II = *y*	*myt* "he died" (e.g., WH 387)		*māta*
	III = *y*	*rʿy* "he pastured"		*raʿā*
	II = III	*ḥl* "he camped"	(Form I)	*ḥalla*
		ḥll "he camped"	(Form II)	*ḥallala*
3rd sg. fem.		*gls¹t* "she stopped briefly" (SIAM i 30)		*ǧalasat*
	II = y	*mtt* "she died" (NST 2)		*mātat*
2nd sg. fem.		*whbt* "may you give"		*wahabti*
		(C 4037, optative §5.3.1)		

ʾ-prefix stem

Person	Radical	Safaitic	cf. Arabic
3rd sg. masc.		*ʾs²rq* "he migrated to the inner desert"	*ʾašraqa*

t-prefix stem

Person	Radical	Safaitic	cf. Arabic
3rd sg. masc.	II = *w*	*ts²wq* "he longed for"	*tašawwaqa*
3rd sg fem.		*ts²wqt* "she longed for"	*tašawwaqat*

t-infix stem

Person	Radical	Safaitic	cf. Arabic
3rd sg. masc.	I = *n*	*tẓr* "he waited"	*intaẓara*

The terminations of the dual, if it existed (cf. Dadanitic and Classical Arabic *-ā*) and the plural (cf. Dadanitic and Classical Arabic *-ū*) of the suffix conjugation are not visible in Safaitic orthography.

Examples of those forms which are attested for the prefix-conjugation in Safaitic are listed in (13).

(13) The prefix-conjugation in Safaitic

Base stem

Person	Radical	Safaitic	cf. Arabic
3rd sg. masc.		*yḫbl* "he may damage"	*yaḫbalu*
	I = *w*	*yʿwr* "he may scratch out"	*yaʿūru*
			yuʿawwiru
	III = '	*yqr'* "he may read" (C 4803)	*yaqra'u*
	III = *y*	*yqry* "he may read" (Hismaic, MNM 6)	
	II = III	*yrbb* "he is training" (C 1186)	*yurabbibu*
3rd pl. masc.	II = *w*	*yʿwrn* "they may scratch out" (WH 2112)	*yaʿūrūna*
			yuʿawwirūna
1st pl.	III = *y*	*nngy* "may we escape" (WH 135)	*nanǧū*
	II = III = *y*	*nḥyy* "may we live prosperously" (Thamudic B, LP 495)	*naḥyā*

' -prefix stem

Person	Radical	Safaitic	cf. Arabic
3rd sg. masc.		*ys²rq* (in *l-ys²rq* "in order to go into the inner desert", LP 180)	*yušriq* (Jussive)

t-prefix stem

Person	Radical	Safaitic	cf. Arabic
3rd sg. masc.	II = *n*	*ytẓr* "he will wait for" (?) (WH 3929)	*yantaẓiru*

4.2.3.2 Dadanitic verb conjugations

(14) The suffix-conjugation in Dadanitic

Base stem

Person	Radical	Dadanitic	cf. Arabic
3rd sg. masc.	I = '	*'ḫd* "he took possession of" (e.g., JSLih 45/3)	*'aḫaḏa*
	I = ', III = *w*	*'gw* "he made provision for" (?) (U 71/2) (see Müller in Stiehl 1971:566)	
	III = *y*	*bny* "he built" (CLL 74/1)	*banā*
	II = III	*ʿrr* "may he dishonor" (HE 1/4, see §5.3.1)	*ʿarra*
3rd sg. fem.		*ndrt* "she vowed" (JSLih 73/4–5)	*naḏarat*
	III = *y*	*bnt* "she built" (root b-n-y, CLL 90/3)	*banat*
3rd pl. masc.	I = '	*'ḫdw* "they took possession of" (JSLih 79/2)	*'aḫaḏū*
	III = *y*	*bnyw* "they built" (CLL 26/2)	*banaw*

On this last, *bnyw*, compare the form binyaw (instead of Classical Arabic *banaw*) in some "old sedentary dialects" of eastern Arabia and many others in Saudi Arabia [Clive Holes].

ʾ-prefix stem

Person	Radical	Dadanitic	cf. Arabic
3rd sg. masc.	I = w	ʾdq "he offered" (?) (root w-d-q, CLL 62/3)	ʾawdaqa
3rd sg. fem.	I = w, III = y	ʾft "she accomplished" (root w-f-y, U 5/2)	ʾawfat
	II = III	ʾẓllt "she performed the ẓll-ceremony" (U 68/4)	
		ʾẓlt "she performed the ẓll-ceremony" (U 6/2)	ʾaẓallat
3rd du. masc.	II = III	ʾẓlh "they two performed the ẓll-ceremony" (U 19/3, but see §5.2)	ʾaẓallā
3rd pl. masc.	II = III	ʾẓllw "they performed the ẓll-ceremony" of four persons (AH 1/3-4, see Sima 1999:35–36)	ʾaẓallū

h-prefix stem

Person	Radical	Dadanitic
3rd sg. masc.		hmtʿ meaning uncertain (*hamtaʿa, root m-t-ʿ, CLL 39/3)
3rd sg. fem.	I = w	hdqt "she offered" (?) (*hawdaqat, root w-d-q, JSLih 62/3)
3rd pl. masc.	I = w	hwdqw "they offered" (?) (*hawdaqū, JSLih 49/5-6)

t-infix stem

Person	Radical	Dadanitic
3rd sg. masc.	I = n or w	tqṭ (*ittaqaṭa ? root n-q-ṭ or w-q-ṭ, e.g., CLL 6, JSLih 103)

(15) The prefix-conjugation in Dadanitic

Base stem

Person	Radical	Dadanitic	cf. Arabic
3rd sg. masc.		yqʿd "it will remain" (?) (JSLih 40/4)	yaqʿudu

4.2.4   Voice

Since no short vowels are expressed in the Arabian consonantal scripts, it is impossible to tell whether the Ancient North Arabian verbal system had a fully operational passive voice, indicated by changes of internal short vowels, as in Arabic. Thus, s¹ nt qtl mʿn (LP 297) presumably means "the year Mʿn was killed," but it is not clear whether qtl here is a verb in the passive of the suffix-conjugation (equivalent to Arabic qutila), or a maṣdar, or verbal noun (equivalent to Arabic qutl, i.e., "the year of Mʿn's being killed"), or even a passive participle (cf. Arabic and Aramaic qatīl) acting as a verb to produce a virtual relative (i.e. "the year [in which] Mʿn [was] killed"), as, for example, in Nabataean (Cantineau 1930–1932:i, 108); see §5.4.

   In Dadanitic, a verb in the passive can occasionally be identified. Thus, for instance, the context in CLL 82/3 requires ʾhd to be a third singular masculine passive of the suffix-conjugation in m{h} ʾhd ʿl-hmy "that which has been acquired on behalf of both of them." A possible example of the passive of the prefix-conjugation is lh yʿd "he will not be threatened" (root *w-ʿ-d, CLL 31/6, cf. Arabic lā yūʿadu).

4.2.5   Mood

Similarly, the fact that no short vowels are indicated in the scripts makes it impossible to tell whether there were indicative, subjunctive, and jussive moods in the prefix-conjugation, distinguished by final short vowels (or lack of them) as in Classical Arabic.

