

THE INFINITIVE IN SABAEAN AND QATABANIAN INSCRIPTIONS

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Sabaean syntax differs widely from the syntactical situation we are confronted with in Classical Arabic. One must only remember the asyndetic relative clauses in Sabaic which are linked to the antecedent substantive appearing in the *status constructus*¹⁾. Also the particle *f-* should be mentioned which is used in the Sabaean inscriptions in a completely different way²⁾. Furthermore the occurrence of two different imperfect forms should be recalled, *yf^al* and *yf^aln*, in the main clauses of the past tense³⁾. The most typical syntactic phenomenon, however, common to all of the Epigraphic South Arabian dialects, is represented by the usages of the infinitive.

- A -

In the following I shall draw an outline of the main functions of the infinitive, as attested in the Sabaean and Qatabanian inscriptions. After that I shall point out the differences between the infinitives as used in these two dialects. First, however, let me say a few words concerning the form of the infinitive:

The orthography of Epigraphic South Arabian is consonantal and, as a rule, no vowels are indicated. Therefore we cannot say anything concrete about the vocalization of the infinite forms. The infinite forms in all Epigraphic South Arabian dialects are homograph with the third person masculine singular of the perfect-stem. In Sabaic, the infinitive of the simple stem as well as the infinite forms of the derived stems are neither marked by the *-n* or the *-m* of the definite or indefinite article nor can the feminine ending *-t* and, as a consequence, any plural endings be attached to the infinite forms. That means that the

Sabaic infinitive lacks the characteristics of flexion which nouns do have, especially substantives. The Sabaic infinitive can be marked by the affirmative *-n*. This Nūn must be distinguished from the Nūn of the definite article. It probably corresponds with the ending *-ān* in Arabic which is attached to infinitives as *fa^clān* and others. I shall not discuss here in detail the problems which are related to this morpheme. But I do not agree with the *communis opinio* according to which the distribution of this affirmative *-n* is ultimately promiscuous⁴. Against this I would make the point that in the simple stem the Nūn is never attached to verbs as *ḥmr*, *s^{1c}d*, *ṣdq* "to grant", *hrg* "to kill", *ṭbr* "to destroy", *wḏ^c* "to humiliate" and *wz'* "to continue". These are verbs which are quite common in middle-Sabaic votive texts. On the other hand I find nowhere the infinitive forms *ḥryn* "to deliver" or *s²w^cn* "to do service" without the affirmative. According to my opinion there is a distribution of the *-n* in the infinitive of the simple stem which can be described as follows:

In the first group of verbs out of which I quote as an example *ḥmr* the Nūn is not attested.

In the second group - *ḥry* could here serve as an example - the Nūn always occurs.

In the third group infinite forms are found with as well as without Nūn, for example *ḏr^c* and *ḏr^cn* "to defeat"⁵.

The dating of the Sabaeen inscriptions in which the infinitive occurs ranges over one thousand years from the archaic period down to the late Sabaeen times of the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. The largest body of inscriptions in which infinite forms occur - I collected about 1500 constructions all together - consists of the Maḥram-Bilqīs-texts which have been dated from the first to the middle of the fourth century A.D.

Apart from only one exception⁶ all examples given in the following list belong to the middle-Sabaic period and appear under B. I. and II. I have concentrated there only on the most important types of constructions. My selection of examples stresses those types of constructions not at all or only marginally mentioned in the relevant grammars⁷.

