Scribal practices in contact: two Minaic/Dadanitic mixed texts

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Summary

In the first Millennium BC the ancient oasis of Dadan (modern-day al-ʿUlā) was one of the major oases on the incense trade route. Due to its strategic position on the trade route it is not only the home of about 2000 inscriptions in the local Dadanitic script, but also hosts a corpus of some 60 Minaic inscriptions. The Minaic inscriptions were left at Dadan during the time the Minaeans had established a trading outpost at the oasis, and are contemporary with the Liḥyanite kingdom. This paper will investigate the possible influence the two writing traditions had on each other. It will focus on two inscriptions previously read as Minaic, and suggest a new reading interpreting them as linguistically mixed Minaic/Dadanitic.

Keywords

Epigraphy, orthography, scribal practice, Dadanitic, Minaic

Introduction

The ancient oasis of Dadan (modern-day al-ʿUlā) is the home of numerous inscriptions in different scripts. Chief among them are the Dadanitic inscriptions, carved in a local variety of the Ancient North Arabian (ANA) script. This corpus consists of about 2000 inscriptions, about 1500 of which are graffiti. The other inscriptions are for the most part highly formulaic and

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predominantly consist of dedicatory inscriptions, but also of legal texts, funerary inscriptions and building inscriptions. While there is not much internal evidence to date the inscriptions, it is commonly assumed that the Dadanitic inscriptions were produced sometime between the sixth and first centuries BC. [1]

Besides the Dadanitic inscriptions, a corpus of little over 60 monumental Minaic inscriptions has also been found. Even though it is difficult to establish any exact dates for the beginning and ending of the Minaic kingdom, it is roughly estimated that Minaean kings ruled in the north of modern-day Yemen between the sixth century BC and the first century BC. [2] The Minaeans established a trading post in Dadan, considered to have been contemporary with the Liḥyanite kingdom (Winnett and Reed 1970: 117–18). The Minaic presence at Dadan probably lasted from about the fourth century BC (Beeston 1979: 8) until a little before the decline of the kingdom in the south which can probably be placed in the first century BC (Robin 1998: 184–85; Arbach 2003: § 24–25); Beeston assumed that the trading station at Dadan was abandoned around 100 BC (Beeston 1979: 8).

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[1] Corpus internally, the word *fḥt* 'governor' has been used to suggest a date at least after the sixth century BC, based on when this originally Assyrian word was presumably introduced in Western Arabia (Winnett 1937: 51; and Winnett and Reed 1970: 115–16). Another source for the dating of the inscriptions has been the *Hierodulenlisten* from Maʿīn, which mentions the marriages between Minaic men and foreign women, among them a 'free women from Liḥyān' and women from Dadan (M 392), but the dating of this object is uncertain (Rohmer and Charloux 2015: 302). Based on the style of statues found at Dadan and the name *Tlmy* of one of the kings of Liḥyān Tarn (1929) argued for strong Ptolemaic influence at the oasis during the third and second centuries BC, but this has since been proven unlikely (for a discussion of the evidence see Rohmer forthcoming). However, Rohmer and Charloux (2015) convincingly argue that the Liḥyanite kingdom flourished between the sixth and fourth centuries BC (Rohmer and Charloux 2015: 309) and entered a phase of decline in the third century BC (Rohmer and Charloux 2015: 313) based on archaeological evidence from the sites of ancient Dadan and Hegra. This would supposedly push the period of the kings who identify themselves as *mlk Ddn* 'king of Dadan' back even further than that.

[2] See for example Winnett (1939) for a general discussion of the chronology of the Minaic kingdom. In this article Winnett asserts that the Minaeans eventually took over political control of Dadan, but in Winnett and Reed (1970) he shows that Minaic-Dadanitic relations were probably friendly (Winnett and Reed 1970: 117–18). See Robin and De Maigret (2009) for a discussion of early archaeological evidence of the Minaic kingdom(Robin and De Maigret 2009).

