A CRITICAL AND COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MODERN NAJDI ARABIC PROVERBS

A thesis presented to the University of Leeds

by

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This dissertation has never been submitted to this or any other University
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Consonants

\( t \)
\( b \)
\( t \)
\( j \)
\( k \)
\( d \)
\( r \)
\( z \)
\( s \)
\( s \)

If a word with a \( ض \) is classical or literary, the \( ض \) is transcribed \( ء \).

\( t \)
\( g \)
\( f \)

\( q \) (only in words of classical or literary origin)

\( g \) (an affricated \( ق \), that is, a \( ض \) similar to the English hard \( g \))

\( dz \) (a \( ق \) affricated as \( ذ \))

\( k \)

\( ts \) (an affricated \( ط \))

\( l \)

\( m \)

\( n \)

\( h \)

Semi Vowels

\( w \)
\( y \)

Vowels

A description of the vowels is given on pp. 465 ff.)
List of Abbreviations

A. Abbreviations referring to sources (usually the surname of the author of the source in question or an abbreviation of it):

Absihi: M.A. al-'Absihi, al-Mustatraf
Akwa: I. al-'Akwa', al-'Amtal al-Yamaniyyah
Amin: A. Amin, Qamus al-
Aqalat wa-Taqalid
'Arif: S. 'Arif, Silat al-'Adab bayn al-Fransis wal-'Arab
'Askari: H. al-'Askari, Jamharat al-'Amtal
Ašqar: S. 'A. Ašqar, at-Turfah al-Bahijah...
Bajuri: M. al-Bajuri, Kitáb 'Amtal al-Mutakallimín...
Bakri: Abū 'Ubayd al-Bakri, Faš al-Maqāl
Baq. (or Baqli): M. Q. al-Baqli, Wihdat al-'Amtal al-'Ammiyah...
Bauer: L. Bauer, "Arabische Sprichwörter"
Baum.: E. Baumann, "Volksweisheit aus Palästina"
Brown. (or Browning): D.C. Browning, Everyman's Dictionary of Quotations and Proverbs
Burck.: J.L. Burckhardt, Arabic Proverbs, except when another work is specified.
Burton: R.F. Burton and C.F. Drake, Unexplored Syria
Cline: W. Cline, "Proverbs and Lullabies from Southern Arabia"
Dabb.: 'A. ad-Dabbāg, Mu'jam 'Amtal al-Maušil...
Darīsī: 'A. ad-Darīsī, al-'Amtal aš-Ša'biyyah fī al-Baṣra
Fā'īqa: F.H. Rāgib, Ḥadā'iq al-'Amtal al-'Ammiyah
Faraj: M.Y. Faraj, Hikmat aš-Su'ūb
Fegh.: M. Feghali, Proverbes et Dicton Syro-Libanais
Frayha: A. Frayha, Modern Lebanese Proverbs
Granq.: H.N. Granqvist, "Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village"
Goit. (or Goitein): S.D. Goitein, Jemenica, except when another work is specified.
Gul.or: 'A. al-Gūlāmi, al-Muraddad min 'Amtal al-Mawṣil...
Hanafi: J. al-Ḥanafi, al-'Amtal al-Bagdādiyyah
Hanki: J. Hanki, A Collection of Modern Egyptian Proverbs
Hurg.: C.S. Hurgronje, Mekkanische Sprichwörter...
Huxley: H.M. Huxley, "Syrian Songs, Proverbs and Stories"
Ibn 'A. Ibn 'A. Ibn 'Abd Rabbīhi, M. Ibn 'Abd Rabbīhi, al-'Īqḍ al-Fārīd
Ibn 'Asim: M.S. Ibn 'Asim, al-Fākīr
Jayak.: A.S.G. Jayakār, "Omanee Proverbs"
Juh.: 'A. al-Juhaimān, al-'Amtal aš-Ša'biyyah... except when another work is specified.
Landb.: P. Landberg, Proverbes et dictons du peuple arabe...
Littm.: E. Littmann, Kairiner Sprichwörter
M.: A.M. al-Maidānī, Majma' al-'Amtāl
Mak: D.S. Mak, "Some Syrian Arabic Proverbs"
Manch. MS: Manchester Manuscript (see pp. 525-526)
Musil, Rwala: A. Musil, The Manners and Customs of the
Rwala Bedouins
Nūri: 'A. al-Nūrī, al-'Amtāl ad-Dārijah fi al-Kuwait
Reinhardt: C. Reinhardt and K. Dragoman, Ein arabischer
Dialekt ...
Sāsi: 0. Sāsi, "Sprichwörter und andere Volkskundliche Texte
aus Mekka"
Singer: A.P. Singer, Arabic Proverbs
Socin: A. Socin, Arabische Sprichwörter und Redensarten
gesammelt ..., except when another work is specified.
Stephan: H. Stephan, "Animals in Palestinian Folklore",
except when another work is specified.
Ta'ālibī, Tamtīl: 'A. at-Ta'ālibī, at-Tamtīl wal-Muḥādarah
Ta'ālibī, Kaṣṣ (or Kaṣṣ-ul-Kaṣṣ): 'A. at-Ta'ālibī, Kaṣṣ-ul-Kaṣṣ
Ta'ālibī, Timār (or Timār al-Qulūb): 'A. at-Ta'ālibī, Timār
al-Qulūb fi al-Mudār
wal-Mansūb
Ta'ālibī, Bardul-'Akbād: A. at-Ta'ālibī, Bardul-'Akbād
fil-'A'dād
Taim.: A. Taimūr Pasha, al-'Amtāl al-‘Āmmiyah
Taim., Kināyāt: A. Taimūr Pasha, al-Kināyāt al-‘Āmmiyah
Ṭāliq.: 'A. at-Ṭāliqāni, Risālat al-'Amtāl al-Bagdādiyyah
Tallq.: K.L. Tallqvist, "Arabische Sprichwörter und Spiele"
Tarjamān: S. Tarjamān, Yā Māl aš-Šām
Tik. (or Tikrītī): 'A. at-Tikrītī, al-'Amtāl al-Bagdādiyyah
al-Muqāranah
Tik., Jamharah: 'A. at-Tikrītī, Jamharat al-'Amtāl
al-Bagdādiyyah
Ubūdī: M. al-'Ubūdī, al-'Amtāl al-‘Āmmiyah fi Najd. The
reference is to the book; but if the series of
articles under the same heading is meant, this is
indicated in a footnote.
Weissbach: F.H. Weissbach, "Beiträge zur Kunde des
Irak-Arabischen"
Yahuda: Iraq: Yahuda - A.S. Yahuda, "Bagdadische Sprichwörter"
Yemen: Yahuda - A.S. Yahuda, "Yemenische Sprichwörter"
Ẓaffīri: A.M. az-Ẓaffīri, "'Amtāl wa Kalimāt Badawīyyah"
Zamāk.: M. az-Zamākṣāri, al-Mustaqṣa fil-'Amtāl
B. Titles of Periodicals

AIEQ: Annales de l'Institut d'Etudes Orientales d'Alger
AJSL: American Journal of Semitic Languages
BBRAS: Bulletin of the Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society
BSOAS: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
CHL: Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum
IC.: Islamic Culture
JAF: Journal of American Folklore
JAOS: Journal of the American Oriental Society
JPOS: The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society
JRAS: Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
JSS: Journal of Semitic Studies
LSS: Leipziger Semitistische Studien
SNR: Sudan Notes and Records
ZA: Zeitschrift für Assyriologie
ZDMG: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft
ZDPV: Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins

C. Siglas

Ident: identical (see p. xi)
NS: nearly the same (see p. xi)
SMDW: the same meaning with different wording (see p. xi)
Sim. WM: similar in wording and meaning (see p. xi)

D. Other Abbreviations

act. part.: active participle
adv.: adverb
Arab.: Arabic
bed.: bedouin
c.: common; circa
cf.: compare
class.: classical
d.: died
dim.: diminutive
dimin.: diminutive
ed.: edition; editor
Eng.: English
equiv.: equivalent
f.: feminine
fem.: feminine
fuṣ.: fuṣ-ha (classical or modern literary Arabic)
G. Syria: Greater Syria (see p. xi, footnote 2)
I.P.A. International Phonetic Alphabet
imper.: imperative
imperf.: imperfect
m.: masculine
masc.: masculine
n.d.: no date
N. Najd: Northern Najd
no.: number
nos.: numbers
p.: person
pass. part.: passive participle
perf.: perfect
pl.: plural
pr.: proverb
prep.: preposition
pron.: pronoun
prov.: proverb
pt.: part
s.: singular
sc.: scilicet
S. Najd: Southern Najd
vol.: volume
INTRODUCTION

The material which forms the basis of this dissertation was collected and recorded over an extended period lasting in all for ten years (1958-1968). This work resulted in a collection of approximately 1,100 proverbs, to which it was subsequently possible to add a further hundred items.

The intention in recording these proverbs was to try to save an important aspect of the folk wisdom of Najd (central Arabia) from oblivion; it was only later that it became clear to the writer that this fairly extensive material might form the basis of a piece of literary research.

These proverbs have been taken from informants at all levels of Najdi society; with perhaps some bias towards the farming community which is more tenacious of traditional forms of speech. Many of the proverbs, however, stem from the more characteristically urban environment of informants who were carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers, butchers and other craftsmen, as well as shopkeepers, officials and others. In addition, it has been possible to record some proverbs stemming from the purely nomadic environment which are not to be found among farmers or townsmen.

A large proportion of these proverbs were collected in the Qaṣīm area (more precisely in al-Bukayriyyah, 40km north-west of Buraidah) or heard from people who grew up there, but a substantial number were recorded in other parts of Najd. Naturally, a number of proverbs which are
exclusively Qaṣ̌īmi are included. This, however, applies only to a limited number; the majority are familiar all over Najd.

Some of the proverbs which were recorded as they are used in al-Qaṣ̌īm may be used with some differences of phraseology elsewhere in Najd (especially where the use of personal suffixes is involved—in proverb no. 1076, nafsuh nafs teer, for instance, the word nafsuh becomes nafseh in southern Najd).

In making this collection, proverbs which were obvious borrowings from classical or modern literary Arabic, or which had the hallmarks of having been borrowed from a region outside Najd were usually excluded.¹

A small number of proverbs of an obscene nature have been excluded from the collection; but several widely current proverbs which are somewhat indecent yet express witty or pithy meanings which compensate for their objectionable wording have been included.²

A number of verses (34) and half-verses of poetry (5) which are used proverbially, and many metaphorical expressions and idiomatic proverbial phrases are among the items in this collection.³

¹ Among proverbs of the present collection there are 13 examples (nos. 25, 33, 380, 413, 455, 486, 622, 646, 667, 727, 991, 1072, 1193) current in literary Arabic forms or in a mixture of both classical and dialectical terms and pronunciations. Some of these are borrowed from classical Arabic literature. When investigating and analysing the language of Najdi proverbs in Chapter Five, these were excluded from consideration.

² For example, nos. 116, 241, 347, 424, 459, 782, 798, 1010, 1110, 1164.

³ The verses are: nos. 20, 68, 69, 70, 102, 145, 152, 273, 327, 372, 422, 546, 721, 730, 737, 746, 751, 772, 781, 867, 969, 979, 986, 1033, 1071, 1080, 1111, 1125, 1127, 1134, 1136, 1142, 1143, 1193. The half-verses are: nos. 1088, 1095, 1145, 1166, 1187.
Like many other proverbs, some Najdi proverbs have two or more versions. It was not a chief concern of this dissertation to give an exhaustive account of these variations. However, some variations which seemed worthy of attention because they involved a substantial difference or because they added an otherwise absent flavour to the proverb, have been mentioned.

While some proverbs may only be used in certain fixed situations, other proverbs may be used in a number of different situations. Other proverbs may be applied to a particular circumstance in a certain area, and in another area said of another circumstance. It would scarcely be possible to list such occasions of use of a proverb exhaustively; in the present investigation I have confined myself to recording the particular context in which each proverb happened to be heard.

Some proverbs in the present collection derive from stories which are no longer remembered. Some such proverbial stories are, however, still recalled, although even these are only actively present in the minds of a small minority of their present-day users.

The difficulty of translating these proverbs is very great; they have arisen against a cultural background very different from that familiar to the European reader, and many are scarcely intelligible even to a non-Najdi Arab. My concern throughout has been to interpret them as clearly as possible, keeping close to the literal meaning as long

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2 The stories of the proverbs: 271, 389, 833, 1147.
as it makes sense in English. In some cases, however, exigencies of the idiom made less literal renderings necessary.

In many cases (some 140, i.e., about eleven per cent), equivalent English proverbs have been given. This has been done where the similarity is very close and the English proverb helps to clarify the meaning of the Najdi proverb. Most of these English proverbs have been taken from standard proverb collections, and are not all necessarily current at the present day.

Following the translation of a proverb, words which are peculiarly Najdi and call for special attention are explained, except for those which can be found in lexicons.

Towards the end of the work of recording this collection of proverbs, two collections of Najdi proverbs appeared in print: al-'Amtāl al-'Āmmiyah fī Najd, vol. 1, by Muhammad al-'Ubūdi (1959) which contains a thousand proverbs with explanations of local words and references to parallels among ancient, post-classical, and contemporary proverbs current in adjacent regions; and al-'Amtāl aš-Ṣaḥbiyyah fī Qalbi Jazīrat al-'Arab, 3 vols., by 'Abd al-Karīm al-Juhaimān (1963) which contains 2,852 proverbs with explanations but with only a few references to similar classical or post-classical (muwallad) Arabic proverbs. However, it contains much repetitious matter, and some non-Najdi proverbs as well as phrases which are not proverbially common are included.

A further number of Najdi proverbs have appeared in a series of articles by M. al-'Ubūdi in al-'Arab under the title of "al-'Amtāl al-'Āmmiyah fī Najd". In these
articles, al-‘Ubūdi follows the same method of treatment of the material as in his above-mentioned book.

Of the proverbs in the present collection, 336 (28 per cent) are also given, although sometimes with some difference in wording, in one or another of the collections of Najdi proverbs referred to above. The remainder (i.e., 864 proverbs) forming seventy two per cent of the whole are recorded for the first time in this dissertation.

References have been made in the notes to proverbs which occur in other collections. If a proverb occurs as recorded in the present collection, attention is drawn to this with "Also . . .," but if it is a different version of a proverb recorded here, even if the difference is slight, it is referred to with "Cf. . . .".

When there are Arabic parallels to a Najdi proverb among classical or modern proverbs current in Mecca, Kuwait, Oman, Yemen, Iraq, Syria (including Palestine and Lebanon), and Egypt, reference is made to them by first mentioning the name of the country or town in which the equivalent is current, followed by an abbreviation (usually the name of the compiler of the collection) to indicate the collection, followed by the number of the volume of the book (if there is more than one volume), then by the number of the proverb (if the proverbs in that collection are numbered in sequence). If they are divided according to their subjects and numbered, the reference is made to the page and the number. If no numbers at all are given, then the reference is made to the number of the page in which a proverb is mentioned, followed by the Arabic text of the proverb; except when it is identical with or nearly the same as the Najdi proverb, in such case only the number of
Non-Najdi proverbs similar in meaning to proverbs in the present collection are divided into four groups:

(a) Proverbs which are identical with Najdi proverbs. Such proverbs are referred to as "Ident.". ¹

(b) Proverbs which differ a little in wording from the corresponding Najdi proverbs. These are referred to as "N3" (nearly the same).

(c) Proverbs which have the same meaning but whose wording bears only a general similarity to the Najdi proverbs. These are referred to as "Sim. WM" (similar in wording and meaning).

(d) Proverbs which express the same meaning as that of the Najdi proverbs but with completely different wording. These are referred to as "SMDW" (the same meaning with different wording).

Most Arabic proverb collections do not specify the exact locality from which their proverbs were collected, and specify only the wider region. More often than not, Egyptian proverbs are attributed to Egypt instead of, for example, Cairo, Alexandria, or Aswan. In some collections of Syrian proverbs such as that of Ašqar (see Bibliography), proverbs were attributed simply to aš-Šam (i.e., Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, or Palestine). ² The same holds true, though to a smaller extent, of collections of Omani, Yemeni, and Kuwaiti proverbs.

The case is different in Iraq, from which eight collections of proverbs were consulted. Three of these

¹ However, a minor difference such as in a preposition instead of another, or in the pronunciation of a word, is usually overlooked.

² The term "G. Syria" (Greater Syria) is used hereafter for convenience as an English equivalent for "aš-Šam" in Arabic.
contain proverbs current in Baghdad, three contain proverbs current in Mosul, one contains proverbs current in Basrah, and the eighth contains proverbs current among the Iraqi nomad population. When a proverb is current in all these areas, it is referred to with the word "Iraq" but if it is current in two areas (e.g. Baghdad and Mosul) then they are specified, after "Iraq", in parentheses.

Professor T. Johnstone's *Eastern Arabian Dialects* has been used as a model for the treatment for the arrangement of Chapter Five. In general, however, reliance has not been placed on the few published works on the Najdi dialect, to which only occasional references have been made; I have preferred to arrive at my conclusions directly from the linguistic material gathered, supplemented by the knowledge of the native speaker.
1. **TRANSLATION, TRANSCRIPTION, COMPARISON AND COMMENTS**

أبِدَاء اِخْتِيَرَتِي عَنّيَّ (عنني) وَخِذَّ شَرْهُكَ مِنّي (منني)

"[If you] keep my sister distant from me, you [will be able to] take her fruit from me [in addition to my own]" i.e., my quantity of fruit will double.

This proverb is put into the mouth of a palm tree with reference to the well-known fact that if palm trees are planted close to each other they remain for many years with few or no dates, since the sun and air have no access to them. On the other hand, if they are planted at a distance from each other they grow strong and consequently bear much more fruit at a much earlier time.

This proverb seems to have its origin in the post-classical (muwallad) proverb:

أبِدَاء اللِّحْم عَنّيَّ لا يَنَشُّ (يمنش)

Also Juh., no. 14.


"Keep flesh away from flesh lest it becomes rotten."

This proverb emphasizes the inadvisability of marriage between relatives. The word al-laham and its singular al-lhameh are often used figuratively for "relatives".

NS: Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., Jamharah, no. 50; Dal., 1, no. 14.
SMDW: Egypt: Taim., nos. 647, 1139.

أمساعد عليك من لحس اذنك
‘ab’ad (‘akwad) ‘aleek men lahs ednek (kū‘ek)\(^1\)
"It is [i.e., something] harder for you to get it than to lick your own ear (var. elbow)," i.e., as impossible to get it as it is impossible for one to lick one's ear.

Said of something which the speaker has no intention of giving to the person addressed.

Sim. WM: Egypt: ‘Arif, p. 84, لَمَا نَشَف وَدْنَك، أَبَعُد عَنَ الدَّاب وَشَجَرَة
‘ab’ed ‘an ad-dabb we šjertah\(^2\)
"Keep away from the snake and its bush."

أَبَعُد عَن النَّعْب ذَرَاعٍ زَم
‘ab’ed ‘an al-‘eeb drā’ ’u nem\(^3\)
"Keep away from danger and sleep," i.e., if you keep an arm's length from danger, you can feel completely safe.

These last two proverbs are used with reference to the advisability of keeping away from potential sources of trouble. al-‘eeb: [al-‘ayb]: used dialectically to mean "faults in a building which might cause it to fall." Its common meaning of "shame" can also be meant in this proverb

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1 Kū‘ek, "your elbow", is used in al-Jawf in northern Najd instead of ‘ednek, "your ear".
2 Also ‘Ubūdi, op. cit., p. 108, no. 67.
3 Also ibid., p. 109.
as 'Abdullatif ad-Dalishi and Fu'ad Jamil think. However, the writer has heard the proverb only in contexts which always implied that the first meaning was intended.

The second of these two proverbs is identified in Basrah and among the bedouins of Iraq. Their meaning is expressed with different wording in Mecca: Sasi, no. 77; Yemen: Akwa',1, no. 35; Baghdad: Tik., no. 593; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 12; Fegh., no. 13; Frayha, no. 26; and Egypt: Taim., no. 2148; Fā'iqa, no. 26

"It (he, she, etc.) is more hateful to him than the blood of his own teeth," i.e., he hates it (him, her, etc.) bitterly. Cf. the English proverbs "He could eat me without salt" and "To hate one like a toad".

"The Devil [lit. Eblîs: 'Iblîs] knows his master." Said of an impish boy or other mischievous person who only gives up making trouble when he knows that someone whom he cannot challenge is present.

2 Ibid.
3 Also 'Ubûdi, op. cit., p. 112, no. 71.
6 Also 'Ubûdi, op. cit., p. 112, no. 73.
"He who has little has consumed it, and he who has much has died and left it [behind him]."

On the advisability of spending money.

"The last place to think of going to for sustenance is a hyena's den."

"The cane is more effective than food," i.e., punishment is more effective than reward.

"Heavier than the metgāl of 'Ebā Zaid." Used to describe anything of excessive weight.

"He has a mangy stomach," i.e., he is poorer than he looks.

Said of someone who, in spite of appearances, is very poor.

14

أحد شيم واحد تشي عن

'ahaden tšayymuh wa ūaden tešayyam 'anuh

"Some people you should respect; others you should respect yourself because of them," i.e., you should hold yourself aloof from them because of their uncouth qualities.

SMDW: Kuwait: Nurī, 2, p. 38:

لحيه احشمتها لحيه احشمت نفس عنها: 

أحد يقل واحد ينشن الثنينه

'ahaden yabgel wa ūaden ytemanna aš-ṣenīneh

"Some people [can afford to] make milk-cakes, while others wish they have even watered milk," i.e., some people have so much milk that they make milk cakes with the excess, whilst others cannot even afford milk mixed with water.

yabgel: imperf. of begal, to make bagel (fuqū, 'aqīt or madīr), cakes made substantially of milk.

16

أحد يحسى واحد ما يلقي للعالم عشا

'ahaden yhaša wa ūaden mā yalga le 'ayālah 'aša

"Some people have money to burn [lit. they shovel money], whilst others cannot [even] find supper for their children."

The meaning of these last two proverbs is expressed with different wording in the following cities and countries:

Mecca: Jeml Bumār Ṛa‘īm yalamūn; Oman: Reinhardt, no. 23;
Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., nos. 2157, 2397; Hanafi, nos. 2310, 2314, 2317; Qul., p. 9, and p. 147; Dabb., p. 454; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4583; Fegh., no. 2933; Stephan, no. 767; Egypt: Taim., no. 2929; Littm., no. 69.

Qurais, 36 (1960), p. 16.
I advise you to avoid [women with] ophthalmia and rumaṣ, and women with children by a former marriage, and families with weak ties [between their members], and keep out of the way of my mare!"