- B -

THE USAGES OF THE INFINITIVE IN SABAIC⁸⁾

- I. $f^c l(n)$, functioning as a predicate, can be replaced by a finite verbal form
1. $w-f^c l(n)$ continuing a finite verbal form ($f^c l$, $yf^c l$, $yf^c l n$)
- (1) $wy'ttmw/w-tqdmn/w-rtđhn/b^c m/hmt/'hbs^2 n$ J 575/5 "and they (sc. the Sabaeans) regrouped, came to a confrontation, and joined battle with those Ḥabashites"⁹⁾.
- (2) $br'w/w-h$ (4) $qs^2 bn/mnzrhmw/w-syhn/gr[n]$ (5) hmw Rob Ḥadara 9 "they built up and erected their multi-storeyed house¹⁰⁾ and levelled their threshing floor"
2. $w-l-f^c l(n)$ functioning as an optative
- (3) $w-l/s^1 c dhmw/'lmqh$ (14) $wfy/bytn/s^1 lhn$ J 559 "and may 'Almaqah grant them safety of the House S¹LHN"
- II. $f^c l(n)$, dependent on a predicate, cannot be replaced by a finite verbal form
1. $f^c l(n)$ stands for a subject
- (4) $k-y'twn/^c dy/m'hđhmw/dyfd/s^1 qym/b^c d/dt/s^1 t'z l/^c dw/^c dyhw/s^1 qym/^c s^1 m/hryftm/bqđmy/dt/hqnytn$ E 7§2 "that he (sc. 'Almaqah) would bring water for irrigation into their cistern YFD after the flowing of water into it had ceased for a number of years before this offering"
2. $f^c l(n)$ stands for an object (introduced by a preposition and without any preposition)
- a. $f^c l(n)/b-f^c l(n)$, dependent on verbs of the group generally meaning "to grant" (e.g. hmr , $hws^2 c$, $hwfy$, $s^1 c d$) and on auxiliary verbs like wz'
- (5) $wlwz'/hmrhmw$ (48) $'lmqh/'tw/hmw/wgy s^2 hmw/bwfy m$ J 665 "and may 'Almaqah continue to grant them that they and their troops will return in safety"
- b. $bn f^c l(n)$ dependent on verbs of hindering, preventing, prohibiting, etc.
- (6) $wbnw/s^1 t[rn]$ (7) $.../f'l/y m n^c w/bny/gđnm/.../bn/hy^c /lhmw/[h]$ (8) $'/$

fnwtn/ms¹b'/mwn C 611 "and the Banū S¹TRN .. shall not deny the Banū GDNM ... the flowing of this main-canal as a watercourse (also) for them"¹¹⁾

c. *l-f^cl(n)* dependent on *verba dicendi* (e.g. *s¹tml'*, *s²ft*, *wqh*)

(7) *wr'/kwqh/'l* (18) [*mqh/^cbdhw*]/*s^{2c}rm/'wtr/.../l-hqnynhw/d* (19) [*n/s^ll*]*mn* NNAG 12 "and now, 'Almaqah has commanded his servant S^{2c}RM 'WTR ... that (he) should dedicate to him (-hw!) this statue"

3. *l-f^cl(n)* and *bn f^cl(n)* in final resp. negative-final meaning

(8) *bkn/blthmw/mr'hmw/'ls²rh/yhdb/.../'l-gzmn/h¹mt/'hbs²n* J 575/2 "when their lord 'LS²RH YHDB ... sent them to extirpate those Habashites"

(9) (1) [*kn/hh*]*r/wrys³n/..* (2) [*../'*]*ls²rh/yhdb/..* (4) *../dn/wtfn/dhmr/'d* (5) [*mhw/*]*..* (7) *../bn/^cdw/kl/'ns¹m/lh* (8) [*d^cn..*]*..../kl/ms²ym[t..]* R 4646 "this concessionary document was decreed and ordained ... by 'LS²RH YHDB ... which he granted his subjects ... lest anyone should approach in order to destroy ... all the cultivated fields ...".

- C -

As is evident from my list the Sabaic infinitive bears two major functions:

The first is to function as a predicate, that means it occurs in a position in which it can be replaced by a finite verbal form.

In the second function, which you find under B. II., the infinitive depends on a predicate and is therefore a constructional part of the clause.

In this position it cannot be replaced by a finite verbal form.

I. *f^cl(n)*, functioning as a predicate, can be replaced by a finite verbal form

By looking closer at my examples given under B. I. you again observe two different usages of the infinitive.

The first group consists of the examples under Nos. (1) and (2) of which I have underlined the infinite forms, the infinitive continues a finite verbal form, regardless whether this be a perfect or imperfect.

Under No. (1) the infinitives *tqdmn* and *rtđhn* continue, coordinated by *w-*, the "shorter" imperfect form *w-y'ttmw* which expresses the past tense. The same paratactic continuation is attested by *hqs²bn* and *syhn* following *br'w* under No. (2). This may suffice to determine the essential rules for this type of infinitive as follows:

Regarding person, tense and mode the infinite forms are commanded by the preceding finite verbal form. I have not found a single certain instance in which the subject changes from the finite to the infinite form¹²⁾. As a rule, the infinite form, as can be seen under No. (1), follows closely the finite verbal form, coordinated by *w-*. There are, however, about a dozen instances showing an object which belongs to the preceding verb, placed between the finite and the infinite verbal form. Instead of the infinitive *w-syhn* cited under No. (2) one would actually expect the perfect form *w-syhw*.