Writing traditions in contact

There are several inscriptions that attest to the participation of Minaeans in Dadanitic cultural practices and general contact between them. A famous example is JSLih 049, in which a priest of Wadd, one of the main deities of the Minaeans, dedicates a boy to Ḏūġābat, the local Dadanitic deity. The inscription is executed in relief and written in Dadanitic script and language and follows Dadanitic dedicatory formulae.

1. **JSLih 049**[3]

   ʿbdwd//ʾfkl/w//d/w bn –h//s¹lm/w z//dwd/hw//

   dqw/h- ġ//lm/s¹lm/h-//[m]ṯlt/l-//ḏġbt// f-rḍy –h//m----

   ʿbdwd priest of Wadd and his son *S¹lm* and *Zdwd* offered the boy *S¹lm* as a substitute to Ḏūġābat so may he favour them....'

A more recently discovered inscription, published by Abū-ʾl-Ḥasan (2005) was written following Dadanitic formulae and in the Dadanitic language, [4] but using the Minaic script. The inscription was deeply incised into a prepared stone. It is interesting that even though the author of the text apparently chose to execute it in Minaic letter forms, he clearly had knowledge of the Dadanitic language and formulae, unless the person who wrote the text and who carved it on the rock were not one and the same. This would still suggest, however, that the mason was not simply copying the letter shapes he saw on the example he was given.

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[3] Note to the transcription: [.] indicates a restored letter; {.} indicates a damaged letter; ---- indicates a part of the inscription that is broken off or too heavily damaged to suggest a reading; / indicates a word divider; // indicates a line break.

[4] The only departure from other Dadanitic texts is the feminine demonstrative *ḏt* which refers to the noun *h-s¹fr*, which is otherwise masculine in the Dadanitic inscriptions (Abū ʾl-Ḥasan 2005: 32). This may have been a slip up by the author of the text due to interference of the Minaic equivalent *ṣḥft* 'document' which is feminine and occurs regularly in Minaic inscriptions.

2. **AHUD 1**

   ----t/ḥrym/bn/ḥyw/ḏ ʿ// mrtʿ/ḥggt/ḏġbt/f rḍ -h// m/w ʾḫrt -hm/w sˡʿd -hm/sˡnt// tltn/b-

   rʾy/ʿtdn/lḏn/bn// hnʾsˡ/mlk/lḥyn/f ʿrr ḏ// ġbt/ʿrr/h- sˡfr/ḏt

   ' *----t Ḥrym* son of *Ḥyw* of the lineage of *ʿmrtʿ* performed the pilgrimage/feast of Ḏūġābat

   so favour them and their offspring and aid them year thirty during the *rʾy* of *ʿtdn*, *Lḏn* son

   of *Hnʾ sˡ* king of Liḥyān and may Ḏūġābat dishonour the one who dishonours this

   inscription'[5]

Other evidence for at least some measure of familiarity with both scripts is evident from several

graffiti that were written using a mix of Dadanitic and Minaic letter shapes. In JSLih 220, for

example, the author used a typical Minaic *z* and *ʾ*, but a Dadanitic *h*.

3. **JSLih 220**

   Zydʾlhn

[insert fig. 1 near hear]

Finally there is a Minaic legal inscription which, even though it is heavily damaged, clearly lays

out the status of the children of a Minaean woman and a Dadanite man, also suggesting close

personal relationships between the Minaeans and the Dadanites.

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[5] Even though both forms of *ʿrr* look the same, the first should be interpreted as a perfective with an optative meaning 'may he dishonour', while the second represents an active participle 'the dishonouring one; the one who dishonours'.

4. **M 360**

[... ...]w(ġ)Nhn(ʾ)[... ...] Mʿnm w-bhn[... ...]//[... ...]s¹ Ddny(m)(ʾ)[..](b)n b(ʾ)[.] ḏ-(ʾẖ)rh

[... ...] //[... ...](M)ʿnyt k-Ddny w-k-ḏ ʾḫrh [... ...] //[... ... M](ʾ)nm w-bhn-s¹m (w)-bhnt-s¹m

w[... ...] //[... ... s¹] ʿrb kl wld tld Mʿnyt k-kl ḏ-(ʾḫrh ʾ)[... ...] //[... ...]