The last phrase about keeping out of the way of the mare is a piece of childish chatter added incongruously to the sage advice contained in the first part of the saying, is supposed to represent the character of Mhalhel (Muhalhil) to whom the advice is attributed, who although a grown man, found pleasure in childish pursuits. According to the tale, he gave the advice to his brother Kleeb (Kulaib) who wanted to marry and asked his mother's advice. She referred him to Mhalhel who feigned stupidity. Kleeb reluctantly went to him and asked his opinion. He answered with this wise saying.

rumaṣ : (ramaṣ): a disease of the eyes, or the eye's dry secretion.

'ēṣbet ad-dār: the shrub of the house; applied metaphorically to a woman with children by a former marriage. This term is not used in normal speech. Abū 'Ubaid al-Bakri said:

"كَانَ ال س ر ي تقول: لا ت كمها حناء ولا أذانة ولا عشبة الدار ولا ك فة الفقا"

However, he gives a different explanation for "عشبة الدار".

1 See Rāzī, Muktār aṣ-ṣīḥāh (Beirut, 1967), p. 256.

one from the need for other people.

The variant translates: "Bandage your hand and show it to physicians," i.e., if you are not sure about something, consult those who know better about it.

\[\text{'ehts bad-dabb 'u wallm al-medzl"ab}\]

"[If you] speak of the snake, keep a stick ready," i.e., since you will need it, for the snake will appear.

Said when an undesirable person mentioned in a conversation turns up unexpectedly. The falseness of comparing an acquaintance with a snake is obvious. If a friend arrives after being talked of, the proverb no. 301 is made use of.

Cf. the English proverb, "Talk of the devil, and he is sure to appear."\(^1\)

SMDW: a post-class. proverb: Ua^JI < J  dsli J J 1  cyJ 1  JJ

M., 1, p. 88; Ta'ālibi, Tamtil, p. 296; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 610; Yemen: Akwa', no. 372; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1017; Hanafi, no. 836; Socin, no. 199; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 27, 201; Huxley, no. 77; Frayha, no. 160; Burton, no. 80; Baum, no. 9; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 895; Taim., no. 176; Littm., no. 414.

\[\text{'ahla mn alli yangd aṭ-teer rāsah}\]

\[\text{yenūšah men been al-jerīd nawās}\]

"[It is] sweeter than that, the top of which the bird pecks; he strains his neck through the fronds to reach it [a date]."

"Sugar" and "honey" are used for extreme sweetness.

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1. ODEP, p. 804.

2. Cf. Juh., no. 27. This is a verse composed in a poem by Rāṣīd al-Kalāwī. He is referring to his sweetheart's kiss. See A.B. Kamis, Rāṣīd al-Kalāwī (Riyad, 1972), p. 308.
in an Egyptian and an Iraqi (Baghdad) proverb (see Fā'īqa, no. 510; Tik., Jamharah, nos. 154, 156, 158).

أَحْلَلْ مِن النَّفْع

‘ahall mn al-fage'¹

"[It is] more lawful than truffles." Said of something absolutely permissible or lawful.

"The mother's milk" and "the water of the Euphrates" in a classical proverb replace "truffles" in this proverb.²

"The mother's milk" is also used as an example for the most lawful thing in an Egyptian proverbial saying.³ In Baghdad and Yemen, "the gazelle's blood" is used instead.⁴

اُخْرَى مِن الْبَلْسِ يَمْعَرَّفُهُ

'akza men blīs yōm 'arafeh

"[He is] more humiliated than 'Iblīs [the devil] on the day of 'Arafah."

The day of 'Arafah is the first day of the Pilgrimage when pilgrims assemble in the plain of 'Arafah, and it is believed they receive forgiveness.

اُخْوَى سَرَّةٍ (الَّسَرَّةَ): قَرِبُ مِنَ النَّخْيرِ بَعْدَ عَنِ الْعُضُدِ (النَّخْير)

‘eku serreh (as-serreh) dżerīben mn al-keer be‘īden ‘an al-meżarreh (aš-šar)⁵

"[Like] a half-brother.⁶ He is close to the benefits and isolated from the drawbacks."

A half-brother, having the same mother, can inherit with his brothers or sisters in some cases. As for his being

¹ Also Juh., no. 20; 'Ubūdi, op. cit., p. 302, no. 97.
² M., no. 2234.
³ Fā'īqa, no. 506.
⁴ Hanafi, no. 687; Akwa', 1, no. 110.
⁵ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 12.
⁶ I.e., a half-brother who has the same mother but not the same father. Lit., the navel brother.
isolated from drawbacks, this refers to his exemption from having to share in the payment of blood money unlike the paternal relations of the guilty person.

Professor Alois Musil mentions the following different version of this proverb which expresses the meaning the other way round: "ahu sirre ba'id 'an al-hejr zerib 'an al-mezarra." He interprets it, "the brother of a married woman is far removed from any good done by her, but very close to any evil she may be guilty of." However, the term eku serreh, which is not used in normal speech, was explained to the writer by a number of Najdi speaking people as "the half-brother who has the same mother." None of them agreed with Musil's definition.

أدب رلديك بالناس ولا تعتاز (تختاج) للناس

'addeb wleedek ba-l-fas 'u lä te'tāz (tehtāj) lan-nās

"It is better to correct the behaviour of your son with an axe than to be obliged to ask people [for a stick]."

Said in commendation of self-reliance.

NS: Iraq: Hanafi, no. 1172; Tik., nos. 119, 1356; Weissbach, no. 160.

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Asqar, no. 1833; Fegh., no. 390;

Frayha, no. 1456; Egypt: Burck., no. 34; Fā'iqa, no. 1402.


ادفنا أحببكم وسجو بدنيناك

'edefnu 'ašebbākum 'u sejju bdenyākum

"Bury your loved ones and go about your business," i.e., the world's business continues even though one's nearest and dearest pass away.

'adnāt mā jazza ge'ūd al-msāfer
"Just [fodder] enough for the traveller's camel," i.e., anything will do.

Said of a request which only seeks to obtain a small and modest amount of something.

27

'ed-hen as-seer yesir
"Smear the thong and it will move."

Said of the lubricating effect which a bribe may have.

Ident.: Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., no. 190; Weissbach, no. 8; Dal., no. 54; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 680.
Sim. WM: Oman: Reinhardt, no. 22.

28

'īdā sabbah al-qayṭūn faqad haamma bis-sariqah
"If the cat praises God, it has its mind on theft." Used to characterize hypocrisy. Pretending to be good in the hope of obtaining an undeserved reward.

al-qayṭūn: the cat. Not used apart from this proverb
Cf. the English proverbs, "When the fox preaches, beware the geese" and "When the devil prays, he has a booty in his eye."

SMDW: three old proverbs: M., nos. 1807, 2998, 4504;
Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 166; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., nos. 560, 2543; Dabb., 1, p. 14;
G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1479; Egypt: Burck., no. 368.
Sim. WM: Egypt: Taim., no. 1502.

1 Also Juh., no. 47.
2 Browning, no. 9778.
3 ODEP, p. 183.
'edbaḥ 'ammek bal-wedats
"Kill your uncle with lard!" A proverbial saying used by anyone who, in spite of the possible bad effect of something, has an inordinate appetite for it and is prepared in a jocular way to override all objections to it.

wedats: wadak, "lard".

'ad-han mn al-ḥaymeh
"Cleverer than birds." Some birds (such as predatory birds) are intelligent. They stay flying and keep far from the ground as a precaution.

'arkas men tebn al-Mednab
"Cheaper than the straw of al-Mednab," i.e., it is dirt-cheap.

This proverb had its original in al-Qaṣīm and is hardly known elsewhere. Al-Mednab is an agricultural area in southern Qaṣīm.

In a number of post-classical (muwallad) Arab proverbs, "sand", "garbage", "dates in Basrah" and "the judge of Mina" are cited as comparisons for extreme cheapness.²

Sand, garbage, leek, radishes, and "dates in Basrah", are used in contemporary proverbs.³

'arda al-maʿāyeš 'iṣṭ al-ḥabbal
"The worst living is that of the trapper," i.e.,
this way of life involves a lot of trouble for little gain.

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2 See Zamak., 1, nos. 450, 939; M., no. 1714 and Taʾālibi, Tamtil, p. 268.
3 See Faʾiqa, no. 924; Tik., no. 171; Akwaʿ, 1, no. 419; Aṣqar, no. 213; Maḥṣara, fol. 22 and Dabb., 1, p. 141.
4 Also 'Ubūdi, op. cit., p. 422, no. 121; Juh., no. 1697.
'aradnā Ṣaqra wa 'arād 'Allah Ẓruma

"We intended [to take] Ṣaqra, but God intended [us to take] Ẓruma."

This proverbial saying refers to an episode in the Egyptian campaign on Arabia in the year 1818.² It is attributed to Ibrāhīm Pasha, son of Muḥammad 'Ali, the leader of the campaign.

Ṣaqra: is the main town in the Wašm region.
Ẓruma: a village (now town) in the 'Ariḍ region.

'argābahā 'ūj ('argābehen lahalhen 'ūj)

"Their [i.e., camels'] necks are crooked (var. their necks are bending to their owners)."

Said of one who leaves his family, group, or friends but soon goes back to them. The analogy is drawn in this proverb between such a person and camels which run away from their owners but quickly turn their necks to look at them and return.

'esker (kal, elzam) māk belzāk²

"Shut your water up in your own basin (var. keep your water etc.)." A picturesque way of asking a person to hold his peace.

Iza: the basin in which water is poured after being brought up from the well.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 20.

² Also Juh., no. 798.
"Look after your own load!" A reference to an anecdote which tells of a girl who bragged of the amount of grass she could fetch of her own and some young men, but who was admonished to confine herself to her own load.

qṭeebeh: dimin. of qatībeh, "a man's load of fodder".

SMDW: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 247; Frayha, no. 187; Egypt: Fā'īqa, no. 1025.

"A name without a body." A phrase said of a very thin person; or of one whose character little lives up to his honourable name.

Ident.: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 294; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 453; Mosul: Gūl., p. 17; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 25; Egypt: Burck., no. 107; Littm., no. 319; Fā'īqa, no. 1033.

"The name is the partner of the mind." Said of a person whose name aptly describes a prominent facet of his character.

Cf. the English proverb, "Names and natures do often agree." 1

"O 'Meer [ 'Umair], you will be sued, anyway!" i.e., since you are going to be punished anyway, multiply your offences.

Cf. the English, "As well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb." 2

esmek: the word esem here has a different meaning; the nearest English equivalent for it is "since" or "anyway", i.e.,

1 ODEP, p. 550.
2 Ibid., p. 350.
it is used to tell that something is certain to take place, e.g., "esmek jáyy" "you are coming anyway!"; "esmi mwāfedzk" "I will meet you anyway!"; "since I will meet you."

"esr at-tayyeb tsamma rābah"

"Buy what is good [even if it is dear] and you will be the gainer."

This proverb refers to the advisability of preferring the best even though it is expensive.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 48; SMDW: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 28, no. 48, 49; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2479; Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 50; Egypt: Taim., no. 666.

"esābe'k ma henb sawa"

"Your fingers are not alike," i.e., in shape and size.

This refers to the fact that:
(a) although some people share some qualities, they have a lot of differences.
(b) Although people may be relatives, they differ in nature.

ma henb: mā hunna bi, they are not.

NS: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 477; Iraq: Tik., no. 214; Hanafi, no. 2234; Dal., 1, no. 227; Dabb., 2, p. 380; Gul., p. 17; Socin, no. 204; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 57; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 272; Fegh., no. 643; Frayha, nos. 2111, 3679; Egypt: Baq., p. 31.

"asbar mn 'Ayyūb"

"More patient than Job."

1 Cf. 'Ubūdi, op. cit., p. 678, no. 143.
2 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 22; Juh., no. 124.
Cf. the English proverb, "He has the patience of Job."

Although this proverb is not found in collections of Arabic proverbs, it is familiar to all Muslims.

An old camel with wounds on his sides is considered an example of endurance and patience in a classical proverb.¹

الاميلِ باصل والسبد ما يرجع نيا
al-eṣil yāṣal wal-ʿabd mā yerūḥ neyyih
"The man of noble origin attains his objects but the slave gets nowhere."

mā yerūḥ neyyih: He does not go far. The word نيا has a different meaning in this idiom.

الطراف أذان
al-atreaf atlāf²
"Remote parts [of a country] cause damage [to those who live in them]."

People who dwell in distant quarters of towns and remote or isolated places are usually exposed to danger; also by being far away, they often miss many advantages.

اطر فيهم بالفق (بالالجا)
'eṭred al-hamm bal-farāḥ (bar-reja)
"Drive away worry with joy (var. with hope)."

اطم يأا بنا زيد والاس يدون الخير (يبرين)
'eṭ'an ya (e)Ba Zeed wan-nās yeddūn al-kabar (yadrūn)³
"Hit out Ebā Zeed and people will spread the news (var. will know)."

(e)Ba Zeed: supposedly Abū Zaid al-Hilālī

The exact meaning of this proverb is expressed in

¹ See M., no. 2167.
² Also 'Ubūdi, "amtal", al-'Arab, 3 (1969), p. 846, no. 158.
³ Also Juh., no. 134.
the post-classical (muwallad) proverb: "The tribe of Tamim said to Salamah b. Jandal: 'Praise us in your poetry.' He answered, 'Do [great things] that I may praise you',' i.e., if you do great things, I find something worthy of praise."

NS: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 133.
SMDW: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 527.

47 اتقع بالمسيد يشيع ذكرك
'etga' bal-masyad yešī' detsrek
"Break wind in the mosque and you will be famous [since many people will hear about it]."

This is said of one who is eager to gain a reputation even if it is a bad one.

48 أجز من قلة الراة
'a'jaz men gamlet at-tergāt
"[He is] lazier than a louse on the collarbone." A louse which settles on the collarbone must be lazy, otherwise it would go to a better place.

at-tergāt: at-turquwah, "collarbone; clavicle".

49 أعد علي حضرى وردك للسلاحة
'e'd 'ala ḥzeeri 'umaraddek las-salāmah
"[If you] attack a town dweller you will return safe."

Many bedouins tend to think that town dwellers are pusillanimous.

ḥzeeri: dimin. of ḥzeri (fuṣ. ḥadari): a town dweller.

50 أعد من الدباب
'a'nad mn ad-dbāb
"[He is] more persistent than a fly" (no matter how many times you drive a fly away, it comes back)."

1 Ta'ālibi, Tamtil, p. 185.
"[He is] more persistent than a soldier ant" (a reference to the fact that no matter how many times you drive it away, it comes back).

Cf. the English proverb, "As obstinate as a mule."\(^1\)

These last two proverbs are said of a persistent troublesome person.

In Baghdad the beetle is the example of extreme persistence.\(^2\)


أعوذ بالله من الحيّة والمعرب والبدوى إلى استدرّب
'a'udu billah mn al-'ayyeh wal-'agrab wal-bduwi elā estadrab
"God protect me from the snake and the scorpion and the nomad when he has acquired sophistication."

The last part of this proverb is Sim. MDW: in Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 117; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2948, and Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 1315.

أفرّ من أدني
'egref mn adna
"Ladle from [the] nearest [spot]."

Said to someone when appealing to the commonness of a phenomenon or a fact, in order to show the ease by which an example may be found that one's assertion is true.

أثّر من صوّاء الليل
'aftar men sawwāyt al-leeel
"Poorer than the night-piper." (The night-piper is a bird that pipes intermittently at night and it is supposed that it

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\(^1\) ODEP, p. 550.
\(^2\) See Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 465.
does so because it cannot find anything to eat.)

"Poorer than a mouse in a mosque." Cf. the English, "As poor as a church mouse."

Sim. WM: Egypt: Fa'iqa, no. 974.

"[It is] worse than saying 'the enemy are upon you'" (lit. they have come to you).

Said of anything dreadful or unpleasant.

"Strike fire with your own flint or else you will die [of cold or hunger]."

Said in commendation of self-reliance and the advisability of exerting oneself to do one's own work and not to depend upon others for it.

Cf. the English proverb, "To paddle your own canoe."

SMDW: four class. proverbs: M., nos. 3786, 3951, 4154; Taliq, no. 565; Zamak., 2, no. 1158; Mecca: Sasi, no. 344; Oman: Jayak., no. 66. Reinhardt, no. 141; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1956, 1960; Hanafi, no. 1547; Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 528; Socin, no. 114; G. Syria: Aṣgar, nos. 378, 754; Singer, no. 94; Burton, no. 139; Fegh., nos. 1219, 1265; Talq. nos. 23, 160.

Cf. nos. 69, 91.

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1 Cf. 'Ubūdi, op. cit., p. 850, no. 168.
2 Cf. Juh., no. 113.
3 Cf. Juh., no. 2342.
4 ODEP, p. 606.
"The nearer you come to fear the safer you will be." Said of the fact that enterprise and daring, even though they bring one close to danger, may also give security through their very boldness.

Ident.: Baghdad: Tik., no. 302; Hanafi, no. 156.
NS: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 454; Yemen: Goit., nos. 456, 863.
SMDW: Fegh., no. 68.

"He who eats raw food feels pain." A wrong-doer will betray himself in one way or the other owing to his feeling of guilt. Cf. the English proverb, "Guilty conscience is a self accuser." ¹

SMDW: three post-classical proverbs: Zamak., 1, no. 633; 'Abbīhi, 1, p. 30; 'Abbī, 1, no. 626; Tāliq., no. 20; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 226; Yemen: Akwa', 1, nos. 374, 874; Oman: Jayak., no. 71; Iraq: Hanafi, no. 222; Weissbach, no. 4; Tik., Jamharah, 1, nos. 552, 745; Dal., 1, nos. 17, 655; Gūl., p. 42; Dabb., 1, p. 84; Ely, no. 522; Socin, no. 81; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 522; Singer, no. 74; Fegh., nos. 43, 2941; Egypt: Taim., nos. 309, 1043, 407; Fā'īqa, nos. 1775, 1904, 2305; Littm., nos. 372, 373.

"More numerous than locusts with their mothers." This proverb

¹ ODEP, p. 340.
² Cf. 'Ubūdī, op. cit., p. 917, no. 176; Juh., no. 180.
was common among ancient Arabs (without the last word).
See M., no. 3222; Zamak., 1, no. 1234.

NS: among the Iraqi bedouins: Zafirî, no. 197.

اَكُذِّبُ (اَكَذَّبُ) يَا شِعْرٌ عَلَى ثُرْكِكْ

'etsdâh ('etstâh) yâ tür 'u 'ala dzarnek

"[If you] throw sand, O ox, it will fall on your own horn."

To bring about one's destruction; to dig one's grave. Cf. nos. 983, 946, 951.

NS: Mecca, Mosul: Dabb, p. 408

SMDW: a number of classical and post-classical proverbs:
see, e.g., M., nos. 1000, 1020, 2113, 2427; 'Ask., nos. 544, 1086, 2427; Zamak., 2, nos. 557, 701, 704; Oman: Jayak., nos. 286, 287; Mosul: Socin, no. 503; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 1597, 2004; Baum., no. 273; Stephan, nos. 766, 957; Landb., no. 37; Egypt: Taim., nos. 480, 1216; Littm., no. 508.

اَكْرُبْ وَحِجْهَكَ وَرَنَىَّ اَبْدِيْكَ

'ekrub wajhek wark ideek

"Show a stern face but have tender hands."

A piece of advice to a paterfamilias., i.e., one should keep a firm control of the affairs of the family while knowing when to relax.

NS: Kuwait: Nûri, 1, p. 115; حَمَّرَ عَينِكَ...الَّذِي, 15; Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., no. 867; Dal., 1, no. 631.

SMDW: G. Syria: Frayha, no. 4058; Egypt: Taim., no. 2978; Littm. no. 111.

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1 ODEP, p. 545.
2 Cf. Juh., no. 1386.
3 Quraiš, 3 (1959), p. 115.
4 Also Juh., no. 179; 'Ubûdi, op. cit., p. 920, no. 181.
"To be eaten by leopards is better than to be eaten by cats."

If something is to be lost or abandoned, it is better that it should fall to someone who has weight than someone who is insignificant.

NS: Kuwait: Nurî, 1, p. 73:
Sim. WM: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 5330; Frayha, no. 4236; Fegh., no. 2835; Stephan, no. 3; Egypt: Taim., no. 426; Fā'iqa, no. 2339.

"He ate straw," i.e., he tasted humiliation or defeat. Cf. the English, "To eat humble pie."

"The greatest stickler for his rights will be satisfied if he is accorded his rightful share."

"If one man challenges you face up to him; if two men challenge you scratch your head [i.e., be cautious]; if three challenge you capitulate [lit. run away]."

The second and third parts of this proverb are

1 Also Juh., no. 182; 'Ubūdi, no. 30.
2 Also 'Ubūdi, 1., no. 31; Juh., no. 193.
3 Cf. Juh., no. 63
Sim WM in Basrah: see Dal., 1, no. 69.


67 إلى حلب يقح ملا (و) 
'ela ḥalab bdzaḥen malāwah
"If he milks into a bowl he fills it to the brim."
Said of one who does full justice to a job. Cf. no. 71.

SMDW: two old proverbs: M., no. 213; Zamak., 1, no. 486

68 إلى مار بالقير ملاق قرى تحش من ذرائع الرجال هماع
'ela šār mâlek bal-geeẓ me'lāq dzerbeh
fšerbek men der'ān ar-rajāl hamāj
"If you have no water-skin [lit. peg for water-skin] of your own in the height of the summer, the drinking-water you receive from other men's hands will be brackish."
Used to express the belief that only personal ownership of a particular thing can ensure that one can obtain what one needs. Cf. no. 57.

SMDW: an old proverb: M., no. 2545.

69 إلى مار ملک بنى عم، يحضرون يلون دلك على جال الركين
'ela šār mâlek beni 'ammen yaḥaqrūn
ylāf dalwek 'ala jāl ar-retsiyyih
"If you have no cousins present [where you draw water], your bucket will be cast to the side of the well."
This refers to the proclivity of the bedouin tribesmen to favour members of their own tribe in drawing water and to exclude from the well persons who are not supported by their fellows. Cf. the English proverb, "Kinsmen helps kinsmen, and woe to him that has nothing." Cf. nos. 57, 91.

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1 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 42; Juh., no. 1462.
2 ODEP, p. 428.
SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., nos. 54, 3053; 'Ask., no. 1909.