   The absence of short vowels in the scripts also means that the imperative can only be identified from context, and there is no visible distinction between the masculine and

feminine forms. Thus, in Safaitic, for example, *flṭ* "deliver!" occurs in some contexts where it must be masculine (cf. Arabic *ifliṭ* [masc.]) and others where it must be feminine (cf. Arabic *iflitī* [fem.]); similarly with *ʿwr* "blind!" (masc. and fem.; cf. Arabic *ʿawwir* [masc.], *ʿawwirī* [fem.]).

In Dadanitic, many inscriptions end with invocatory formulas consisting of a series of verbs in the imperative or in the suffix-conjugation with an optative sense (see §5.3.1). The most common of these formulas is *f-r-ḍ-h w-s¹ʿd-h w-ʾḫrt-h* "and so favour him and help him and his descendants" (see JSLih 8, where the deity is mentioned, and U 14/5–6, etc., where it is not; see Sima 1999:105 for the variants of this formula at al-ʿUḏayb). Here *rḍ* is the masculine imperative of *rḍy* "to favor" (equivalent to Arabic *irḍa*) whereas *s¹ʿd* can be compared with the Arabic Form III imperative *sāʿid*.

In the case of verbs whose first radical is *w* there seems to be a distinction between Safaitic and Thamudic B, though the small number of examples is restricted to the verb *whb*, which in Classical Arabic is exceptional in this respect (see Wright 1896–1898:i, 78–79). We cannot therefore be certain how widespread a phenomenon this was. In Safaitic (in all but two examples), the initial *w* of *whb* is retained in the imperative, whereas in Thamudic B it seems to be dropped (as in Classical Arabic). Thus, in Safaitic we find *w-whb l-h nqmt* "and give to him booty" (C 1808, cf. Classical Arabic *hab*); and *h rḍw whb l-h...* "O Rḍw give to him..." (WH 190). On the other hand, there are two Safaitic texts in which the imperative appears as *hb*: *h rḍw hb l-ʿbdʾl nqmt* "O Rḍw give to ʿbdʾl booty" (LP 460) and *h ʾlt flṭ l-bgʿ w-hb l-h nʿm* "O ʾlt [grant] deliverance to Bgʿ and give to him prosperity" (LP 504), though in both cases this could be due to haplography, as it could be in the Thamudic B text *h rḍw hb s²km* "O Rḍw give a gift" (unpublished).

4.2.6   Participles

As a verbal noun, the participle in Ancient North Arabian was inflected according to gender, number, and voice. On the uses of the participle see §5.4.

4.2.6.1   *Active participle*

Base stem

	sg. masc.	*qtl* (cf. Ar. "*qātil*"): Safaitic, in *ṯʾr mn qtl-h* "revenge on his killer" (CSNS 1004);
	pl.	*qbrn* (cf. Ar. *qābirūna*): Safaitic, in *qbrn ḏw ʾl yẓr* "members of the ʾl Yẓr having performed the burial" (C 2156), see §5.4;
II = *w*	sg. masc.	*mʿwr* (cf. Ar. *muʿawwir*): Safaitic, in *ʿwr l-m ʿwr* "blindness to a scratcher-out" (WH 408, etc.)
II = *w*, III = *y*	sg. masc.	*nwy* (cf. Ar. *nāwin*): Safaitic, in *rʿy h-nḫl nwy* "he pastured this valley while on migration" (C 3181)
III = *y*	sg. masc.	*rʿy* (cf. Ar. *rāʿin*): Safaitic, in *ṣyr rʿy ḥrt* "he was on his way to permanent water pasturing the *ḥarra* [basalt desert]" (C 3131)
II = III	sg. masc.	*ʿrr* (*ʿārir*, cf. Ar. *ʿārr*): Dadanitic, in *ʿrr ḏġbt ʿrr h-s¹fr ḏh* "may Ḏġbt [the chief deity of Liḥyān] dishonor him who dishonors [lit. 'the dishonorer of'] this inscription" (HE 1)

4.2.6.2 *Passive participle*

There appear to be two morphological types of passive participle in the base stem – the *faʿīl*-type and the *mafʿūl*-type. Safaitic singular and plural examples of each follow:

1. *The faʿīl-type*: Singular masculine *qtl* "killed" (e.g., LP 658; see §4.2.4); singular feminine (i.e., of the form *faʿīlat*) *trḥt* "untimely dead" (e.g., NST 2); plural masculine *ḥrbn* "plundered and left destitute"(C 657, *pace* ed.; cf. Arabic *ḥarībīn*, oblique case).
2. *The mafʿūl-type*: Singular masculine *mqtl* "killed, murdered" (e.g., HCH 76; cf. Arabic *maqtūl*); plural masculine *mḥrbn* "plundered and left destitute" (HCH 71; cf. Arabic *maḥrūbīn*, oblique case).

In Dadanitic, the only clear participial form, *h-mqtl* (JSLih 40/9), is in a damaged context and could represent either an active participle (cf. Arabic *muqattil* "mass killer") or a passive (cf. Arabic *maqtūl* "killed, murder victim"). There are no certain cases in the other dialects.

The feminine, dual, and external masculine plural forms of participles are similar to those of other nouns; see §4.1.2.

4.3 Particles

4.3.1 The definite article

The most obvious difference between the two branches of North Arabian lies in the form of the definite article. In Old and Classical Arabic and the majority of the vernaculars, it is *ʾal-*, while in Ancient North Arabian it is either *h-* (*hn-*) or in some dialects possibly zero. The earliest evidence for both comes from the fifth century BC in the epithet of a goddess which Herodotus (3.8) quotes in its Old Arabic form, Ἀλιλάτ (*ʾal-ʾilat), and which occurs in its Ancient North Arabian form, *hn-ʾlt*, in a number of Aramaic inscriptions on silver bowls found at Tell al-Maskhūṭah in northeastern Egypt (Rabinowitz 1956). In both cases, it means literally "*the* goddess."

A definite article has not yet been identified in Hasaitic (except in names) or in Thamudic C and D, and there are doubts whether Hismaic employed one at all (see below). In Taymanitic, Thamudic B, and Safaitic, it is *h-* in all contexts. Since the script shows neither vowels nor the doubling of consonants, it is impossible to tell how this *h-* was vocalized and whether it was followed by systematic strengthening or doubling of the following consonant (as, for instance, in Hebrew, but in contrast to Arabic; see Macdonald, forthcoming, *contra* Ullendorff 1965). In Dadanitic (and in some names spread over a wide geographical and chronological range) it has the form *hn-* before ʾ and ʿ. In an inscription in the Safaitic script, the gentilic *hn-ḥwly* (a tribe apparently from the region of Dadan) attests to the use of this form before ḥ (Macdonald 1993:308). There are as yet no examples of the article before a word beginning with h, but it is possible that it was *hn-* here as well.

Traditionally, it has been assumed that this *hn-* in Dadanitic was the survivor of the original form of the article before all phonemes, in all Ancient North Arabian dialects. However, had this been so, we would expect to find scattered examples of this form in other dialects (which so far we have not) and in front of other phonemes in Dadanitic (see Macdonald 2000:41–42). At present, therefore, it seems more likely that this was a development peculiar to Dadanitic and that, even there, it was simply a euphonic or dissimilatory phenomenon before glottal and pharyngal consonants.