'[... ...] Nhn(ʾ) [... ...] Maʿīn and the sons [... ...] // [... ...] a Dadanite man [... ...] of the

descent [... ...] //[... ...] a Minaean woman to a Dadanite man and for those of descent [...

...] // [... ...] Maʿīn and their sons and their daughters [... ...] //[... ...] offer all the children

that a Minaean woman will have for all that descent [... ...] //

[... ...]' [6]

These inscriptions testify to the close relations between the Dadanite and the Minaean

communities at the oasis, mostly to the Minaean participation in Dadanite cultural practices.

While the graffiti with mixed Dadanitic/Minaic letter shapes show that people were exposed to

both scripts, their mixing could be due to imperfect learning of either script independently, or

playful use of the variation rather than the purposeful creation of a mixed register, as it seems to

be unpredictable which glyphs are exchanged. [7]

Contact between scribal schools?

Despite the apparent close contact between the Minaeans and the Dadanites and their epigraphic

habit, their scribal schools seem to have had little impact on each other. In her 2014 paper Irene

Rossi noted that the language and orthography of the Marginal Minaic (MMin) texts, found

beyond the Minaic homeland, barely diverge from those of Central Minaic (CMin) (Rossi 2014:

[6] Translation and transcription following DASI (accessed 29-09-2017). Translation of lines 3-5 are based on the interpretation by Grimme (1932: 236–37), except for the translation of *ḏ-ʾḫrh*, which was translated as 'what follows'.

[7] Only 13 of the total 28 glyphs in the Dadanitic script are clearly distinguishable from the Minaic script (ʾ; *ṯ*; *g*; *ḥ*; *ḫ*; *ḏ*; *z*; *ṣ*; *ḍ*; *ṭ*; *f*; *h*; *ẓ*). On top of that, Dadanitic merged its *s¹* and *s³*, which Minaic kept apart.

114). Most of the differences that do occur can be found in the formulae that are used in the inscriptions (Rossi 2014: 114). [8] Rossi sees this as a testament to a strongly maintained Minaic identity in the communities established abroad and the important role of the central scribal schools in the maintenance of this identity (Rossi 2014: 119).

Dadanitic contains several features that set it apart from other ANA varieties: it is the only ANA script used to carve monumental inscriptions in relief; inscriptions written in this style are the only ANA variety in which word dividers are used consistently (Macdonald 2008, 186); and Dadanitic is the only ANA script that uses *matres lectionis* (Macdonald 2008, 105). While these features are unique to ANA writing practices, they are common in Ancient South Arabian inscriptions (Macdonald 2015: 15; Robin 2015: 99). Dadanitic may have developed the typical stylistic features of the inscriptions through contact with other writing practices, but it seems to have developed its *matres lectionis* independently. While Minaic and Dadanitic both represent final long –ū and –ī with –w and –y respectively, Dadanitic clearly uses –h to represent –ā (Drewes 1985: 167–68; followed by Farès-Drappeau 2005: 62–63) which sets its system apart from Minaic (Stein 2011: 1049). [9] Moreover, while Minaic clearly represents word-internal diphthongs, Dadanitic does not. [10]

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[8] While there seems to be an overlap in genres of inscriptions (legal texts, dedicatory texts and construction texts) at present, a direct link between Dadanitic and Minaic formulae is difficult to demonstrate.

[9] Minaic has what is called the 'parasitic *h*'. This can be found infixed in some plural forms *bhn* 'sons (of…)'; *ʾnthtn* ' the women' (Stein 2011: 1049). It has been suggested that its possible occurrence in feminine external plurals might point to a vocalisation /ā/ word internally (Stein 2011: 1049; referencing Frantsouzoff 2003: 42) it has also been suggested it might represent final short –a, based on its occurrence in construct state (Stein 2011: 1051–52) e.g. *b-byth ʿttr ḏ-Qbḍ* 'at the temple of ʿAṯtar of Qbḍ' (M 302). While its exact vocalisation is still unclear, it was not used to consistently represent –ā as in Dadanitic.