‘elā sār mā me'ak rāyen ydellek fked lek mn amtāl ar-rjāl delil (var. 'ela 'ād (sār) mā lar-rajel rāyen ydelluh fykōd mn ašwār (arya) ar-rjāl delil)¹

"If you yourself lack sound judgement to guide you, take [wise] men's proverbs as a guide." (Var. Since (if) the man lacks sound judgement to guide him, let him take advice from [wise] men.)

‘elā šabb fī ḥozen ūfereh

"When he pours water into a basin he fills it to the brim."

Said of one who does full justice to a job. Cf. no. 67.

'alḥag al-gōm 'abātuh

"He let the robbers have the cloak [off his back]."

Said of a person who, having lost almost everything, resignedly parts with what is left. Cf. the English proverb, "To throw the helve after the hatchet."²

SMDW: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 90.

'el'ab 'alayy 'u kebb al-jrāb

"Make fun of me but leave my purse [lit. hamper] alone."

kebb: imper. leave alone! Used by bedouins.

¹ Cf. A. Socin, Diwan aus Centralarabien (Leipzig, 1900), poem no. 77, line 34; Juh., no. 333. This is a verse in a poem composed by Jeri al-Jenūbi. See ibid., 1, p. 139.

² ODEP, p. 368.
"Play alone and you will come pleased" (for there is nobody to beat you).

waḥdek: this fasih word is not used in normal speech, lḥālek is used instead.

Ident.: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 419; Singer, no. 52.
NS: G. Syria: Baum., no. 103; Fegh., no. 1167; Frayha, no. 316.

SMDW: an old proverb: M., no. 3007; 'Ask., no. 1412;
Zamak ., 2, no. 775.

"I put the bit into his mouth and he snaps my hand [instead]."

Said of one who wilfully misunderstands something that has been carefully explained to him.

"God is aware of those who have consumed the cow (var. the young she-goats)."

The last variant is used in al-Jawf.
'Allah lã ytabbeb al-tsalb al-ḥaram
"May God not let the dog set foot in the sanctuary!"

Said of a person whose presence is not wanted.

ytabbeb: from ṭabb, "to set foot in". mā umrī ṭabbeet
London: lit. I have never set foot in London: I have never been to London.

'Allah lã y'izena lsawani al-begar ʿo tediyynen mn al-ḥarīm
"May God not put us in need of drawing water with cows, nor let us incur debts from women!"

N.B. The cow is generally rated much inferior to the camel as an animal for drawing water.

'allah yaj'al kell karābeten lenā bah garābeh
"May God provide us with a relative wherever we may be."

(Lit. May God put in every ruined place a relative for us.)

karābeh: is often used with the general sense of a "desolate or inhospitable place" rather than simply a "ruin".

NS: Iraq: Weissbach, no. 162.

'allī bal-bir 'abkaṣ mn allī bal-ʿteneh (var. mn allī ywidz)
"He who is in the well knows [it] better than he who is outside it." (Lit. . . . than he who is in the camel's resting ground (var. than that who looks in from above)). Cf. no. 137.

'allī bāṭn al-mleeḥā b-baṭen rā'yah (rā'Iha)
"What is in the she-camel's belly is also in her owner's." E.g., if you are kind to my friend or relative you are also being kind to me.

al-mleeḥā: dimin. of al-malḥa, "the dark she-camel".
Let an overhanging cliff fall down!" A reference to undercut river banks and the like where the overhanging soil or sand is likely to give way.

Said in reference to a person who is quick to anger when there is no point in humouring him.

"He who has hands and a head [should] do as [other] people do."

"He who has luck will not be devoured by the wolf," i.e., if a person is destined to live he will survive, whatever dangers confront him.

"He who is without evil is without good." Cf. the English proverb, "He is a silly man that can neither do good nor harm."
'alī mā 'enduh flūs yag'ed yehūs
"He who has no money cannot get anywhere [lit. goes round in a circle]."

yag'ed: stays. However, it has no meaning in such a context.
yehūs: imperf. of hās, to turn round in a circle.

88
اللَّيَّةِ ما عَنْدَهُ ثَروةٌ ماْ يَهْوَى
'alī mā 'enduh grūş mā yehūş
"He who has no money has no fight in him," i.e., a poor man is apt to surrender and be easily reconciled rather than stand and resist pressure.

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1977; Dabb., 2, p. 44; Egypt: Fā'īqa, no. 2102.

89
اللَّيَّةِ مَا لَّهُ مَا يَضِيعُ لَهُ (اللَّيَّةِ مَا لَهُ مَا يَضِيعُ لَهُ شَيْئًا)
'alī mā luşš mā yezī' luşš (allī mā luh šīh mā yezī' luh šīn)
"He who owns nothing loses nothing." Used to console a person who has lost something.
luşš: lahu šay'


90
اللَّيَّةِ مَا لَهُ لِسانٌ يَأْكُلُ الخَنْفَان
'alī mā luh lsān yākluh al-kenfesān
"He who has no tongue will be eaten by beetles."

A quiet and harmless person is often exploited even by the weakest people. Cf. no. 265.

91
اللَّيَّةِ مَا يَخْذُ الْثَّقَدُ بِبَيْدُهُ مَا يِرْوُى
'alī mā yākṣ al-dzdaḥ biduh mā yarwa
"He who does not take the drinking bowl with his own hand will not quench his thirst." Cf. nos. 57, 69.

1 Cf. Juh., no. 234.
2 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 81.
'allī mā yṭā' mā luh ṭay
"He who is not obeyed has no opinion," i.e., the view of a person who has no ways of making others obey him is as good as non-existent.

The post-classical proverb,  \[ \text{لا رأى لن لا يطاع} \] which was first coined by 'Ali b. 'Abī Ṭalīb is apparently the original of this proverb.\(^2\)

\[ \text{"He who is not jealous is the son of an ass," i.e., a man should be jealous for his rights especially in regard to his honour, women folk, etc.} \]

NS: Iraq: Tik., no. 2354; Gūl., p. 146; Dal., 1, p. 77; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 337; Frayha, no. 383; Egypt: Baq, 1, p. 46.

\[ \text{اللّي ما يغاف أبوه حمار} \]

\[ \text{"He who does not measure [the depth of water] before he dives will not be benefited by its being measured after his drowning."} \]

NS: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 157; Yemen: Cline, no. 30.
Sim. WM: Mecca: Sāsī, no. 179; G. Syria: Fegh, no. 1786; Baum., no. 472; Egypt: Taim., no. 2218.

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1 Qurais, 12 (1960), p. 16.
2 See M., no. 3662.
3 Also Juh., no. 259.
'alī ma yakteb resāletuh 'u yagrāha 'aṭūh ganamen 'a begaren yar'āha
"Give him who cannot read or write a letter sheep or cows to tend."

'āli ma yelin yenkeser (var. 'ūden ma yelin yenkeser)
"He who does not soften will break (var. a rod which does not bend, breaks)."

'āli ma ymaleh 'aduww
"He who will not taste [your] food is an enemy."

Said in reference to the customary usage in Arabia whereby a chance comer is automatically invited to partake of a meal which is in progress. His refusal to do so invites people's suspicion of his intentions.

'allī ma yantah al-mujbīl lā yanzl al-meṭṭārāg
"He should not reside near the road who is unable to meet obligations of hospitality."
yantah: imperf. of netah, "to meet". Here "to endure, to be able to carry something".

'allī ma yūta gerṣūh 'ādzēl
"He whose loaf has not been touched may well be judicious," i.e., if one's interests are not involved one can assume a high-minded judiciousness and tolerance.

Cf. the English proverb, "He preaches patience that never knew pain."²

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 90; Juh., no. 2312.
² Browning, no. 7510.
'allī mīn Allah ṭa (ṭāqīn būh)
"What comes from God must be accepted (var. we accept it)."
SMDW: Lebanon: Frayha, no. 458.

اللَّهُ هَذَا أَوَّلَ يَعْمَلُ تَأْلِيِّه
'allī hādā 'awweluh y'en 'āf tālīh
"If this is its beginning, the rest of it should be rejected."
Since its beginning is so bad, the rest of it will not be better.

اللَّهُ يَبْيَنَا غَيْبَ النَّفْسَ تَبْغِيهُ وَالَّلَّهُ نَيْعَ عَيْنَ الْبَخْتِ لاَ يَجْحِيْهِ
'allī yābīnā 'ayyat an-nafs tabqīh walli nabi 'ayya al-bakat lā yejībuh
"We did not like him who liked us, and our fortune was unable to give us the one whom we liked!"
'ayya: to refuse.
The particle lā at the end of this proverb is the dialectical equivalent of ʿann ʾasrīrīb.
Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 44, no. 95.
G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 45.

اللَّهُ يَشِيلُ الْحَامِلَ ما يَعِجزُ عَنَ الرَّوْحِ (الرَّوْحِ)
'allī yāṣīl al-ḥemel mā y'ajāz 'an al-wsāṭeh
"He who can carry a full load will be able to carry al-wsāṭeh (ar-rewiyyeh)."
(al-wsāṭeh: (in al-Jawf ar-rewiyyeh) a small quantity of grass or soft branches of trees put on the load of a camel.)
One who can do a great task will not find it hard to do a
1 Also Juh., no. 246. This is a verse from a short poem composed by Nureh al-Hūṣān. Cf. 'Abdullah b. Raddās, Sā'īrātun min al-bādiyyah (Riyad, n.d.), p. 29.
2 Cf. Juh., no. 2373.
smaller one.

SMDW: Oman: Jayak., no. 58; G. Syria: Feqh., no. 540; Frayha, no. 744.

'alli yetih mn an-njum kuffen las-sema (ma tāḥ mn an-njum keffeṭen las-sema)

"Whatever falls from the stars makes the sky['s load] lighter [lit. is lighter for the sky]."

Said when an unwanted person leaves a company.

'umma endezem wella endereb

"Either leave the task alone or do it properly." (E.g., if you invite people for a meal, entertain them well or it is better not to invite them.)

SMDW: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 541; Oman: Jayak., no. 21; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1910; Dabb., 2, p. 477; G. Syria: Frayha, no. 266.

'umma tamši wella tamši b(e)k al-mahhāleh ('edrej wella tadrej bek al-mahhāleh).¹

"Either you move [of your own accord, lit. walk], or else the pulley-wheel will move you," i.e., failure to agree will mean that you will be forced to agree.

'umma ḥameena ad-dīreh wella jaleena 'anah ('anha)

"Either we defend the town or we leave it," i.e., let us not be content with half measures.

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 360.
"Either a pearl or a shark." Said of the ups and downs of life.

"Either two lanterns or complete darkness."

"Either violent gales or [complete calm in which] flour cannot be winnowed." Cf. no. 109.

This proverb has as its origin in al-Bkayriyyah in al-Qasim and is hardly known outside it. It has the following story:

Iben Bassäm, who was a rich man from the town of 'Unaizah, was the creditor of a certain farmer called Iben 'Awwâd who said these words which passed into a proverb.

One day Iben 'Awwâd was paid a visit by his creditor who saw among his palms a very good small palm of the type known as sekkeri and asked his debtor to send it later to be planted in Iben Bassäm's palm-grove in 'Unaizah. Iben 'Awwâd did not like to give up this shoot to his creditor as he hoped to get a good sum of money for it in cash. So he took a male palm shoot instead to Iben Bassäm. When the latter discovered the deception some years later and reproached him, his answer was as above.
There are two proverbs with similar meaning and stories known in Oman¹ and G. Syria.²

'āmraj mn al-bēez bal-geeż³
"More rotten than eggs in the heat of summer."

'emsaḥ ḵāhri wa(a)msaḥ ḵāhekh
"Scratch my back and I will scratch yours [lit. stroke with your hand on my back ... etc.]."⁴

NS: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 175.
SMDW: an old proverb: M., no. 2216; Zamak., 1, no. 882; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 175; Baghdad: Tik., no. 853; Hanafi, no. 1034; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 1827, 2484; Frayha, no. 1441; Fegh., nos. 1448, 1502; Baum., nos. 27, 291; Egypt: Taim., no. 131; Fā'iqa, no. 1107.

'amšî wa amanni nafsi wa(a)gul al-leeleh 'ersi
"While I walk I make a wish for myself and say 'My wedding shall be tonight'." Said of one who indulges in wishful thinking and entertains vain hopes.


'umm 'ābes tākl ar-raṭub wal-yābes⁵
"[Like] fire. It devours both the wet and the dry." Said of a greedy man.

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¹ Jayak., no. 22.
² Ašqar, no. 5326.
³ Also Juh., no. 367.
⁴ This translation is an English proverb, see ODEP, p. 706.
⁵ Also Juh., no. 370.
'umm 'ābes: mother of the frowning one: fire. This term is not used in speech.

Sim. WM: Oman: Reinhardt, no. 24.
SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 20; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1143; Landb., no. 159.

أنا اطحن وانت تطعمين

'ana at-ḥan wa(a)ntity talhamin
"I grind [the flour with the mill-stones] and you gobble [what I grind]."

This saying is attributed to a blind woman who stayed for several hours grinding a large quantity of grain. Another woman quietly stole all the flour. When she finished grinding she of course found nothing, so took a stone and hit her vagina many times saying, "I grind and you O my vagina gobble."

Said of someone who frivolously spends what another has saved with much labour.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 2970.

أنا عمامك اللّي ما يعماك (تعماك)

'ana 'asāk allī mà y'asāk (t'asāk)
"I am your staff that does not disobey you," i.e., I am as ready to obey you as your own staff.

NS: Baghdad: Tik., no. 12.
SMDW: two old proverbs: M., no. 2508, 4509; 'Ask., no. 1163; a post-classical proverb: Ṭāliq., no. 183; Yemen: Goit., no. 172; Baghdad: Tik., nos. 395, 2097; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1341; Frayha, no. 3510.

أنا عود بعرق (معرق) حزمه

'ana 'uden b'arz (men 'arz) ḫezmuh

Also 'Ubūdī, 1, no. 97; Juh., no. 393.
"I am [but] one stick in a bundle," i.e., I will agree if others agree.

'I am pulling my ribs together." A metonymy (كتايب) for "I feel extremely anxious." Said when one is anticipating some unpleasant thing to happen.

'I am from Šbeeḥ and I am lost. I do not know whether my family has found me or not." Said of crass foolishness.


You are her (var. his) father and you give her (var. him) a name," i.e., you have complete freedom of choice in the matter.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 56, no. 126.

"If I spit upwards it falls on my moustache, and if I spit downwards it falls on my beard (var. my chest)," i.e., if I try to discipline my own family, group, or people, I am only harming myself.

Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 99; Juh., no. 374.
"If one donkey passes away, there is another tethered in his place."

Said contemptuously of, for example, a worker who is dismissed because a replacement can easily be found. Cf. no. 147.

This proverb is of old origin and has changed very little. See M., no. 82; Zamak., 1, no. 1606; 'Ask., no. 99.

"If you shake hands with him, count your fingers [afterwards]." Said regarding transactions with a notorious thief.

"If you have eaten your fill they envy you, and if you are starving they poke fun at you." It can also be translated: "If you are rich they envy you, and if you are poor they poke fun at you." The word šab'an is also used figuratively to mean "well-to-do" and so is the verb šébe', "he became rich."
'ensad mjarreb 'u lā tanṣed ṭebīb
"Consult a man of experience rather than a physician." A man who has suffered an illness and knows its remedy may be better informed about it than a physician.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 26, no. 41; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 432; Goit., no. 527; Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., nos. 176, 212; Dal., 1, no. 107; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 60.

'anfrēṭat sabḥat-hum
"[The string of] their rosary is broken." A metonymy (كلٍّ) for, "they broke up or disbanded."

NS: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 542; Palestine: Baum., no. 207

'een fareet fareet (šaggeet šaggeet) jeebi we(e)n sekatt sekatt 'ala 'eebi
"If I tear, I tear my own garments [lit. opening of my shirt] but if I keep silent I conceal my own ailment."

This proverb refers to the dilemma of a person who has to face the agonising choice whether to protest against a wrong done to him by a member of his own family which may lead to disputes and quarrels out of which the whole family may gain nothing but ill reputation, or to remain quiet and try to endure and by doing so harm his health and peace of mind.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, no. 129.

SMDW: Iraq: Tik., no. 519; Hanafi, no. 1897; Weissbach, no. 237; Dal., 1, no. 223; Gul., p. 56; Dabb., 2, p. 527.

أَنْفَظَ مَا بِالجَِّيْبِ يَأْتِي مَا بِالْغِيْبِ
"anfedż mà bal-jeeb yāti mà bal-geeb"¹

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 100; Juh., no. 401.
"Spend what is in your pocket, then what is in the Unknown will come." Said to encourage a man to spend liberally without worrying about where more money will come from. Cf. the English proverb, "Spend and God will send."¹

NS: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 50; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, no. 55; Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., nos. 95, 220; Hanafi, no. 121; Dal., 1, no. 122; Yemen: Akwa‘, 1, no. 489; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 279; Egypt: Taim., no. 138.

If she conceives [i.e., after the stud camel or horse has covered her] well and good, but if not the camel (or horse) has done her no harm," i.e., there is nothing to be lost by making the attempt.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 55, no. 125.

"If she [i.e., a camel] does not outstrip [other camels] while she is young, she will not outstrip [them] when she is older (var. she had not outstripped [other camels] when she was young let alone when she is older!)

"If nothing happened in the past nothing will follow," i.e., a man who has done nothing significant in the past is unlikely to do something significant in the future.

¹ ODEP, p. 763.
² Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 105; cf. Juh., no. 411.
The meaning of these last two proverbs is similar to that of a classical proverb (see M., no. 234) and is expressed with different wording in Baghdad: Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 765, and Lebanon: Frayha, no. 4026.

'ен медаћ асраf вен сабб асраf
"If he praises [someone] he exaggerates, and if he disparages [someone] he exaggerates too."
SMDW: Oman: Jayak., no. 281.

'еhbeš habišek 'u kall aṣ-ṣalāṭīn tedzātal
"Pound your grain and let the sultans fight each other," i.e., mind your own business and do not bother about matters which do not concern you.

"Aḥh ʿan ʿabbi bīhībī yahāna laʿi
I flee from ʿabbā but ʿabbā keeps up with me [wherever I go]."
ʿabbā: name of a mountain.
SMDW: three classical proverbs: Zamak., 1, no. 1959; ʿAsk., no. 36.

"Aḥl al-ʿgūl bʿāfyeh ʿ"
"People of sense are scarce." (They do not involve themselves in dangerous situations.)
Sim. WM: Egypt: Taim., no. 137; Faʿiqa, no. 1126.
NS: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 21.

"Aḥl ʿinn Abkāṣ bē ʿabbāh ʿ"
1 Cf., Juh., no. 430.
2 Cf. ʿUbūdi, 1, no. 108; Juh., no. 424.
The people of Mecca know its ravines best.

NS: a classical or post classical¹ proverb: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 15; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 723; Baghdad: Tik., no. 429. SMDW: two classical proverbs: 'Ask., no. 1278; Zamak., 1, no. 1417.

138 أوراء تعقله

'ōbārah ta'aglah

"They [i.e., camels] are tethered with their own hair."

Said in reference to the practice of tethering a camel with a rope made of its own hair.

Said of someone whose own belongings are used to thwart him. Cf. nos. 290, 399.

Sim. MDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2238; Hanafi, no. 2160; Dabb., 2, p. 503: يَتَّقَّفُ مِن صُوْنا أَوْطُ العَس

139 أُذَّتْ التَّحْس

'ūṭ al-ḥess

"Tread on the sound," a metonymy for "speak softly."

أَوْلاَ نَجُّمَ مِن آَبِ يَحْرُقُ السَّماَرَ بَيْنَ الْبَابَ، وَأَوْضَعَ نِمْمَ آَبِ نَحْرُ الْعَنْب

"The first period of 'Āb burns the nails in the door; the middle period of 'Āb makes the grapes disappear and the dates abundant; the last period of 'Āb opens the door for winter."

'Awwal najmen men 'Āb yehreḍz al-masmar bal-bāb, wōṣat najmen men 'Āb mwakkren al-'nab we mṭattren al-ertāb, watla najmen men 'Āb fāṭ-ḥen laṣ-ṣṭa bāb

Sim. WM: Iraq: Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 1155; Dal., 1, nos. 302.

¹ See A. al-Qalqašandi, Subḥ al-'Aṣa, 1 (Cairo, 1963), p.
A door is worth more [lit. is cheaper] than its price," i.e., it pays for itself in safeguarding property.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 1388.

"[He is like] a door made of palm leaves: [a breath of] air opens him (var. a door made of palm-fronds is thrown away by the wind)." Said of a weak character. Cf. no. 1112.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 1388

"The door is open, the water-bucket is laid down; he who comes, comes, and he who goes, goes."

Said when a household is ready to receive visitors; there being no pressing work needing to be done.

"In the feathers." Said when an accident causes damage to property but not to people.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nüri, 1, p. 70, no. 5.

Sim. WM: Egypt: Taim. no. 441.

1 Cf. no. 444.

2 This version is used in al-Jawf (and probably most northern districts of Arabia).
bālek te'il 'u lā tareekam lmen 'āl wal-marjleh bālek
t-ṭalledz ḥbālah
"Beware of committing aggression, but [also] of showing weakness towards him who commits aggression; beware of abandoning nobility of mind [lit. beware of letting go the ropes of noble mindedness]."

The first sentence is similar to the English proverb, "Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you."¹

batten nāzi
"A discordant strand." Said of someone who always disagrees with the majority.

bedāl al-tsalb tsalb
"One dog can easily be found to replace another [lit. instead of the dog a dog]." Cf. no. 123.

bduwi we b'abātuh reg'eh
"A bedouin with a patch on his cloak."

Said ostensibly to describe a distinguished feature of someone but in reality it is ironical since almost every bedouin is likely to have a patched cloak.

brāsuh hōš (hōm)
"There is a fight (var. violence)² in his head," i.e, he is

¹ Browning, no. 8429.
² The second version is common in al-Jawf.
determined to do something regardless of how much effort or trouble it may require.

SMDW: an old proverbial phrase: M., no. 2728; ‘Ask., no. 1326; Egypt: Taim., no. 1097.

"Beware of the cold of autumn but meet the cold of spring."

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 72, no. 11; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 475; Dabb., 1, p. 112: برد السيارين أثرتاه وبرد الربيع الالقاء; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2344; Frayha, nos. 860, 864.

"He who is cold should fetch the fire-wood." Cf. the English proverb, "Let them that be cold blow at the coal."

"Do not concern yourself about lightning which has passed you by, since you cannot hope to graze your herds on it," i.e., on the grass which may follow a shower of rain which is heralded by it.

"[Like] the lightning of Ḥreewel." Ḥreewel is a man who once said he had seen lightning; when asked in what direction it was, he pointed with his fingers to several directions.

