A selection of Safaitic inscriptions from the Mafraq Antiquities Office and Museum

Abdul-Qader al-Housan

Mafraq Antiquities Office and Museum, Jordan

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Abdul-Qader al-Housan
(Mafraq Antiquities Office and Museum, Jordan)

Abstract
This paper provides the photographs, readings, and interpretations of sixty-one Safaitic inscriptions from the Mafraq Museum's collection.

Keywords: Ancient North Arabian; Safaitic; Old Arabic

1 Introduction
The inscriptions under investigation are part of the collection of the Mafraq Museum, located in the town of Mafraq in northern Jordan, about 45km southeast of Irbid. Since 1991, Abdul Qader al-Housan has been gathering inscriptions from various sites across northern Jordan, including Wadi Salma, Wadi Rajil, Al-Muhaddath, Al-Ajb, Zaatari, Al-Qattafiyyat, Al-Ashaqif, and storing them in the depository of the Mafraq Museum. This effort has been mainly to preserve the texts against development, theft, and vandalism. Unfortunately, the provenance of these stones is not known and no GPS information is available.

The texts edited herein are considered a representative sample of the kinds of Safaitic inscriptions held by the Museum. It is hoped that by publishing these texts, we will stimulate the interest of researchers to visit the Museum on-site and to work on the various collections of texts held in its depository. The reading and translation of these texts was made in collaboration with Dr. A. Al-Jallad and Dr. A. Al-Manaser, and the tracings are by Dr. A. Al-Manaser.
2 Vocabulary items of interest

The inscriptions of this corpus have yielded several unique or rarely attested words. These are listed below in the order of their occurrence.

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<tr>
<td>tll</td>
<td>‘writing’, ‘words’</td>
<td>#1</td>
<td>See Al-Jallad (2015: 348)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṣdt</td>
<td>‘side of a valley’</td>
<td>#10</td>
<td>CAr ṣuddun ‘the side of a valley’ (Lane, 1659a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mtʿ</td>
<td>‘the day became advanced, the sun being held high’</td>
<td>#13</td>
<td>CAr mataʿa n-nahāru ‘the day became advanced’ (Lane, 3016c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sʾyʾ</td>
<td>‘to experience want’</td>
<td>#26</td>
<td>See Al-Jallad (2015: 345)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿnzt</td>
<td>‘goat’</td>
<td>#31</td>
<td>well known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gʿlt</td>
<td>‘short palm-trees’</td>
<td>#31</td>
<td>CAr gāʿlun ‘short palm-tree’ (Lane, 431b), perhaps here an individuative plural */gaʿlāt/.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḥrf</td>
<td>‘the side of a rivulet’</td>
<td>#42</td>
<td>CAr harfun ‘the extremity, verge, boarder, margin, brink, brow, side, or edge of anything...for example the side of a rivulet’ (Lane, 550a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rḍt</td>
<td>‘meadow’</td>
<td>#44</td>
<td>See Al-Jallad (2015: 339)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʾmr</td>
<td>‘to be widespread’</td>
<td>#45</td>
<td>See Al-Jallad (2015: 339)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḥgg</td>
<td>‘to make a pilgrimage’</td>
<td>#58</td>
<td>well known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḥfrt</td>
<td>‘guidance’</td>
<td>#60</td>
<td>See Al-Jallad (2015: 318)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 The inscriptions

No. 1:  

_ l mfny bn qdm bn mfny h- tll_  
‘By Mfny son of Qdm son of Mfny is this writing.’
Figure 2: Inscription No. 2

No. 2:  
\[ l \ ʾby\ bn\ grmt\ bn\ ḏʾb\ bn\ ʿs²mn\ bn\ ʿmr\ w\ wgm\ l-\ bz\ w\ l-\ ʿkt \]
‘By ʾby son of Grmt son of ḏʾb son of ʿs²mn son of ʿmr and he grieved for Bz and for ʿkt.’

Figure 3: Inscriptions No. 3-5

No. 3:  
\[ l\ wʿl\ bn\ grm \]
‘By Wʿl son of Grm.’

No. 4:  
\[ l\ ʾbs¹\ bn\ gr\ bn\ ḏʿr\ w\ h\ lt\ ʿwr\ m\ ʿwr \]
‘By ʾbs¹ son of Gr son of ḏʿr, so, O Lt, blind whosoever would efface (this inscription).’