The following section under B. I. 2. contains infinitives replaceable by a finite verbal form. In conjunction with a preceding Lām - the vocalization of which is almost certainly the particle *li-* - those infinitives occur in the final expressions of the middle-Sabaic votive texts. In this context they function as optatives and they are - in contrast to the just-mentioned infinitives - in person and tense absolutely independent from the preceding finite verbal form. In the same position we may find the so-called N-imperfect *yf^cln* connected with the particle *l-*. The construction of this type of infinitive, comprising more than one third of the entire evidence, is quite clear and I have considered it as sufficient to quote just one example under No. (3) on my list.

II. *f^cl(n)*, dependent on a predicate, cannot be replaced by a finite verbal form

As indicated the infinitive also occurs within the clause, where it cannot be replaced by a finite verbal form. In this case it appears as a part of the clause dependent on the predicate. I could offer you almost 400 instances for this kind of usage. Some more detailed information on the question which parts of the clause the infinitive is able to represent, can be found under B. II. It rarely functions as a subject as does *^cdw/^cdyhw/s¹qym* in the temporal clause *^cd/^cdt/s¹t'zl* in No. (4)¹³⁾.

I have listed under B. II. 2. the examples for the function of the infinitive as an object. Three substantial usages can be distinguished. Firstly, the infinite form follows a group of verbs related to each

other by the general meaning of "to grant" like *hmr*, *hws*^{2c}, *hwfy*, *s*^{1cd} and, additionally, it follows auxiliary verbs like *wz'* "to continue". Both constructions are abundant and pose no problems. See example No. (5). Secondly, the infinitive is preceded by that group of verbs, the common meaning of which can be described as "to hinder, to prevent, to forbid, to prohibit, etc." like *ymn*^{cw} under No. (6). I should draw your attention to the fact that the infinitive is here introduced by the preposition *bn* corresponding to the Arabic ^c*an* in these special occurrences¹⁴⁾. I shall have to return to this example Nr. (6) in a different context later. Under B. II. 2. c. I have then listed infinitives in the form *l-f^cl(n)*, following verbs, which in a very broad sense could be determined as *verba dicendi* related to each other by the general meaning of "to ask, to command, to promise, etc.". Although abundantly attested, this usage of the infinitive is not mentioned in the relevant grammars as bearing the function of an object. An example you find in No. (7). The infinite form *l-hqynnhw* does not function as a final clause - like e.g. the corresponding form in No. (8), *l-gzmn*, - but as a clause representing the object of the preceding verb *wqh*¹⁵⁾. The infinitive *l-hqynnhw* refers to future time from the past standpoint of the governing verb *wqh*. This type of infinitive is equivalent to subordinated clauses introduced by the conjunction *k-* and containing a predicate in the imperfect *yf^cln*. An example of this can be found in NAM 2494 = CIAS II.41: (14) *wr' / kwqhnmw / 'l[mqh] / b'mrhw / k-[y]* (15) *hqynnn / slmtm*. The translation reads: "and now, Almagah has commanded them in his oracle that they should dedicate a female statuette". *l-hqynnhw* under No. (7) corresponds to *k-[y] hqynnn* of the preceding example. Evidently the two sentences reveal their close affinity even by their formulation¹⁶⁾. More commonly as in the usage just demonstrated the infinitive *l-f^cl(n)* occurs in a final meaning. I would like to point to the sentence under No. (8) as an example for this final usage, well known from the grammars and sufficiently clear. Infinitives bearing a final meaning in Sabaic commonly stand after *verba actionis* and especially after verbs expressing motion. Quite a different usage is shown by example No. (9) which you also rarely find in our grammars. There are several instances for the phenomenon that the infinitive introduced by the preposition *bn* is not preceded by verbs of hindering, preventing, prohibiting, etc., as testified by example No. (9). I understand the function of *bn f^cl(n)* in most of these cases as final, more precisely, as the negative-final meaning of "lest", "in order that not"¹⁷⁾. *bn/c dw* of