Said of any claim which evaporates on closer inspection.

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1 Cf. Juh., no. 445.
2 Cf. ‘Ubūdi, 1, no. 117.
3 ODEP, p. 132.
al-brekeh sahamen kafiyy
"Blessing is hidden share."
This succinctly expresses the belief that partaking of a common meal or doing something together is likely to have a benign effect on the participants.

berr 'u šilah
"[It is] a charitable gift and help for one's kinsfolk [at one and the same time]." Said of a charitable gift given to a needy relative, because such a gift also fulfils the religious duty of šilat ar-rahim, that is, the helping of one's kith and kin.

berirat Háyes
"[Like] the favour done by Háyes."
Said of a present or an offer which seems good and useful while in fact it is harmful or causing one some trouble.

al-bess lā ḥjer hāš
"[Even] a cat will fight when driven into a corner."
The cat in this proverb is depicted as being a relatively weak animal which will only fight if forced.
Cf. the English proverb, "Tread on a snail and she'll shoot out her horns."\(^1\)

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3090; a post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 129; Baghdad: Tik., no. 481.

bešt Eben 'Amireh mā šāf mnaṭ-ū'eh yšūfuh ma'ešyeh
\(^1\) ODEP, p. 835.
"[Like] the cloak of Eben 'Amireh: what it has witnessed of piety, it will witness of impiety." Eben 'Amireh was a man of great piety whose cloak was acquired after his death by a most impious person. This proverb is an example of personification. SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3086.

break the good news of having a new farmer to the palm trees.
Cf. the English proverb, "A new broom sweeps clean." 2
SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 2047.

Weak eye-sight is better than blindness." Cf. the English proverb, "A man were better to be half blind than have both his eyes out." 3

Sim. WM: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 548; Oman: Jayak., no. 34; Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 321; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 1242, 3472; Singer, no. 34; Fegh., no. 2307; Tallq., no. 134; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1790, 2946.

A satisfied man is slow to feed a hungry one." Cf. the English proverb, "None knows the weight of another's burden." 5
SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 1986

1 Also 'Ubādi, 1, no. 121; cf. Juh., no. 457.
2 ODEP, p. 564.
3 Ibid., p. 56.
4 Cf. Juh., no. 1100.
5 ODEP, p. 438.
baţni mahūb jarāben laḥad
"My stomach is not a food sack for someone else," i.e., my food has not been given me by someone else, and so I am under no obligation to any other person.

bu‘erṣī 'Ibrāhīm
"[Like] Ibrahim's gecko." Said of a person who is spite of appearances turns out to be malevolent. Cf. the English proverb, "A snake in the grass."

The phrase refers to a legendary gecko which is supposed to have fanned the flames, which were to have burned Abraham in the furnace, with his breath.

be‘ir az-żahar dzelīl (m‘adūm)
"Camels with strong backs are few."

be‘ir šemāl
"[He is like] a camel from the North." Said of someone who is quick in temperament and movement. Camels bred in northern

1 Quraiṣ, 7 (959), p. 10: الشعوان يثبت للجیمان
2 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 124; Juh., no. 461.
Arabia are known for this quality, as opposed to the camels of central or eastern Arabia which are well-known for their size and slower in their movements.

"Like the cows of the people of al-Gwareh: they are stolen from them and then sold back to them."

al-Gwareh: a village in al-Qašīm, about 50 miles north-west of Buraida.

SMDW: an old proverb of several variations: M., no. 3189; 'Ask., nos. 1144, 592; Zamak., 1, nos. 294, 295; 2, no. 708.

"The cow has been threshing." Said of someone who is very tired after working.

"There are awns in the camels' noses." Said of a group of people who are cool towards each other as a result of some contretemps in the past.

Ident.: Mosul: Dabb., 1, p. 119.

"The predicament of townspeople: it is [that there is no end to their] bowing and genuflecting (rak' 'u taslim)."

Said when an expected benefit fails to materialize and an awkward situation presents itself instead.

The saying arose in reference to a bedouin who supposedly visited a mosque during Ramādān in the supposition

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1 Cf. Juh., no. 2141.
2 See also J.G. Lorimer, Gazetteer of The Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia (Calcutta, 1908), p. 1497.
that the people were assembling for a feast. Not only was there no feast but the bedouin had considerable trouble in getting away from the praying faithful. Hence his wry comment above.

balšt: in pause it is pronounced balšeh: predicament, fix, difficulty.

البل هزلي والمسرّب غطيان
al-bell hazla wal-m'azzeb Gtayyān
"The camels are thin and weak and the boss is Gtayyān."
Said in reference to double trouble.

This proverb was said by a camel driver who was hired by a certain Gtayyān, a farmer in al-Bkayriyyah, to drive water-drawing camels. The worker complained that the camels which he had to drive were very lean and weak. They moved too slowly making the work dull and boring. Besides, the boss was Gtayyān, who was known for his meanness and who probably did not look after those who worked for him.
Cf. nos. 206, 234, 267, 495, 975.

بنات ماجد واحد
banāt Mājed wājed
"The daughters of Mājed are many." Said of a person who can easily be replaced. Cf. the English proverb, "There is plenty more fish in the sea."

بنّا عقيل: واحد يربد الجدار وواحد يأخذ المرقة
bna 'Geel: wāhden yarf d al-jdār 'u wāhden yākd al-'regeh
"[Like] building work done by men of 'Geel ('Agayl): one supports the wall while the other receives the fee."

'Geel: the 'Geel (or 'Agayl) were a group of non-aristocratic town dwelling camel dealers and merchants who used to journey trading between Najd, particularly al-Qašīm, and Iraq, Syria
and Egypt. They belonged to different tribes and districts. They are depicted in this proverb as being intent upon making quick profits and in doing so would carry out work which would only last until they had collected their fee.

al-'regeh: fee, pay.

yarfed: imperf. of rufad, to support (a wall, a tree etc.).

al-bendag al-'ōja bah ramyeh

"The crooked gun has [fired] a shot." Said of something clever or intelligent coming from a person from whom one would not have expected it.

Ident.: Basrah: Dal., no. 386.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, p. 92, nos. 23, 24.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3857.

bhār al-benn benn

"Coffee is its own flavouring." Pulverized cardamom seeds or cloves are usually added to coffee as a flavouring (bhār). When there is no bhār the saying is quoted as an excuse. The adding of extra coffee is regarded as a substitute for bhār.

beet as-sabe' ('ešš aţ-ţeer) mā ykala mn al-ţām

"The lair of the lion (var. the nest of a falcon) is never devoid of bones." Said of someone who has money (or something else) to spare though he denies it.

Ident.: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 88; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul):

2 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 29.
3 Also Juh., no. 504.
4 This version is used in al-Jawf (and probably the other northernmost parts of Najd).
beet jarbū'

"[Like] a jerboa's burrow." Said of a house that has many exits, in reference to the jerboa's well-known habit of constructing several escape holes in its burrow.

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beeten mā buh tamer ahaluh jya'

"The inhabitants of a house devoid of dates are hungry."

The origin of this proverb is the hadīt, "بيت لا تمر فيه جياع أهله" related by Muslim, Ahmad (b. Ḥanbal) and others from 'Āʾishah.

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beezat dīts bal-ʿumer (bas-seneh) marreh

"[Like] a cock's egg: once in a lifetime (var. a year)."

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 79, no. 31.

NS: a classical proverb: M., no. 2985; Zamak., 2, no. 711; Taʿālibi, Timār-ul-qlūb, no. 794; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 985; Baghdad: Tik., no. 565; Hanafi, no. 1900; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 2257; Frayha, no. 3493; Fegh., no. 2926.

Sim. WM: a classical proverbial phrase: M., no. 466; ‘Ask., no. 285.

SMDW: a modern Syrian proverbial phrase.

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beez m’adūd bejrāben mašdūd

 بيض معدود يجري مشدود


2 It is the phrase: "a slip in July." I heard it from Mr. Najib ʾas-Sihābi, who is a native of Damascus.

3 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 131; cf. Juh., no. 489.
"Numbered eggs in a fastened bag." Said of something definite and fixed.

Ident.: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 323.
NS: Mosul: Socin, no. 496; Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 37.

البيضة ما تعادم العجر
al-beezah mā t-ṣādm al-ḥajar
"An egg may not clash with a stone." Used metaphorically of a weak and a strong character.

Sim. WM: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 84; Baghdad: Tik., no. 566; Hanafi, no. 431; G. Syria: Frayha, no. 1091; Egypt: Taim., no. 852.

بين اذائه وزيز طير
been edānuh weziż źeer
"There is a bird chirping between his ears." Said of someone who has some knowledge of a matter although he has supposedly not been informed about it.

بين له طرف السنين
bayyan luh źaraf as-ṣets-ṣīn
"He showed him the tip of the knife," i.e., he evinced a hostile attitude.

تأكل العانٍ
tāflen al-'āfyeh
"He has spat out health," i.e., he has become extremely tired. Cf. no. 824.

تأكل الدجاجة عشاه (عشاء)
tākl ad-dejāje 'ašāwh
"A chicken could eat his supper." Said of a very timid or

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1 The page numbers used in referring to this MS follow the numbers which have been pencilled on the recto of each folio. This pagination, however, has been incorrectly commenced on folio 2r.
weak person. Cf. the English proverb, "He cannot say boo to a goose."  
Sim. WM: G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 1180; Stephan, no. 421.

"Things will be clear [to you] when 'Beed ('Ubaid) comes from al-Jōf," i.e., you should wait and see; you will know all in good time.

'Beed: 'Ubaid b. 'Ali b. Raṣīd. He was sent by his brother 'Abdallah, the founder of the Šammari emirate in northern Najd with Ḥāyel as its capital and who ruled for thirteen years (1835-1847), with a campaign to capture al-Jōf and annex it to their state, which 'Ubaid successfully did.  

"The ant collects [e.g. seeds] and the camel [eats them and] becomes fat (var. what the ant collects throughout a year, the camel eats in one mouthful)." Said of anyone who grows prosperous through the efforts of another. Cf. the English proverb, "Cats eat what hussies [i.e., housewives] spare."  
Sim. WM: Mecca: Browning, no. 7431.1

The second version is common in al-Jawf. Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 139.

Browning, no. 6994.
"Chances may bring what prearrangements do not."

Ident.: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 131.

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 3565; Fegh., no. 2555; Frayha, no. 2150; Egypt: Taim., no. 2385; Littm., no. 60.

**tahazzam lāl-.ḥesnī b'mehzam esad**

"Gird yourself for fighting a fox as you would for fighting a lion," i.e., do not underrate an enemy because he appears to be insignificant.

Cf. the English proverb, "Though thy enemy seem a mouse, yet watch him like a lion."¹

Sim. WM: Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., no. 602; Hanafi, no. 1692; Dal., 1, no. 352.

**tehh (tāḥ) luh 'u yalḥakk**

"Say tahh to him and he will follow you." Applied to a person who can be easily led astray, or who is not of a firm mind.

**tehh**: imper. of tahh; tāḥ is the imper. of tāḥa', to call a sheep by saying tahh . . . tahh.

Cf. nos. 616, 936, 987.

**t-ḥawilen men t-ḥatiyy ad-drejeh wala men 'luwwah**

"Descending from the lower part of the staircase is easier than from its upper part," i.e., it is better not to persist in a profitless undertaking.

NS: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 355.

SMDW: G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 4412.

**tedelluh al-ḥalteh**

¹ ODEP, p. 222.
"The shot knows its way to him," i.e., he is often made a scapegoat. Cf. nos. 230, 415, 490, 548.

Cf. the English proverbial phrase: "to give a dog a bad name".

الذى يعلم الطريق إليه (لم تكونى لم تلقى)
tdawwran mā talgān (tdawwrni mā talgāni)
"If you had searched for me you would not have found me," i.e., I was very embarrassed.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 189.

ترضيح نجد (ترضيح الشمس)
terẓīh Najd (var. terẓīh aš-šams)
"Najd will reconcile him (var. the sun will reconcile him)."

Often said about an angry person by one who has angered him and does not wish to apologize.

tar'a we hi rweebzeh
"It [i.e. a beast] grazes while it is resting." Said of a person who acts effectively without outward fuss.


ترزه وياطأ رجلك
tezettuh 'u yāṭa rejlek
"You push him away and he treads on your foot." This alludes to the awkwardness of the donkey but is used metaphorically for an awkward person.

tezett: imperf. of zatt, to push.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 1384.

tes'in ebreh mā yejen (teji) mekrāz (mekyat)
1 Also Juh., no. 520.
2 Cf. Juh., no. 1545.
"Ninety needles do not make an awl." Said in praise of the worth of an individual who is worth more than many lesser men. Cf. no. 884.

Sim. WM: Yemen: Goit., no. 1245.

Sim. MDW: two post-classical proverbs: Tāliq., no. 434; Abūḻiḥi, 1, p. 36:

(ε)τ-τορέτ 'ομη τ-τορέτ τεύκηκ ταλίκ Αλ'ηα 'u τετυφφήκ

"Whether you rise in billows or not, al-'Alya will come and drink you up."

al-'Alya: the name of the speaker's camel.

A saying attributed to a simple man from the 'Anazi clan of the Rwala when he saw the river Euphrates for the first time. Said to denote absurd pretention.

t-τορέτ: imperf. of τορατ. Not used in speech.
tetuff: imperf. of ταφ, to drink to the very last drop in a cup, glass, etc.

ταιάββαρ βε υμμ υςουση λεεν (λαμα) τεύκηκ αλ-μαγουση

"Make do with the girl with unkempt hair until you find an elegant one [lit. until an elegant one comes to you]," i.e., make do with what you have even if it is not as good as you may wish, until you find something better.

Musil records a variant of this proverb which reads, تلهي بام شوشه اليا ما تجيك المنقشه". He gives his own interpretation of it: "amuse thyself with a short-haired one if thou canst not get a girl whose tresses are ornamented with coins."1

His translation, nevertheless, seems to stray from the exact wording. The word υςουση is used in the Najdi dialect to

1 Musil, op. cit., p. 118.
mean "the hair when it is long or unkempt or both." It is unlikely that the Rwala from whom Musil heard this proverb differ from others in the use of this word. As for his translation of al-mangūșeh as "the girl whose tresses are ornamented with coins," this is unlikely, for the custom of adorning hair with coins is virtually unknown in Najd. It is more likely that the word is used mainly for the sake of rhyme and tībaq (elegant contrast), to mean "elegant or pretty" as opposed to the "one with long or unkempt hair."

Ident.: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 379.

Sim. MDW: an old proverb: M., no. 863; Zamak., no. 1329
SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 320; Hanafi, nos. 160, 175; Gul., p. 12: 
G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 417; Baum., no. 104; Stephan, no. 723; Egypt: Taim., nos. 231, 232; Burck., no. 47; Littm., no. 178.

Said, for example, of a modest meal, to which not many people can be invited.

tegl m'āras bsāsēh
"Like cats courting." Said of an outburst of noise or clamour.

te: tegel: like, as. Originally the verb tegul: taqul.
bsāsēh: plural of bess, cat.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 216, no. 15.

at-tamer kass waz-zād gass
"Dates may be selected [from anywhere in the bowl], but cooked food must be eaten from one side."

When eating dates one may pick up any date one chooses, but cooked food may be eaten from the nearest part of the dish to the diner. This is an accepted rule of table manners.

NS: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 173.

tamrat kerj
"[Like] a date in the saddle-bag." i.e., you find it whenever you need it. Said of someone who is useful and at hand when needed.

at-tamreh mā tejyah (tejīha) al-lāwāhis
"A date is not affected by noxious insects." Said of a person who is unaffected by adversity or changing fortunes.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 89, no. 15.

1 Also Juh., no. 559.
2 Also ibid., no. 561; ‘Ubūdi, 1, no. 149.
3 Cf. Juh., no. 558.
Getting acquainted with places is useful [it enables one to know one's way easily when revisiting them], getting acquainted with men brings gains, but getting acquainted with women is a bad thing."

\textit{teme'erfen}: the colloquial verbal noun equivalent to the \textit{fus.}. The verb is \textit{tema'raf}: to try to know.

...temman we swa Slubeh ...

"[The meal is] \textit{temman} [a kind of poor quality rice] and it is cooked by Slubeh nomads."

Slubeh nomads are not particularly expected to be skilled in cooking.

Cf. nos. 170, 234, 267, 495, 975.

\textit{swa (saw)}: cooking; \textit{sawwa}: to cook; also "to do" in other contexts.

tanks umm as-ṣeltān 'an al-ḥejj!

"[So what!] will the sultan's mother turn back from the Pilgrimage!" i.e., will anything of moment happen if you do or do not do this thing? Rhetorical question implying the insignificance of an action.

tanks: (tenkes) imperf. of \textit{nekas}, to return.

The reference in the proverb is to a common story about an incident which supposedly took place sometime in

\footnote{Cf. Juh., no. 1276. In al-Jawf the following version is used by the learned men: معرفة البلاد إمارة وعرفة الرجال تجار وعرفة الساخرين, ma'arft al-blād emāreh 'u ma'arft ar-rajāl tjārehe, y ma'arft an-nsa kasārehe: "getting acquainted with countries is like being an emir, getting acquainted with men is riches, and getting acquainted with women is a loss.}
the nineteenth century, in which a certain Najdi ruler prevented the caravan of the mother of the Sultan (of the Ottoman empire) from proceeding to Mecca to perform the Pilgrimage. The Sultan was so furious that he sent a force which took this ruler captive and carried him to Istanbul. There, the Sultan, so the story goes, killed him cruelly and boiled his body in a pot.

This probably has its origin in a historical incident in which Sa‘ud b. ‘Abdul ‘Aziz b. Muḥammad ‘Āl-Sa‘ūd, after conquering Mecca in the year 1803, sent the Sultan a warning that "the pilgrim caravans under the protection of the Pasha of Egypt and Syria would not be permitted to bring the mahmal (the litter in which the covering of the Ka‘ba was borne) or make their entry into the city to the accompaniment of trumpets and drums."¹

توَّدَّى البِرْ من الزَّجَاب

tawadda al-bir mn az-ze‘ib
"The well has become tired of the water drawers." Said when someone has had all patience lost with him.

ze‘ib: plur. of za‘ab, from za‘ab, to pull a bucket full of water (sand, etc.) out of a well.

تَيِّس عَجَره

tees ‘ahreh
"[Like] a he-goat of a lascivious woman." Said (impolitely) of one who interferes with the business of others.

ثُرُ أَدِرع

torn adra’²
"A black-headed ox." Said of an imprudent person. Such a

² Cf. Juh., nos. 576, 577.
person is also described in **Iraq** as a turbanned ox,¹ and in **Kuwait** and **Yemen** as a hornless ox.²

'adra': al-Jawhari said:³

"والذنوج من الخيل والثناء ما أسود رأسه وأبيذ سائره والثني درعه".

Thor Skeet: ytaḥāla ad-dabḥ 'alās-sarḥ (var. ytaḥāla al-mōt 'anas-sawānī)

"[Like] the ox of Skeet, he prefers [resting with the risk of] being slaughtered to going for grazing (var. he prefers death to water drawing)."

Skeet’s ox resisted his owner’s efforts to make him go away to graze, and consequently was slaughtered.

Said of a very lazy and stupid person.

jāddat begar

"[Like a cow’s track [it is never straight]." Said especially of unclear and confused talk.

jāk ad-dīb jāk wleeduh

"Here comes the wolf and here comes his cub [towards you]!"

Said of repeated interruptions and threats.

Ident.: **Kuwait**: Nūrī, 1, p. 98, no. 4.
Sim. WM: **Baghdad**: Tik., no. 683.
SMDW: **a classical proverb**: M., no. 1061; ‘Ask., no. 568.

jāk ‘ammek wal-balah

"Your uncle has come as well as the dates."

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¹ Tik., no. 666; Hanafi, no. 515; Ġul., p. 46; Dal., 1, no. 426.
² Nūrī, 2, p. 191; Akwa‘, 1, no. 1133.
A boy asked his uncle, who was at the top of a palm tree harvesting dates, to throw some dates down to him. Suddenly his uncle fell down with the dates and delivered himself of this sentence.

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\[ Jak yā Mhanna mā temanna (\text{var. yā Mhanna jak mā temanna}) \]

"You have attained, O Mhanna, what you wish." Said when a wish is fulfilled.

temanna: tatamanna

al-jāli fāni

"The self-exile is as one who has perished." Said unfavourably of living away from one's home.

al-jeḥer 'ala gadd an-netileh

"The hole is commensurate with the sand heap," i.e., the spoil taken from an excavation indicates the size of the latter.

jekren yūse'k (yāsa'k) mā yeṣīd bi

"A hole which is wide enough for you will not be narrow for me," i.e., I intend to keep your company wherever you go.

iekr: juhr, hole, burrow.

N.S: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1204.

1 Cf. Juh., no. 603.
2 Browning, no. 8346.
jedd al-begar tör

"The cow's grand sire is an ox." Applied (impolitely) to one who is as imprudent as his sons.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 199.

jarādeten bal-yad wala 'aşren ṭāyrāt (ṭeyyar)¹

"Better a locust in the hand than ten flying in the air."

NS: Mecca: Hurg., no. 45; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1218; Goit., no. 278.

Sim. WM: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 557; Yemen: Goit., no. 1393; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1424; Hanafi, no. 1242; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2237; Ašqar, nos. 2842, 2843; Frayha, no. 2376; Egypt: Burck., no. 3; Taim., nos. 1907, 956.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Taʿālibi, Tamtil, p. 198:

al-jarādeh men jarād wal-meṭiyyeh men rtsāb²

"A locust [means] many locusts and a riding camel [means] many camels," i.e., a single locust points to the swarm which must be around, for it seldom wanders by itself, and the same is true of camels.

Cf. the English proverb, "If you kill one flea in

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 158.
² Also ibid., no. 159.
March, you will kill a hundred."\textsuperscript{1}

SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., no. 502; Hanafi, no. 364; Lebanon: Frayha, no. 939; Egypt: Taim., no. 801.

جراءو أشبع (بَلَّ عَلَى) غزو

\textit{jarbū'en 'ašba} (badd 'ala) gazu

"A [single] jerboa has satisfied a raiding party." Said of a modest portion of food which has nevertheless satisfied a large party of people.

\textit{badd 'ala}: to be sufficient for a number of people or things.

جرد البريشم ولا جديد القطن

\textit{jard al-brīsam wala jedīd al-geten}

"Worn-out silk is better than new cotton," i.e., an old and familiar friend is better than a person of untried character.

\textit{jard}: worn-out; old, as opposed to "new".

\textit{al-brīsam}: silk--from the Persian, \textit{abrišam} (see p. 506 below).

