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Prepositional Phrases in the Dadanitic Inscriptions

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Abstract

This article is concerned with the use and meaning of ten different prepositions attested in the corpus of Dadanitic inscriptions. Compared with previous overviews of the prepositional system, the article provides a more complete picture of the various semantic functions exhibited by these prepositions. It also discusses the impact of formulaic language on the semantic scope of individual preposition as well as instances where different prepositions have the same semantic function. It also compares the use of these prepositions with cognates in other ancient North-Arabian corpora. In addition to this, it contains some new interpretations and translations.

Keywords: Ancient North Arabian; Dadanitic; Prepositions

1 Introduction

This article concerns the prepositional system exhibited in the Ancient North Arabian inscriptions from the ancient oasis Dadan (modern-day ʾal-ʿUlāʾ in north-western Saudi Arabia). The term Dadanitic refers to inscriptions made in the local script of the oasis. These inscriptions were previously categorised as either Dedanite or Lihyanite. These terms could refer to successive dynasties in the oasis. However, the term Lihyanite is consistently used as an ethnonym. Dadanite, on the other hand, is also used with reference to the place. It is, therefore, possible that the terms have the same referent (Scagliarini 1995). Macdonald has argued in favour of the term Dadanitic because the texts in both groups belong to the same palaeographic and linguistic continuum and because of Sima's arguments in favour of the spelling Dadan instead of Dedan.[1] For these same reasons the term Dadanitic will be used in this paper.

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[1]Macdonald 2004: 490–492; for further discussions about the palaeographic development see Macdonald 2000: 33; for arguments in favour of the spelling Dadan see Sima 2000: 42–46, and Macdonald 2000: n. 1. The vocalisation primarily rests on the spelling in two cuneiform texts from the neo-babylonian period related to Nabonid (^{URU}da-da-nu and ^{URU}da-da-na; cf. Beaulieu 1989: 150–151, 167) and the spelling Δαδαν in the Septuagint (cf. Gen 10:7).

The Dadanitic corpus can be subdivided into several different categories based on content/formula or on the method of carving. As for the latter it is noteworthy that some inscriptions are written in relief with a formal hand, most of which have a commemorative function. The use of a stone mason makes these inscriptions unique within the ANA corpora. But it is also noteworthy that not all commemorative inscriptions were written in relief.

The main part of the article contains a survey of ten different prepositions and the appendix contains a glossary of words with a new interpretation.

1.1 Aim and purpose

The main aim of this article is to map the prepositional system as it is used in the corpus of the Dadanitic inscriptions. The following questions will be considered:

1. What prepositions are used in the Dadanitic corpus?

    (a) Do these inscriptions contain the same prepositions as other neighbouring ANA corpora (e.g. Safaitic)?

2. What was the semantic scope of these prepositions and what functions did they have?

    (a) How does the formulaic language affect their semantic scope?

    (b) Do these prepositions cover different and distinct semantic fields or are there overlaps so that some can be used interchangeably?

3. How many prepositional objects can a preposition govern?

1.2 Prepositions within a uniform corpus: the scope and limitations of this study

Before the main part of this study some remarks about the content of these inscriptions are in order. First, many inscriptions are irrelevant because they do not contain any prepositions. Secondly, many clauses lack prepositional phrases because they do not contain peripheral arguments. Thirdly, even those inscriptions that contain prepositions exhibit little variation of topics and syntactic constructions. Fourthly, many prepositions are primarily found in formulaic expressions (e.g. in *ẓll*-inscriptions). It is reasonable to assume that the formulaic character of these inscriptions has influenced the semantic scope exhibited by different prepositions. The use of *ʿly* and *bʿd* in *ẓll*-inscriptions nicely illustrates this point. The latter is more often used to mark benefactive phrases. But *ʿly* is also used in similar clauses pointing to a semantic overlap. If *ẓll*-inscriptions had not been so numerous, the standardised use of *bʿd* could easily have obscured this polysemy. These observations are very important and serve as a reminder of the incompleteness of the material at hand. With this in mind we turn to the inscriptional evidence.

2   Dadanitic prepositions

Both Macdonald and Farès-Drappeau have written brief surveys of the prepositions used in Dadanitic.[2] But their treatments are limited in that they only give a few examples, list English and French counterparts, and occasionally provide etymologies. The present article attempts to fill this gap.

2.1   ʿly/ʿl

This preposition is written either as *ʿly* or *ʿl*. The longer form occurs in most examples, making it difficult to determine if there is a distributional pattern. The shorter form *ʿl* is primarily found with clitics (e.g. ex. [5]) but it is also used once in the construction *ʿl ḏ-kn* (ex. [2]). It is therefore possible that *ʿl* and *ʿly* represent two distinct forms, the shorter being used with clitic pronouns and the long in most other constructions. However, more evidence would be needed to prove this. Moreover, the use of *ʿly* in similar phrases (e.g. *ʿly ḏ-kn* in AH 069 and 075) could indicate that *ʿl ḏ-kn* was a scribal error. If so, the different forms are probably due to orthographic conventions. y, whether it represented a diphthong or a long vowel, is never written word-internally in Dadanitic orthography.