It was once thought that a definite article *hl-* existed in Dadanitic. However, the only examples were in two texts, one of which has now been identified as being an abecedary in the South Semitic order (JSLih 158, see Müller 1982:22); while the other is not in the

Dadanitic language but in Old Arabic written in the Dadanitic script, where *h-l-* represents a preposed demonstrative, *h-*, plus the Old Arabic definite article (ʾ)l- (JSLih 71/8, see Beeston *et al.* 1973:69–70 and Macdonald 2000:70, n. 90 and forthcoming). Compare the situation in many modern Arabic dialects, where an invariant demonstrative *ha-* with a relatively weak demonstrative force is placed before the article (e.g., ha-l-bēt "this house," ha-s-sana "this year"; Holes 1995:152–153).

In Safaitic, the distinction between the definite article and the nearer demonstrative ("this") is not always clear and it is possible that the article had a mild demonstrative implication (e.g., *h-dr* "the/this place," *h-s¹nt* "this year"), as it can have in Arabic (e.g., ʾal-yawm "the/this day," i.e., "today"). This, of course, is different from the case in JSLih 71/8 and the modern Arabic dialects mentioned in the previous paragraph, where the demonstratives *h-* and *ha-* respectively are prefixed to the article. In Hismaic, on the other hand, *h-* is relatively rare in contexts where it would appear to represent the definite article. Thus, for instance, there is, as yet, no example in Hismaic of affiliation to a social group being expressed by the *nisbah* (see §4.1.6), in contrast to Safaitic where it is common (e.g., *h-gdly* "the Gdlite"), while in "signatures" to rock drawings *l* N *bkrt* alternates with *l* N *h-bkrt*, "by N is the young she-camel," where in Safaitic only the latter is found. The few possible examples of *h-* as definite article in Hismaic could equally well represent the nearer demonstrative "this" and there is, as yet, no case where it could not. It is therefore an open question whether Hismaic employed a form of determination which does not show up in the script (e.g., a final vowel, as in the Aramaic "determined state"), or had no definite article (as, in effect, in Syriac).

4.3.2   Demonstrative adjectives

In Dadanitic and Hismaic demonstrative adjectives are formed with *d̠* and follow a noun defined by the article or a pronominal suffix.

In Dadanitic the masculine demonstrative adjective is *d̠h* (probably *d̠ā), for example *h-s¹fr d̠h* "this writing" (HE 1) and the feminine is *d̠t* (probably *d̠āt), for example *h-ṣfḥt d̠t* "this section of cliff" (JSLih 66/2). The demonstrative adjective *hd̠h* (probably *hād̠ā) is found in *h-{ṣ}lmn hd̠h* "this statuette (?)" (JSLih 82/1, cf. Arabic *hād̠ā*).

In Hismaic, a demonstrative adjective *d̠ʾ* is attested only once, in *wqʿ-n d̠ʾ* "this our inscription" (MNM 6, *pace* ed. who reads *d̠h*, though ʾ is clear on the photograph). This is a curious form since it would be highly unusual for the ʾ to represent a vowel in Hismaic. If the ʾ represents a consonant, perhaps compare *d̠ʾt* in §4.1.8.3, **5**. It seems possible that in the relatively rare cases in Hismaic where *h-* is prefixed to a noun with no other visible form of definition, that this represents a demonstrative adjective rather than the definite article. See the discussion in §4.3.1.

In Safaitic, the prefixed *h-* is the only form of demonstrative so far clearly attested (see §4.3.1).

4.3.3   Introductory particles

Most of the Ancient North Arabian graffiti and the majority of the Dadanitic monumental inscriptions begin with the name of the "author" (see §5.1.1). In the Taymanitic, Thamudic B, C, and D, Safaitic, and some Hismaic graffiti, the name is usually introduced by a particle. In Taymanitic, this is often *l* (known as the *lām auctoris*), which is probably the preposition "for, of" (see §4.3.4) which in this context means "by" in the sense of authorship, as it can in Arabic. However, a particle *lm* is also used, apparently with the same meaning (perhaps cf. Hebrew *lᵉmô*, found only in the Book of Job, the language of which is thought to exhibit many

North Arabian features). This particle is characteristic of Taymanitic (Winnett 1980:135–136). What is possibly a dialectal variant of this, *nm*, is found as an introductory particle in Thamudic B, while Thamudic D texts often begin *zn* "this is . . . ." In Safaitic, all but a handful of texts begin with the *lām auctoris*, while in Hismaic the author's name can be introduced by the *lām auctoris*, or by the conjunctions *w* or *f* (see §4.3.6). In Dadanitic, no introductory particle is used (except possibly in JSLih 128). Since most of the Hasaitic inscriptions are gravestones they begin *wgr w-qbr* "tomb-chamber and grave" (see Livingstone 1984:102) or *nfs¹ w-qbr* "memorial and grave."

4.3.4   Vocative particles

The vocative particle is *h* in Dumaitic, Dadanitic (JSLih 8), Thamudic B, Safaitic, Hismaic, and Hasaitic (sole example unpublished). None has yet been identified in Taymanitic and Thamudic C and D. Given the nature of these texts it is not surprising that it has been found only in prayers (e.g., *h rḍw s¹ʿd* N, "O Rḍw help N"; *h lt s¹lm*, "O Lt [grant] security"). In origin, it was probably a sound used to attract attention (*hā), and can be paralleled in Arabic by the *hā* which forms the initial part of a number of interjections and of the demonstrative *hāḏā* "this" (Wright 1896–1898:i, 268, Brockelmann 1908–1913:i, 503).

It has been suggested that in Safaitic the forms *hylt* "O Lt" (or "O Ylt") and so forth represent a variant vocative particle, *hy*, equivalent to Arabic *hayā* (Winnett and Harding 1978:47) or *ʾayyuhā* (Littmann 1943:21), though other explanations for this are possible. In fact, the particle *ʾyh* (*ʾayyuhā) occurs in the invocation *w-ʾyh lt* "and O Lt" in a Safaitic inscription (unpublished) recently found in southern Syria.

In some Hismaic texts an *-m* is suffixed to the divine names *Lh* and *Lt* in invocations, thus *h lh-m*, *h lt-m* (King 1990:80). This is probably an asseverative particle which may be compared with the *-mma* in Arabic *allāhumma* (sometimes *yā allāhumma*), and possibly the *-m-* in such names as *ʾabîmāʾēl* (Genesis 10:28), and *ʾbmʿttr*, and others from Haram and its environs on the northern borders of Yemen, where the local form of Sabaic may have have included a number of North Arabian features (Müller 1992:20).

4.3.5   Prepositions

1. *ʾl* "towards" (cf. Arabic *ʾilā*), "for" (after the verb *ts²wq* "to yearn"): Safaitic and Hismaic.

2. *ʿdky* "up to": Dadanitic (JSLih 72/6, see Müller 1982:33 and Beeston 1979a:4).

3. *ʿl* "over, on, for, against" (cf. Arabic *ʿalā*): Safaitic and Hismaic; in Dadanitic it is usually found as *ʿly* with nouns (e.g., JSLih 81/4, 5) but as *ʿl* with pronominal suffixes (e.g., JSLih 77/3). This suggests that the final sound was a diphthong, which would not be represented in the Safaitic and Hismaic scripts. Since Dadanitic orthography only shows diphthongs in final position, the *-y* was not written when followed by a pronominal suffix. However, there are also a few examples in Dadanitic of the form *ʿl* without a pronominal suffix (e.g., U 73/4) which may indicate a pronunciation with final *-ī* or simply an uncertainty about the representation of diphthongs.