NS: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 471.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 214, no. 10; Oman: Jayak., no. 194; Reinhardt, no. 101.

جرد الشمال ولا جديد الحساوي

\textit{jard aš-šemāl 'ulā jedīd al-ḥasāwi}

"An old [cloak] from the north [i.e., of good quality] is better than a new one from al-Ḥasa [i.e., of poor quality]."

A northern cloak (bešt šemāl) was well-known in Najd for its good material, contrary to a ḥasāwi one, that is, one made in al-Ḥasa in eastern Arabia, which was of a poorer quality.

جرة غنم: يعنى بعضه بعض

\textit{jerrat ganam ye'mi ba'aẓha ba'az}

"[Like] sheep's spoors: some of them obliterate the others,"

i.e., the spoor of one sheep is usually obliterated by the

\textsuperscript{1} Browning, no. 7888.
sheep following it. Said of muddled talk which is difficult to follow.

jeza nāgt al-ḥejj ḏabhah
"The reward of the Pilgrimage camel is to be slaughtered."

Said of ingratitude and requiting evil with good. The reference is to the practice of some pilgrims who after finishing the Pilgrimage, slaughter the camel which brought them to Mecca as a sacrifice (fiḍyah). Cf. nos. 554, 578, 1142, 1147.

The idea of returning evil for good expressed in this proverb is very common in Arabic proverbs, old and modern. See, for example, M., nos. 828, 1633, 1787, 2372, 2589, 4701, 3041; Ḍabbī, p. 70: ذنب صحر أنها أنحفته وأكرمه ريدتته فطمهًا; Zamak., 2, nos. 419, 195; Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 39, لفطه غليس; Oman: Jayak., no. 55; Iraq: Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 1176; Hanafi, no. 537; Dal., 1, no. 221, G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 76, 1636; Frayha, no. 3486; Baum., no. 242; Stephan, nos. 443, 649; Egypt: Taim., nos. 221, 1288, 1344; Burck., no. 572.

jelden mahūb jeldek jerruh 'alaš-ṣjereh
"A hide which is not yours, you pull over the bush," i.e., you abuse it. Said of a selfish person who does not refrain from causing loss or damage to others. Cf. no. 229.

Sim. WM: Mecca;² Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 100, no. 11; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1235; Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 479; Egypt: Taim., no. 964.

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¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 164.
² جلد مهوب جلدك جرّ على الشّجرو; See Quraisḥ, 69 (1961) back page.
"The camel is hired and the goad is [taken] from the tree," i.e., since the camel is not one's own and the goad is easily obtained, a selfish person will hit the camel hard and when the goad is broken he will simply take another goad.

Said of a selfish person who does not refrain from causing harm to others' property. Cf. the English proverbs, "Men cut large thongs of other men's leather" and "A hired horse tired never."3

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 103, no. 18.
SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., nos. 1077, 3318; 'Ask., no. 1506; Zamak., 2, no. 1087; Egypt: Taim., nos. 53, 54, 1350.

"Jneedān (Jleedān) an-netūl"

"[He is like] Jneedān (or Jleedān) the thief." Cf. the English, "To give a dog a bad name."

an-netūl: the thief; from netal, to steal. This word however is unlikely to be used in this sense in southern Najd. Consequently, this proverbial phrase is used in northern Najd only. Cf. nos. 191, 415, 490, 548.


"Jókt ahal aṣ-suffah men dakal menhum labsah"

"[Like] the broadcloth mantle of the People of the Bench: whoever goes to the market wears it."

Ahal aṣ-suffah (ahlus-suffah) "the people of the mantle" was an

1 Cf. Juh., no. 462.
2 ODEP, p. 163.
3 Ibid., p. 374.
appellation applied to certain persons who were the guests of El-Islam [i.e., supported by the charity of the Muslims] consisting of poor refugees and houseless men, who passed the night in the suffah of the mosque of the prophet in [El-Madīnah].

dakal: here has a particular meaning, "to go to the market or the town."

labsah: labisahā: he put it on; he wore it.

jawwzūhen wa (a)'īnu 'aleehen "Marry them off [i.e., your daughters] and give assistance in regard to them," i.e., help the men who marry them to look after them.

Said when someone is asked for two services at the same time.

SMDW: Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 1169.

al-jō'ān (al-'atsān) yakser al-ḥūz "A hungry (var. a thirsty) man will break the basin (pond)."

When an animal is too thirsty and is brought to water, it may break the wall of the cistern. | Applied in the sense of want of patience on the part of a needy person.|

Ident. (the second version): Mecca: Oman: Jayak., no. 171; Mosul: Dabb., 1, p. 273; Gul., p. 96; Egypt: Taim., no. 1911.

NS: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 235, no. 71; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1430; Hanafi, no. 1253; Weissbach, no. 93.

jū' u ḥets-tseh

1 Lane, p. 1694; see also Encyclopaedia of Islām, 2nd ed., vol. 1, s.v. "Ahl Al-Ṣuffa".

2 Quraiš, 94 (1961), p. 16.
"Hunger and itching." Said in reference to double trouble.
Cf. nos. 170, 206, 267, 377, 975, 495.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 2667; 'Ask., no. 90;
Zamak., 1, no. 1088; Mecca: مويًا ما لحه ووجهه كالحس;
Oman: Jayak., no. 120; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi,
no. 2541; Qu'., p. 156; عما وصاداع راس; Palestine: Baum.,
no. 45; Egypt: Taim., no. 870.

"I came from the deserts, my liver is melting [with wild desire]." Said of someone who has a wild feeling after a period of deprivation. Cf. the English, "As hungry as a hunter."

Sim. MDW: Lebanon: Frayha, no. 1311; Egypt: Fā'īqa, no. 1109.

"[He is] a good guest [but] a bad host," i.e., he likes to enjoy the hospitality of others, but he is reluctant to return it.

This proverb is also sometimes changed to: jayyden ma'azzeb rediyyen kater, "[He is] a good host [but] a bad guest," which may be said of a generous man who, although he likes to entertain guests, is rarely a guest himself.

"[like] neighbours in a graveyard." Said of neighbours who do not visit each other.

Ibid., 53 (1960), p. 16, recorded by Ḥasan Naṣir Gari.
"Gebreh is here!" Gebreh, "the dusty one", is an allusion to anger. Said of one who is in a bad mood, especially one who is prone to outbursts of anger on frequent occasions. Cf. no. 1081.

Cf. the English proverbial expression, "to be on the high ropes[i.e., to be in an elated, disdainful, or enraged mood]."

Ghalleen luh al-ḥarjeh

"Carrion has become lawful food for him," i.e., he is desperately poor.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: M., 1, p. 151:

Hamm 'alal-merq'ät

"He went around to [all] the wet-nurses," i.e., in search for one for his child. Said of one who asks many people for something or for a service.

Habb al-liyy (al-lha) taddzi'en bah

"Kissing the beards is [just like] farting to them." Said by someone who realizes he has been deceived by one who has been full of feigned politeness to him.

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 224; GUL, p. 16: Aẓhak al-lajal ḥab lāham; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 1279; Singer, no. 28; Landb., no. 102; Egypt: Taim., no. 839; Littm., no. 327.

Ḫabel lif mà yentḥazzam buh

"[He is like] a palm-fibre cord: it cannot be used as a belt," i.e., it is not strong enough.

1 ODEP, p. 372.
Palm-fibres fray easily and are therefore no use for making belts. Cf. the English proverb, "He is not a man to ride the water with."  

243 ḥubbeh 'u befum šedīdز
"A kiss in a friend's mouth." Said of a good thing given to a close friend or relative.

244 ḥetta al-ḵunfes yenfes (ye'ezz)
"Even a beetle breathes (bites)!" This may be said arrogantly by a patronising person to someone whom he considers is attempting to do something beyond his implied limited capacities.

245 ḥajjam 'u gallā' žrūs
"A cupper and an extractor of teeth [at one and the same time]." Said of one who does two or more tasks at the same time.

246 ḥejjen bgezyan ḥājeh
"[Going on] a pilgrimage and running an errand [at one and the same time]."

Cf. the English proverb "To kill two birds with one stone." Cf. no. 433.

Ident.: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 172.
NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 106; Egypt: Taim., no. 1027.
SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1084; Egypt: Taim., no. 1562.

1 Ibid., p. 676.
2 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 179.
3 Also ibid., no. 177; Juh., no. 658.
"His excuse is in his jugular vein." Said of one who is always ready with an excuse or a pretext.

"[Like] an anklet on a leg." Said of (a) two people who are often seen together, or (b) a person who sticks to another or others, especially one who forces his company on others and is hard to shake off.

Cf. the English proverb, "They cleave (or hang or hold) together like burrs."

"A white-footed [dog] and a white-necked one." Said of a group of undesirable people.

Cf. the English proverb, "Like any Tom, Dick or Harry."

"[Even] a hunchback knows how to lie down." Said of a difficult man who behaves well when he is firmly ordered to do so.

NS: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 176.
"Caution will not stave off Fate." One cannot take precautions against the inevitable.

Ident.: Baghdad: Tik., no. 803.

NS: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 118, no. 41; Iraq: Dal., 1, no. 561; Weissbach, no. 38; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1745; Frayha, no. 1374; Egypt: Taim., no. 1038.

الحرّ حرّ ولو مسه الشهر

al-ḥerr ḥerr 'u lū massaḥ aẓ-żerr

"A free man is a free man even when privation befalls him."

This proverb was originally said by the famous pre-Islamic orator 'Akteb b. Shayfiyy and has been used ever since: see M., no. 1107; 'Ask., 2, p. 92; Abšīhī, 1, p. 76.


الحريم مفاتيح الرجال

al-ḥarīm mafātīḥ ar-rjal

"Women are the keys of men." Said of the power of women's influence.

ハウスن مهوبد فيد ليعل

Ḥassūn mahūb feed lyūl

"Ḥassūn is not one for the nights," i.e., he is not a night bird.

حصان اشقر: من قاده ما ريح

ḥṣān ašqar men ġadūh mā rebeḥ

"[He is like] a light-coloured horse: whoever leads him will be the loser." Said of an ill-omened person, to associate with whom will bring bad luck.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 45.

The superstition of regarding a yellowish or light-coloured horse as an evil potent seems to have been entertained for a long time in Arabia. There are two classical
proverbs which refer to such a horse as inauspicious.¹

ḥṣān aḥal al-Gwāreh

"[He is like] the horse of the people of al-Gwāreh." The people of al-Gwāreh were said to have had a horse which was always around except when needed.

al-Gwāreh: see no. 166 (above, p. 47).

Ident.: Kuwait: Māri, 1, p. 100.

Sim. WM: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1134.

ḥṣeeni dżedd

"[He is like] a fox [which is satisfied] with pieces of leather [instead of substantial pieces of meat]." Said of a person who is satisfied with too little and who is near-sighted or unambitious.

dżedd: fus. qidd, dry leather.

ḥett al-jrayy ḥadr al-faras 'umma nebaḥ wella gumaş

"Put the puppy under the mare, it will either bark or jump back."

gumaş: to retreat, to draw back quickly or suddenly in fear.

ḥatab 'amyaya²

"[Like] the dead wood [gathered by] a blind woman." A blind woman naturally cannot be expected to pick up the best fire-wood. Her wood will often be a hotchpotch of different things.

ḥett beenek 'u been an-nār mṭawwa³

¹ See M., no. 3027; Zamak., 2, nos. 693, 727.
² Also Juh., no. 695.
³ Also ibid., no. 686.
"Put a religious scholar (mṭawwa') between you and Hell-fire," i.e., if you do not know the religious answer to a question, consult a religious scholar.

ḥett: imper. put!

ḥatt dānuh marfag

"He protected him with his elbow." Said of someone who stands up for the reputation of an absent person.

marfag: fuṣ: mirfaq, elbow.

ḥett lena tamer 'u lā 'ala krubah

"Offer us [some] dates, even [if you put them] on a krubah." Said to one who says he cannot serve food for the lack of utensils.

krubah: karabah: the cut-off base of a palm frond which is usually used for fire-wood, and would normally be considered quite unsuitable as a receptacle for food.

ḥaffār al-gbūr ygul yā 'Allah mayyit

"The gravedigger says: '0 God [please] send me a dead man'," i.e., to bury him and receive the burial fee. Said of someone whose only concern is to obtain a benefit for himself even if it comes through the misfortune of others.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 4207; 'Ask., no. 1732.

ḥeggen wāfaq ūbuguh

"[It is like] a tin: it fits its lid." (They are two of a kind.) Said disparagingly of a couple who have married or have become close associates. Cf. the English proverb, "Like (such) cup like (such) cover."1

1 ODEP, p. 161.
This proverb seems to be a colloquial Najdi version of the classical proverb:

\[\text{шееп: } \text{huqq, little tin.}\]

SMDW: \text{classical and post-classical proverbs: see M., nos. 322, 2987; 'Ask., no. 1785; Tāliq., no. 44; Mecca,}\]

Yemen: \text{Goi., no. 200a; Akwa', 1, no. 1047; Iraq (Baghdad, Mosul and among the nomads):}\n
\text{Tik., nos. 604, 2482; Hanafi, nos. 468, 494; Socin, no. 523; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1200; Frayha, no. 2273; Singer, no. 38; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1253, 60; Burck., no. 271.}

\[\text{الحقوق تبي حلوق}\]

\[\text{al-}\text{ğug tabi hlug}\]

"Rights need throats," i.e., rights need to be claimed, if necessary, vociferously.

\[\text{tabi: imperf. "it wants, it needs".}\]

NS: \text{Iraq: Weissbach, no. 40; Hanafi, no. 684; Dal., 1, no. 602; Qul., p. 56.}

\[\text{حكام تزاقون}\]

\[\text{hukm Grāğūš}\]

"[As unjust as] the judgement of Grāğūš."

Grāğūš: "Bahā' al-Dīn Ibn 'Abd Allah al-Asadi (Mamlūk of Asad al-Dīn Shirkūh) al-Rūmi (of Asia Minor) al-Mālikī al-Nāṣiri, officer of Malik al-Nāṣīr Yusuf (i.e., Saladin); he was eunuch, was freed by Shirkūh and was made an emir. When Shirkūh died (564:1169) he carried on his job, so people say, with severity. He was (at some periods of his rule) an example of foolishness. He died in 597:1201." 4

1 M., no. 4340; ‘Ask., no. 1796; Zamak., 2, no. 1368.
2 M., no. 4340; ‘Ask., no. 1796; Zamak., 2, no. 1368.
3 A. Ūafiri, op. cit., p. 130, no. 199.
Ident: Iraq: Tik., no. 855; Hanafi, no. 682; Dal., 1, no. 609; Dabb., 1, p. 167; Ġul., p. 54; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4165; Frayha, no. 3503; Egypt: Amīn, p. 173; Baq., p. 293.

ḥets-tseh ‘u tewehweh
"Itching and shuddering."

tewehweh: verbal noun of the verb ṭawahwah, to repeat the exclamation ‘ahh which signifies that one is cold or feeling pain.

Cf. nos. 170, 206, 234, 975.
The reference is made at no. 234 to other proverbs similar to this proverb in meaning.

ḥatsyen bal-fāyet nagṣen bal-‘agel
"Talking about the past [is owing to] lack of sense," i.e., there is no sense in raking over the past.

Sim. WM: Egypt: Taim., no. 1857.
SMDW: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1825.

ḥaltat ‘aša
"A stick's throw." Equivalent to the English, "a stone's throw."

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 108, no. 11; Mosul: Dabb., 1, p. 237; Ġul., p. 76; G. Syria: Baum., no. 249; Tallq., no. 11.

ḥmar aš-Šlubi: yar’aal-ḥaya be’yūnun

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1 Also Juh., no. 703.
2 Also ibid., no. 665.
"[Like] the ass of a Slubi: it grazes with its eyes only."

Slubi: one who belongs to the Slubeh or Salab tribe, a tribe of obscure origin, considered socially inferior to other tribes. It is said that a Slubi drives his loaded donkey so hard and so quickly that the poor animal sees the green grass but cannot stop to graze.

Said of one who cannot get what he wants although it is at hand.

Sim. MDW: Kuwait: Nurî, 1, p. 115, no. 30; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1248; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2048; Hanafi, nos. 1134, 1895; Yahuda, no. 11; Socin, no. 296; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 4150, 4151; Fegh., no. 1697; Egypt: Taim., no. 1413.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: Zamak., 2, no. 700; M., no. 2930; Mecca: Hurg. no. 41.

" Hammârû mâ luh ādan "

"His donkey has no tail."

This proverb derives from the following story: a man out hunting shot a bird, and coming to a village gave it to the proprietor of a cooking stall to cook it while he went about his business, intending to return later and eat it. The proprietor of the stall prepared the bird and placed it in the oven. Presently the religious leader and judge (cadi:gâdi) of the village, who, let it be said, was not as perhaps his station might lead one to believe, smelled the bird cooking and asked the cook for it. The cook, naturally, was not at all keen to let the judge have the bird, for what would he do when the hunter returned? Not only that,

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1 Cf. ibid., no. 720.
he also had to consider the consequences of displeasing the judge, and by way of persuasion the judge suggested he tell the hunter that the bird had flown away. "But what sort of fool do you think the hunter is?" retorted the cook. "Fear nothing. If he brings you to court I will know what to say to him. Tell him the bird flew away," said the judge, and with that took the bird.

Soon enough, the hunter returned. He was furious to find that the cook no longer had his bird. Rather than argue with the cook, he threatened him with a beating if he did not get the bird for him, and the cook, knowing there was no hope of that, ran off through the village with the hunter in pursuit. The cook stumbled and fell, grasping at the tail of a passing donkey as he did so, and so violent was his pull on the donkey's tail that the poor beast lost it altogether.

The donkey's owner was far from pleased to see his donkey with its tail cut off and joined the hunter in chasing the cook. In his desperation, the cook next ran through the open door of a house, but unfortunately for him, the lady of the house was six months pregnant and the shock of the sight of the wild-eyed cook precipitated the arrival of her child.

The last stages of desperation were now upon him and with the pregnant woman's husband newly added to his pursuers he had little hope of escape. As a last resort he threw himself over a wall. Alas! the unfortunate cook dropped onto the body of a sick man lying in the shade of the wall who was being tended by his brother. The sick man's troubles were at least ended at this for he was instantly killed by the crushing blow, but not so for the cook who was grabbed by the dead man's brother and held until the rest of
the angry mob arrived. The furious pursuers dragged the cook before the judge. The judge, after listening to the hunter's complaint accused the latter of a lack of faith in God as he did not believe the half-cooked bird could have flown away --did not he know that God was entirely capable of such miracles? He dismissed the complaints of the man whose brother had died with the directive that he should jump over a wall onto the cook as punishment, while the man whose wife had lost her child had even less satisfaction as the judge directed that the cook should see to the refilling of the man's wife's womb on the principle that he who knocks over his neighbour's bowl shall refill it. Finally the judge came to the case of the man with the donkey: "Ah! so you accuse this man of pulling off your donkey's tail?"

Seeing the way the decisions were made, the donkey's owner was disinclined to pursue his case: "Not at all, may God forgive you,¹ my donkey has never had a tail."²

The proverb is usually said of a person who is inconsistent in regard to promises and his own attitude.

²⁷²

(Temp \textit{my} \textit{donkey})

\textit{Hmūd hu Hmūd}

"\textit{Hmūd is Hmūd}," i.e., one's nature does not change. Cf. the English proverbs, "The leopard does not change his spots," and "Send a fool to the market and a fool he returns."

\textbf{SMDW: Yemen: Goit., no. 732.}

\begin{flushright}
\textit{henna 'aṣāfīren we (e)Bā Zeed sedreh, 'u men ṭāh menna yelteji fī źlālah}
\end{flushright}

¹ Judges are usually addressed with "God forgive you".

² The story was told by Slaimān ar-Rube' who heard it from Sheikh 'Abd Allah al-Klaifi, who was the judge of Ḥāyel at one time.
"We are [like] sparrows and Eba Zeed (Abū Zaid) is [like] a tree [lit. a lotus tree]: if any one of us falls he takes refuge in its shade."

Said in praise of a great man who helps his relatives, juniors, and friends to overcome their problems. The Abū Zaid referred to in this proverbial verse is presumably Abū Zaid al-Hilālī who was famous as a popular hero. Cf. Qisṣatu Banī Hilāl.

Hanats ḥmār
"[Like] a donkey's jaw bone." Said of a very narrow place, especially a house or a room.

SMDW: Palestine: Stephan, no. 942.

Ḥwār (ḥwayyer) rebīʾ 'en dannag wala jerreh we(e)n rufaʾ rāsuh wala derreh
"[Like] a young camel born in spring time: if he lowers his head he finds grass, and if he raises it he finds milk [i.e., from his mother's udder]."

Said of a young person who leads an easy life and has no experience of hardship.


Hūfets yal-karga kūleeh (eešets yā Ṣalma kūlih)
"You cooked it, O clumsy woman, so you eat it (var. O Ṣalma, it is your food and you eat it)." 3

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 124, no. 7; Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 640.

1 Cf. Juh., nos. 729, 2170.
2 Cf. ibid., no. 73.
3 The second version is used in al-Jawf.
al-ḥaya matbūṭ١ "Rain is pursued." A reference to the fact that in Arabia bedouins make for places where rain is reported to have fallen in order to graze and water their flocks.

hayat šjertuh
"His tree revived," i.e., he felt fresher and happier.

al-ḥayyt ar-ragāṭa walaz-żeef al-mezhī٢ "Better a speckled viper than a guest who stays till late in the morning." This proverb is used facetiously.

NS: Syria (among the bedouins).٣

kāredz 'ādeh
"[This is something] breaking through custom." A phrase said of something which is out of the ordinary or unusual.

kāṭr al-leel majfiyy٤ "The guest [who comes] at night is not well received."

It is difficult to entertain a guest who arrives at an inconvenient time.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Ţāliq., no. 409; Egypt: Burck., no. 640.

١ Also Juh., no. 736.
٢ See also Musil, op. cit., p. 464.
٣ See Gertrude L. Bell, Syria, The Desert and The Sown (London, 1919), p. 64: "Hayyeh rubda wala ḍaif muḥqa." Bell referred to this proverb merely as an Arabic proverb. However, as it is unlikely that it is known among Syrian town people, nor is it of course a classical proverb, it is probably safe to assume that Bell must have heard it from some Arab nomads in Syria. The wording of the proverb supports this assumption.
٤ Cf. Juh., no. 1198.
al-kāl kālen ela yōm ad-dīn

"The [maternal] uncle remains an uncle until the day of judgement." A reference to the high status in the family accorded to the mother's male relatives.

kālek mālek 'ekūk mn ummek ṭešṣuḫ

your [maternal] uncle is your half brother [from the mother side]!