In terms of function *ʿly* was used as a marker of locative and benefactive phrases, with the meanings 'on' and 'for the sake of'. The locative function is attested three times:

[1] :   *l-ntnbʿl bn wny hn qbr ḏh ḥm ʿly ymn w ʿly šm mn ṯrq(h)* (JSLih 081)
'This tomb belongs to Ntnbʿl son of Wny. It is protected on the north and on the south against thieves.[3]'

Two observations are noteworthy about the phrases in ex. [1]. To begin with, the preposition is repeated before both *ymn* and *šm*. Secondly, *ʿly* could be interpreted as an adversative if the two phrases were not followed by *mn ṯrq(h)*. However, together with the adversative phrase, a locative interpretation of *ʿly* seems more plausible. The two phrases emphasise that the tomb is thoroughly protected.

Farès-Drappeau has suggested that *ʿly* primarily functioned as a locative preposition.[4] The locative meaning is certainly closer to that of the root *ʿly* but the size of the sample makes it impossible to determine whether *ʿly* had any primary function in the local dialect. Moreover, the preposition is used as

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[2]Macdonald 2004: 519–520; Farès-Drappeau 2005: 72–74.

[3]Winnett & Reed 1970: 124, follow Jaussen & Savignac 1909-1922: 450–451, Pl. LXXXV, and reconstruct *šm[ʾl]* at the end of line five, i.e. one of the words meaning 'left' in CAr (*Lane*, 1601). For the present argument it is not necessary to determine whether the text was broken or not. But some comments about the state of the inscription are still in order. It is possible that the text is broken at the end of line five because some of the previous lines are longer. But the last word on the previous line (*ymn*) ends at the same point as the *m* in *šm[ʾl]*. Moreover, the photograph does not contain a trace of more letters to the left of the *m* in *šm*. Lastly, it might not be not necessary to reconstruct *[ʾl]* at the end of line five since CAr also contains the term *šʾm*, meaning either 'left' or 'south' (Lane, 1490). In comparison with other Central Semitic languages Hebrew and Aramaic has *śmʾl* (DNWSI, 1159–60) while *šʾm* is attested in Sabaic (SbD, 130) and Qatabanic (MuB 659, 9).

[4]Farès-Drappeau: 74: "La premier sens de la préposition ʿly est «sur, au-dessus»"

much as a benefactive within the present corpus because of its occurrence in the formula of *ẓll*-inscriptions. This function suggests that there was a semantic overlap between *ʿly* and *bʿd*:[5]

[2]: *llt ʾẓll h-ẓll l-ḏġbt ʿl ḏ-kn l-hm b-bdr f-rḍ-h* (U 073)
'Llt performed the ẓll-ceremony for Ḏġbt on behalf of that which belongs to them at Bdr and so favour him!'

[3]: *mqḥ s¹lḥ ḏ-(ġ)bt ʾẓll b-khl ʿly m kn l-h b-ḏtʿʿl mn ḏtʾ w-ḫrf f-rḍ-h w-ʾtb-h* (U 059)
'Mqḥ the priest of Ḏġbt performed (the ẓll-ceremony) at Khl on account of that which belongs to him in Ḏtʿʿl from the spring harvest and autumn harvest, and so favour him and reward him.'

It is noteworthy that *ʿly* governs the same kind of objects as *bʿd* and that both are used together with the same kind of locative phrases. It is possible that a diachronic explanation could account for the use of *ʿly* and *bʿd* but the absence of dating formulae in many inscriptions and the lack of a fixed chronology makes it impossible to substantiate such a theory. Leaving this question to the side, we turn to syntactic matters:

As for prepositional objects, *ʿly* governs both individual nouns and headless relative clauses. It mostly takes one object but there is one instance where it governs two coordinated objects:

[4]: ---- ʿ ʿzy ---- ḏ ---- *h-ẓll ʿly ḏtʾ-h w nḫl-h f rḍ-h w ʾ{ḫ}rt-h* (AH 107)
'----ʿ ʾzy ---- ḏ ---- the ẓll-ceremony for his spring harvest and his palm garden and so favour him and his descendants.'

In addition to the benefactive use of *ʿly*, there is one example with a semantic function that is neither benefactive nor malefactive but somewhere in-between the two:

[5]: *whblh bn zdqny w lmy bn nfyh wdyw nfs¹ mr bn ḥwt m{h} ʾḫḏ ʿl-hmy ḫrg* (JSLih 077, 1–3)[6]
'Whblh son of Zdqny and Lmy son of Nfyh dedicated? the funeral chamber of Mr son of Ḥwt because of an obligation he had brought upon them.'

Lastly, the corpus does not contain any examples where *ʿly* means 'against' rather than 'on' or 'on behalf of'.[7] Neither does the corpus contain verbs of

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[5]Cf. Sima 1999: 101; Other examples of this type occur in U 050, U 071, U 059, U 087, U 125, U 126, AH 069, AH 071, AH 075, AH 079, AH 089, AH 107, AH 010.

[6]The verb *ḫrg* usually means 'to go' or 'to issue' in CAr and there is also a noun from the same root with the meaning 'disbursement' or 'expenditure' (*Lane*, 718–19). The root is also attested twice in Central Middle Sabaic with the meaning to 'sue' or 'bring a lawsuit against s.o': *w-ʾs¹d-hw ʾs¹d ḫrg-hw b-ʿbr mrʾ-hm* 'and his men are the men who sued him before their lord' (CIH 398, 7); *w-tws³ʿ-ḏ-ḫrg-hw b-ʿbr mrʾ-hw* 'and to take his due of the one who sued him before his lord.' (Ja 646, 6–7). In the present context the combination of this verb with *ʾḫḏ* and *ʿly* probably means something along the lines of 'to bring a claim/obligation upon s.o'.