No. (9) is then to be identified as the infinitive of negative-final meaning dependent on the preceding hmr . The passage quoted in my list in a very abbreviated form I have translated as follows: "This concessionary document was decreed and ordained by 'Ilsharah Yahdib" ($[kn/hh]r/wrys^3n/\dots[...]'ls^2rh/yhdb/\dots\dots/dn/wtfn$), the Sabaic text is continued by a relative clause running: $\underline{d-hmr}/'d[mhw/]\dots/bn/^cdw/kll/'ns^1m/l-h[d^cn].. /kll/ms^2ym[t\dots]$. I translate: "which he granted to his subjects, lest anyone should approach in order to destroy all the cultivated fields"¹⁸⁾.

III. The construction of the logical subject or object of dependent infinitives

So far I have concentrated on the issue of the particular syntactic functions of the infinitive within a given clause. Apart from that it can be observed that the infinitive is extended by elements which bear its logical subject or object. What I myself labelled under B. II. in the list: " $f^cl(n)$, dependent on a predicate, cannot be replaced by a finite verbal form" is commonly referred to in the grammars as "the nominal usage of the infinitive"¹⁹⁾. This expression, however, leads to the - in my opinion - erroneous conclusion that the elements by which the infinitive is extended and which represent its logical subject or object appear in a nominal construction, i.e. in form of a *status constructus*. I cannot here exhaustively display the sequence of arguments, according to which the infinitive and its logical subject or object are not embedded in a construct²⁰⁾. It should at this point suffice to recall three already-mentioned instances which clearly demonstrate that no *status constructus* exists. As you see from No. (5) the infinitive 'tw is followed by the anaphoric demonstrative pronoun hmw. This demonstrative pronoun, the singular of which is hw' and in the feminine hy', appears to be the only nominal type that can, according to the spelling, be distinguished as either nominative (*casus rectus*) or genitive-accusative (*casus obliquus*). Were the subject of 'tw in No. (5) embedded in a *status constructus*, it would have to accept the genitive and therefore appear as hmt. Accordingly, it is evident from Nos. (4) and (6) that s^1qym resp. $h'/fnwtn$, functioning as subject of the preceding infinitive cdw resp. hy^c , is separated from its infinitive by the prepositional phrase cdyhw resp. $lhmw$ ²¹⁾. This forcibly excludes here a *status constructus*. Furthermore, on the basis of this evidence - my collection of references of these types of constructions numbers about 15²²⁾ - I am quite confident to deny also

in the other instances Nos. (7), (8) and (9), in which a personal pronoun is attached to the infinite form or a noun follows closely the infinitive, the existence of a *status constructus*. To advance the argument to a rather positive conclusion, one might say, with all due caution, that the subject or the object of an infinitive dependent on a predicate figures as if it were preceded by a finite verbal form.

Summing up the functions of the dependent infinitive I would like to point out the restriction on the sphere of the object which determines its usage, not taking into account at the moment its final function. In other words: The infinitive does not function to express adverbial relations e.g. of temporal or causal type (unlike Hebrew, where usages such as *be-še't Yiśra'el* "when Israel came out" are common).

- D -

As compared with Sabaic, the Qatabanic dialect is attested only over a considerably shorter period of time and has for this reason produced a smaller amount of epigraphic remains. The Qatabanic texts, however, record nevertheless 120 constructions of the infinitive derived from inscriptions which have been dated from the third century B.C. down to the second century A.D.

The infinitive in Qatabanic functions more or less in the same way as in Sabaic:

THE USAGES OF THE INFINITIVE IN QATABANIC

I. $f^{\circ}l$, functioning as a predicate, can be replaced by a finite verbal form

$w-f^{\circ}l$ continuing a finite verbal form ($f^{\circ}l$, $l-yf^{\circ}l$, $b-yf^{\circ}l$)

(10) $w'y/'y/'s^1dm/bydr/w-s^1h\underline{d}^{\circ}/bn/wfr/$ (5) $w^{\circ}s^2q/ws^1qhm/ws^1cndm/zrbts^1/hgdn/dmhrn$ R 3854 "and whoever refuses and refrains from planting, cultivating, preparing and taking care of his field according to this ordinance"