Imper. of ṭašš, to throw away. This word is used by bedouins.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., no. 2484; 'Ask., no. 1200; Mosul: Socin, no. 299; Egypt: Fa'iqa, no. 625.

al-kadd meedān wal-keel (wehen) gerraḥ

"The plain is broad and the horses are fully grown," i.e., all the facilities for racing are there. Often said in accepting a challenge.

gerraḥ: plur. of dzāreh (fūṣ, qāriḥ): "a horse is called so when he finishes teething and enters his sixth year" or "in its eighth year or older; aged horse."

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Tāliq., no. 552.

ked men b'aruh 'u fett 'ala žharuh

"Take its [i.e., an animal's] dung and crumble it on its own back."

Dry droppings are put on an animal's open sores in order to dry them out.

A vulgar saying meaning "to give someone a taste of

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1 Socin, no. 299.
2 Dickson, op. cit., p. 629.
3 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 212.
his own medicine."

Ident.: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 42.

SMDW: Palestine: Baum., no. 368.

 ked menḥatsy al-'adzel nesfuḥ1 (var. ḥatsy al-'adzel yanges nesṣuh).

"Accept half of what a wise man says (var. half of a wise man's talk should be omitted)."2

People tend to exaggerate in reporting. Even in the case of a wise man one should consider that only half of what he says is true. A fool will certainly be still less trustworthy.

karāb as-sefīneh3

"[He is the cause of] the shipwreck," i.e., he is a troublemaker. Cf. the English proverb, "He is the fly in the ointment."

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 199.

SMDW: a number of classical proverbs: M., no. 2804; Zamak., no. 1141; 'Ask., nos. 1236, 1334, 1335, 1337; Egypt: Burck., no. 489; Fā'iqa, no. 1350.

karz tarz4

"Piercing, stitching." Said of a thrifty person who only spends money when it is necessary to do so, likened to one who skillfully pierces and stitches something.

karag 'ala j'areh

1 Cf., ibid., no. 213; Juh., no. 2556.
2 The second version is used in al-Jawf.
3 Also Juh., no. 771.
4 Cf. ibid., no. 773.
"His root has reached j'areh," i.e., he has changed for the worse.

j'areh: a type of clay which is very bad for plants. When their roots reach it they wither.

SMDW: Oman: Jayak., no. 305.

khzām al-'eeer men dnebuh

"The nose rope of a donkey [is made] from its own tail," i.e., a wicked or troublesome man is only effectively overcome by an equally troublesome one. Cf. nos. 138, 399, 285.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 129.

SMDW: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 649; Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 503
G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1949; Aṣqar, nos. 4424, 4425, 4426; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1138, 1817.

al-kasāreh māhna kasāreh, 'ummal-mereh wellal-hmāreh

"As regards the loss, there will be no loss: [I shall] either [get] the woman or the ass."

This proverb is attributed, in a tale, to a blind man who, noticing a couple riding on their ass on their way to a certain town, begged them to let him ride the donkey as he was very tired. The man agreed to let him ride with his wife. The blind man claimed the woman as his own wife and the ass as his own too, saying the above words to himself.

NS: Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., no. 901; Hanafi, no. 736; Dal., 1, no. 666.

Sim. WM: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 694; Oman: Jayak., no. 303;
G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 853.

māhna: mā huna, there is not.

\(^{1}\) Also ibid., no. 774.
al-kasweh 'and 'Geel māhi hayyneh

"Among the 'Ageel it is not a trivial matter to say: 'Shut up!'"

'Geel: ('Aqayl), see proverb no. 172 (above, p. 48).

kšebat rajjāl

"A man like a piece of wood," i.e., a blockhead.

kašmek menk lō kān ągţam ('awaj; lō a'fank)

"Your nose is a part of you even though it is cut off (var. crooked)(var. even if it gave you a bad smell)."

Said in reference to the need to put up with the faults and mistakes of one's kith and kin.

Sim. Wh: a classical proverb: M., no. 51; Zamak., 2, no. 1280.

SMDW: three classical proverbs: M., nos. 1571, 2436, 4710; Zamak., 2, no. 1280; 'Ask., no. 1621; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 414; Hanafi, no. 132; Gül., p. 24: الإطرفا ما يشعل من اللحم; Egypt: Taim., no. 680; Lebanon: Frayha, no. 2501.

Ident.: Basrah: Dal., no. 671.

ḳa al-ḥarb gṣ̌āṛ

"The paces towards war are measured," i.e., although something may appear to be a straightforward matter, it will quickly be evident that it requires patience and caution.

Cf. ibid., no. 777.

The last version is used in al-Jawf.

Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 217; cf. Juh., no. 667.
kalla ad-dar'a tar'a¹
"He let the sheep graze." He let everybody do what they liked. He let things go on as they were without interference on his part.

ad-dar'a; fem. of 'adra', a horse or sheep that has a black head the rest being white.²


NS: Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., no. 917; Dal., no. 693.

kall ḥārrek yabred
"Let your heat cool down," i.e., wait. Said as a reproach to one who shows impatience. Cf. the American slang, "Keep your cool."

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 4579.

kall (kalla) Ḥreemla btsabd halah³
"Leave Ḥreemla [and its problems] to its own people (var. He left Ḥreemla etc.]."

halah: 'ahalah: (fuṣ., 'ahluha), its people.
tsabd: kabid: liver. In the Najd dialect it is also used for "stomach".

A young man from Egypt is said to have come to Najd and settled in the town of Ḥreemla (Ḥuraimilā') in the Še'īb (aš-Ša'īb) province. He bought a palm-grove and started to look after it, introducing new methods of planting which were unknown to the local inhabitants of Ḥreemla. He spent all his money on this business and repeatedly asked his well-to-do father, who lived in Egypt, to send him more. The

¹ Also Juh., no. 795.
³ Also Juh., no. 791.
father did not hesitate at first, but as his son's requests for money became very frequent, he could not bear it any longer. He wrote a letter to him saying that he should give up looking after Ḥreemla and its palms and return home leaving the problems of Ḥreemla to its own people. I.e., one should not involve oneself in others' problems.


خُلّ كَلّ شاهي على قلبيه
kall kell šāwyen 'ala dżelibuh
"Leave every shepherd at his [own] well," i.e., do not interfere in the affairs of others.

خُيال البلها راعيها
kayıyāl al-balha rā'īha
"The rider of the she-camel [or mare] is her own owner," i.e., I am her owner and have the right to her.

al-balha: a description of a horse or "camel that does not take fright and flee from a thing by reason of staidness or heaviness as though she were stupid."¹

الخير عند ذكره
al-kayyir 'end detsruh²
"When [the name of] a good man is mentioned, he appears."

A polite proverb said of one who happens to come after being mentioned in a conversation.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 133.

Sim. WM: Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., no. 32; Hanafi, no. 7; Dal., no. 5.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Zamak., no. 500; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 371; Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 86; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2074; Egypt: Fā'iqa, nos. 191, 896.

¹ Lane, 1, p. 254.
² Cf. Juh., no. 1238.
al-keel kešer là gall an-nešiy
"Horses share the nešiy grass when it is scarce," i.e., if there is little food it must be shared by all the company.

an-nešiy: aristida plumosa.

kešer: sharing, from the verb takāšar, to share in something.

dābb jarād: mā tadri weš tešid 'u weš tkallī
"[Like] a snake [in the midst] of locusts: it does not know which one to catch," i.e., a snake, although it enjoys eating locusts might be puzzled as to which one to eat first if it found itself in the midst of a swarm of them. Cf. the French "embarras de richesse" and the English proverb, "like a donkey between two bundles of hay."¹

dābben selīm (selīme; dābbetn selīmeh)
"[Like] a harmless snake (var. a harmless creature)." Said of a quiet and harmless man.

To compare a quiet and peaceful man with a snake is strange; this suggests that the meaning of dābb in the first variant is probably the same as that of dābbeh (fuṣ., dābbah) in the second and that in the phrase it does not have its normal dialectical meaning of "snake".

dābben 'ama: tešīh al-`aşāfīr bufmuh 'u yāklah
"[He is like] a blind snake: he just opens his mouth and birds fall into it [lit. sparrows fall into its mouth and it eats them]." Said of a lucky person who always does well without much effort on his part.

¹ ODEP, p. 199.
"He is concealing his little knife," a metaphor for "he is quietly deciding on something."

"While it is [still] green and has not yet dried out." The reference is to the leaves of grain. To seize an opportunity, or do something before it is too late. Cf. the English proverbs, "Strike while the iron is hot" and "Make hay while the sun shines."

"Correct camels with a stick and women with women," i.e., if you cannot manage your wife, then marry another woman to keep her under control.

The advice for a man to marry another wife in order to make the first wife behave herself is also expressed in two Palestinian proverbs with different wording.

"What is done all the time is burdensome."

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1 Also 'Ubūdi, "Amtāl", al-'Arab, 2 (1968), p. 519, no. 29.
2 ODEP, p. 781.
3 Ibid., p. 501.
dubaren taḥat wubar
"Sores covered by hair." Cf. "Whited sepulchres."

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., nos. 1776, 2359.

ad-debs mā yalzag 'ella 'ala šedz-dz lāḥsuh
"The treacle only sticks to the cheek of one who licks it," i.e., a person who has been meddling in some matter usually bears the signs of it on his person. Cf. the English proverb, "Where the deer is slain, some of her blood will lie."²

yalzag: valtašiq, it sticks.
šedz-dz: fuṣ., šidq

ad-dejājeh t'aref beezaha
"[Even] a hen recognizes its [own] eggs." No matter how silly a person is, he may still be fully aware of things that vitally affect him.

dakkan jalleh³
"[Like] smoke from camel dung." Said of a muddled talk or discussion in which the parties do not come to a conclusion. Cf. no. 226.

jalleh: dry camel droppings used as fuel. Unlike other fuels, smoke from its fire does not rise high but goes round and round on a low level.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 202

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¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 242.
² ODEP, p. 176.
³ Also Juh., no. 825.
"Better smoke than north wind," i.e., it is better to be near the fire (i.e., on a cold day) despite the inconvenience caused by smoke, than to face the cold wind away from it.

The north wind is very cold when it blows in winter in Najd, and cool when it blows in summer.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 136.
SMDW: Mosul: Gūl., p. 64.
G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1128; Frayha, no. 1605; Landb., no. 43.

"Water entered him," i.e., he felt a twinge of fear. Cf. "He got cold feet."

Sim. WM: Mosul:

"[Like] a Dervish, he does not speak intelligibly."

The word derwiš is not used here in its sense of "devotee", "mystic", "sufi", but merely in the sense of a simpleton or foreigner who tends to be incoherent in speech.

"Milk comes from the cud (var. milk only flows with the cud)," i.e., hungry animals do not give milk. You have to give in order to receive.

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 5211.

1 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 243.
3 Also Juh., no. 835.
"Burying [favourites] in men is better than burying [money] in the sand," i.e., giving assistance to others can be more beneficial to the giver than keeping it, for money can be lost, but men, sooner or later, will return the favour.

"Be precise in reckoning up [with your friends] and the friendship will last." Cf. the English proverb, "Short reckonings make long friends."

"[Like] a bucket let down in the well of Debâdeb: it does not pick up water from the middle [of the bottom of the well], nor is it in the hand of the drawer." Cf. the English, "It is neither fish, nor fowl, nor good red herring."

Debâdeb: (a proper name) is said to be the name of a well in the north of Najd. This well has a series of ramifications at the bottom in which water is to be found, but the bottom

1 Cf. ibid., no. 248.
2 Browning, no. 8790.
3 Cf. Juh., no. 837.
of the well directly below its mouth is dry.

321
dalu ma’ u dalu ṭīn
"A bucketful of water and a bucketful of mud." Said of a man whose talk or behaviour is sometimes apposite and sensible, sometimes foolish.
Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 139.

322
dumm al-bīr yegell werdūh
"Fill in the well and neither man nor beast will come to it." (Lit. coming to it will decrease.) Said in opposition to someone who wishes to revive the cause of a quarrel.
Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 205.
NS: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 35.

323
ad-denya tajma’ wetfarredz
"Life brings [people] together and [then] disperses [them]."

324
dehnāt margūg
"[Like] clarified butter on margūg," i.e., it seems plentiful but it is little.

margūg: a traditional Najdi dish. If a little ghee is put on it, it appears to be plentiful because of the relatively large quantity of water it contains. This makes the ghee spread and seem to be more than it is. I.e., appearances are deceptive.

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1 Also ibid., no. 836; ‘Ubūdī, 1, no. 251.
2 Cf. ‘Ubūdī, 1, no. 258.
dwa Jem'eh là yanfa' 'u la yeżerr
"[Like the medicine of Jem'eh: it does neither good nor harm."

Jem'eh was a man who claimed a knowledge of medicine. He prescribed medicines which were as he put it, "if not useful at least not harmful."

There is a Kuwaiti proverbial phrase referring to this Jem'eh: see Nüri, 1, p. 114, no. 27.


dawwr al-urar 'end ar-rumrāmeh
"Look for the monitor lizard at the rumrāmeh [the Chenopodium morale] bush." Said when one finds a person in the expected place.

The monitor lizard often dwells near a rumrāmeh. These bushes were supposed to have anti-snake bite properties. It is said that this lizard, when bitten by a snake, rubs itself on it.

dawwart 'Ayef rūpuh wa(a)zreet ana algāwh kellen ḥasab nafsuh mn aṭ-ṭayyibīni
"I searched for a man who despised himself, but failed to find one. Everyone had a high opinion of himself." Cf. the English proverb, "Self-love is a mote in every man's eye."  

'āyef: active participle of 'af, to refuse.
dawwart: I looked for.
'azreet: 'azra: to be unable to. Used by bedouins.

dayyān 'tebeb: 'en mā 'ofāk mā 'annāk
1 ODEP, p. 712.
"If your debtor lives at your door step, at least you do not have a long journey after he has refused to pay." (Lit. the creditor of the threshold. If (your debtor) does not repay, he does not oblige you to travel.)

*tebeh*: 'atabah: door step, threshold.

deen 'u 'ala bduwi

"[He has let him have it on] credit, and the debtor is a bedouin." Said in reference to the difficulty of securing repayment of a debt from a nomad. This proverb is also used by extension in reference to the difficulty of securing the return of goods or money from certain people.


*dubbeten begre'eh*

"[Like] a hornet in a pumpkin." Said of noise which, though low, is disturbing.

dubbeh: the Najd dialectal equivalent of the fus., zanbūr, hornet.

gre'eh: pumpkin


*dra'uh kis*

"His arm is a purse." Said of a strong young man who can work and earn plenty of money.

*detsr al-ḥaya wal-kayyīrin yebīn*

"The report of rain and generous people spreads abroad." Cf.,

1 Cf. Juh., no. 866
2 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 274.
333
ad-dalleh bah ṭolat ‘umur
"Timorousness may lengthen one's life." Said sarcastically of one who surrenders rather than face danger.

334
ad-damm mešā‘ib ar-rjāl
"Disparagement is man's cudgel [lit. is the cudgels of men]," i.e., by it they hurt and anger each other.
mešā‘ib: plur. of meš‘āb, a stick with a hook at its top.

335
ad-dīb bal-dzelīb
"The wolf is in the well," i.e., danger has arrived.
Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 205.

dīb ḥarreh
"[Like] a wolf of the ḥarreh," i.e., a malevolent person who is not easily detected.
ḥarreh: harrah: land covered with black volcanic stones. Nature's law of adaptation gives many animals the same colour as their surroundings. Thus a wolf in the ḥarrah is difficult to recognize from a distance, which makes it easier for him to reach his victim.

337
ad-dīb dakal ad-dreh (var. flān dakal ad-dreh)
"The wolf went into the maize field (var. so and so went into the maize field)." Said of one who takes to flight after resistance, or of something which suddenly disappears and nothing is heard of it any more. If one takes refuge

1 Also Juh., no. 882.
2 Cf. ibid., no. 826.
in a maize field, one is not likely to be discovered owing to the density and height of the grain.

الذيب له غيبات تهلك

ad-dib luh geebaten teheltsuh¹

"The wolf's wanderings [lit. absences] may bring about his undoing." Said to (or of) one who travels much, especially by himself.

338

ذيب يأكل السالمين

diben yäkl al-msälmän

"A wolf who devours peaceable people." Said of a grasping person.

339

الذيب يطمح بالزبيه

ad-dib yețîb baz-zebyeh

"[Even] a wolf [may] fall into a ditch," i.e., a very astute man may be cheated on occasion.

SMDW: Mosul: Dabb., p. 487; G. Syria: Asqar, no. 3961; Stephan, no. 822; Egypt: Taim., no. 2691; Littm., no. 193.

340

رأس الطروحي: ما يتحركة

ras as-ṣṭūhi mā yent-ḥarrak²

"[Like] the head of as-ṣṭūhi: it cannot be moved." Said of something which appears sound, although it is already spoilt.

This proverb refers to a story about a man by the name of as-ṣṭūhi who had some knowledge of magic which he applied once whilst travelling with a friend to trick a shepherd into giving them a sheep. As they were travelling they became short of food, and seeing a shepherd with his sheep, as-ṣṭūhi resolved to do the trick. He joined two small beetles together with a thread and turned them into a

¹ Cf. ibid., no. 883.
² Also ibid., no. 2848.
pair of ewe lambs. He then approached the shepherd and offered him the ewe lambs in exchange for a full grown ram. The shepherd was pleased by such an offer and agreed readily. When he had gone, aṣ-Ṣṭūḥi warned his friend of the shepherd's imminent angry return when the ewes resumed their beetle form. Setting his friend to cook the slaughtered ram, he himself lay nearby as though asleep, telling his friend that the shepherd should be told that the only way to wake him was to pull at his ear.

As predicted, soon the angry shepherd did indeed return, and seeing aṣ-Ṣṭūḥi asleep poured his anger on the cook who denied any knowledge of the deal, saying, "There is my friend asleep. He can only be awakened by pulling his ear." The shepherd, now even angrier, pulled hard at aṣ-Ṣṭūḥi's ear. To his horror, aṣ-Ṣṭūḥi's head came off his body, and blood poured over the ground. Hoping that the cook would not notice, the shepherd fled, forgetting all thoughts of his ram, and aṣ-Ṣṭūḥi and his friend were left to enjoy their meal.

("Like a gazelle's head: there is no meat on it." Said of something of little use, or of a mean person.)

This proverb was first used by well-known Rāšid al-Kalāwī. He said in one of his well-known poems:

("And she [i.e., his sweetheart] for me and for other people is like a gazelle's head ..." i.e., our relationship is pure and clean.)

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1 Cf. ibid., no. 889.
2 See A. Kamīs, op. cit., p. 308.
raš: from 'araš, to eat meat off the bone with some effort.

"A head without passion: it is all one whether it is alive or dead."

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 719.

rāsi 'u rās Š'eeleh
"[Just] my head and the head of Š'eeleh," i.e., only my wife and I, or only two persons are concerned.

A. al-Juhaimān, however, thinks that Š'eeleh is the name of a riding camel.

ra' al-ḥajeh melḥāh
"A man with a need [should be] persistent."

ra' al-ḥalāl yartsab 'alad-dbereh
"The owner of an animal [may] ride [even] on the lesions on its back." I.e., it will not be harmed because he will know well enough how to avoid causing any harm to it. Camels and donkeys may, on occasion, have open sores on their backs which make people unwilling to ride them, but as this proverb puts it, their owners will ride them in spite of their wounds.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 150.

ra' al-ḥenna yflhanni tizuh
"He who has [much] henna will henna his backside." Said of one who, having plenty of something squanders it. Cf. the

1 Also Juh., no. 902.
2 Ibid.
3 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 286.
English proverb, "They that have got good store of butter may lay it thick on their bread."\(^1\)

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 4015; ‘Ask., no. 1639;
a post-classical proverb: Ṭāliq., no. 515; Zamak., 2, no. 1319; M., 2, p. 329;
Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1304; Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 930; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 701;
Fegh., no. 1120; Frayha, no. 513; Egypt: Taim., no. 311; Fā’iqa, no. 1950.

348

"The owner of a sixth does not drive away the ass from the corn stook," i.e., the older of a small share in something does not bother to protect it.

349

"He who is used to toil, does not enjoy idleness."

Sim. WM : Yemen: Akwa‘, 1, no. 802.

350

"The man who is riding does not see the man who is walking."

Cf. the English proverbs, "He that is warm, thinks all so"\(^2\) and "The man in boots does not know the man in shoes."\(^3\)

Ident.: Mecca.\(^4\)
"Thoughts [come] after quenching one's thirst," i.e., food before thought. A person who has had his fill of food and drink tends to have a better judgement.

352

rabbenā 'u rabbk Allah

"God is our Lord and yours," i.e., he alone will judge between us.

353

ar-rjāl mn ar-rjāl yertewūn

"Men satisfy their desire [for knowledge] from men."

354

reja' al-ma' lmanādz'uh (al-ma' yanks . . .)

"The water has collected again in its pools," i.e., things were straightened out and returned to normal.

355

ar-rejli mā ybari al-kayyāl

"A man on foot cannot keep pace with a man on horseback."

356

redāt al-'agel mālah matswa (mṣibeh)

"Weakness of mind cannot be cauterized," i.e., it is incurable. (Var. Weakness of the mind is a disaster.)

Cf. the English proverb, "He that is born a fool is never cured."

357

redd ad-dib jak ad-dib

1 ODEP, p. 75.
2 Baq., p. 277.
"Drive away the wolf! The wolf is coming towards you!"

This proverb is attributed to someone who wanted to disturb and frighten another. However, it is used for a persistently troublesome person. Cf. no. 213.

refidzuh al-jayyed

"His friend is the successful man." Said of an opportunist who makes friends only with those whom he thinks to be likely to be of use to himself.

radz-dze' fiha zerbūlek

"Patch your shoe with it!" If a person is jealous of another who is more successful than he, and expresses his jealousy, others may use this saying to rebuke him.

zerbāl: (old usage) boot.

radz-dze': ragqi'

rgalat rejluh

"His foot is loose in its socket," i.e., he is thinking of moving house, changing his place of residence, his job, etc.

redzi Ḥelwān: lā rega zelfeh ḥawwal zelfeteen

"[Like] Helwan's climbing [up palm-trees]: he comes down two stages for every one he goes up."

This proverb is common in al-Bkeerīyyah in al-Qasīm. Ḥelwān is the nickname of a man called 'Abdalla al-Ḥdeeti.

zelfeh: step (of a ladder or a staircase).