[7]Cf. the Safaitic use of *ʿly* in curse formulae (Al-Jallad 2015: 149).

grief which normally have *ʿl* with their objects in Safaitic and Hismaic.[8] However, the absence of these functions should not be taken as an indication that Dadanitic used other preposition for these functions. In light of the current evidence it is just as likely that the lack of comparable phrases and expressions accounts for the absence of examples.

2.2 bʿd

The preposition *bʿd* is used frequently in *ẓll*-inscriptions, governing both nouns or headless relative clauses. In these constructions it has a benefactive function, like *ʿly*, indicating that it is a compound preposition consisting of *bi-* and *ʿad*.[9] As was noted in the section above, it is unclear why both *bʿd* and *ʿly* were used but their relative frequency indicates that *bʿd* was part of the standard formula:

[6] : *ḥmyh bnt nẓrh ʾft h-ẓll ḏh l-ḏġbt b-khl bʿd m-l-h f-rḍ-h w-s¹ʿd-h* (U 005)
‘Ḥmyh daughter of Nẓrh accomplished this ẓll-ceremony for Ḏġbt at Khl for the sake of that which was hers and so favour her and help her.’

[7] : *ʿbdʾs¹ bn ʿgry ʾẓll h-ẓll b-khl l-ḏġb(t) bʿd nḫl-h b-bdr f-rḍ-h w-ʾḫrt-h* (U 011)
‘ʿbdʾs¹ son of ʿgry performed the ẓll-ceremony at Khl for Ḏġbt for the sake of his palm garden in Bdr and so favour him and his descendants.’

As for the number of objects governed, *bʿd* is often followed by one noun phrase but in a number of inscriptions it also governs two phrases coordinated by *w*:

[8] : *ʿf bn ʿyḏh ʾẓll h-ẓll nḏr bʿd dṯʾ-h w-nfs¹-h f-rḍ-h w-ʾṯb-h w-s¹ʿd-h w-ʾṯb-h* (U 021)[10]
‘ʿf son of ʿyḏh performed the ẓll-ceremony as a vow for the sake of his spring harvest and for himself and so favour him and reward him and help him and reward him.’

[9] : *ʿbdʾs¹ bn ws¹ṭ ʾẓll l-ḏġbt b-khl bʿd nḫl-h w-dṯʾ-h b-bdr f-rḍ-h w-ʾḫrt-h* (U 009; cf. U 058, U079bis, AH100)
‘ʿbdʾs¹ son of Ws¹ṭ performed (the ẓll-ceremony) for Ḏġbt at Khl for the sake of his palm garden and his spring harvest at Bdr and so favour him and his descendants.’

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[8] Al-Jallad 2015: 148; King 1990: 48 (C.5); According to Kootstra forthcoming.b *ʿly* is not attested in Taymanitic inscriptions.

[9] Macdonald 2004: 519–520; Cf. Al-Jallad 2015: 147; Farès-Drappeau 2005: 74, rightly notes that a temporal *bʿd* meaning ‘after’ does not occur in Dadanitic (cf. CAr *baʿda*). A temporal *bʿd* is attested in Safaitic, Aramaic, and Sabaic. It is possible that *ḫlf* (‘after’), which is not attested in these languages, was used in the local dialect of Dadan instead of *bʿd*. But this cannot be deduced from the evidence seeing that *ḫlf* is only attested twice in Dadanitic (see 2.6 below).

[10] Note that the verb *ʾṯb* is used twice in the prayer creating a parallelism, an uncommon feature in other prayers.

Example [8] is especially noteworthy because *bᶜd* is used to govern two different kinds of objects, i.e. both 'his spring harvest' (*dṯ-h*)[11] and 'himself' (*nfs¹-h*).[12] By way of contrast some inscriptions contain chains of objects, all of which are preceded by *bᶜd*:

[10]: *ᶜ{y}ḏ bn ḥr ᵓẓll h-ẓll l-ḏġbt b-khl bᶜd-h w bᶜd ᵓ---- b-bdr frḍ -h w ᵓḫrt-h* (U 102bis)

"{y}ḏ son of Ḥr performed the ẓll-ceremony for Ḏġbt at Khl for the sake of him and for the sake of ᵓ---- at Bdr and so favour him and {his} descendants.'

[11]: *ᶜyḏ bn ḥr b-khl ᵓẓll h-ẓlln bᶜd-h w-bᶜd ᵓb-h w-bᶜd nḫl-h <l>-ḏġbt f-rḍ-h w-ᵓḫrt-h w-s¹ᶜd-h* (U 034)

"ᶜyḏ son of Ḥr performed two ẓll-ceremonies at Khl for his own sake and for the sake of his father and for the sake of his palm garden to Ḏġbt and so favour him and his descendants and help him.'

The repetition of the preposition could indicate that it was optional in constructions with two objects but mandatory with more than two. The sample is too small, however, to determine whether the use of multiple prepositions is coincidental or if the choice was regulated by syntactic rules.

As for the order of clause constituents it is relevant to note that *bᶜd*-phrases normally occur at the end of a clause (after *b-khl* or *l-ḏġbt*). The formulaic nature of these clauses explains the consistent placement at the end of the clause while ex. [11], could suggest that there was some flexibility.