[10] Compare for example Dadanitic *bt* ' temple' (e.g. JSLih 077; AH 197) and *ym* 'day' (Al-Saʿīd 1420/1999: 3–14, no. 1) to Minaic *byt* (M 338; M 356) and *ywm* (M 316; M 366). Based on the currently available evidence it is impossible to tell whether this difference is purely orthographic, or whether it reflects a difference in pronunciation. There are some personal names in which the diphthong may be represented (e.g. *rʿnʾwsˡ* (JaL 156l); *yṯbqwsˡ* (Al-Saʿīd 1419/1999: 28-30, no. 5); *zydḫrg* (JaL 161b)). In the case of personal names it is difficult to be certain of the exact vocalization of the form. Moreover, since the linguistic situation in the oasis was not homogeneous (see

This shows that both Dadanitic and Minaic had strongly established scribal practices that, despite their being in contact, seem to have had little influence on each other. Generally language, script and formulae were strongly connected to each other and only occasionally seem to have affected each other, as we can see in AHUD 1 and in the mixing of Dadanitic and Minaic script in some of the graffiti. Two Minaic inscriptions however, might shed more light on the existence of bilingualism at the oasis. If the interpretation proposed below is correct, M 335 and M 370 would be the first linguistically mixed Minaic/Dadanitic texts in Minaic script and orthography.

Commentary on the texts

Both inscriptions were discovered by Jaussen and Savignac. They note that the inscriptions are irregularly but deeply carved into the rock (Jaussen and Savignac 1909-1922: 339–340; 347). Unfortunately only their copies of the inscriptions are available (Jaussen and Savignac 1909-1922: Pl. CXXV; CXXVII).

5. **M 335**

Nḥs¹ṭb Dṯʾ ʾgr-Wd//{ʾ}ṣnʿ s¹ṭṭr ʿl-mtbr//ʾwdq k-Ḥmyn Brn

‘*Nḥs¹ṭb* (of the lineage of) *Dṯʾ* servant of Wadd, the artisan, has traced on the quarry a dedication for *Ḥmyn Brn*’

6. **M 370**

Nḥs¹ṭb//ḏ-Dṯʾ//ṣnʿ Wd //s¹ṭṭr ʿl mtbr//ʾwdq

‘*Nḥs¹ṭb*, he of the lineage of *Dṯʾ*, the artisan of Wadd, has traced on the quarry a dedication’

Kootstra forthcoming for a discussion on the linguistic diversity at Dadan), it is not certain that these spellings and a possible retention of the diphthong would have been representative of the pronunciation of the majority of the inhabitants of the oasis. I would like to thank Jérôme Norris for asking me about ‘marginal’ spellings of diphthongs in Dadanitic.

Since M 370 is briefer version of M 335, the commentary will focus on M335, referring to the other inscription when needed.

Line 1. The Personal names *Nḥs¹ṭb* is most commonly found in Nabataean inscriptions (Negev 1991: 43 cf. Macdonald 1999: 280). It is also attested once in Dadanitic (JSLih 230) and once in the Safaitic corpus available on OCIANA (MEG 5). Including M 335 and M 370 it occurs six times in Marginal Minaic.

ʾgr can be more closely associated with the South Arabian realm. It never occurs in Dadanitic as a noun and only once as a personal name (Graf Abū al-Ḍibāʿ 1). In Minaic it occurs with the meaning 'servant, employee'.

7. **Shaqab 1**; 6-8

(w)-//fqḍ kl Mʿn ḥr w-[ʾ]//[g]r w-ġbr [11]

And they were those appointed (for the tributes?) of all Maʿīn, free men and employees and farmers'[12]

8. **M 401**; 3

kl Mʿnm ḥrm w-ʾgrm w-ms²km

'...all Maʿīn, free men, servants[/]salaried employee[sic] and the assembly of the officials(?)' [13]

It is not surprising that the author used a form more common in Minaic to indicate his relationship with the Minaic deity Wadd. This firmly places this phrase in the Minaic cultural

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[11] Note that ʾ and *g* of ʾgr have been restored and the stone has broken off where the letters were supposed to be. It has probably been restored based on the phrase in M 401, as there are no clear parallels in other ASA languages.