No. 5:  
\[ l\ rb\ bn\ wʿl\ h-dr \]
‘By Rb son of Wʿl, in this region.’
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Figure 4: Inscription No. 6

No. 6:  
\[ l\ s'\text{mm} \ bn \ 's'\text{l}m \ bn \ 's\text{m} \ bn \ 't h \ - \ frs' \]
'By S'mm son of 's'l'lm son of Ş'm son of Š't is the horse.'

Figure 5: Inscriptions No. 7-8

No. 7:  
\[ l \ q'tl \ bn \ grm \ bn \ 'd'l \ bn \ bwk \ bn \ 'sb'h \]
'By Qtl son of Grm son of D'l son of Bwk son of Şbh.'

No. 8:  
\[ l \ 'd'r \ bn \ b'mh \ bn \ s'wd \ w \ h \ 'lt \ s'lm \ w \ nq't \ l- \ d \ 'wr \ h- \ s'fr \]
'By 'dr son of B'mh son of S'wd and so, O Lt, [grant] security but may he who would efface this writing be thrown out of the grave.'

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**Figure 6: Inscription No. 9**

**No. 9:** \( l\ b\ 'l\ bn\ \text{ḥṭf}\ h\ -\ h\ yt \)

‘By B’l son of Ḫṭft are the animals.’

**Figure 7: Inscription No. 10**

**No. 10:** \( l\ ns¹r\ bn\ nhmn\ bn\ 'd\ bn\ kmn\ f\ h\ rẓy\ ġmr\ )\)

‘By Ns¹r son of Nhmn son of ’d son of Kmn, so, O Rẓy, [grant] spoil.’
No. 11:  
\[ l\ s¹krn\ bn\ ħ́ts¹t\ bn\ s¹krn\ h-\ sdt\ w\ 's²rq\ f\ h\ lt\ s¹lm \]
'S¹krn son of ħ́ts¹t son of S¹krn, at this side of the valley, and he migrated to the inner desert so, O Lt, [grant] security.'

No. 12:  
\[ l\ ghm\ bn\ ḏsky\ bn\ ħ́ts¹t\ bn\ s¹krn\ w\ wgd\ s¹fr\ 'b\ -h\ w\ l\ ... \]
'By Ghm son of ḏsky son of ħ́ts¹t son of S¹krn and he found the writing of his father ...'
Figure 10: Inscriptions No. 13-19

No. 13: \( l\ 'n'm\ bn\ 'd'r'l\ bn\ Bdr\ w\ mt'f\ h\ 'lt\ s'l'm\)

'By 'n'm son of 'd'r'l son of Bdr and the day became advanced (the sun’s heat was intense) so, O 'lt, [grant] security.'

No. 14: \( l\ mlk\ bn\ Bdn\ bn\ 'w'd\ w\ r'y\)

'By Mlk son of Bdn son of 'w'd and he pastured.'

No. 15: \( l\ z'n\ bn\ Gfft\)

'By Z'n son of Gfft.'

No. 16: \( l\ \h'r\ bn\ 'm\)

'Ḥr son of 'm.'

No. 17: \( l\ s'l'd\ bn\ Gyr'l\ bn\ S'krn\ bn\ Zkr\ bn\ Zn'l\)

'By S'l'd son of Gyr'l son of S'krn son of Zkr son of Zn'l.'

No. 18: \( l\ hs'l'k\ b[n]\ hrs'\ w\ r'y\)

'By Ḥs'l'k son of Ḥrs' and he pastured.'

No. 19: \( l\ q's'\ bn\ Ḥlf\ bn\ Frg\ w\ r'y\)

'By Qs' son of Ḥlf son of Frg and he pastured.'
No. 20:  
l ʿqr bn sʾrkʾl bn ḥrsʾn  
‘By ʿqr bn sʾrkʾl bn ḥrsʾn.’

No. 21:  
l sʾḥtr bn nṣr bn ḥlm bn zhrn  
‘By Sʾḥtr bn nṣr bn ḥlm bn zhrn.’

No. 22:  
l sʾkrʾl bn sʾkrʾl bn ḥrsʾn ḥ- ḏmyt  
‘By Sʾkrʾl bn sʾkrʾl bn ḥrsʾn ḥ- ḏmyt.’