4. *ʿn* pace Caskel (1954:72), there is no clear evidence in Ancient North Arabian for a preposition *ʿn* "from" (cf. Arabic *ʿan*).

5. *b* "in, at, with, by" (cf. Arabic *bi-*): Taymanitic, Dadanitic, Thamudic B, Safaitic, and Hismaic.

6. *bʿd* "after" (cf. Arabic *baʿda*): Safaitic (e.g., SIJ 787).

The preposition occurs in Dadanitic with the meaning "for the sake of" (e.g., U 5/4, etc.). Compare Hebrew *baʿad* which is used in this sense and in a very similar context in Ezekiel

45:22 and Job 42:8 (see Stiehl 1971:9). Clive Holes informs me that in eastern Arabia a woman will plead with a loved one *yā baʿad rūḥ-ī! yā baʿad ʿēn-ī! yā baʿad čibd-ī!*, which is usually explained as "O you who are [the dearest thing to me] *after* my spirit/eyes/liver," but may in fact mean "please, O X, for the sake of my spirit/eyes/liver" (personal communication) Note that Sima (1999:99–105) interprets *bʿd* as "in the direction of" in the same Dadanitic texts.

7. *bn* "between" (cf. Arabic *bayna*): Safaitic, in *h lt whbt s²nʾ-h bn yd-h* "O Lt may you give his enemy into his hands" (C 4037). In Arabic, the expression *bayna yaday-hi*, "between his hands," has come to mean "in front of," but in Safaitic it seems to retain its literal sense. In the phrase *s¹nt ws¹q bn rm nbṭ*, which appears to mean "the year of the conflict between the Romans and the Nabataeans" (C 4866), either the connective *w* (see §4.3.5) was not considered necessary between the two nouns (as it would be in Arabic), or it was accidentally omitted by the author or the copyist.

8. *dn* "without" (cf. Arabic *dūna*): Hismaic (unpublished).

9. *f pace* Winnett and Harding (1978:643) and Caskel (1954:72), there is no clear evidence in Ancient North Arabian for a preposition *f* "in" (cf. Arabic *fī*).

10. *ḫlf* "after, behind" (cf. Arabic *ḫalfa*): Dadanitic (JSLih 70/4).

11. *l* "to, for, on behalf of" (cf. Arabic *li-*): Taymanitic (*nṣr l-ṣlm*, "he gave help to Ṣlm," e.g., WTay 15), Dadanitic, Thamudic B, Safaitic, Hismaic. The preposition is attested in several additional uses:

A. *Indicating possession:* Safaitic (e.g., *l*-N *bn* N *h-rgm* "the cairn is N son of N's", WH 329); Dadanitic (e.g., *l*-N *bn* N *h-qbr ḏh* "this grave is N son of N's", JSLih 312).

B. *In dating formulas:* Dadanitic (e.g., *s¹nt ḫms¹* **l**-*hnʾs¹ bn tlmy mlk lḥyn* "year five **of** Hnʾs¹ son of Tlmy, king of Lḥyn", JSLih 75/5–7).

C. *Indicating motion:* Safaitic (e.g., *l-mdbr* "to the inner desert", LP 180).

D. *Indicating purpose:* Safaitic, used with verbs in the prefix-conjugation (e.g., *l-ys²rq* "in order to migrate to the inner desert", LP 180).

12. *ldy* "to, up to" (cf. Arabic *ladā*): Dadanitic (JSLih 77/3).

13. *mʿ* "in company with" (cf. Arabic *maʿa / maʿ*): Safaitic (e.g., LP 325); Dadanitic (JSLih 52/3).

14. *mn/m* "from" (cf. Arabic *min*): Thamudic B, Dadanitic, Safaitic, Hismaic *passim*. In Safaitic also with the sense "on account of" (e.g. SIAM:34).

15. *qbl* "before" (temporal, cf. Arabic *qabla*): Dadanitic (CLL 80/4).

16. *tḥt* "below" (cf. Arabic *taḥta*): Dadanitic (JSLih 50/4).

4.3.6   Conjunctions

Two conjunctions, *w* "and" and *f-* "and (so)" "and (then)", are attested in Ancient North Arabian. The former is found in all dialects, the latter so for only in Dadanitic, Safaitic, and Hismaic (see the discussion in Sima 1999:110–114).

4.3.7   Other particles

1. *ʾḏh* "when" (cf. Arabic *ʾiḏā*): Dadanitic (JSLih 55/2).
2. *ʾn* "that" (cf. Arabic *ʾan*): Safaitic, in *s¹mʿ ʾn myt flfṣ* "he heard that Philip had died" (MHES p. 286).
3. *ʾn* "if" (cf. Arabic *ʾin*)?: Dadanitic (JSLih 40/6, in a very damaged context).
4. *ʾn* "verily" (cf. Arabic *ʾinna*)?: Dadanitic (JSLih 40/7, in a very damaged context).

5. *lh* negative particle (cf. Arabic *lā*): Dadanitic, *f-lh yʿd,* "and so he will not be threatened" (?) in a very damaged context (JSLih 40/6).

6. *lm* negative particle followed by the prefix-conjugation (cf. *lam* plus the jussive in Classical Arabic): Safaitic (unpublished). This particle, which is characteristic of North Arabian, is also found in some of the texts from Haram on the northern borders of Yemen which are in Sabaic with some North Arabian features (see Macdonald 2000:49–50, 55–56).

4.4 Numerals

4.4.1 Cardinal numbers

These are attested in Dadanitic, Safaitic, and Hasaitic.

4.4.1.1 Cardinal numbers in Dadanitic

The Dadanitic cardinal numbers are presented in Table 16.2.

The final entry in the table is so read by Sima, though the first and last words are more or less invisible on the published photograph and these lines were not copied by Abū al-Ḥasan.

It will be seen from Table 16.2 that there are some interesting similarities and differences between the treatments of numerals in Dadanitic and in Classical Arabic.

1. As far as we can tell on present evidence, numerals precede the nouns to which they refer; nouns following the numbers three to ten are in the plural, while those following eleven and upwards are in the singular, as in Classical Arabic. However, the situation is obscured by the fact that, in Dadanitic, the vast majority of the examples of numerals are in dates, where the noun (*s¹nt*) precedes the number and is, by definition, singular.

2. The principles of agreement in gender with the preceding or following noun appear to be roughly the same as in Classical Arabic, namely that numerals of a feminine form refer to nouns which (in the singular) are masculine and vice versa. Since *ʾym* "days" follows the forms of numerals referring to a feminine noun in both Dadanitic (*s²r ʾym*) and Safaitic (*s¹t ʾym*), it seems probable that the word **ym* "day" must have been regarded as feminine in these dialects (see §4.1.1).

3. If this is correct, it is probable that the final *t* in *t̲lt* (*t̲lt ʾym*) is part of the root (*t̲lt < *t̲lt̲*) rather than the equivalent of Arabic *tāʾ marbūṭah* (see §3.1.1). Unfortunately, the word *mʿn* in *t̲lt mʿn* has not yet been satisfactorily interpreted and so we cannot be certain whether or not it is the plural of a feminine noun and therefore whether the second *t* in *t̲lt* should be explained in the same way. However, it should be noted that the development **/t̲/ > /t/* is not typical of Dadanitic and so far appears to be peculiar to this word. The Dadanitic form, *t̲lt̲t*, used with masculine nouns and Safaitic *t̲lt̲t/t̲lt̲* are identical to the Classical Arabic forms.