II. $f^{\circ}l(m)$, dependent on a predicate, cannot be replaced by a finite verbal form

1. $f^{\circ}l$ stands for a subject

(11) $w'l$ (6) $s^3n/s^1whs^3s^1/bn/br$ (7) $\underline{t}s^1\dots$ (3) $\dots/bn/'mlk/'w$ (9) s^1n
R 3884bis = NAM 601 = CIAS II. 155 "and it is not permitted for

any of the (future) kings of 'Awsān to remove it (sc. the M^CMR) from its place ..."²³⁾

2. $f^c l(m)$ stands for an object

a. $f^c l(m)$ dependent on the auxiliary verb wz'

(12) $w^c m / lyz$ (11) $' / \underline{s} \underline{d} \underline{q} \underline{s}^1 \underline{n} / bkl / mngw$ AM 757 = CIAS I. 147 "and may ^CAmm continue to grant them all the prosperous affairs"

b. $bn f^c l(m)$ dependent on verbs of hindering, preventing, etc.

see No. (10): $bn / wfr /$ (5) $w^c s^2 q / ws^1 qhm / ws^1 c hdm / \underline{z} \underline{r} \underline{b} \underline{t} \underline{s}^1 / \underline{h} \underline{g} \underline{d} \underline{n} / \underline{d} \underline{m} \underline{h} \underline{r} \underline{n}$

c. $l - f^c l(m)$ dependent on *verba dicendi*

(13) $w \underline{t} \underline{f} \underline{t} / s^2 \underline{h} \underline{r} / ' \underline{d} \underline{m} \underline{s}^1 / ' \underline{r} \underline{b} \underline{y} / \underline{d} \underline{l} \underline{b} \underline{h} / \underline{l} - s^1 \underline{t} \underline{r} / \underline{w} \underline{f} \underline{t} \underline{h} / \underline{d} \underline{t} \underline{n} / ' s^1 \underline{t} \underline{r} \underline{n} / \underline{b} \underline{s}^1 \underline{r} \underline{n} / \underline{l} \underline{b} \underline{h}$
R 3691/7 "and S²HR has ordered his subjects, the 'RBY of LBH, to write and engrave these lines in the valley LBH"

3. $l - f^c l(m)$ in final meaning²⁴⁾

(14) $kl / \underline{d} \underline{m} / \underline{b} \underline{y}$ (20) $^c \underline{r} \underline{b} / \underline{t} \underline{m} \underline{n}^c / \underline{l} - s^2 \underline{t} \underline{y} \underline{t} \underline{m}$ (21) $bn / ^c \underline{m} / \underline{n} \underline{k} \underline{r} / s^2 \underline{c} \underline{b} \underline{m}$ R 4337B
"whoever enters Timna^{C2} / pays the Timna^C market-tax² in order to trade with a foreign tribe".

- E -

Here, too, one can distinguish between two major usages, according to the position of the infinitive within the clause being described, as the function either to continue paratactically a finite verbal form or to depend on the predicate as a constructional part of the clause. The majority of the evidence consists of constructions of which I have given as an example No. (10). This sentence represents the protasis in a conditional clause. The infinitive $w - s^1 \underline{h} \underline{d}^c$ continues paratactically the imperfect $b - ydr$ which corresponds to the Sabaic so-called N-imperfect $yf^c ln$.

In case the infinitive is construed as an element of the clause dependent on the predicate, it appears in a number of instances to be connected with Mīm suffixed. I shall return to this phenomenon at the very end of my paper.

The dependent infinitive in Qatabanic also appears more or less to occupy the same syntactical positions as is known to us from the Sabaic. I need not therefore discuss in further detail the examples listed under D. II. In No. (11) the infinitive $s^1 \underline{w} \underline{h} \underline{s}^3 - s^1$ and the

following parts of the clause: $bn/br \underline{t}s^1 \dots bn/'mlk/'w s^1 n$ are to be identified as subject of the phrase ' $\underline{l}/s^3 n^{25}$ '.

Functioning as an object, the infinitive occurs on the one hand - as is shown by No. (12) - preceded by the auxiliary verb wz' in the imperfect. On the other hand - I refer to No. (13) - it bears the form $\underline{l}-f^e \underline{l}$, preceded by verbs like $\underline{t}f\underline{t}$, which have in common the general meaning of "to order, to command, etc." and which can rather roughly be determined as *verba dicendi*. The infinitive $\underline{l}-s^1 \underline{t}r/w-ft\underline{h}$ - in translation: "to write and engrave" - has not a final meaning but represents the content of what is expressed by the predicate, that is the content of the order or command. In the same way as in the Sabaic text No. (7) the dependent infinitive refers to future time.