[12] Translation following CSAI (accessed 29-09-2017).

[13] Translation following CSAI (accessed 29-09-2017), the / between servant and salaried employee was added by the author. ʾgr also occurs twice in Qatabanic as 'dignitary' of a deity (MuB 36 and TC 1046).

and linguistic realm. Compare CAr. ʾajīr 'a hired man' (*Lane*, 24b); Jewish Babylonian Aramaic and Syriac ʾgr 'to hire (s.t., s.o)' (CAL online dictionary (accessed 29-09-2017).

Line 2. The reading of the *alif* at the beginning of line two in M 335 is considered unsure, even though it is clearly visible on the trace by Jaussen and Savignac (1909-1922: Pl. CXXV). In the commentary on the DASI website [14] it is noted that based on comparison with M 335, the *alif* in line two was not considered part of the inscription. This is partly due to the fact that the *alif* is written slightly above the line, but also because it poses a problem for the linguistic interpretation of the inscription, if the language is considered to be Minaic. A plural form would not make sense here, and other functions for a prefixed *alif* are not available in Minaic. In M 370 ṣnʿ occurs in construct with the name of the deity Wadd while it occurs independently in M 335, therefore we cannot conclude *a priori* that the *alif* in M 335 does not belong to the inscription.

Instead I would propose to interpret ʾṣnʿ as a Dadanitic form and to read the ʾ- as a definite article. Even though this is not the most common form of the definite article in Dadanitic, it occurs in several inscriptions as can be seen in the following examples. [15] If this interpretation is correct, this may tell us something about the spoken register of Dadanitic. Since the author of this inscription was clearly not strictly following any set formula, it is likely that he was basing himself more closely on spoken language than the highly formulaic dedicatory inscriptions. This may lend further support to the idea that there was a more archaic written register present in the

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[14] Accessed 29-09-2017.

[15] The most common form of the definite article in Dadanitic is a prefixed *h-* with the unassimilated form *hn-* before laryngeals (Farès-Drappeau 2005: 65), but Dadanitic also contains examples of a ʾ- and an unassimilated ʾl- definite article (for more on the variation of the definite article in ANA see al-Jallad forthcoming: 8–9).

Dadanitic inscriptions (using the more common *h(n)-* definite article) and a spoken register of which we sometimes see traces in the inscriptions (such as the *ʾ-* definite article). [16]

9. **JSLih 276** (part)   *f-ʿrr/ḏġbt/ ʿrr/ʾ-sfr/ḏh*

   'So may Ḏūġābat dishonour whoever dishonours this inscription'

10. **AH 119**; 3-4   *ʾẓlt ʾ-ẓll ḏh*

   'she performed this *ẓll* ceremony'

11. **AH 074**; 2-3   *ʿm/bnt/bs² ʾẓlt ʾ-ẓll*

   '*ʿm* daughter of *Bs²* performed the *ẓll* ceremony'

This has as an additional benefit that it solves the previously awkward syntax of the sentence of the inscription with the author of the inscription identifying himself with an indefinite noun. Further support for a Dadanitic origin of the noun *ṣnʿ* can be found in its usage in the different corpora. While it is one of the more commonly mentioned occupations in the Dadanitic corpus, [17] it does not seem to occur as such in the Ancient South Arabian (ASA) corpus. [18] Instead it is found with a different shade of meaning e.g. 'to fortify, to reinforce' (CIAS 39.11; Gr 1; Gr 219; Ir 32) or 'save' (Ir 13) in Sabaic; *ʾṣnʿ* is attested once in Central Minaic with the meaning 'firmest' (as-Sawdāʾ 27) and once as a noun in Ḥaḍramitic *h-ṣnʿ* 'the help' (KR 6), [19] Beeston et al. mention *ʾṣnʿ* as a plural noun 'fortification' (Beeston et al. 1982: 143).