4. In compound numbers, the units continue to take the opposite gender to the noun, but from twenty upwards the tens are (probably) of common gender, again as in Classical Arabic. However, an interesting difference is observable in the numbers thirteen through nineteen, where in Classical Arabic (and Safaitic, see §4.4.1.2) the ten takes the same gender as the noun and the unit the opposite. In the only Dadanitic example available so far, *s¹nt ʿ{s²}r w-s¹bʿ* (where Classical Arabic would have *sanat sabʿa ʿašrata*), either the ten was regarded as of common gender (like twenty, etc.) or it behaved in the same way as the units, taking the opposite gender to the noun.

5. In the compound numerals, the larger unit is generally placed before the smaller, contrary to the practice in Classical Arabic. This occurs both in the numbers from thirteen through nineteen (e.g., *ʿs²r w-s¹bʿ* "seventeen," cf. Classical Arabic *sabʿa ʿašrata* and Safaitic

Table 16.2　The cardinal numerals in Dadanitic

	Masculine	Common	Feminine
1			s^1nt *ʾḥdy* "year one" (CLL 26/4)
2			s^1nt *ttn* "year two" (JSLih 45/3)
3	*tltt ʾẓlt* "three ẓll ceremonies" (U 32/3–4)		*tlt ʾym* "three days" (JSLih 68/4) notes 2,3
	tltt ʾẓl "three ẓll ceremonies" (U 50/2–3)		*tlt mˁn* "three …" (?, JSLih 47/2) note 3
5			s^1nt *ḫms*^{1} "year five" (JSLih 75/5; Scagliarini 1996:96–97)
10	^{s2}rt *mnh*{l} "ten canals" (JSLih 177/1)		^{s2}r *ʾym* "ten days" (CLL 86/3) note 2
17			s^1nt ˈ{s^2}r w-s^1bˈ "year seventeen" (U 8/4–5)
20		s^1nt ^{s2}rn "year twenty" (JSLih 68/2–3; AH 63/5, 64/7–8? see Sima 1999:38)	
22			s^1nt ^{s2}rn {w}-ttn "year twenty-two" (JSLih 77/11)
29			s^1nt ^{s2}rn w-ts^{1}ˈ "year twenty-nine" (CLL 86/2–3; JSLih 83/6)
35			s^1nt *tltn w ḫms*^{1} "year thirty-five" (JSLih 82/3–4)
40		*ʾrbˁn s*^{1}*l*^{1}*t* "forty drachmas" (JSLih 177/2)	
120		*mʾt w-*^{s2}*rn* … (JSLih 77/5)	
140		*mʾt w-ʾrbˁn* … (CLL 33/2)	
145		*mʾt w-ʾrbˁn w-ḫms*^{1} *nḫl*? "one hundred and forty-five palm trees" (U 23/4–5 = AH 41)	

tmn ^{s2}*rt*, see §4.4.1.2), and from twenty onwards (e.g., *tltn w-ḫms*^{1}, cf. Classical Arabic *ḫamsun wa-talātūna*). Note also that, in the teens, unit and ten are connected by *w-* in Dadanitic but not in Arabic. See the discussion in Sima 1999:119, but note that the supposed examples of *s*^{1}*tt* ^{s2}*r* and *s*^{1}*t* ^{s2}*r* are very doubtful and that the restoration ^{s2}*r w-t*[*s*^{1}]{ˈ} in AH 81/6 (n. 28) looks unlikely on the published copy.

6. The form *ttn* may have resulted from an original *tintān (i.e., without a prosthetic initial vowel, cf. Classical Arabic *tintāni* beside *itnatāni*, also *tintēn* in modern dialects of central and eastern Arabia) with the assimilation of vowelless /n/ characteristic of Dadanitic and other Ancient North Arabian dialects (see §3.1.5).

4.4.1.2　Cardinal numbers in Safaitic

In Safaitic no example of the numeral "one" has yet been found, though a verb *wḥd* "he was alone" is well attested. The dual is used for "two". The other Cardinal numbers attested in

Safaitic are as follows:

(16)	Masculine	Common	Feminine
3	*tltt ʾs²hr* "three months" (WH 3792a)		*tlt s¹nn* "three years" (AZNG)
4			*ʾrbʿ s¹nn* "four years" (WH 3094)
5	*ḫms¹t ʾmny* "five minas" [a coin] (C 3916)		*ḫms¹ ws¹q* "five herds of camels" (C 2088)
6			*s¹t ʾym* "six days" (unpublished)
18			*s¹nt tmn ʿs²rt* "year eighteen" (LP 1064)
100		*mʾt frs¹* "a hundred horsemen" (WH 1849)	

In contrast to Dadanitic, the rules of agreement in gender and number between a numeral and the noun to which it refers appear to be the same in Safaitic as in Classical Arabic, except in the case of *s¹t ʾym* (see note 2 above). Similarly, the form of the single example of a compound number in *s¹nt tmn ʿs²rt* is paralleled almost exactly by Classical Arabic *sanat tamāniya ʿašrata*.

4.4.1.3   Cardinal numbers in Hasaitic

The following cardinal numbers, all feminine, are attested in Hasaitic:

(17)	6	*s¹nt s¹t* (unpublished)
	27	*s¹nt ʿs²{rn} w s¹b{ʿ}* (Robin-Mulayḥa 1, *contra* ed.)
	34	*ʾrbʿ w-tltn s¹nt* giving a person's age (Livingstone 1984:100)

4.4.2   Ordinal numbers

No ordinal numbers have yet been identified.

4.4.3   Totality

The notion of totality is expressed in Safaitic, Hismaic, and Dadanitic by *kll* (*kulil (?), cf. Arabic *kull*). As in Arabic, when *kll* is followed by an undefined entity it means "each, every": for example, *kll ʿs²r ṣdq* "every true kinsman" (HCH 191, Safaitic; MNM 6, Hismaic). When it is followed by a defined entity (so far only pronominal suffixes are attested), it means "all" or "the whole": for example, in Dadanitic *h-mqʿd kll-h* "the whole sitting-place" (HE 1); Safaitic *ʾs²yʿh kll-hm* "all his companions" (LP 243).

5.   SYNTAX

Given the fragmentary and formulaic nature of the available documents, no coherent description of Ancient North Arabian syntax can yet be attempted. The following notes represent some miscellaneous features which can be gleaned from the Dadanitic and Safaitic texts.

5.1 Word order

5.1.1 Word order in verbal sentences

5.1.1.1 *Dadanitic*

The majority of Dadanitic inscriptions begin with the subject followed by the verb followed by the object (i.e., they are SVO) and then adverbial or prepositional phrases:

(18) 1. N *bn* NN *qrb h-ṣlm l-ḏġbt*
        "N son of NN offered the statue to Ḏġbt" (JSLih 41/1–3)
      2. N *ktb-h b-ḏh*
        "N wrote it here" (JSLih 279)
      3. N₁ *w*-N₂ [SUBJECTS] *ʾẓlh* [verb] *h-ẓll* [OBJECT] *l-ḏġbt b-khl bʿd ml-hm b-bdr*
        [PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES]
        "N1 and N2 have performed the ẓll ceremony **for** Ḏġbt **in**
        Khl **for the sake of** their winter crops **in** Bdr" (U 19/1–6)

This order may not reflect normal practice but rather the nature of the texts, which are mainly dedications, records of the performance of religious rites, and graffiti, in which the name of the "author" was inevitably given prominence.