Relatively common in Qatabanic are infinitives introduced by the preposition bn . By looking more closely at the examples which bear on the question we find, in most cases, that, when preceded by a verb of the general group of "to prevent, to forbid, to hinder, to avoid, etc.", the infinitive connected with bn can be determined as object of that verb²⁶). Parallel to the example of $\underline{l}-f^e \underline{l}$ quoted above, the infinitive introduced by bn represents clauses by which the actual content of what is forbidden, hindered, avoided, refrained from, etc. is expressed. This is well demonstrated by No. (10): The infinite forms wfr , $s^2 q$, $s^1 q\underline{h}m$ and $s^1 e\underline{h}dm$ represent the prepositional object of the preceding $b-ydr/w-s^1 \underline{h}d^e$, which is introduced by bn . As one would expect, this particular usage of the infinitive is restricted to juridical texts comparatively abundant in the remains of Qatabanic. By the way, all the Qatabanic examples under D with the exception of No. (12) are derived from inscriptions of juridical content.

Yet in another juridical text containing the Mercantile Code of Timna^C of the third century B.C., No. (14), the infinitive $\underline{l}-s^2 \underline{t}y\underline{t}m$ is used in final function²⁷).

- F -

How, as a final question, can we describe the difference between the Sabaic and Qatabanic infinitive?

A fundamental difference lies in its usage. There is not a single instance in Qatabanic for the functioning as optative of the infinitive connected with $\underline{l}-$. The standard expressions like $w-\underline{l}-\underline{h}mr-hmw$ deity name, $w-\underline{l}-s^1 e\underline{d}-hmw$ deity name, $w-\underline{l}-hwfy\underline{n}-hmw$ deity name, etc., abundant

in middle-Sabaic votive texts are missing in the Qatabanic inscriptions. The reason for this cannot be found in an absence of votive texts in Qatabanic, of which we possess almost 30 complete examples containing at least two clauses each, not to speak of the numerous fragmentary texts. It is, however, common to all of them that the infinitive appears not in connection with *l-* but rather is expressed by *l-* and imperfect, that is to say *l-yf^cl*.

Another equally fundamental difference to the Sabaic to which the relevant grammars draw no attention, is revealed by the form of the infinitive. Maria Höfner and A.F.L. Beeston do point out that the infinitive always occurs without *-n* in Qatabanic²⁸⁾, which is undoubtedly correct. On the other hand it has slipped their notice what has been already observed by Nikolaus Rhodokanakis in the second part of his collection "Qatabanische Texte zur Bodenwirtschaft"²⁹⁾ and what a close examination of the 120 infinitive constructions clearly reveals: that a *Mīm* can be attached to the verbal stem. This *Mīm*, however, appears solely in those cases where the infinitive functions as an object or final clause. I draw your attention to the infinitive in No. (10): *s¹qhm/w-s^{1c}hdm* as well as to No. (14): *l-s²tytm*, which both represent dependent parts of the clause. I would again like to stress the point that this *Mīm* can be attached to the infinitive in the syntactical positions described but must not always do so. It is completely irrelevant that the infinite forms mentioned are forms of derived stems, equivalent to Arabic stems IV and VIII³⁰⁾.

This *Mīm* certainly has to be identical with the *Mīm* of the indefinite article. Therefore the question arises how the logical subject or object of a dependent infinitive is construed. I refer again to example No. (10) where you find the form *s^{1c}hdm* by which the *Mīm* is preserved, irrespective of the following object, which in No. (10) would be *ꝥrbts¹*. The conclusion is compelling that no *status constructus* exists here. We must consider it as certain that in Qatabanic as well as in Sabaic the logical subject or object of a dependent infinitive is not embedded in a construct. Therefore we would describe it in the nominative resp. accusative, could we determine vowels indicating cases in Sabaic or Qatabanic, which in fact we are not able to do.

By turning to a rather general conclusion of my modest treatise on the infinitive, I hope it has sufficiently demonstrated a quite sophisticatedly developed system of the functioning of the infinitive in Epi-

graphic South Arabian, which is in this extent quite unfamiliar to other Semitic languages, especially to Arabic.