2.3   *l*

The preposition *l* is used frequently in Dadanitic. Semantically it covers the same areas as counterparts in other Central Semitic languages, indirect object (to), benefactive (for), possession (of), and possibly temporal duration (for/during). When it marks indirect objects, it is mostly used in connection with *ḏġbt* but it also occurs with other nouns outside of *ẓll*-inscriptions:[13]

[12]: *ᵓmtyṯᶜn bnt dd nḏ[r]t bᶜd bnt-h qn bnt ḫtl l-s¹lmn hm-ḏ nḏrt ᵓl-h ᵓm-h f rḍ-h w s¹ᶜd -h* JSLih 073

"ᵓmtyṯᶜn daughter of Dd vowed on behalf of her daughter Qn daughter of Ḫtl to S¹lmn according to that which her mother vowed on her behalf, and so favour her and help her.'

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[11] The noun *dṯ* typically refers to the period of the later rains in Safaitic (Al-Jallad 2015: 311; ?macdonald1992). In Sabaic *dṯ* can refer to both spring (Ja 2848 ad) and spring harvest (CIH 2). In these instances, *dṯ* often occurs together with *ḫrf* meaning either autumn or autumn harvest. In Akkadian the noun *dišu* refers to both spring and spring pasture (CAD D, 164). A noun *dš* is also attested in Ammonite meaning 'grass' or 'hay' (DNWSI, 262).

[12] The use of *bᶜd* with pronominal clitics and nouns like nfs¹ suggests that the preposition is benefactive rather than directional. Example [8] and [11], especially, make the interpretation "in the direction of" unlikely (contra Sima 1999: 99–105).

[13] An extension of this function occurs in existential clauses: *ḏ-kn l-h b-bdr* 'that which belongs to him in Bdr.' (AH 077, 3–4). Note that Farès-Drappeau 2005: 73, refers to this as possession.

Farès-Drappeau argues that *l*- can be used to express time:[14]

[13]: *s¹nt ṯtn l-tlmy* (JSLih 045)
    'the third year of Tlmy '

[14]: *f-ḫbr h-l-gbl ḏ l-ṯlt s¹nn* (JSLih 071)
    '… for three years'

As for ex. [13], it is difficult to argue that *l* expresses duration.[15] The phrase as a whole refers to a period of time but this is not caused by the semantics of *l*. The phrase in JSLih 071, on the other hand, could be classified as temporal if the above reading is correct. But there are some interpretive difficulties. First, the reading is somewhat uncertain. The last lines of the inscription are considerably shorter than the preceding ones and it is not clear (from the photograph) whether this was the result of damage on the rock before or after the carving of the inscription. If something is missing between *ṯlt* and *s¹nn*, it is far from certain that *l* has a temporal function. Secondly, Beeston has argued that the language of this inscription is closer to classical Arabic than Dadanitic.[16] If valid, his conclusion would be sufficient to exclude JSLih 071 from the present corpus even if *l* is temporal. Another feature of this inscription is the use of mixed letter forms, i.e. the carver used monumental script as well as less formal letter shapes.[17] Because of these reasons it is difficult to argue with confidence that there is evidence for a temporal emphl in Dadanitic inscriptions.

Lastly, it should be noted that the Dadanitic corpus only includes a few examples of a *lam actoris*.[18] This differentiates Dadanitic from Safaitic, Taymanitic, and Hismaic where *l/lm* is used frequently to mark authorship or possession.[19]

2.4   b

The preposition *b* has three functions in Dadanitic: to mark locative phrases (spatial and temporal), instrumental phrases, and authors.[20] When *b* is used as a spatial locative it primarily occurs in *ẓll*-inscriptions. As a locative, *b* often means 'at' but in some cases it could also mean 'in' (e.g. *b-h-mṣd*). One thing that differentiates the Dadanitic inscriptions from the Safaitic ones is the ab-

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[14]Farès-Drappeau 2005: 73; Cf. Al-Jallad 2015: 145, for this function in Safaitic.

[15]Macdonald 2004: 520 has a similar example of *l* in a dating formula: *s¹nt ḫms¹ l-hnʔs¹ bn tlmy mlk lḥyn* 'year five of Hnʔs¹ son of Tlmy king of Lḥyn'

[16]Beeston et al. 2005: 107; Beeston also argued that *l-ṯlt s¹nn* in early Arabic means 'in the third year' rather than 'for three years'.

[17]Beeston et al. 2005: 108; Macdonald 2000: 52, classifies this inscription as Dadano-Arabic.

[18]*l-gwr s²ms¹* 'by gwr son of s²ms¹' (AH 265; cf. AH 295); Winnett and Reed, 1970, 123, 228–29 contains two possible examples: *z l-dln l-rm*, 'This is for Dln by rm' (nr. 3); and *l-šnḫ* 'by Šnḫ' (nr. 4). The first inscription might not be Dadanitic because *z* is not used as a demonstrative in Dadanitc. The reading of the second one does not match the tracing or the photograph so it is uncertain.

[19]Al-Jallad 2015: 145; Macdonald 2004: 518–519; Kootstra forthcoming.b: 46.