By contrast, the VSO (or VOS) order, which is the norm in Classical Arabic, is very rarely attested in the Dadanitic inscriptions:

(19) *ḫls¹*   N₁   *bn*   N₂
      died   N₁   son of   N₂
      "N₁ son of N₂ died" (literally "was carried off," CLL 78, 79, 80)

5.1.1.2 *Safaitic*

Unlike the Dadanitic inscriptions, the Safaitic graffiti usually begin with the *lām auctoris* (see §4.3.2) followed by the author's name and part of his genealogy. Any statement is then linked to the genealogy by the connective *w* "and." This permits a natural word order within the statement, in contrast to the Dadanitic texts where it may have been distorted by the need to begin the first sentence with the author's name for the sake of emphasis.

The usual word order in Safaitic is VSO or VOS, as in Classical Arabic. Even if they existed, case endings, being short vowels, would not show up in Safaitic orthography and it is therefore sometimes impossible to decide which is the subject and which the object in a sentence. Thus:

(20) 1. *s¹nt ḥrbt ʾl ʿwḏ ʾl ṣbḥ,*
        "the year the ʾl ʿwḏ made war on [or "plundered"] the ʾl Ṣbḥ," or *vice versa*
          (SIJ 59, see also C 2577)
      2. *s¹nt s¹lm ʾl bʿd ʾl ʿwḏ,*
        "the year the ʾl Bʿd made peace with the ʾl ʿwḏ," or *vice versa*
          (C 4394, wrongly transliterated in C)

The indirect object can also precede the direct object:

(21) 1. *ngy*   *b-h-bqr*   *h-nḫl,*
        he fled   with-the-cows   the-valley
        "and he fled the valley with the cows" (LP 90)

2. *bny*   *l-s¹ʿd*   *h-rgm*,
   he built   for-S¹ʿd   the-cairn
   "he built the cairn for S¹ʿd" (WH 421)

Verbs in Safaitic can take multiple direct objects: for example, *rʿy h-ʾbl h-nḫl bql*, "he pastured the camels (*h-ʾbl*) [in] the valley (*h-nḫl*) [on] spring herbage (*bql*)" (C 2670). Compare *rʿy h-nḫl bql nʿm-hm*, "he pastured their small cattle (*nʿm-hm*) [in] the valley [on] spring-herbage" (C 1534).

5.1.2   Word order in nominal sentences

In common with Arabic and other Semitic languages, the Ancient North Arabian dialects used nominal sentences instead of employing the verb "to be" as a copula.
Thus in Dadanitic: *w-ʾn N bn N*, "and I [am] N son of N" (CLL 57/2; also in Thamudic D e.g., JSTham 637, and Hismaic e.g., King 1990: KCJ 646)
   l-N h-mṯbr (literally "to/for N [is] the grave-chamber"), i.e., "the grave-chamber belongs to N" (JSLih 366/1)
There are numerous examples in Safaitic. Thus
   l-N h-ḫṭṭ, "By N [are] the carvings" (e.g., WH 368)
   l-N w-h-ḫṭṭ, 'By N and the carving [is by him?]' (WH 353)
   l-N w-h-rgm, "For N and the cairn [is his]" (HCH 1, 2), where we know from other texts that this person was the occupant of the grave under the cairn.
   l-N w-l-h h-bkrt, "By N and the young she-camel [is] his [or "is by him"]" (WH 2833b)
   l-N w-l-h-rgm, "For N and for him/her [is the] cairn" (WH 3420, etc.); for the assimilation of the article to the preceding enclitic personal pronoun, see §4.1.8.2, **7**.
   w-b-ʾs¹ l-h, literally "and distress [was] to him", i.e. "he was in distress" (CSNS 779)
   l N h-dr, literally " by/for N the place". This ia a very common expression in the Safaitic inscriptions. It is unlikely to be a claim to personal real estate, something which is impractical in the nomadic life. Instead, it almost certainly means simply "N was here".
Note also the word order in the nominal phrase
   l-N b-ms¹rt ʾl ʿmrt frs¹, "by N, a horseman (*frs¹*) in the unit (*ms¹rt*) of the ʾl ʿmrt" (Macdonald 1993: 374).

5.1.3   Annexation

Annexation (the *iḍāfa* of the Arab grammarians) is a fundamental feature of Semitic grammar (see Ch. 10) in which two or more elements are bound together to form a grammatical and semantic unit. Nothing is allowed to intervene between the elements (except in certain very specific circumstances of which we have no examples in Ancient North Arabian) and thus items such as adjectives (including demonstrative adjectives) follow the final element even if they refer to the first. The unit as a whole is defined or undefined according to the nature of the final element even if one of the preceding elements would otherwise normally take the definite article (see under Safaitic, below).
Examples of annexation in Dadanitic are:
Undefined *b-ḥqwy kfr* (*ḥaqway) 'on two sides of a tomb' (JSLih 75/3)
Defined 3-element annexation *kbry s²ᶜt h-nṣ* "the two kabīrs of the association of H-NṢ" (CLL 77/3-4)
Defined + a demonstrative *ʿrr h-s¹fr ḏh* "the dishonorer of this inscription" (HE 1/5-6).
Examples of annexation in Safaitic are:

Undefined + adjective *kll ʿs²r ṣdq* "every true friend" (HCH 191, also in Hismaic MNM 6)
Defined by the article (**1**) *mʿwr h-s¹fr* "the scratcher-out of the writing" (e.g., WH 1679),
              (**2**) *nmrt h-s¹lṭn* "Namārah of the government" (LP 540). When not annexed, the place-name is *h-nmrt* (e.g., LP 330, cf. the modern name, *al-Namārah*)
Defined by a name *ḥrb nbṭ* "the war of the Nabataeans" (C 3680).

5.1.4   Demonstrative Adjectives

When the modified noun is part of a noun phrase, two constructions are possible: (i) *h-ẓll ḏh l-dġbt* (U 33/2-3) or (ii) *h-ẓll l-dġbt ḏh* (U 4/3), both of which mean "this ẓll-ceremony for Dġbt." The second construction is bizarre and may be an error on the part of the engraver.

5.2 Agreement

In Ancient North Arabian verbs agree with their subjects in gender and number, regardless of their position in the sentence (in contrast to Classical Arabic, Wright 1896–1898: ii, 289–290).

In Dadanitic, the only dialect in which it is identifiable, the use of the dual in verbal agreement is erratic. Thus, it is used after two subjects in some texts:

(22) N₁ *w*-N₂ *ʾẓlh h-ẓll*
      "N₁ and N₂ have performed the ẓll-ceremony" (U 19/1–4)

whereas in others the plural verb is used:

(23) A. N₁ *w*-N₂ *wdyw*
          "N₁ and N₂ have erected (?)" (JSLih 77/2)
      B. *kbry s²ʿt h-nṣ ʾhḏw*
          "The two kabīrs of the association of H-NṢ have taken possession" (CLL 77/3–4)

The same variation can be seen in the use of enclitic personal pronouns (§4.1.8.2). Thus, in U 19 the two subjects are followed by a verb in the dual (*ʾẓlh*), but are later referred to by the plural enclitic personal pronoun *-hm* (lines 5–7). By contrast, in U 69, the two subjects are followed by a verb in the plural (*ʾẓllw*), but are referred to later by the dual pronominal suffix *-hmy*. See Sima 1999:117–118 for tables showing the variations in agreement in the inscriptions from al-ʿUḏayb. Compare the situation in the modern spoken Arabic dialects, where the dual is in general use on nouns, but requires plural concord in the verb, adjectives, and pronouns (Clive Holes). This is a very old feature in the dialects which can already be seen in the earliest Arabic papyri (see Hopkins 1984:94–98).