NOTES

- *) I am very grateful to Dr. Christian Marek for his kind help with the English wording of the present paper.
- 1) See e.g. Beeston 1984 § 26:4. - I have collected about 500 instances for relative clauses, the antecedent of which appears in the *status constructus*.
- 2) A study on this topic is in preparation.
- 3) See e.g. Beeston 1984 § 7:6.
- 4) See e.g. Höfner 1943 § 53, Solá-Solé 1961 : 38, Robin 1983 : 166 1.3 and Beeston 1984 § 8:3.
- 5) For a more detailed study on the distribution of this affirmative see Nebes 1985 : 32-34.
- 6) The paleography of the juridical inscription C 611 (see example No. (6)) regarding water usage points to a dating in the 2nd. to the 1st. centuries B.C.
- 7) See Höfner 1943 §§ 53-55, Bauer 1966 : 84-87, Beeston 1984 § 8: 1-3. The following more or less comprehensive studies were devoted to the infinitive in Epigraphic South Arabian: Solá-Solé 1961 : 29-40, Gruntfest 1965 : 285-306 [compare also the French résumé of Jacques Ryckmans in BO 24 (1967) 271] and Robin 1983 : 164-172. - The quoted contributions dealing with the infinitive in Epigraphic South Arabian under various aspects are based on a rather selective source material. A study departing from an exhaustive collection of all infinite forms occurring in the inscriptions and evaluating these forms systematically under morphological and syntactic aspects has not yet been produced. The present outline serves the more limited purpose to demonstrate the more important syntactic usages.
- 8) The abbreviations of the sigla of inscriptions cited are those of the Sab.Dict. XX-XXV. The present translation uses the meanings proposed by the authors of the Sab.Dict.

- ⁹⁾ Translation according to Beeston 1976 : 28.
- ¹⁰⁾ For *mzr* see now Al-Selwi 1987 : 206.
- ¹¹⁾ Also quoted by Beeston 1984 § 8:6. The most recent commentary and translation of this inscription was given by Müller 1983 : 277f.
- ¹²⁾ A changing of subject in the clauses, the predicate of which is represented by the infinite forms *t^crbn* (J 735/9) and *t'hrn* (J 702/13), has been assumed as one possible explanation inter alia by Nebes 1985 : 35. I now consider this as improbable.
- ¹³⁾ Also the infinitives following the phrase '*l/s³n* assume the function of subject, see e.g. C 380/3, C 400/1, C 617/1, MAFRAY Ouṭra 1/1, MAFY Ḥamir 1/1.
- ¹⁴⁾ For the original meaning of *bn* in this context see n. 17.
- ¹⁵⁾ *l-f^cl(n)* functioning as object which follows verbs of commanding which, according to their meaning, belong, strictly speaking, to a section of *verba dicendi*, i.e. *verba voluntatis* (see Bennett 1910 : 379ff.), is mentioned also by Solá-Solé 1961 : 34.
- ¹⁶⁾ I just marginally mention here the complete absence of the conjunction *k-* expressing a final meaning in Sabaic.
- ¹⁷⁾ The function of the preposition *bn* in this context as well as in positions in which it introduces, after verbs of hindering, preventing, etc., the infinitive functioning as object, follows from its original meaning, which essentially points to "the separation of s.th."
- ¹⁸⁾ Some further instances: G1 1142/8, G1 1379/3 (= C 318/2), Rob Maš 1/4.
- ¹⁹⁾ Compare e.g. Höfner 1943 § 54: "In vielen Fällen präsentiert er (sc. der Infinitiv im Altsüdarabischen, N.N.) sich als Nomen".
- ²⁰⁾ For details see Nebes : 1987.
- ²¹⁾ The infinitives in No. (4): *^cdw/^cdyhw/s¹qym* and No. (6): *hy^c/lhmw/[h]'/fnwtⁿ* were translated into English by using the gerund "the flowing of water into it" or "the flowing of this main-canal ... for them". By the usage of this gerund the logical subject can be expressed only "nominally" by the genitival combination with "of".
- ²²⁾ For instances see Nebes 1987 : 84-88.

23) See A.F.L. Beeston in CIAS II.156.