[20]Farès-Drappeau 2005: 72–73, mentions three functions: (1) instrument or means; (2) place; (3) in dating formulas. The third corresponds to the temporal locatives.

sence of unmarked locative nouns as well as the prepositions *ʿnd* and *f*.[21] Given the formulaic nature of the inscriptions the absence could be circumstantial, especially since very few examples require the pragmatic meanings expressed by *ʿnd* and *f*.[22]

Most prepositional objects fall into one of two categories. The first consists of phrases containing the two nouns *khl* (e.g. U 56) and *mṣd* ('sanctuary' e.g. AH 224, 244).[23] For the interpretation of *khl* it is worth noting that these nouns never appear together and that they fill the same slot in the standard formula:[24]

[15]: *w ʾẓlw b-h-mṣd ẓll h-[nq] l-ḏg̱bt* (AH 197:6–7)
'And they did the ẓll of the mountain for ḏg̱bt in the sanctuary.'

[16]: *ns²l bn whblh ʾẓll h-ẓll b-khl l-ḏg̱bt bʿd ḏ-kn l-h b-bdr f-rḍ-h* (AH 130)
'Ns²l son of Whblh performed the ẓll-ceremony at Khl for Ḏg̱bt for the sake of that which belongs to him at Bdr, and so favour him.'

The distribution of *khl* and the lack of a preceding article indicates that it is a proper name, probably referring to a similar entity as *mṣd*. It is even possible that *khl* was the name of a sanctuary in Dadan where *ẓll*-ceremonies were performed.[25]

The second category of objects consist of the following terms: *tḥfy, bnʾl, tr, btr, bdr, ḏʿmn, ḏʾm, blḥ, ḏtʿʿl, ms²hl, hmḏhb, ḏʾdn*. All these words occur in phrases governed by *bʿd* and *ʿly* and they have so far been interpreted as place names. The absence of the article *h-* between *b* and these terms suggests that they referred to geographical locations. Another possibility is that they are calendrical terms. But the consistent placement directly after the noun/phrase governed by *bʿd* indicates that these locative phrases are part of the benefactive phrase, making a calendrical reading less likely. More importantly there are other calendrical terms found in dating formulae:

[17]: *s¹nt ḥms¹ b-rʾy ʿbdn hnʾs¹* (JSLih 072, 8–9)
'year five, at the rʾy of ʿbdn, Hnʾs¹'

The exact meaning of the phrase *b-rʾy* is at the present unknown and the meanings of most words that follow are uncertain (*s¹lḥn*, JSLih 068; *ḏʾbs¹mwy*, Nasif, 1988, 96; *ḏʾs¹lʿn*, AH 244; *hrm*, AH 219; *ʿbdn*, JSLih 072; *[m]nʿy*, JSLih 082; *gltqs¹*, JSLih 083; *ḥmt*, JSLih 085; *hrʿ*, as-Saʿīd 1420/2000, 3–14, no.1). The lack of an article before *rʾy* suggests that the noun is in the construct followed by a proper noun. It has been suggested that the following words are

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[21]Note, however, that the use of *f* to mark static location in Safaitic is rare and *ʿnd* is used only twice in the corpus of Safaitic texts included in *An Outline of the Grammar of the Safaitic Inscriptions* (Al-Jallad 2015: 150, 152–153).

[22]Cf. Al-Jallad 2015: 70–71, 245–26. The Safaitic corpus also uses the accusative to indicate the goal of travel. The Dadanitic texts neither mention travel nor journeys so it is impossible to determine whether the accusative, if it was still morphologically marked in Dadanitic, was used with this function.

[23]The Dadanitic noun *mṣd* could be a cognate of Arm *mṣd/mṣdʾ* meaning 'fortress' or 'stronghold' (DTTML, 823).

[24]The reading *b-mṣd* in AH 207 could be interpreted as *b-[h]-mṣd* or as elision of the article.

[25]Note, however, that Robin 2003: 778, suggests that Khl was the ancient name of Al-ʿUdhayb.

personal names. But this seems unlikely since most of them are not attested as names in the ANA and ASA corpora. Moreover, even if words such as ʿbdn, ḥrm and s¹lḥn are attested personal names, it is still unlikely that ḏʾbs¹mwy is a personal name. A more likely alternative is that they are calendrical terms referring to months, festivals, or astronomical phenomena.[26] In either case, the use of b-rʾy X after s¹nt indicates that the preposition has a temporal function.[27]

The second function of b is to mark instrumental phrases:[28]

[18] : b-yd wt JSLih 106
'By the hand of Wt.'

Related to this function is the use of b to indicate the author of an inscription comparable to *lam auctoris*:

[19] : b-ḏkrh wdd ḏ{h}k (AH 311)[29]
'By Ḏkrh son of Wdd son of Ḏ{h}k'

To summarise, the use of b in Dadanitic covers the same semantic spheres as other Central Semitic cognates even though the formulaic language of the Dadanitic material makes it difficult to determine the full semantic scope.

2.5   qbl

The preposition qbl occurs three times in the Dadanitic corpus. Two attestations occur in dating formulae before the object rʾy and one is followed by ʾns¹ in a broken context:

[20] : {s¹}nt ʿs²rn {w} tmn ṯlt ʾym qbl rʾy s¹lḥn (JSLih 068; cf. AH 244)
'Year twenty-eight three days before the rʾy of s¹lḥn. '

[21] : wʾl ʿbd s¹rmrʾ hʾ nṣb ---- h [l-]ʿtrġth qbl ʾns¹ ---- (AH 288)
'Wʾl the servant of S¹rmrʾ, he set up a standing stone [to] ʿtrġth in presence of ʾns¹'

Contextual factors determine the meaning of the preposition. In the dating formula it is reasonable to assume that it has a temporal function because the formula has a similar structure as b-rʾy X, it is preceded by a temporal expression ({s¹}nt ʿs²rn {w} tmn 'year twenty-eight'), and it modifies the temporal phrase ṯlt ʾym ('three days').