5.3 Verb conjugations

The suffix- and prefix-conjugations are each associated with particular usages.

5.3.1   The suffix-conjugation

In Dadanitic, the suffix-conjugation is used of completed acts, e.g., N *ʾhḏ h-mqbr*, "N has taken possession of the tomb" (JSLih 306), and for the optative: *ʿrr dġbt*, "may Dġbt dishonor" (HE 1/4–5); or *rḍy-h*, "may he [the deity] favor him" (U 18/4–5) in contrast to the imperative, *rḍ-h*, "favor him," which is more common in this formula.

In Safaitic, the suffix-conjugation has four distinct functions. First, it is used for completed acts and, in particular, acts which preceded the author's present state or actions (where Classical Arabic would have the perfect, or *kāna* + the perfect, or *qad* + the perfect): for example, *nfr mn rm* "he had fled from Roman territory" (e.g., C 3721); *wgd ʾtrʿm-h f-ngʿ*, "he had found the inscription of his grandfather and so he was grieving" (e.g., C 793); *wgm ʿl* N *mqtl qtl-h ʾl ḥwlt*, "he was mourning for N, a murder-victim, whom the ʾl Ḥwlt had killed" (lit. "...killed the ʾl Ḥwlt killed him," HCH 126); *s¹mʿ ʾn myt flfṣ* "he heard that Philip had died" (MHES p. 286).

Second, the suffix-conjugation is used for descriptions of the author's state, or acts which were not complete, at the time of writing: *dt̲ʾ* "he is spending the season of later rains"; *rʿy* "he is pasturing"; *wgm* "he is grieving"; *h̲rṣ* "he is keeping watch" (where Arabic would use the imperfect).

Third, in Safaitic, as in Classical Arabic, it is used for the optative: *f-h lt whbt s²n²-h bn yd-h* "and so, O Lt, may you give his enemy into (lit. between) his hands" (C 4037). This construction is also frequent in Hismaic: for example, in *d̲krt lt*, "may Lt be mindful of" (e.g., TIJ 58, etc.).

Fourth, the suffix-conjugation can be used as a virtual subjunctive: *s¹lm l-d̲ s¹ʾr w- ʿwr l-d̲ ʿwr h-s¹fr*, "security to whoever leaves (i.e., "may leave") intact and blindness to whoever scratches out (i.e., "may scratch out") the inscription" (e.g., LP 361). Compare the same formula using the prefix-conjugation in §5.3.2.

5.3.2 The prefix-conjugation

The handful of Dadanitic examples of the prefix-conjugation are all in damaged or doubtful contexts.

However, four distinct uses of the prefix-conjugation can be identified for Safaitic. First, it is used in clauses expressing purpose: *l-ys²rq* "in order to migrate to the inner desert" (LP 180).

Second, the Safaitic prefix-conjugation occurs with a jussive implication: *nngy* "may we escape" (WH 135). Note also *nḥyy* "may we live prosperously" in Thamudic B (LP 495).

Third, after the negative particle *lm* the prefix-conjugation has a perfect implication as in Classical Arabic (in an unpublished text).

Finally, the prefix-conjugation is used with a subjunctive implication: *s¹lm l-d̲ s¹ʾr w-ʿwr l-d̲ yʿwr*, "security to whoever leaves (i.e., "may leave") intact and blindness [cf. Arabic *ʿawar*] to whoever scratches out (i.e., 'may scratch out')" (e.g., LP 391). There seems to be no difference in meaning between invocations which use the suffix-conjugation (see §5.3.1) and those which use the prefix-conjugation.

5.4 Participles

Several different uses of participles are attested in Safaitic. An active participle can function as a finite verb with a perfective sense: for example, *w-wgd ʾtr gs²-h qbrn d̲w ʾl yz̲r* "he found the traces of his raiding party, members of the ʾl Yz̲r having performed the burial" (C 2156); *wlh ʾl ʾs²yʿh ḥrbn ʾl t̲{y}* "he grieved for his companions [who were] raiding [*ḥāribīn*] the tribe of T̲y'" (C 2795). In addition, active participles often form a circumstance clause (in Arabic grammar, a *ḥāl*): for example, *w-wḥd ġzz* "and he was alone on a raid" (WH 128), where *ġzz* is an active participle (*ġāziz*); *ḥll h-dr ṣyr m-mdbr* "he camped at this place while returning to permanent water [ṣyr] from the inner desert" (C 2590), where *ṣyr* is an active participle (*ṣāyir*).

Participles can be used as virtual relative clauses (see §5.5). The active participle can take a direct object, as in C 2795 above, while a passive participle can be used either on its own (e.g., *wgm ʿl s¹yd mqtl* "he mourned for S¹yd who had been killed"; CSNS 1004), or in construct with another word (e.g., N *mqtl ṭyʾ* "N victim of [i.e., who had been killed by] Ṭyʾ"; CSNS 1011). This is probably the explanation of the passive participles which often follow the names of those for whom an author mourns: thus N *trḥ* (*tarīḥ) "N who is untimely dead"; N *rġm mny* (*raġīm manāyā) "N who has been humbled by (lit. "of") the Fates."

5.5 Relative clauses

In Safaitic, relative clauses can be formed with the relative pronoun *ḏ* (see §4.1.8.3, **3**).

(24) *h   lt   ʿyr   m-ḏ   qtl-h*
          O   Lt   recompense   from-who   killed-him
          "O Lt [grant] recompense from [him] who killed him" (LP 385)

and with the relative *mn* (*man; see §4.1.8.3, **1**):

(25) *ʿwr   l-mn   yʿwr   h-s¹fr*
          blindness   to-whoever   scratches out   the writing
          "And blindness to whoever scratches out the writing" (SIJ 284)

Relative clauses can also be formed without a relative ponoun simply by using the prefix-conjugation with an implied or explicit reference back to the antecedant. This type of relative clause can be used in Safaitic even after a defined antecedent, contrary to the practice in Classical Arabic, though it is found at earlier stages of the language (cf. Beeston 1970:50, n.1):

(26) *l-h   h-mhrt   yrbb-h*
          to-him [is]   the-filly   he is training-it
          "His is the filly which he is training" (C 1186)

Such a relative clause can also be constructed using the suffix-conjugation, and again can be employed even after a defined antecedent:

(27) *wgm . . .   ʾlʾnʿm   qtl-h   ʾl   ṣbḥ*
          he mourned . . .   for-ʾnʿm   killed-him   ʾl   Ṣbḥ
          "He mourned . . . for ʾnʿm whom the ʾl Ṣbḥ had killed" (C 4443)

5.6 Invocations

In Safaitic, invocations can be expressed in three different ways: (i) by the vocative particle *h* + divine name + imperative + predicate (e.g., *h lt ʿwr ḏ yʿwr h-s¹fr* "O Lt blind whoever scratches out the writing"); (ii) by the vocative particle *h* + divine name + an understood verb + noun (e.g., *h lt ġnmt* "O Lt [grant] booty"; cf. Arabic *ḥanānayka yā rabbi* "O Lord have mercy on me" for *taḥannan ʿalayya ḥanānan*, Wright 1896–1898:ii, 73); and (iii) by a verb in the suffix-conjugation with an optative implication + divine name + predicate. This is particularly common in Hismaic: for example, *ḏkrt lt* N., "may Lt be mindful of N."