No. 23:  
l khl bn sʾkrʾl bn ḥrsʾn  
‘By Khl bn sʾkrʾl bn ḥrsʾn.’

Figure 11: Inscriptions No. 20-23
No. 24:  
\[l s¹ʿd bn Ḥny bn ʿbd bn s¹ʿd bn ʿbd bn s¹ʿd bn ʿḏ bn ʿḏ bn ṣʾrb bn Ġlmt w ṣʾfr ʾs²yʿ h f ngʿ w rʿy h- ḍʾn f h lt ġnyt l- ḍ rʿy w mḥlt l- ḍ yʾwr h- sʾfr \]
‘By S¹ʿd son of Ḥny son of ʿbd son of ʿḏ son of S²rb son of Ġlmt and he found the inscription of his companions so he grieved in pain; and he pastured the sheep, so, O Lt, may he who has pastured have abundance but may he who would efface this writing experience a dearth of pasture.’

No. 25:  
\[l s²mt bn zkr bn Ġyrʾl w rʿy h- ḍʾn f h lt ġnyt \]
‘By S²mt son of Zkr son of Ġyrʾl and he pastured the sheep and so, O Lt, [grant] abundance.’
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Figure 14: Inscriptions No. 26-28

No. 26: \( l \ s^2\text{ddt} \ bn \ s^2\text{bm} \ w \ r^\prime y \ h- \ n\text{h}l \ w \ s^2\text{y}^\prime \ f \ h \ r^\prime \text{dy} \ \text{gny[t]} \ l- \ d \ r^\prime y \)

'By S^2\text{ddt} son of S^2\text{bm} and he pastured in the valley but experienced want so, O R\text{dy}, may he who has pastured have abundance.'

No. 27: \( l \ m^\prime \text{qn} \ bn \ s^\prime n \)

'By M^\prime qn son of s^\prime n.'

No. 28: \( l \ \text{bd} \)

'By bd.'

Figure 15: Inscription No. 29

No. 29: \( l \ s^\prime \text{d} \ bn \ qdm \ bn \ rmzn \)

'By S^\prime d son of Qdm son of Rmzn.'

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Figure 16: Inscriptions No. 30-36

No. 30:  
{l drʾl bn ʾḥlm bn mty bn rġd bn ḥḏr w ḫrṣ h- sʾnt f h lt sʾlm w rwh h bʾlsʾmn w nqʾt l- ḏ yʾwr h- sʾfr}
‘By Drʾl son of ʾḥlm son of Mty son of Rġd son of Ḥḏr and he kept watch this year and so, O Lt, [grant] security and send, O Bʾlsʾmn, the winds; and may he who would efface this writing be thrown out of the grave.’

No. 31:  
{l ḥd bn mḥrk bn mty w ḫrṣ ʿn{z}t -h gʾlt f h lt sʾlm ḏ sʾr}
‘By Ḥd son of Mḥrk son of Mty and he watched his goats at the small palm-tress, so, O Lt, keep him who would leave (this inscription) untouched safe.’

No. 32:  
{l tm bn ǧmr bn tm}
‘By Tm son of Ǧmr son of Tm.’

No. 33:  
{l ṣʾd bn ẓnn bn ʿlf bn lʾṯmn bn rġd}
‘By Ṣʾd son of Ẓnn son of Ṣʾd son of Lʾṯmn son of Rġd.’

No. 34:  
{l ʿlf bn ẓnn bn ṣʾd bn lʾṯmn bn rġd}
‘By ʿLf son of Ẓnn son of Ṣʾd son of Lʾṯmn son of Rġd.’

No. 35:  
{l ẓnn bn ṣʾd bn lʾṯmn w wgm ʾl- ḫdk}
‘By Ẓnn son of Ṣʾd son of Lʾṯmn and he grieved for Ḫdk.’

No. 36:  
{l sʾḥr bn sʾʾd bn sʾṯʾz w ḫrṣ}
‘By Sʾḥr son of Sʾʾd son of Sʾṯʾz and he kept watch’
No. 37:  
\[ l \text{ mlk} \text{ bn} \ y^\prime \text{mr} \ h\ htt \]
'By Mlk son of Y`mr are these carvings.'