The t-stem of the root *s¹ṭr* is rarely attested in either corpus. There is one attestation in broken context in Dadanitic:

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[16] For a more elaborate discussion on variation and possible different registers in the Dadanitic inscriptions see Kootstra (forthcoming).
[17] It occurs 11 times, e.g. AH 213; JSLih 074; al-Ḥuraybah 12.
[18] After a search for the root in DASI (accessed 29-09-2017).
[19] All attestations and translation are based on DASI (accessed 29-10-2017).

12. **AH 207**   *---- s¹ṭṭr/b- mṣd ----*

          '--- he wrote at the sanctuary---'[20]

In Minaic the two occurrences under discussion are the only ones, while there is one attestation of it in Ḥaḍramitic (Qāniʾ 4). The root is however quite widely attested in Minaic, while it only occurs once in Dadanitic as a G-stem verb (JaL 061 f). In Minaic it mostly occurs as a noun *s¹ṭr* 'inscription' (e.g. al-Jawf 04.37; Gr 326; M 43). Based on this it is clear that the verb was not part of the common formulae of either corpus, but could have come from either language.

The preposition *ʿl* 'on, upon' is separated from *mtbr* by a word divider in JSLih 370, but not in M 335. It is clearly the same phrase, however. Jamme compares *mtbr* to CAr. *mutabbar* 'broken up' from the D-stem *tabbara* 'to break, break into pieces' and suggests to interpret it as 'quarry' (Jamme 1974, 104) following the translation proposed by Jaussen and Savignac (1909- 1922, 339–40). In relation to this Jaussen and Savignac mention that some metal was found close to where the two inscriptions were found, which to them suggested that in ancient times this location may have been used as a quarry (Jaussen and Savignac 1909- 1922: 340). The root *tbr* does not seem to occur elsewhere in Dadanitic or ASA. [21]

Line 3. *ʾwdq* is translated by Jaussen and Savignac as a broken plural form 'the cuttings' (Jaussen and Savignac 1909-1922: 339–40) which is followed by Jamme (1974: 103–4), they interpret this as a reference to the inscription itself. Jamme notes that it is syntactically awkward that there is no definite article on this noun (Jamme 1974: 104). He suggests that the possibility

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[20] For the translation of *mṣd* as 'sanctuary' see (Lundberg 2015: 136). The text is damaged and fragmentary.
[21] Based on the lack of occurrences in DASI, OCIANA and the online Sabaic dictionary http://sabaweb.uni-jena.de/SabaWeb accessed 29-09-2017. Note that Aramaic *tbr* 'to break' (CAL, accessed 29-09-2017) comes from the root *√ṯbr (compare Sab *ṯbr* 'to destroy, to damage, to crush' (Beeston et al. 1982: 149) and CAr. *ṯabara-hu* 'he destroyed him' (*Lane*: 330c). It is unclear why the etymological *ṯ would be represented with a *t in this word in either Minaic or Dadanitic which both preserved their interdentals. However, there are a few examples of etymological interdentals being represented as stops in Dadanitic (Kootstra forthcoming).

to omit the definite article is due to "Liḥyanite" (i.e. Dadanitic) influence. He gives the example *b-ḥqwy/kfr* 'on two sides of [the] tomb' (JSLih 075 and JSlih 077) to illustrate that if the referred to object was clearly enough defined from context, the definite article could be omitted in Dadanitic. As an additional example he mentions *ʾṣfḥt* 'rock faces' in JSLih 065 [22] He dismisses the possibility that we might be looking at a *ʾ*- definite article. According to him, this inscription cannot be compared to JSLih 066 *ʾẖḏ h-ṣfḥt ḏt* 'he took this rock face', since the demonstrative pronoun is lacking in JSLih 065 (Jamme 1974: 101).

While *b-ḥqwy/kfr* indeed suggests that *kfr* was so well defined for the author of the inscription that it functioned as a proper name, this only seems to occur with the nouns *kfr* and *mṣd*. [23] This suggests that these words were so closely connected to the place they indicated that they had become (almost) equivalent to toponyms. Since this phenomenon is so restricted in its use in Dadanitic it seems unlikely that this influenced Minaic.