The second example is more difficult to interpret because of the break at the end of the line. Two interpretations of ʾns¹ are possible. It could either

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[26]This interpretation was suggested by Kootstra and a more detailed discussion of this and other dating formulae will appear in her forthcoming article about Dadanitic dating formulae.

[27]Moreover, rʾy is also preceded by qbl which is more narrow semantically.

[28]Another possible example occurs in JSLih 70 (cf. n 29 below).

[29]It is possible that bḏkrh is a personal name in which case the inscription would mean 'Bḏkrh loves Ḏ{h}k'. But it is not uncommon that bn is left out in Dadanitic genealogies (cf. AH 157, U 038, U 078).

mean 'people' or it could refer to someone called *ʾns¹*.[30] In both instances the preposition would be spatial rather than temporal. However, it is also possible that the missing word(s) at the end of the line would lead to another interpretation.

2.6   ḫlf

The preposition *ḫlf* only occurs twice in dating formulae, both times with a temporal function:

> **[22]** : *s¹nt ᶜs²r w tlt ymn ḫlf tᶜn ḏ ---- l{ᶜ}{b} / [t]lmy / bn / [l]ḏ{n} / ml{k} / {l}{ḫ}yn* (AH 197)
> 'Year thirteen, two days after the *tᶜn* of *ḏ ----* l{ᶜ}{b} [T]lmy son of [L]ḏ{n} king of {L}{ḫ}yn'

The damage on the second line of this year formula slightly obscures the meaning of the sentence. The term *tᶜn* could be the opposite of *rʾy*.[31] If so, then this formula would be similar to *qbl rʾy* and the missing word would be a calendrical term.

2.7   mᶜ

The preposition *mᶜ* (Ar. *maᶜa/maᶜ*), which has a comitative function, is attested four times in Dadanitic:

> **[23]** : *ḏbn ᶜmr bn mr{d} ʾgw h-ẓll ḏh l-ḏġbt ᶜl ---- mᶜ hn-ʾfklt b-bnʾl f rḍ-h w ʾḫr[t]-h w ʾtb-h hnʾ bn ᶜmr* (U 038)
> 'Ḏbn ᶜmr son of Mrd organised this ẓll-ceremony for Ḏġbt on behalf of ---- together with? the priestess in Bnʾl and so favour him and his descen[dants] and reward him. Hnʾ son of ᶜmr'

> **[24]** : *wny bn fs¹y tqt mᶜ ḏ mᶜly f rḍy-h w s¹ᶜd-h w ʾḫrt-h* (WR 16)
> 'Wny son of Fs¹y wrote together with the one of the family of Mᶜly and so may (the deity) favour him and help him and his descendants'

The reading of *mᶜ* in the first example is slightly uncertain because of the gap in the text. As a comitative phrase, it would indicate some kind of involvement of a priestess. The *ᶜl* immediately before the break could introduce

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[30] According to Harding 1971: 79, the name *ʾns¹* is attested in Dadanitic, Safaitic, and Taymanitic. It should be noted that the *ʾ* of *ʾns¹* has an unusual shape, perhaps because of the length of the word divider in the line above.

[31] Cf. Kootstra (forthcoming.a) for a more detailed discussion of this and similar formulae; The term *tᶜn* also occurs in JSLih 077 with *b*: *b-{t}ᶜn ṣd ḏ —*. It has previously been interpreted as 'at the departure of Ṣd'. But in light of Kootstra's work it seems more likely that it means: 'at the *tᶜn* of the turning of ḏ…' The broken word at the end could be a divine epithet. The term *ṣd* could mean 'turning' or 'return' (Lane, 1658). An alternative meaning could be 'sign' if it is a cognate of Akk. *ṣaddu* (*ṣādu*) which is sometimes used together with planets, e.g. Jupiter. (CAD Ṣ: 56). The second example with *ḫlf* occurs in JSLih 070: *ḫls¹ zdḫrg bn bl ḫld s¹nt ᶜs²rn wts¹ᶜ ᶜs²rʾym ḫlf fdg wbmmʾ ᶜly mgh mn hḫls¹ s¹ʾh mʾlh w ….* The meaning of the last term *fdg* is unclear but it could be a 'month' name (cf. Kootstra forthcoming.a).

a benefactive construction indicating that the priestess at Bnʾl (*hn-ʾfklt b-bnʾl*) was a beneficiary of the *z̧ll* ceremony. If so, it would be a variant of the standard formula with several benefactive phrases introduced by *l* and coordinated with *mˤ*. Alternatively, the comitative phrase could indicate that the priestess was involved in the performance of the ritual. The departure from the standard formula could be a way of emphasising that the ceremony had followed the proper procedures. But it could also be a way of highlighting that the ceremony was performed by a priestess rather than a priest.

In ex. [24] the comitative function indicates that the inscription was a collaboration between Wny and someone of a family called Mˤly.