24) An instance of $bn f^e l(m)$ functioning in a negative-final meaning can possibly be found in R 3689/4 (for the same phrases see also R 3691/4 and R 3692/3). The passage runs as follows:

(1) $s^2 hr/ygl/bn/yd^c 'b/mlk/qtbn/sry/ws fh/bn/h\dot{t}bm$ (2) $m\dot{h}rm/^c m/d\dot{d}wnm/...$ (3) $.../'dms^1/m^c dkrb/bn/hybr/w\dot{w}d'l/bn/rb\dot{h}/w'h\dot{h}y$ (4) $s^1 my/'rby/^c m/d\dot{l}bh/wt'n\dot{t}s^1 m/bn/s^1 n\dot{s}fm/ws^1 kt/w'h\dot{d}/w$ (5) $g\dot{d}dm/l^c \dot{s}m/w\dot{d}m/wbntm/ws^2 f\dot{t}m/l^c m/w'trt$.

Beeston 1971 : 10 translates as follows:

"S²hr Ygl son of Yd^C'b king of Qataban has promulgated and recorded from H^tb the sanctuary of ^CAmm of Dwnm ... for his subjects M^Cdkrb of the clan Hybr and Wd'l of the clan Rbh and the fellow-clansmen of these two, the 'rby of ^CAmm of Labakh, and their womenfolk, the formation - without any shortcoming, falling into abeyance, derogation or termination - of a patronage-tie of friendship, affiliation and protection in relation to ^CAmm and 'Athirat".

As can be understood from his translation A.F.L. Beeston puts $bn/s^1 n\dot{s}fm/ws^1 kt/w'h\dot{d}/w$ (5) $g\dot{d}dm$ as parenthesis. I rather suppose the existence of infinitives here, which is supported by the observation that Mimation is not attached to all four forms (see also section F and n. 30), as e.g. the following substantives $w\dot{d}-m/w-bnt-m/w-s^2 f\dot{t}-m$. Instead of the parenthesis I am inclined to explain the infinitives introduced by bn in analogy to Sabaic clause No. (9) by a negative-final meaning. If I am right, only 'dm-s¹, etc. mentioned before would fit as subject of the infinite forms not explicitly expressed. Putting aside the more thorny problems of the whole passage I would nevertheless like to present the following translation of it, for which I use essentially what was proposed by A.F.L. Beeston as the meanings of $s^1 n\dot{s}fm$, $s^1 kt$, etc.:

"S²HR YGL ... has promulgated and recorded from H^tB ... for his subjects M^CDKRB ... and the fellow-clansmen of these two, the 'rby of ^CAmm of Labah, and their womenfolk, in order that they (sc. his subjects) should not neglect, conceal, remove and cut the patronage-tie of friendship, affiliation and protection in relation to ^CAmm and 'A^tirat".

25) A.F.L. Beeston points out correctly in CIAS II.158 that $bn/'m\dot{ik}/w s^1 n$ functions as subject of the infinitive $s^1 w\dot{h}s^3 -s^1$.

- 26) See, however, n. 24.
- 27) The meaning of the preceding verb *b-y^crb* has not been clearly understood. It was suggested by Beeston 1959 : 5 and 12 (translation) to mean "pay the market-tax" whereas Müller 1983 : 279 n. 8a is rather inclined to favour inter alia the translation of that verb by "to enter".
- 28) See Höfner 1943 § 53 and Beeston 1984 Q § 8:1.
- 29) See Rhodokanakis 1922 : 24.
- 30) According to Rhodokanakis op. cit., the Mīm is attached to infinitives of derived stems. But as shown by *bqlm* and ^c*lym* (J 2360/8,11 = VL 6/8,11) as well as *gddm* (R 3689/5), the Mīm can also be attached to infinite forms of the simple stem where these are construed as syntactically dependent parts of the clause. - The connection of Mīm and infinitive in *l-qtbr-m* of the Sabaic text YMN 1/5 is a phenomenon which can perhaps be traced to Qatabanian usage. The passage runs: *lqtbrm* (6) *bhw/kl/'ḥrr/w-ḥrtw/b* (7) *ythw/ḡyln* "in order that all free men and women of his House Ḡaylān should be buried in it (sc. in his tomb)". See also Sab.Dict. s.r. QBR which proposes inter alia for the form *qtbr-m* an infinitive.

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