Once again I would propose to instead interpret this unique form in Minaic as a nominal form derived from a fairly common Dadanitic dedicatory verb *ʾdq* (√wdq) 'to offer'. This root occurs in several different forms in Dadanitic. It is attested both as a C-stem verb *ʾdq* /ʾawdaq(a)/ and *hdq* /hawdaq(a)/and as a CD-stem verb *hwdq* /hawaddaq(a)/. [24] The representation of the diphthong in this inscription is probably due to the usage of the Minaic script. Unlike Dadanitic, Minaic does represent word internal diphthongs. [25] Since orthographic rules tend to be dictated

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[22] JSLih 065 = JaL 133.
[23] Both *b-h-mṣd* (e.g. AH 208; 217; 221) and *b-mṣd* (AH 202; 207) 'at the sanctuary' occur.
[24] Dadanitic clearly did not represent word internal diphthongs (see note 10 for examples). Therefore the *w* in *hwdq* most likely represents something else. CD-stems can also be found in Geʽez (A₂ stem) (Weniger 2011: 1131); Akkadian (Von Soden 1952: § 95) and possibly in Modern South Arabian (Dufour 2017: § 4).
[25] For some examples see note 10.

by the script used, and not by the language used, [26] it would be expected that the word internal diphthong is represented if it was pronounced. This spelling therefore could suggest that the word internal diphthongs had not collapsed in Dadanitic when this inscription was written.

If this interpretation is correct, this inscription can be related to more common formulae in the oasis related to dedicatory texts.

13. **JSLih 061** (3-4)   ʾdq/l-l//h/{h}- ṣlmn

He dedicated to *Lh* {the} two statues

14. **JSLih 063** (2)   ʾdq/{l}- ḏġ{b}t/hn- ʾṣl[m]

'He dedicated to Ḏūġābat the {statues}'

15. **Private collection 2** (3-5)   ʾdq/h- m// gmrt/l-// ḏġbt

'He dedicated the incense burner to Ḏūġābat'

While it is still unusual that the object of a dedication is mentioned with an indefinite form, it is syntactically possible (see examples 13-15). This would be an awkward reading if *ʾwdq* referred back to the inscription itself.

The preposition *k-* 'for' is typically Minaic (Arbach 1993: 40; Stein 2011: 1062) and does not occur in Dadanitic.

Ḥmyn is a common Safaitic name (147 attestations in the OCIANA database[27]), it is attested once in Dadanitic (U 109). It occurs 7 times in Minaic and once in Sabaic (Haram 18) (DASI[28]).

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[26] Compare for example, the Safaitic script which did not represent diphthongs. However, from Greek/Safaitic bilinguals we know that they were most likely pronounced. In an inscription from Jordan a man called Taym wrote his name in Greek as Θαιμος while he represented his name in Safaitic as *tm* (Al-Jallad and al-Manaser, 2016: 56).
[27] Accessed 29-09-2017.
[28] Accessed 29-09-2017.

The name *brn* is less well attested but occurs five times in Safaitic (e.g. KRS 2451; 1784), once in Dadanitic (JSLih 105) and once in Hismaic (KJB 11) (OCIANA [29]). It is also attested in Qatabanic (Ja 361), Sabaic (Robin Kāniṭ 3) and Ḥaḍramitic (RES 2693), but does not seem to have been very common (DASI [30]). Based on these occurrences however, it seems to be the case that *Ḥmyn Brn* was a person, and not the epithet of a deity.