6. LEXICON

Since Ancient North Arabian is known only from inscriptions, 98 percent of which are graffiti, there is a vast disproportion between the size of the recorded onomasticon and

the surviving lexicon. The former is huge, perhaps the largest collection of personal names in any group of Ancient Near Eastern texts. Indeed, in reality it is even larger than it appears, since no vowels or doubled letters are shown and in many cases the same group of consonants must have covered several different names distinguished only by their vocalizations or by consonant doubling (e.g., *S^{l}lm* could represent *S^{1}alm, *S^{1}ālim, *S^{1}alīm, etc.).

By contrast, the lexicon that has survived is tiny and is severely limited in range by the subject matter of the texts. This is particularly true of Dadanitic, where the vast majority of the monumental inscriptions are dedications, or record the performance of religious duties, whereas the graffiti consist almost entirely of names. Similarly, since the Hasaitic inscriptions found so far are virtually all gravestones, they have yielded a very limited vocabulary. On the other hand, the Safaitic (and, to a lesser extent, the Hismaic) graffiti deal with a wide range of subjects, albeit very laconically.

In the past, the main resource for interpreting the Ancient North Arabian lexicon has been Classical Arabic. However, Modern Arabic dialects are being used increasingly to help explain features in Ancient North Arabian (particularly Safaitic) which do not occur in the Classical language. For instance, the word *ʾs^{2}rq* (found in Safaitic) has traditionally been translated "he went east," based on Classical Arabic *šarraqa*. However, it is clear from the texts that their authors used *ʾs^{2}rq* in the same way as the modern bedouins of the same area use *šarraq*, in the sense of "he migrated to the inner desert," regardless of whether that meant traveling north, south, east, or west. There are also a number of words where the meaning has not been preserved in Arabic, but can be found in the cognate in another Semitic language, for example the word *nḥl* in Safaitic which means "a valley" (cf. Hebrew and Aramaic *naḥal*), as opposed to Arabic *naḫl* "a palm tree." Similarly, the word *ʾs^1* in Taymanitic and possibly Lihyanite is probably to be interpreted as "leader" on the basis of Sabaic (see Macdonald 1992a:30–31).

However, there are also a number of words for which etymology does not seem to provide an appropriate meaning and which therefore, at present, have to be explained from their context: for example, *ḥrṣ* in Safaitic which appears to mean "he kept watch," or *wgm*, which seems to be one of the numerous words for "to mourn" in that dialect. Sima argues that the key words in the Dadanitic vocabulary of the inscriptions from al-ʿUḏayb (a side-valley near al-ʿUlā) relate to the maintenance of the irrigation system (1999:90–105), but this is often difficult to justify philologically, and the context usually seems to point to the performance of a religious ceremony.

Given the nature of the material, a complete description of Ancient North Arabian will never be possible. However, large numbers of new, well-recorded texts are becoming available (particularly in Safaitic) and much careful analysis is being undertaken. It may therefore not be too long before it will be possible to present a rather more detailed description than that offered here.

7. READING LIST

In Macdonald 2000, I have discussed the languages of pre-Islamic Arabia (i.e., not just Ancient North Arabian) at a more general level and explained the terminology. For a masterly brief discussion of Ancient North Arabian (with some different views from those expressed here) see Müller 1982. Sass 1991 presents a detailed analysis of the dispersed ONA texts though for a brief critique of his use of paleography see Macdonald 2004a. Caskel 1954 is

still the most recent published overall description of Dadanitic (Lihyanite), though a number of unpublished doctoral theses have been devoted to the subject. Caskel's work is marred by many strained interpretations of the texts and an attempt to force the language into the mold of Classical Arabic. However, Sima 1999 presents an excellent edition and analysis of an important group of Dadanitic texts and, although some of his conclusions are disputed, this marks a significant advance in our knowledge of the language. For a brief general outline of the present state of Thamudic studies (plus Taymanitic and Hismaic), see Macdonald and King 1999 and references there. For a similarly brief outline of Safaitic, see Müller 1980 and Macdonald 1995. Readings of the full corpus of the Hasaitic inscriptions (though regrettably without photographs) together with an excellent study can be found in Sima 2002. Finally, it should be noted that readings and interpretations of Ancient North Arabian texts published by A. Jamme and A. van den Branden should be treated with great caution.

Abbreviations

AH	Dadanitic inscriptions originally published in Abū al-Ḥasan 1997 and republished in Sima 1999
AZNG	Safaitic inscription in Abbadi and Zayadine 1996
C	Safaitic inscriptions in *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum. Pars V*. Paris, 1950–1951
CIH	South Arabian and Hasaitic inscriptions in *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum. Pars IV*. Paris, 1889–1932
CLL	Dadanitic inscriptions in Caskel 1954
CSNS	Safaitic inscriptions in Clark 1979
CTSS	Hismaic inscriptions in Clark 1980
HCH	Safaitic inscriptions in Harding 1953
HE	Dadanitic and Taymanitic inscriptions in Harding 1971b
HU	Taymanitic, Hismaic, and Thamudic B, C, and D inscriptions copied by C. Huber and renumbered in van den Branden 1950
Ja 1046	Hasaitic inscription in Jamme 1966:72–73
JSLih	Dadanitic inscriptions in Jaussen and Savignac 1909–1922
JSTham	Taymanitic, Hismaic, and Thamudic B, C, and D inscriptions in Jaussen and Savignac 1909–1922
LP	Safaitic and Thamudic B inscriptions in Littmann 1943
MHES	Safaitic inscriptions in Macdonald 1995b
MNM	Hismaic inscriptions in Milik 1958–1959
MSTJ	Safaitic inscriptions in Macdonald and Harding 1976
NST	Safaitic inscriptions in Harding 1951
Ph	Taymanitic, Hismaic, and Thamudic B, C, and D inscriptions copied by H. St.J. B. Philby and published in van den Branden 1956
Robin-Mulayḥa 1	Hasaitic inscription in Robin 1994:80–81
SIAM i	Safaitic inscriptions in Macdonald 1979
SIJ	Safaitic inscriptions in Winnett 1957
TIJ	Hismaic inscriptions in Harding and Littmann 1952
U	Dadanitic inscriptions from al-ʿUḏayb published (and republished) in Sima 1999
WH	Safaitic inscriptions in Winnett and Harding 1978
WTay	Taymanitic inscriptions in Winnett and Reed 1970
WTI	Dumaitic, Hismaic, and Thamudic B, C, and D inscriptions in Winnett and Reed 1970

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In the bibliography, works are listed alphabetically by author, but each one is marked with one or more of the following letters which give an indication of the subject matter:

D   Dadanitic
G   General
H   Hismaic
Ha   Hasaitic
OA   Old Arabic
ONA   Oasis North Arabian
S   Safaitic
T   Taymanitic
Th   Thamudic B, C, D, Southern Thamudic

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