2.8 mn

The Dadanitic preposition *mn* occurs ca. 15 times. The form is always *mn*, perhaps suggesting that the *n* was followed by a vowel (*mina*), and it usually has the meaning 'from', indicating origin or source:

[25] : *mqḥ s¹lḥ ḏ{ġ}bt ʾz̧ll b-khl ˤly m-kn l-h b-ḏtˤˤl mn ḏtʾ w ḫrf f rḍ-h w ʾtb-h* (U 059)
'Mqḥ priest of Ḏ{ġ}bt performed [the z̧ll-ceremony] at Khl on behalf of that which belongs to him in Ḏtˤˤl from the spring harvest and the autumn harvest, and so favour him and reward him. '

[26] : *llt bn ˤbny ʾz̧ll h-z̧ll bˤd ḏ-kn l-h b-bdr mn nḫl{-h} f rḍ-h l-ḏġbt* AH 077
'Llt son of ˤbny performed the z̧ll-ceremony for the sake of that which belongs to him in Bdr from (his) the palm garden – and so favour him – to Ḏġbt.'

It is probably that *mn*, in these examples, precedes products that were used to perform a *z̧ll*. The first example could then indicate that produce from both the spring and the autumn harvest was used in the ceremony. This means that Mqh either performed two separate ceremonies but only made one commemorative inscription or that he offered the fruits of both harvests at one time. The second inscription has a similar pattern but contains another object (*nḫl*; palm garden). The use of these, therefore, objects suggests that various kinds of harvests could be used to perform a *z̧ll*.[32]

In one instance it is possible that *mn* expresses manner meaning 'according to':

[27] : *tmlk bnt hd{l} ʾz̧lt l-ḏġ[b]t b-khl s¹tt ˤs²r mn s¹nt mt ˤl-h f rḍ-h w ʾḫrt-h ˤdb s¹nt ˤs²rn tlmy [mlk l]ḥyn* AH 064
'Tmlk daughter of Hdl performed [the z̧ll-ceremony] for Ḏġ[b]t at Khl sixteen (times) according to the custom of reverence on her behalf, and so favour her and her descendants forever. Year twenty of Tlmy [king of L]ḥyn.'

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[32]It is also possible that the preposition has a partitive meaning here. If so, the inscription emphasises that the ritual was only performed on behalf a specific harvest or palm garden belonging to the person who performed the ritual.

This formula is only attested in this inscription. An interesting feature is the phrase *s¹tt ʿs²r* (sixteen). It is possible that Tmlk performed the ritual 16 times before she commissioned the commemorative inscription, indicating that the inscription was made as a complement to the ceremony. The interpretation of *mn* rests on the meaning of *s¹nt* which could mean either 'year' or 'custom'. If 'year', it would be desirable to connect *mn s¹nt* with *ʿdb s¹nt*. The word *ʿdb* could perhaps be a compound preposition consisting of *ʿd* and *b* meaning 'until'. The main problem with this interpretation is the placement of the prayer between the two prepositional phrases. If the second phrase was not added as an afterthought it is simpler to view *ʿdb* as a part of the prayer. If *s¹nt* means 'custom', then *mt* could be understood as a term for a ritual/bond where one person seeks favour on someone else's behalf.[33]

Lastly two additional functions should be highlighted, the use of *mn* in reason clauses and in adversative expressions, both of which are also attested in Safaitic:[34]

[28] : *bʿls¹mn ʾḥrm h-qrt mn mh trq-h mrʾt ʾl-bhny hn-ʾfklt ḏ----* (JSLih 064)[35]
'Bʿls¹mn protected the village because the woman of the palm tree, the priestess of … cast a spell on it.'

[29] : *l-ntnbʿl bn wny hn qbr ḏh ḥm ʿly ymn ʿly šm mn ṯrq(h)* (JSLih 081)
'This tomb belongs to Ntnbʿl son of Wny. It is protected on the north and on the south against thieves.'

Regarding ex. [28] it is possible that *mn* has an adversative function: 'Bʿls¹mn protected the village against the woman…'. The exact function depends on the interpretation of *trq*. If casting a spell/charm is something positive, then *mn* is probably used to express the reason for Bʿls¹mn's protection. On the other hand, if it is something negative, it is more likely that Bʿls¹mn is protecting the village against the sorceress, in which case *mn* has an adversative function.

To summarise, *mn*, has a similar semantic range as its cognate in other Central Semitic languages. In addition to these examples *mn* also occurs in a spatial phrase together with the preposition *ʿdky* ('until'), discussed in the following section.

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[33] Cf. Lane, 2688, for similar meanings of *mt*.

[34] Ex. [28] and [29] are discussed in Farès-Drappeau 2005: 73, but she does not place them in a separate category. Both of these occur in Safaitic (Al-Jallad 2015: 150–151)

[35] This interpretation of JSLih 064 is the product of discussions during an ANA seminar in Leiden during the spring semester 2015 with Ahmad Al-Jallad, Fokelien Kootstra, and Hekmat Dirbas. The term *qrt* is taken as a cognate of Arm *qrt* (city/town; DNWSI, 1037). For *bhn* meaning palm tree see KAZ, vol 1, 174.