ḥawwal: to descend.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Ṭāliq., no. 468; Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 124; G. Syria: Landb., no. 190; Fegh., no. 1259; Frayha, no. 1259; Egypt: Fā'īqa, no. 975.
"'Abbas rode Dabbas." Said of a group of people who are milling around in complete chaos.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 212, no. 5.

He hammered his head into the ground," i.e., he insisted; he remained steadfast; he put his foot down.

"Horses run in a straight line. (Var. If horses are to be stabbed, they must be stabbed strongly so that their bellies are cut open [since they are too strong to be affected by light stabs])." Said of a person who gives notice of his intention to come straight to the point.

"The spear of [the clan of] al-Jameelāt has killed [lit. is in their own mare]." Said of harm done by an individual to his own side, and therefore no outsider can be blamed.

"A lance that hits me transfixes you," i.e., we are in the same boat.

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1 Cf. Juh., no. 687.
2 Also ibid., no. 961.
"The [quality of a] spear is evident from its first striking."


"[Like] shooting at a wedding," i.e., not aimed at a target. Said of thoughts or talk of a random nature.

"[Like] Eben Bekit's shot," i.e., it achieved its purpose although it was shot without careful aim having been taken.

"A shot from an untrained marksman," i.e., a bad shot may hit the target. Said of a good suggestion by someone who is not experienced and therefore is not expected to make it, or of a successful act done by such a person.

This is an old Arabic proverb which is still used in Najd, Mecca, Baghdad, and Lebanon.

"The faces of enemies rather than the tails of friends," i.e.,

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1 Also ibid., no. 963.
2 Cf. ibid., no. 960.
3 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 315.
4 See M., no. 1581; 'Ask., no. 879; Zamak., 2, no. 379; Qurais, 46(1960), p. 16; Tik., no. 1090; Frayha, no. 1816.
it is better to be the subject of hostile attention rather than to be ignored even by friends.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Ṭāliq., no. 255.

زَدَكُ وَمِسْرَوكَ لَنَّ النَّحَبِ أَخْرَجَهُ مِنْ كِيسِ كَبِيرٍ يَجَابُ

زَادِكُ لِإِمْسَرُوكَ وَلِنَّ النَّحَبِ أَخْرَجَهُ مِنْ كِيسِ كَبِيرٍ يَجَابُ

"Your own food, and what you can afford, with kindness, are better than a big ram."

mezūr: anything which one can afford to offer, especially of food.

SMDW: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1190; Egypt: Littm., no. 290; Taim., no. 780.

زَنَ لَكِ الْضَّرَابِ

"The right time for you to strike." Said to a person when he is presented with an ideally apposite opportunity or occasion for speaking out about another person's shortcomings.

زَبِيلَ مَنْطُقَة عَراوُهُ (عَراوُهُ)

"Like a basket without handles [lit. a basket the hands of which are cut off]." Said of one who is in a helpless position.

zebīl: a large basket made of palm-leaves.

NS: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1107.

الْزَمَانُ أَطْولُ مِنْ أَهْلِهِ

az-zemān aṭwal mn ahluh


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1 This proverbial verse was first composed by 'Ali al-Gubāli in a poem beginning:


2 Cf. Juh., no. 1021.
az-zōd ekw an-nags
"Excess is the brother of deficiency." Said of the advisability of not being over-ambitious. Cf. the English, "Extremes meet."

Ident.: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2215.

NS: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 163, no. 14; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1100; Hanafi, no. 895; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 271; Frayha, no. 1833; Egypt: Baq., p. 225.

Sim. WM: a post classical proverb: M., 2, p. 171.

zōden 'ala al-ḥumma melīleh
"A melīleh on top of fever." Said of making something worse; to add insult to injury.

melīleh: a sort of poultice of hot sand, burnt by fire. It is used as treatment for some ailments, but certainly not for fever which would only be increased as a result.

NS: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 208.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., no. 2202; 'Ask., nos. 1116, 408; Zamak., 2, no. 499; Baghdad: Tik., nos. 1097, 1098; Hanafi, nos. 1404, 1405, 1406; Oman: Jayak., no. 197; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 2214, 3165; Fegh., no. 758; Frayha, no. 1828; Tallq., nos. 68, 117; Egypt: Taim., Kinayāt, p. 20.

zayyen (ḥeṭṭ) lrejleek marāḍzi
"Make footholds for your feet," i.e., prepare yourself for

1 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 322.
2 Cf. ibid., no. 137.
difficulty that may be in store for you.

zayyen: make, repair

marādzi: plur. of mergāt, a foothold, refers to steps or something similar inside a well or on a hillside.

sāḥati rāḥati, baṭni jraḥībi

"My carpet is the palm of my hand, my knapsack is my stomach," i.e., I have nothing.

sāḥah: carpet made of camels hair; common among the bedouins.

jrab: food sack.

SMDW: Iraq: Hanafi, no. 1239; Dal., 1, no. 289; Gūl., p. 92; Oman: Jayak., no. 169.

as-sāriq min as-sāriq kal-wāriṭ min 'abīh

"He who steals from a thief is like one who inherits from his father," i.e., there is nothing wrong in stealing from a thief. Cf. the English proverb, "to deceive a deceiver is no deceit." ¹

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2149; Weissman, no. 245.

sāṭ al-mhebb gesīreh ²

"An hour with a good friend passes quickly [lit., is short]."

Cf. the English proverb, "Pleasant hours fly fast." ³

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 4698; G. Syria: Manch.

sabbal tefag

"He bequeathed a gun," i.e., he made people fight or quarrel

¹ ODEP, p. 175
² Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 326.
³ Browning, no. 8627.
with each other.

sabbal: to grant or bequeath something to someone as an endowment. The word is derived from the phrase *fi sabil Allah*, for the cause of God.

tefag: gun (old usage)

Sbeet mā luh beet¹
"Sbeet has no home." Said of one who moves from place to place and is therefore difficult to find.

SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1887.

saḥābtaḥ abal Feed: yā rabb hātah yā rabb egla'ah²
"[Like] the cloud of the people of Feed: O Lord bring it! O Lord take it away."

Feed (Fayd): a village in northern Najd near Ḥā'il.

eyla': imper. of gala' (fuṣ., gala''), to eradicate; to uproot. It can also mean, dialectically, "to take or send away."

The inhabitants of Feed were said to be in a certain year in desperate need of rain. On seeing a dark cloud, which they hoped would be full of rain, they hurried to their mosque and prayed fervently to God to bring it to their village. Their prayers were soon answered, but to their utter disappointment, it rained hailstones and also such a quantity of rain that it caused a great deal of damage to their houses and crops. So they rushed again to the mosque and asked God to take it away.

srāj nahār

¹ Also Juh., no. 992.
² Cf. *ibid.*, no. 995.
"[Like] a lamp in the day time."

Sim. WM: a classical proverb: M., no. 2245; Baghdad: Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 415; G. Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 23.

sarh jerdi

"[Like] the roaming of a rat [it does not stray far from its burrow]."

jerdi: jurd: large rat.

sekāra we'gūlah ma'ah

"[They are] drunk and yet have their wits about them." Said of one who may appear careless but in fact is no fool.

salāmeten men Salāmeh aslam

"To be safe from Salāmeh is enough [in itself]." Cf. "To be happy to have saved one's skin." Cf. nos. 570, 888.

SMDW: two old proverbs: M., nos. 393, 1560; 'Ask., no. 865; Zamak., 2, nos. 359, 1068; six post-classical proverbs: see e.g., Zamak., 1, no. 1723; Tāliq., no. 126; about thirty contemporary proverbs current in Mecca, Yemen, Kuwait, G. Syria, Iraq, and Egypt: see e.g., Ašqar, nos. 1351, 1140, 2850, 3274; Fegh., nos. 1938, 2966, 1397; Stephan, nos. 419, 420, 904; Burton, no. 153; Nūrī, 2, p. 210; al-salam ġinēm: Goit., no. 1416; Tik., nos. 133, 1731, 703, 2539; Hanafi, nos. 548, 1574, 2449; Dal., 1, no. 1140, Taim., nos. 2084, 2185, 2072, 3064; Burck., nos. 299, 488, 521; Littm., no. 344.

as-salam yerret kalām wal-kalām yerret bāṭīk ('aṣa)

Cf. ibid., no. 1010 and 'Ubūḍi, 1, no. 333.
"Greeting produces talking, talking produces melons (supper)."

yerret: the imperf. of 'arrat, to cause.

A farmer was working in his melon farm. When passers-by in the nearby road greeted him, he always returned their greeting. This often led to conversation after which he found it necessary to offer them some melons. He realized afterwards how much returning greetings had cost him and decided not to answer anyone who greeted him thereafter.

When someone was passing shortly after the farmer had made this decision and said "as-salāmu 'aleekum," he did not answer "'alaykum as-salām," but "as-salām yerret kalām . . ."

NS: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1157; Hanafi, no. 946; Socin, no. 113; Dabb., 1, p. 225; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2349; Frayha, no. 1912.

سلعة حمادي ما شرّح

sel'at Ḥamāda mā trabbeḥ

"[Like] a commodity bought from the Ḥamāda: it will not bring profit [when resold]." (Because they allegedly sell for a high price so minimising any chance of making a profit on a resale.)


This proverb is probably confined in usage to al-Bkayriyyah

السلف تلف

as-salaf talaf

"A loan is a loss," (since it is liable to be forgotten or ignored by those who have received it).

This proverb was known as far back as the Middle Ages: see M., 1, p. 357; Tāliq., no. 116; Ta’ālibi, Tamtil, p. 197. It is also known at the present time in G. Syria and Egypt. See Ašqar, no. 2353; Burck., no. 108;
as-sema yâked reșāyen wâjed
"There is room in the sky for many bullets," i.e., let an angry person shout as he pleases; nobody is harmed by his noise.

yâked: ya'kud: (here) to have enough room for.
wâjed: plenty, much, many.

as-summ mā yûkal tajerbeh
"Poison cannot be consumed for the sake of experiment."
Said concerning the advisability of avoiding exposure to unnecessary dangers.

semîn al-ma bârduh (var. al-bâred semîn)
"Cold water, like fat meat, is the best." Fat meat is regarded as the best and "fat" is here used metaphorically of water.

Sim. WM: Yemen: Akwa, 1, no. 776.

Sanda ya Dbees
"[This is] Sanda 0 Dbees." Said of two persons who have similar qualities and therefore can stand up against each other.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 2675.
Sanda and Dbees: two proper names

senn šâyeb
"[Like] an old man's tooth." Said of a solitary person or

1 Also 'Ubâdi, 1, no. 339.
someone who is alone.

"Stories [or conversations] require an attentive audience [lit. stories want people who appreciate them]." Said by one who gives up talking after being interrupted or ignored, as a reproach to the bad-mannered listener.

as-sawālef: plur. of sālfeh, story, conversation.
tabi: the imperf. form of baga, to want, to need.
halah: 'ahalah (fuṣ., 'ahluha), its people.

"[Like] a Bedouin sword (blade)," i.e., it may not be clean but it is sharp. Said of one who proves to be more formidable than he appears.

SMDW: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 169: مكنَ صبٍّ عرفت وثُّقَت

"Their [i.e., camels'] saddle-girths are [taken] from their own[backs]." Said of something which is repaired by means of another part of it.

\[\text{ṣāf an-ḥūm az-ẓaḥā (ḥūm az-ẓaḥa; warrāwḥ an-ḥūm baẓ-ẓaḥā)}\]

"He saw the stars at noon," i.e., he suffered from exhaustion or hunger (var. he showed him (someone else) the stars at noon, i.e., he caused him much trouble).

Sim. WM: a classical proverb of four variations: M., no. 1603; Zamak., 2, no. 325; Ibn 'Asim, no. 191; Bakri, p. 367; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 606, no. 37;

Syria is for you when life proves hard, and India is for you when you are in need [lit. when what you own is few]," i.e., go to Syria or India when you are needy.

Until the recent past, many Najdis who suffered hardship at home left for India and neighbouring countries, especially Syria and Iraq, seeking a living.

el-āmenn: (adv.), when. Equivalent to the two adverbs la and elā. However, it differs from them in that it is directly followed by a noun or a pronoun and not by a verb.

The first part of the sentence is NS in Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1191; Gul., p. 77; Dabb., 1, p. 228.

"[He is] the ewe of God on His earth." Said of a simple-hearted or naive person.

ba(a)rzuh: bi 'argīhi, on His land (or earth).

Also Juh., nos. 1043, 2562.
"A slaughtered sheep is not hurt by skinning."

This saying is attributed to 'Asmā' bint 'Abi-Bakr when replying to her son 'Abdullāh b. az-Zubair, after he had told her that he was not afraid of being killed by his enemies, but only of his body being mutilated.

This proverb is included, with almost the same wording, in collections of post-classical Arabic proverbs: see e.g., M., 1, p. 392; Zamak., no. 1408; Ta'ālibi, Tamtil, p. 40.

NS: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2391; Stephan, no. 28; Egypt: Taim., no. 2952.

"A witness of the contract of marriage." Said of one who gets no advantage out of an affair.

malāts: malāk (عقد قران), engagement; contract of marriage.

"[He is] a witness and [at the same time] a mzats-tsi

In Islamic law, a witness who is unknown to the judge has to be vouched for by a trustworthy person (mzats-tsi or mzakki)

Said of one who performs two functions at the same time.

Ident.: Lebanon: Frayha, no. 1935.

"Consult him even though you fail to heed him." People are often satisfied by merely being consulted.
"Šbät is the rattler of doors," i.e., it brings violent winds.

Šbät: this term is applied in Najd to a period of winter coinciding with the month of February.

mdzardze*: act. partic. of qarga', to rattle.

Šbät ydzall' an-nakal

"Šbät roots out palm-trees." Violent winds are usually frequent at this period of winter. See no. 407 above.

šen balāš mā yeswāš

"A thing given free is worth nothing."

šen: var. for šayyen, a thing.

balāš: bila šay', free, without price.

mā yeswāš: var. for mā yeswa šayy', not worth anything.

SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., nos. 1070, 1504; Egypt: Taim., no. 2584.

aš-šta yabi şemil waş-šeef kberuh ‘endek

"Winter requires a milk-skin, and you know what summer requires." I.e., since one needs so much milk in winter in spite of its cold days, one needs even more milk in the hot days of summer.

şemil: milk-skin.

yabi: imperf. of baga, to require, want, need.

šra weld az-zna wala tгадātuh

"To buy a bastard [lit. the son of adultery] is easier than to nurture it."

weld: son.

1 Cf. Juh., no. 1080.
Drinking without thirst hurts the stomach.

I.e., excess is harmful.

The reward is forty [i.e., riyals]: twenty for us, and twenty for you.

This proverb is attributed, in a tale, to a man who once travelled into the desert and was approached by some bedouins who wanted him to be their imam to lead them in prayer. He gladly accepted the position for which he was to receive 40 riyals a year—a not inconsiderable sum in those days. Being an illiterate man, he found himself in a dilemma, for he knew little or nothing of the Koran to recite in prayers. He therefore started to compose false suras and to recite them. He continued this practice until one day a

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1 See A. Kamis, op. cit., p. 88.
2 Cf. Juh., no. 1074.
townsman came to join in their prayers. He was surprised to hear such silly sentences and cleared his throat as a way of expressing his shock. The imām understood what the townsman meant and told him in a verse which he extemporized on the spot, "Be quiet! The salary is forty; twenty for me and twenty for you."\(^1\)

SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1056; Hanafi, no. 254.

\(\text{اشر مهو مهاد}\
\text{aš-šarr mahūb mī‘ād}\
"It is not certain that misfortune will occur." Said in encouraging a person who is worried concerning the recurrence of misfortune at the same place or time in which some misfortune has already taken place.

\(\text{mahūb: mā huwa bi, is not.}\)

\(\text{شعرته حمرا}\
\text{š'artuh ġamra}\
"His hair is red," i.e., he is out of favour, and so always blamed although he is innocent. Cf. nos. 191, 230, 490, 548.

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2587; Frayha, no. 2170.

SMDW: an old proverb: M., no. 4659; ‘Ask., no. 1947;

\(\text{شغل مسييس بالطلا}\
\text{šegl Mšeелеš baẓ-żalma}\
"[Like] the work of Mšeелеš in the dark." Mšeелеš appears in this proverb as an archetypal bungler; if he does something in the dark it will of course be even worse.

\(\text{شف وجه العنز واحلب لين}\
\text{šef wajh al-'anz we(e)ḥleb leban}\(^2\)


"Look at the face of the goat and milk her," i.e., if her face is pleasant you are likely to get plenty of milk and vice versa.

Said impolitely of someone whose repellent appearance betrays his true character.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrí, 1, p. 180, no. 21.
Sim. WM: Yemen: Cline, no. 34; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1239; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2187; Stephan, no. 575.
SMDW: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 199; Oman: Jayak., no. 278; Mosul: Socin, no. 26; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 53; Egypt: Fa'īqa, no. 352; a classical proverb: 'Ask., no. 128.

الْضَّحَّ أَوْسَعِ مِن الْرَّقَعَةَ

aš-shagg 'ūsa mn ar-reg'eh

"The tear is bigger than the patch," i.e., the rent is beyond repair.

Sim. WM: a classical proverb: 'Ask., no. 164; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1226; Hanafi, no. 882; Dabb, p. 234: .Channeling was used to conceal. Cf., "He let the cat out of the bag."

šagg garbuh

"He tore his [another person's] water-bucket," i.e., he disclosed something which another wished to conceal. Cf., "He let the cat out of the bag."

الشَّمْسُ مَا يُغَاطَثْيَهَا النَّخْلُ

aš-šams mā ygaṭṭyah al-menkul

"The sun cannot be hidden by a sieve."

NS: Kuwait: Nūrí, 1, p. 183, no. 31; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 997; Oman: Jayak., no. 133; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul):

1 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 372.
This proverb is a verse composed by Mhammad al-'Abdallah al-Gazi. It begins with the word tara, "let it be known to you that," which is missing here.2

423

"[Like] the running of a cow," i.e., it may start running fast, but its energy is soon expended. Said of an effort which quickly wanes.

1 Cf. ibid., 1, no. 375.
3 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 377.
This phrase is used in Lebanon: see Faraj, p. 347.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 2956.

424

šōfuh šīf slegeh (šeer)
"As sharp-sighted as a greyhound (var. a falcon) [lit. his eyesight is a greyhound's (var. a falcon's)]." Cf. no. 1171.

In a number of classical and post-classical Arabic proverbs the crow, the dog, the eagle, the falcon, the snake, and the horse, are given as examples of sharp-sightedness.¹

425

aš-šwayy mā yentdabbar
"A little thing [of quality or amount] cannot be kept over a long period of time," i.e., a small quantity of flour, fruit, etc., cannot be constantly used over a long period. Cf. no. 1119

426

šwayyen hannāk wala tsetirem 'annāk
"A little thing you obtain easily is better than a big thing you obtain with much difficulty."

427

šwayy wella ban-ne'leh wa(a)na šārīha bmeddeen
"It [e.g., a stone] nearly hit my shoe which I bought with two medds [of grain]." Most people use only the first part of this proverbial saying. It is attributed to a man who was said to be such a skinflint that when a stone struck and injured his foot he felt relieved that his shoe was safe. Cf. no. 476

medd: mudd, a small measure of grain.

SMDW: Iraq: Hanafi, no. 444; Dal., 1, no. 330; Gul., p. 69, 69, 578, 580; 'Ask., nos. 309, 313; Zamak, 1, nos. 54-61.
428

"The profit on a thing obtained free [no matter how little or insignificant it is] is [already] known." Said of something which may be of little use, but having been obtained free is bound to contribute a modicum of usefulness.

Sim. WM: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 305.
SMDW: Mosul: Socin, no. 425.

429

"A thing you hope for is better than a thing you are consuming now."

Sim. WM: Mecca.
SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Ta'alibi, Tamtil, p. 18; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 596; Hanafi, nos. 461, 2232, Socin, no. 505.

430

"Give a sheep a free hand in its own domain." Everyone is entitled to decide how to use his own property regardless of how foolishly he may manage it.

lit., make a sheikh, i.e., give a free hand in something.

431

"Rather an ugly thing [or person] beautified than a beautiful one neglected." Often used by women. Said of the effect of

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1 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 380.
2 Also ibid., no. 381.
3 See Quraiš, no. 24 (1960), p. 16.
4 Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 382.
personal adornment.

\[\text{sad} \ '\text{'esfureenen b'hajar}\]

"He caught two sparrows with one stone." The equivalent of the English proverb "To kill two birds with one stone." 

Sim. WM: Mecca: Säsi, no. 534; Iraq: Tik., nos. 782, 1428; Hanafi, no. 1248; Dal., 1, no. 548; Dabb., 1, p. 247; Gul., p. 163; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1357; Mak, no. 23; Faraj, p. 337; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 1133. 

\[\text{sāraw } \text{'e'ib 'u negreteen}\]

"They became a valley and two depressions [of land]," i.e., they split into many groups.

\[\text{sam } \text{'am wa(a)f'at 'ala bušal}\]

"He fasted for a year and broke his fast on onions," i.e., he waited for a long time only to be disappointed.

Sim. WM: two post-classical proverbs: see M., 1, p. 418; Abšīhi, 1, p. 35; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1267; Hanafi, no. 1056; Gul., p. 79; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2535; Frayha, no. 2133; Baumann, no. 375; Stephan, no. 914; Egypt: Taim., no. 1722; Burck., no. 369; Littm., no. 356.

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1. Cf. ibid., no. 388.
3. Browning, no. 9499.
This proverb has been familiar since the Middle Ages. Maidāni mentions it among his collection of post-classical (muwallad) proverbs. It is mentioned in the following collections of contemporary proverbs: Taim., no. 173; Aṣqar, no. 2542; Frayha, no. 2144; Weissbach, no. 48; Socin, no. 373.

Although it is not mentioned in all contemporary proverb collections, it is widespread and few Arabic speaking people would not know it.

The aloe can cut the bowels [because of its extremely bitter taste]."

There is a play on words in this proverb. It is used as a retort to one who preaches patience. While in classical Arabic "patience" is ās-ṣabr and "aloe" is ās-ṣabir, in Najd dialect ās-ṣaber is used for both "patience" and "aloe".

Pour [the coffee or tea] for him who is on your right, even if Ebā Zeed [himself] is on your left." Ebā Zeed: Abū Zaid al-Hilali, the popular hero of the folk-tales of B. Hilāl.

This proverb emphasizes that when serving coffee,
the host should give the first cup to the nearest man who sits on his right, i.e., this rule of courtesy may not be modified.

Sim. WM: *Baghdad, Tik.*, no. 1902.