No. 38:  
\[ l \text{ bny} \text{ bn} \ ʾṣr \text{ bn} \ bny \ h\ frs\ f \ h \ lt \ ʿwr l\ d \ y^\prime \text{wr} \ h\ htt \]
'By Bny son of ʾṣr son of Bny is the horse, so, O Lt, may whosoever would efface these carvings go blind.'
Figure 19: Inscription No. 39

**No. 39:**

\[ l \text{ ẓhr } bn \text{ ḥṭṭ } bn \text{ ẓhr } bn \text{ tʾm } d- \text{l } gr \text{ w syr } s¹nt \text{ ws¹q } l \text{ ʿbd } w \text{ ṣ¹ml } f \text{ h lt s¹lm } \]

`By Ẓhr son Ḥṭṭ son of Ẓhr son of Tʾm of the lineage of Gr and he returned to a place of water the year of the struggle of the lineage of ʿbd and ṣ¹ml and so Lt [grant] security.'

Figure 20: Inscription No. 40

**No. 40:**

\[ l \text{ s¹ny } bn \text{ s¹wd } bn \text{ ḥy } bn \text{ ṭrd } bn \text{ ms¹ğ } \]

`By S¹ny son of S¹wd son of Ḥy son of Ṭrd son of Ms¹ğ.'
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Figure 21: Inscription No. 41

No. 41:   lʾtm bn hnʾ bnʾtm w wgm ʾl· bs¹ w ʾl· hnʾ
‘By ῥtm son of Hnʾ son of ῥtm he grieved for Bs¹ and for Hnʾ.’

Figure 22: Inscriptions No. 42-43

No. 42:   l gfft bn wqm bn ḥs² bn ws¹m w rʿy h· ḥ{r}f
‘By Gfft son of Wqm son of Ḥs² son of Ws¹m and he pastured
the side of a rivulet.’

No. 43:   l s²ʿʾl bn ʾnʿm bn znmy
‘By S²ʿʾl son of ʾnʿm son of Znmy.’
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Figure 23: Inscription No. 44

No. 44:  l kṣṭ bn nṣrʾl bn zbdy bn s²krʾl bn ryḍ w rʿy h- ḍʾn h- rʿṭ bq̲l f h lt sʾlm
            ‘By Kṣṭ son of Nṣrʾl son of Zbdy son of S²krʾl son of Ryḍ and he pastured the sheep in the meadow on fresh herbage so, O Lt, [grant] security.’

Figure 24: Inscriptions No. 45-46

No. 45:  l kḥsʾmn bn gnʾl bn s²ʿr bn gnʾl ḏ-ʾl kn w tʾmr h- sʾnʾ sʾnt qṣr w h- mḏy f h lt w gddf sʾlm w ʿwr l- ḍ- ḍwr h- sʾfr
            ‘By Kḥsʾmn son of Gnʾl son of S²ʿr son of Gnʾl of the lineage of Kn and adversity was widespread the year of Caesar and the Persians so, O Lt and Gddf, may he be secure; and may he who would efface this writing go blind.’

No. 46:  l gnʾl bn kḥsʾmn bn gnʾl
            ‘By Gnʾl son of Kḥsʾmn son of Gnʾl.’

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Figure 25: Inscriptions No. 47-48

No. 47: l sṣr bn qtl bn sḥly bn mr bn ʾft
‘By Sṣr son of Qtl son of Sḥly son of Mr son of ʾft’

No. 48: l mty bn sṣr
‘By Mty son of Sṣr.’

Figure 26: Inscriptions No. 49-50

No. 49: l ysλm bn ġlṭ bn rbn w rʿy h- nḫl tbb f h rḍw ṭ-ḥ [m-] bʾs¹
‘By Ysλm son of ġlṭ son of Rbn and he pastured in the valley as an old man so, O Rḍw, deliver him [from] misfortune.’

No. 50: l ḥḍz bn wʿl w rʿy h- nḥl wny
‘By Ḥḍz son of Wʿl and he pastured in the valley feebly.’
Figure 27: Inscriptions No. 51-52

No. 51:  
\[ l \text{sīhr} \text{ bn sīhr} \text{ bn grm bn ḏl bn bwḥ} \]
‘By Sīhr son of Sīhr son of Grm son of ḏl son of Bwḥ.’