Discussion

If this interpretation is correct and we are looking at two linguistically mixed inscriptions, probably written by someone of Minaean descent. The words he chose to substitute for Dadanitic words or phrases suggest that he was borrowing specific cultural terms from Dadanitic. One might even suggest that he was code-switching, since he used the Dadanitic noun together with the Dadanitic definite article (Myers-Scotton 1997). The fact that the author chose to use a Dadanitic term for an occupation that is regularly attested in the Dadanitic inscriptions may suggest that he was part of the Dadanitic workforce and this was simply how his job was referred to in day-to-day interactions. Of course this can be no more than speculation, and it has to be noted that none of the artisans that give their name in the Dadanitic inscription bear the name *Nḥs¹ṭb*. Note also that the other possible Dadanitic term in the text is closely tied to the Dadanitic cultural practices and may therefore also be considered a cultural loan.

Conclusions

The new interpretation of M 335 and M 370 points to bilingualism of the Minaic author of the inscriptions. This is of course to be expected in a situation such as that at the oasis of Dadan,

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[29] Accessed 29-09-2017.
[30] Accessed 29-09-2017.

where a trading colony is established in a foreign oasis; however this is the first clear example of it in the epigraphic record. Since the author's Dadanitic insertions are likely based on spoken language, as he is clearly diverging from written formulae, his usage of the ʾ-definite article may tell us something about the spoken register at the oasis. We only have this one example, however, making it unclear whether this would have been the common spoken register for all the Dadanitic speaking inhabitants of the oasis. Finally, the use of Minaic script and orthographic conventions might tell us something about the phonology of Dadanitic. The fact that the author wrote the *w* representing the diphthong could suggest that the diphthong had not collapsed in Dadanitic, but was simply not orthographically represented.

Acknowledgements

Sigla

AH	Dadanitic inscriptions in Abu ʾl-Ḥasan (1997).
AHUD	Inscription published in Abū l-Ḥasan (2005).
Al-Saʿīd 1419/1999	Inscriptions published in Al-Said (1419/1999).
Al-Saʿīd 1420/1999	Dadanitic inscriptions published in (1420/1999).
CAL	Online database: Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon. http://cal.huc.edu/ .
CIAS	South Arabian inscriptions published in Beeston, Pirenne and Robin (1977).
CSAI	Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions, part of DASI.

DASI	Digital Archive for the Study of pre-Islamic Arabian Inscriptions, directed by Alessandra Avanzini (University of Pisa) http://dasi.humnet.unipi.it/ .
Gr	Inscriptions published in Grjaznevič (1978).
Graf Abū al-Ḍibāʿ	Inscriptions published in Graf (1983).
Haram	Inscriptions published in Robin (1992).
al-Ḫuraybah	Dadanitic inscriptions published in Al-Theeb (2013).
Ir	Inscriptions published in al-Iryānī (1990).
Ja	Inscriptions published in Jamme (1963).
JaL	Dadanitic (formerly Lihyanite) inscriptions published by Jamme (1974).
al-Jawf	Inscriptions published in Arbach and Schiettecatte (2006).
JSLih	Dadanitic (formerly Liḥyanite) inscriptions in Jausse and Savignac (1909-1922).
KJB	Hismaic, formerly Thamudic E inscriptions published in King (1990).
KR	Inscriptions published in Avanzini (2008).
KRS	Safaitic inscriptions recorded by G.M.H. King (1990) on the Basalt Desert Rescue Survey.
Lane	Arabic dictionary by Lane (1863).
M	Minaic inscriptions in DASI.
MEG	Inscriptions published in Macdonald (1991).
MuB	Qatabanic inscriptions published in Avanzini et al. (1994).
OCIANA	Online corpus of Inscriptions from Ancient North Arabia http://krcfm.orient.ox.ac.uk/fmi/webd#ociana .
Private collection	Dadanitic inscriptions from a private collection available on OCIANA.

Qāniʾ   Inscriptions from ancient Qāniʾ published in Ryckmans (1939).

Robin-Kāniṭ   Inscriptions from the ancient site of Kāniṭ in Robin (1982).

RES   See RES (1900-1968) in bibliography.

as-Sawdāʾ   Inscriptions published in (1995).

Shaqab   Inscriptions from Shaqab al-Manaṣṣa available on DASI.

TC   Inscriptions from the Timnaʿ cemetery in Cleveland (1965).

U   Inscriptions from al-Uḏayb in Sima (1999).

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