2.9 ʿdky

The Dadanitic corpus contains one attestation of the preposition ʿdky (to, until):

[30] : ʾbʾlf b[n] ḥyw kbr h-dʿt s²ʿt hnṣ w rb-hm ḥrmnḥr bn wḫyn kbry s²ʿt hnṣ
ʾḫdw h-mkn w h-mqʿd ḏh kll-h mn mʿn h-gbl hnʾʿly ʿdky mʿd h-gbl hnʾs¹{f}l
f rḍ-hm s¹nt ḫms¹ b-rʾy ʿbdn hnʾs¹ (JSLih 072)
'ʾbʾlf son of Ḥyw the kabir of the adviser of the party of Hnṣ and
their lord Ḥrmnḥr son of Wḫyn the two kabirs of the party of Hnṣ
took possession of the place and also of this sitting-place, its entirety
from the assembly place of the upper border until the sanctuary of the
lower border and so favour them. Year five at the rʾy of ʿbdn, Hnʾs¹.'

The preposition is found in the second part of a phrase that specifies the
boundaries of h-mkn w h-mqʿd which ʾbʾlf and Ḥrmnḥr took as their possession.
Semantically it has a terminative function meaning 'until, as far as'.[36] The
area subdued ranged from the assembly place of the northern border 'until' the
sanctuary of the southern border.[37]

2.10 ldy

The preposition ldy (cf. Ar laday-, ladā) has only been identified in JSLih 077:[38]

[31] : whblh bn zdqny w lmy bn nfyh wdyw nfs¹ mr bn ḥwt m{h} ʾḫḏ ʿl-hmy ḫrg
w h-dṯ ldy dṯ ḥmm b-ḏʾfʿ w l-ḏġbt ---- (JSLih 077, 1–4)
'Whblh son of Zdqny and Lmy son of Nfyh dedicated? the funeral
chamber of Mr son of Ḥwt because of an obligation he had brought
upon them and (they dedicated) the spring harvest on account of a
harvest he had offered at ḏʾfʿ. And for ḏġbt … '

The translation of this inscription is somewhat uncertain. If it contains
the preposition ldy it could mean 'on account of'. Formally ldy could also
be a G infinitive of wdy where the initial radical has been assimilated. More
attestation of ldy or a similar formula are needed to determine the validity of
the above interpretation.

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[36]Cf. Macdonald 2004: 519.

[37]Farès-Drappeau 2005: 73, gives the following translation: "depuis mʿn en haut de la mon-
tagne, jusqu'à mʿd en bas de la montagne". There are two problems with this interpretation. First,
the definite article before gbl indicates that it is not in the construct state, suggesting that the word
that follows is an attributive adjective. Secondly, it is more likely that gbl means border than
mountain. That leaves mʿn and mʿd. The first could be a cognate of Hb. mʿwn which occurs in
the Dead Sea Scrolls with the meaning 'abode' or as a reference to the temple or a dwelling place
(TWQ II, 728–30). There is also an Akkadian noun māʾunnu with the meaning 'dwelling' which,
according to von Soden, is derived from Canaanite māʿōn (AHW II, 637). Moreover, there is also
an example of mʿwn meaning 'temple' in Punic (DNWSI, 668) and Arm has the word mʿwn (CAL).
The noun mʿd could be a cognate of the Hb. mwʿd meaning "meeting place" (HALOT, 557–58)
from the root yʿd which is waʿada in Arabic (cf. also mawʿid and miʿād in Lane, 2953). Another,
less likely interpretation occurs in Zwettler 2000: 227–239, where he cautiously suggests that mʿn
could refer to Mineans and mʿd to the Arabic tribe Maʿaad.

[38]Macdonald 2004: 520.

3   Conclusion

This survey shows that prepositions in the Dadanitic inscriptions have similar functions as their counterparts in other Central Semitic languages. But the difference in formulae also makes it difficult to make comparisons with texts in other ANA scripts. The main difficulty concerns static location and goal of travel. Safaitic can use the accusative with the meaning 'in' or to indicate the goal of travel. Dadanitic locative phrases are preceded by *b* but in examples like *b-h-mṣd* it could mean either 'at' or 'in'. In addition, there are no clauses in the Dadanitic corpus referring to the goal of travel.

Appendix: Glossary of terms with a new interpretation

For further discussion of these terms see the discussions in the footnotes notes in parentheses.

ʾḫd:	claim or obligation (n. 6)
bhny:	a kind of palm tree (n. 35)
ḫrg:	to sue, bring a lawsuit against s.o (n. 6)
mʿd:	meeting place, assembly point (n. 37)
mʿn:	sanctuary, temple, dwelling place (n. 37)
mṣd:	sanctuary (n. 23)
mt:	custom (n. 33)
qrt:	village (n. 35)
rqy:	to cast a spell (*trq* G prefix conjugation 3fs in n. 35)

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Sigla

Dictionaries

CAD	Gelb & Civil (1956-)
CAL	*Comprehensive Aramic Lexicon.* `http://cal1.cn.huc.edu`
DNWSI	Hoftijzer & Jongeling (1995)
DTTML	Jastrow (1886-1990)
HALOT	Koehler et al. (1995-2000)
KAZ	Kazimirski (1860)
Lane	Lane (1863-1893)
SbD	Beeston et al. (1982)
TWQ II	Fabry et al. (2013)

Inscriptions

AH	Dadanitic inscriptions in Abū L-Ḥasan (1997; 2002)
JSLih	Dadanitic inscriptions in Jaussen & Savignac (1909-1922)
U	Dadanitic inscriptions in Sima (1999)

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