No. 52:  
\[ l \text{ḥlm} \text{ bn mʿd} \]
‘By ḥlm son of Mʿd.’

Figure 28: Inscriptions No. 53-54

No. 53:  
\[ l \text{sʿkrn} \text{ bn ḫṭsʿt} \text{ bn sʿkrn} \]
‘By Sʿkrn son of Ḫṭsʿt son of Sʿkrn.’

No. 54:  
\[ l \text{ṣʿḥr} \text{ bn ʿṭsʿ bn ʾsʿḥr w ḫrṣ f ḥ lt sʿlm w ʿwr l- ḏ ʿwr w ʿwnmt l- ḏ dʿy w ṭmr mṭr} \]
‘By ṣʿḥr son of ṣʿḥr and he was on the look out and so O Lt [grant] security; and may he who would efface (this inscription) go blind but may he who would read (this inscription) aloud have spoil; and he awaited rain.’
No. 55:  l tm bn s¹lm bn nml ḏ- ʾl grs²t w wld h- mʿzy f h lt s¹lm w ḏkr ytʿ bn s²ddt ḥl ḥ-

'By Tm son of S¹lm son of Nml of the lineage of Grs²t and he helped the goats to give birth, so, O Lt, [grant] security; and may Yṯʿ son of S²ddt, his maternal uncle, be remembered.'

No. 56:  l trml bn yʿly bn ḏhdτ bn s¹dy

'By Trml son of Yʿly son of Dhdt son of S¹dy.'
No. 57:  
\[ \text{l znm bn gmz bn s¹b w wgm} \]
‘By Znm son of Gmz son of S¹b and he grieved.’

No. 58:  
\[ \text{l ʿbdt bn ʿqrb bn Lbʾn ḏ- ʾl Ḥly w ḥgg s¹nt mnʿt bn rḍwt w ḥrṣ L- ḥl -h f ḥ lt w ḏs²r s¹lm w qbl} \]
‘By ‘bdt son of ‘qrb son of Lbʾn of the lineage of Ḥly and he made a pilgrimage the year Mnʿt son of Rḍwt died and kept watch for his family so, O Lt and Ds²r, [grant] security and reunion.’
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Figure 33: Inscription No. 59

No. 59:  
\[ l \, mnʿ \, bn \, hʾs¹... \, n \, s¹krn \, h\, gml \]
‘By Mnʿ son of Hʾs¹ n S¹krn is the male camel.’

Figure 34: Inscription No. 60

No. 60:  
\[ l \, ṣʿd \, bn \, ġlmṭ \, bn \, mtn \, bn \, hŋy \, bn \, ms¹k \, bn \, s²rk \, bn \, ʿbd \, bn \, ġlmṭ \, w \, hṛṣ \, h\, mlkt \, f \, h \, lt \, w \, gdʿwḏ \, w \, s²ḥqm \, w \, ds²r \, b\, hlfr \, -k \, ʿwd\, -k \, w \, nqʿr \, b\, wdl[d] \, ḥbl \, h\, s¹fr \, w \, ḡlmṭ \, l\, d \, dʿy \, h\, s¹fr \, w \, w \]
‘By Ṣʿd son of Ġlmṭ son of Mtn son of Hŋy son of Ms¹k son of S²rk son of ʿbd son of Ġlmṭ and he kept watch for Ḥmlkt so, O Lt and Gdʿwḏ and S²ḥqm and DS²r, through your guidance comes your protection; and may he who would obscure this writing be thrown out of the grave by a loved one but may he who would read this writing aloud have spoil and...’
Figure 35: Inscription No. 61

No. 61:  l ...l bn 'n'm bn nṣr bn nṣr bn hms¹k bn hg bn rb bn hmlk bn nhḍ bn ḥmyn bn ġḍḍt bn 'nḍt bn ws²kt bn ḏf bn gn'l
        'By ...l son of 'n'm son of Nṣr son of Nṣr son of Hms¹k son of Ḥg son of Rb son of Hmlk son of Nhḍ son of Ḥmyn son of ġḍḍt son of 'nḍt son of Ws²kt son of ḏf son of Gn'l'

Address for Correspondence: alhousan@yahoo.com
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<td>'father'</td>
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<td>ʾhl</td>
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Sigla

Lane  Lane (1863-1893)

References