"[Like] the shepherd (servant, singer) of the camel traders: if their camels are rustled he sings, and if they are not he also sings." Said of one who is not affected by others' losses or misfortunes and behaves unaffected by whatever happens.

al-mawalfeh: people who collect camels, tend them and trade in them. It is usually pronounced mwallfeh, a collective noun for mwallef, from wallaf, to collect animals, especially camels, tend them and trade in them. However, it is also possible that al-Mawalfeh was the name of a clan and the proverb would then refer to an incident in which they were involved.

SMDW: *a classical proverb*: M., no. 3035; ‘Ask., no. 1423; Yemen: Goit., nos. 578, 783; Oman: Jayak., no. 223; Mosul: *Gul.*, p. 143; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 862, 4119; Fegh., nos. 930, 952, 1013; Frayha, nos. 3461, 3475, 1940; Baum., no. 344; Stephan, nos. 259, 616; Egypt: *Taim.*, no. 1365.

"A little boy, and it is summer time," i.e., he has no experience of hard times.
"[He is] a young boy and he has grown up in times of plenty," i.e., he has had no experience of hardship. See no. 440 above.

"This is] a plate, tweezers!" i.e., there is nothing whatever for you. Said of a miserly person from whom nobody can get anything. Cf. "Where there is nothing, the king loses his rights."

Sim. MDW: Baghdad: Yahūda, no. 5; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2207; Egypt: Taim., no. 723.

"[Like] the young nanny-goat of aš-Še'īb: she does not love any except a foreign billy-goat." Said of a woman of loose morals who prefers dealing with strangers. It is sometimes impolitely applied to someone who only makes friends with foreigners.

aš-Še'īb: name of a province in Najjd; also "water-course".

Sim. WM: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 648.

"Turn your face away [i.e., go away] with what you have brought." Said to a person who breaks bad news or predicts misfortune.

"Consider [your] fair weather friends [lit. friends of the time of plenty] as enemies."

Also Juh., no. 1139.
This proverb is apparently a quotation (with some change) of a sentence contained in the following two verses composed by the famous poet Mhammad al-Gāzi:¹

أحذرك خلان الرُّخا عدَّهم قَوم
فِلَيْي ادوت دنياك عدوك معدم
مرأ ولا رَذَوا عليك السلام

gَمَم: qawm, dialectically used for "enemies".

الصديق اللّي ما يفع مثل العدو اللّي ما يضر

aṣ-ṣedīd ِz alli ma yanfa‘ meţl al-‘aduww alli ma yeżerr
"The friend who does [you] no good is like the enemy who does [you] no harm."
NS: G. Syria: Frayha, no. 2153; Fegh., no. 1320.

ṣaggehuh ar-rami
"The shooting made him deaf," i.e., he became confused by others' noise and shouting at him.

ṣaggeh-: (pronounced ṣagghah in pause), to make deaf.

صلَابِح راقصه: الكل مسح يندح

ṣalābīk Wāgṣeh al-kell menhen yadźdah
"[Like] the pebbles of Wāgṣeh: each one of them strikes fire." Said of a group of people who are equally sharp, hot-tempered, etc.

ṣalābīk: plur. of ṣelbūk, pebbles, shingle.
Wāgṣeh: is probably Wāqiṣah which was mentioned by some old Arab writers and lexicographers. It is a station on the pilgrimage road from Iraq to Mecca about 160 Km. to the south of an-Najaf.² Al-Fairūzābādi, however, mentions four places--including this one--each of which is called by this name: "A place between al-Far' and 'Aqabat aš-Šaytān, and

¹ See A. az-Zāmil, op. cit., p. 103.
a watering place belonging to Banî Ka‘b, and a place on the road to Kufa before Dī Mark, and a place in al-Yamāmah.\textsuperscript{1}

\begin{align*}
\text{aş-şalāt mā(a)gnat Mdzīmeh} \\
\text{"Prayers did not make Mdzīmeh rich."} \\
\text{Mdzīmeh was a poor old bedouin woman who prayed most of the time.}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{ṣōṭen 'āli 'u baṭnēn kāli (var. metl at-tabel, ṣōṭen ...)}\textsuperscript{2} \\
\text{"A loud noise but empty within (var. like a drum ...)."} \\
\text{Cf., "Empty kettles make most noise."}
\end{align*}

NS: Kuwait: Nārī, 1, p. 192, no. 21; Egypt: Amīn, p. 67. 
SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., no. 629, 1670; ‘Ask., no. 371; G. Syria: Singer, no. 108; Baghdad: Yahūda, no. 37; Tik., no. 187; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1460, 1387; Burck., no. 267.

\begin{align*}
\text{ṣūṭ 'u laḥas} \\
\text{"Sometimes the whip, sometimes a nudge [lit. a whip and a nudge]."}
\end{align*}

This proverb is used in advocating moderation in treating one's children or dependants. It conveys the same meaning as the English phrase, "The carrot and the stick." laḥas: the meaning of this word is not clear. It is not used apart from this phrase. It probably means, as A. Juhamān explained it,\textsuperscript{3} a nudge or a gentle movement of the foot or the heel of one who is riding an animal to urge it

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2} Cf. Juh., no. 2190.
\item \textsuperscript{3} See A. Juhamān, al-‘Amtāl, 2, p. 31.
\end{itemize}
to walk quickly.

şayyāḥ kala

"[He is] a shouter in the desert," i.e., a voice in the wilderness.

SKDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3294; 'Ask., no. 1731; Iraq (Baghdad and among the Iraqi bedouins): Tik., no. 1863; Ḫafīrī, no. 246; G. Syria: Singer, no. 4209; Egypt: Taim., no. 899.

şayyād al-fhūd yṣād

"He who hunts leopards will [himself] be hunted." Cf. the English proverbs, "At length the fox is brought to the furrier" and "The biter bit."

şayyūr al-'umr fānī

"In the end man [lit. age] perishes," i.e., so let us not worry about expenditure, losses, etc., it is all the same in the end.

ẓallat al-ganam laka 'aw li 'akīka 'aw lad-dib

"[Like] a lost sheep: it is either for you [if you find it] or for your brother [i.e., another man if he finds it] or for the wolf." This proverb is a quotation from the ḥadīt:

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1 Cf. ibid., no. 1827.
2 ODEP, p. 284.
3 Also Juh., no. 2806.
aṣ-ẓabb mā y'aref rabbuh leen ysalga
"The lizard knows his Lord only when put on his back [to be slaughtered]."
"The lizard" here is used to represent an incorrigible person.

leen: 'ila 'an, until
ysalga: passive imperf. of salga, to put someone on his back.


SMDW: Iraq (Basrah and Mosul): Dal., 1, no. 481; Dabb, 2, p. 394:
G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4129; Landb., no. 125; Egypt: Burck., no. 632; Littm., no. 30.

az-ẓabb 'u 'ūšzetuh
"The lizard and its boxthorn bush." The lizard who dwells by a parched thorny bush, no matter how far he goes wandering abroad, will still return to it owing to his love of his native place. Said when one longs to return to one's homeland in spite of its being inhospitable.

‘ūšzetuh: class. 'awsajah
SMDW: Palestine: Stephan, no. 845.

ṣahak ḥjajuh
"His eyebrow laughed," i.e., he felt happy and pleased. This proverb is an example of personification.

ṣarat namel
"[Like] the farting of ants." Said of something of little

1 Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 440.
or no effect.

\[\text{ zarab (tagg) anjar }\]

"He let down an anchor [into the ground]," i.e., he stayed sitting for a very long time.

\[\text{ anjar: anchor }\]

\[\text{ az-\(z\)arb (at-tagg) m\(\ddot{a}\) yanfa' bal-\(h\)adid al-\(b\)\(\acute{a}\)red }\]

"Striking cold iron is of no effect."

Sim. WM: a classical proverb: M., no. 638; G. Syria: Frayha, nos. 219, 3108; Manch. MS, fol. 33.

\[\text{ zarbeten bal-mes-\(h\)\(\acute{a}\)t \text{ an } 'a\(\ddot{s}\)ren bal-m\(\ddot{t}\)eerdzeh}\]

"A stroke with a spade is worth ten with a little hammer."

Sim. WM: two post-classical proverbs: Zamak\(h\), 2, no. 494; \(\ddot{\text{T}}\)\(\ddot{\text{a}}\)liq., no. 291.

\[\text{ zarbeten (taggeten) ff r\(\ddot{a}\)s geeri metel \(\ddot{s}\)\(\ddot{a}\)\(\ddot{t}\)ben (taggen) }\]

\[\text{ bal-j\(d\)\(\acute{a}\)r (tsennaha b\(\ddot{e}\)del teben)}\]

"A blow on another's head is like a crack in (var. a blow on) a wall (var. . . . is as if it is on a sack of straw)."

This proverb is usually quoted in protest against a callous or indifferent attitude.

\[\text{ \(\ddot{s}\)\(\ddot{a}\)\(\ddot{t}\): crack. }\]

Sim. WM: Oman: Jayak., no. 158; Reinhardt, no. 93; Yemen: Goit., no. 660; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1317; Hanafi, no. 1116; G. Syria: A\(\ddot{s}\)qar, no. 2616; Fegh., no. 208; Frayha, no. 2192; Landb., no. 116; Egypt: Hanki, p. 59.

1 Cf. Juh., no. 1180.
2 Cf. \(\text{ibid.}\), no. 1175.
aẓ-ẓ'ayyef zankan
"A poor man is foetid," i.e., a poor man is regarded by the rich as if he smelled; whatever good he does is not appreciated, and his mistakes are not forgiven. Cf. the English proverb, "The poor man is aye put to the worst." ¹

Egypt: Taim., no. 2112.

aẓ-ẓ'if ẓe'if an-nafs
"The poor (weak) man is the poor (weak) in spirit."

zaww harm
"[Like] the fire of the saltwort." Dry saltwort bushes (harm) when set on fire burn brightly and quickly but soon go out. Cf. "a flash in the pan." Cf. no. 956.

zaww: fire, from the class. daw', light.
harm: see below, no. 820.

Baghdad: Tik., no. 2104; Hanafi, no. 2026; Lebanon: Faraj, p. 348; Egypt: Burck., no. 687.

aṣ-ṣeef ba(a)mr(ḥ ḥekm) al-mzayyef
"The guest is at the whim [lit. order] of the host," i.e., he should leave matters of entertainment, lodging, etc., to his host.

Palestine: Baum., no. 97.

†āb alli brāsuh

¹ ODEP, p. 639.
"What is in his head fell," i.e., he ate humble pie.

"She fell down a well whilst crying out 'O my beloved ones'."

Said of one whose calls for help are not answered even by his dearest friends.

dzelîb: ُقلبُ, a well.

"The wall fell on it." Said about something which suddenly disappears, or is borrowed but never given back. If a wall falls on something it is of course unlikely to be found again.

tâh ʻaleeh al-ṣdâr

"The birds have flown off with their catches." Said when someone misses something after arriving late.

Ident.: a post-classical proverb: Abṣ̌hi, 1, p. 136; Kuwait: Ṣu̇ṛ, 1, p. 180, no. 2; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 2643; Fegh., no. 2975.

"[Leave] one who is far away alone with the circumstances he has to face," i.e., we should not jump to conclusions about him. His success will depend on the situation with which he has to deal.

tâṛeš: active participle, from taraš, to travel; to go away from one’s hometown or land (old usage).

1. Also ʻUbūdi, 1, no. 423.
2. Also Juh., no. 1194.
"His fire is out." He is a good-for-nothing.

"It [i.e., a subject of conversation] has become diffuse and lengthy."

"[Like] a trip of Shanwan."

Said of one who attempts to gain something, but loses it as well as what he already had before. This proverb is unlikely to be known to other than the inhabitants of al-Bkayriyyah in al-Qašīm, where a man by the name of Mḥammad at-Tweeni, nicknamed aš-Šawanwan, lived. It is said that he was once out of work. He was in desperate need, but could not find work in his native town and so decided to look elsewhere for it. He approached a caravan of cameleers who were going to al-Madina, and he offered them a full meg'adeh of dates as fare for his journey with them to that destination. They agreed, and carried him there. In al-Madina he tried to find work, without success. He stayed for a few days, during which he spent even the little money which he had brought with him. When the caravan was due to return, he was so disappointed that he offered to give two meg'adehs of dates for his journey back to al-Bkayriyyah.

meg'adeh: a large jar made of pottery or gypsum, with a narrow mouth and base.

cf. the English proverb, "Many go out for wool, and come home shorn."\(^1\)

\(^1\) ODEP, p. 913.
SMDW: *five classic proverbs:* M., nos. 1560, 1568, 2697; *'Ask.,* no. 365; *Zamak.,* 2, nos. 355, 737; Ibn 'Āṣim, no. 393; *Bakr,* p. 287; four post-classical proverbs: M., 2, p. 172; M., 2, p. 399; M., 2, p. 172; Tāliq., no. 481; Abšihi, 1, p. 36; Östan: Jayak., no. 125; Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., no. 1027; Hanafi, nos. 843, 844; Dal., 1, no. 493; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 1691, 2989, 2119; Fegh., nos. 1099, 2928, 2938; Egypt: Taim., nos. 2182, 3062; Burck., no. 470.

طمع ولا شنخ خلقه

"Hit him but do not tear his worn-out shirt." Said of one who cares about his belongings more than about himself.

SMDW: *Yemen:* Goit., no. 831.

مطط ويات

"Hit--he died," i.e., he was hit and died. Said of brief reporting.

A man who was attending a feast began telling a story by saying, "There was a man;" then he noticed that the table was being laid; so he stopped talking for fear that if he continued with his long story he would be busy talking while the others were helping themselves to the food. When someone asked him, "And what happened to the man," he gave the brief answer, "He was struck and he died."

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1 Cf. *Juh.*, no. 1219.
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at-tenzeh tmadd madd

"Mockery is passed on apace," i.e., if you mock someone you will soon be a subject for mockery yourself. Cf. no. 1007.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3627; Zamakh., no. 876; a post-classical proverb: Ta'Alibi, Tamtil, p. 43; Egypt: Taim., nos. 472, 2846.

tmadd: passive imperf. of madd, to hand.
madd: verbal noun of madd.

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ṭawāri 'Odeh

"[Like] the erratic notions of 'Odeh." A man who is always thinking of doing something different is likened to a certain 'Odeh.

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ṭwāl al-keel t-ḥama gsārah

"The big [lit. tall] horses protect the small [lit. short] ones." An important, wealthy, or strong man, is naturally expected to help his weaker friends and dependents.

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at-ṭib matbū' wal-jefa mkalla

"Goodness (generosity) is pursued and aloofness is forsaken." People tend to befriend good and useful people.

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at-ṭayybin mā 'aleehum 'usūm

"Upright people have no brands [on their faces by which one may recognize them]," i.e., one cannot tell from appearances.

1 See also Musil, Rwala, p. 465.
2 Cf. Juh., no. 1242.
aṭ-ṭeer alli yeşid al-ḥabāri mā yeşid al-gubaṣ
"A falcon that catches bustards does not [care to] catch grasshoppers." I.e., a man of noble origin, no matter how needy he is, will not condescend to do a mean thing. Cf. the English proverbs, "Eagles catch no flies"¹ and "If you can kiss the mistress, never kiss the maid."²

SMDW: Oman: Jayak., no. 179; Egypt: Taim., no. 1599.

ṭeer Šalwa
"[He is] the falcon of Šalwa." Said in praise of a daring and helpful man.

aṭ-ṭyūr 'ala ašbāḥah tegā³
"Birds perch with similar birds." Cf., the English proverb, "Birds of a feather flock together."⁴

NG: a post-classical proverb: M., 1, p. 442; Mecca: Baghd.: Tik., nos. 420, 1367; Hanafi, no. 271; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2707; Frayha, no. 2288; Baum., no. 101; Stephan, no. 722.

SMDW: Mosul: Socin, nos.82, 205; Egypt: Taim., no. 1833; Littm., no. 436.

al-‘ādāt qāhirāt
"Habits are tyrannical [lit. overpowering]." Cf. nos. 632, 1029, 1030.

¹ CDEP, p. 209.
² Browning, no. 7881.
³ Also ‘Ubūdī, 1, no. 439.
⁴ Browning, no. 6949.
⁵ Quraisy, 72 (1961), back page. (This proverb is recorded by Sāki Sulaimān Sukūrī.)
SMDW: five post-classical proverbs and numerous contemporary proverbs: e.g., Ţaliq., no. 261; Goit., no. 1329; Jayak., no. 115; Nurī, i, p. 252, no. 16; Tik., nos. 1570, 39, 1343, 1754; Hanafi, no. 1430; Weissbach, no. 177; Asqar, nos. 893, 2733, 372; Stephan, no. 430; Singer, no. 45; Frayha, nos. 2757, 3831; Tallq., no. 98; Fegh., no. 554; Taim., nos. 190, 885, 3178.

"Hteem bala leban"

"Hteem [managed to] live without milk," i.e., although something may seem necessary, one can still do without it.

Hteem: Hutaim. It is perhaps, a reference to the famous tribe.

"[Like] the wise men of Al Merreh (var. 'Anezeh): when they were asked who was their wisest man, they replied that it is the man who was in bonds," (sc. a lunatic).

Al Merreh: Alu Murrah, a well-known tribe which dwells in eastern Arabia.

'Anezeh: a well-known Arabian tribe. At present most of the members of this tribe inhabit northern Arabia.

NS: Kuwait: Nurī, 2, p. 142.

"A wise man is his own opponent," i.e., a wise man subjects himself to self-criticism.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nurī, 1, p. 233.

Sim. WM: Egypt: Taim., no. 1843.

1 Also Juh., no. 1254.
"Blame sticks to him." Regardless of what good work he does, fault is always found with him. Cf. nos. 230, 191, 415, 548. 


This proverb has the following story: Eben Ġannām was a farmer who owned a slave. After many monotonous years in his service, the slave became extremely bored. He went to his master and enquired: "Master! now we are growing winter crops: what are we to do in summer?" to which he received the ready reply, "Grow vegetables and other summer crops." The slave impatiently asked again, "And what are we to do when next winter comes?" The master answered: "We will grow more winter crops."

Seeing no hope of an end to his toil, the slave chose to commit suicide. He jumped into a nearby well saying, "The well is better than Eben Ġannām." After he had fallen down the well, Eben Ġannām shouted to him, "You are free! You are free!" but it was too late.

SMDW: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, no. 138; Yemen: Akwa', 1, nos. 511, 1190; Egypt, Taim., no. 797.

"[Like] the slave of the people of al-Beṣūr: he has neither knowledge nor intelligence." Said of a simpleton. The point
of the saying is presumably to be found in the pun between al-Beşur and beşur.

al-Beşur: a number of villages near Buraida in al-Qaşīm. They are also called al-Kbūb.

hal: 'ahal: 'ahl

'abden māmūr

"A slave under orders," i.e., a myrmidon. Said of one who is only carrying out orders.
NS: a classical proverb: M., no. 1810.

'beesāten belbeen

"A few date-stones: a little milk," i.e., you give a cow foodstuffs and therefore she gives milk.

'beesāt: dimin. plur. of 'beseh, a date-stone. Macerated date-stones are used for feeding cattle.

lbeen: dimin. of leban.

SMDW: Oman: Jayak., no. 275; Mosul: Socin, no. 127;
G. Syria: Landb., no. 161; Stephan, no. 987; Egypt: Burck., no. 697.

'ajāj 'u man hamaj 'u nas'al Allāh al-mekrāj

"Dust storms and brackish water: we pray God will give us deliverance." Cf. nos. 170, 206, 267, 377, 975.

'ajājuh yatbe'uh seel

"His dust storms are followed by rain." Said of a quick-tempered person whose outbursts are often followed by acts of generosity.

Sometimes this phrase is reversed, in which case it refers to a generous person who, however, spoils himself
by outbursts of anger.

"A lazy man can foretell the unknown future [lit. is acquainted with the unseen]," i.e., he acts as if he can. Said of someone who, for example, when asked to go to someone in a certain place, claims that the latter is not there, so that he himself does not have to run the errand.

SMDW: Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 12: 

"Laziness is the son of poverty, the son of death," i.e., laziness leads to poverty and poverty leads to death. Cf. the English proverb, "Laziness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes him."

"The precipitate man [by nature] remains precipitate even if he becomes a king.

"Count up [the days for the field] and do not [constantly] watch it." I.e., in assessing the growth of a crop, reliance should be placed on the known times for germination and growth, not on constantly observing the crop itself.

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1 Cf. Juh., no. 1255.
2 Also ibid., no. 1263.
"The enemy of your grandfather will never like you, and your father's friend will be on friendly terms with you." Cf. the English proverb, "Trust not a new friend nor an old enemy." ¹

¹ Cf. the English proverb, "Trust not a new friend nor an old enemy.

¹ The first sentence is identically used in G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1468; Frayha, no. 2346. The second sentence has the SMDW as the post-classical proverb: ²

² The first sentence is expressed with SMDW in Iraq: Tik., nos. 1392, 1402; Hanafi, no. 1203; Gul., p. 95; Dal., 1, no. 587; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2792; Stephan, no. 220; Egypt: Taim., no. 1956; Littm., no. 280.

³ "He is an enemy from the bottom," i.e. an implacable enemy.

⁴ "Rmezān [Ramadān] is the miser's excuse." Since everybody is fasting in the month of Ramadān, a miser finds it a good
"Excuses do not fill a hungry man's belly." Cf. the English proverbs, "Fair words butter no parsnips" and "The belly is not filled with fair words."

"The wedding is clearer than the betrothal."

"Coming across him is like coming across a fox," i.e., he is as inauspicious to come across as a fox.

People consider it inauspicious if a fox crosses the path in front of them.

"The glory of this world is achieved with riches but the glory of the Hereafter is achieved through [good] deeds."

This proverb is apparently a quotation (with slight change) of 'Ali b. 'Abi Ṭālib's saying:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{azīmt al-grāb we(E)bal-Ḥseen} \footnote{Cf. also Musil, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 23.}
\end{itemize}
"[Like] the invitations of the crow and the fox [it was meant to displease the invited person rather than to please him]."

The fox invited the crow for a meal. He made a very soft gruel made of flour ('āṣīd) and poured it out on a hard piece of rock and asked his guest to eat, but the latter tried to peck it up without success, while the fox helped himself to it, licking it up quickly. The crow then went hungry and annoyed and determined to return the invitation with a similar one. In due course he asked the fox to come for a meal. He put some pieces of meat in the middle of a boxthorn ('awsajah) bush which contains many long thorns. He asked the fox to help himself. The fox tried in vain to reach any of them, while the crow pecked them up one by one with his beak. Cf. the fable of the fox and the stork in Aesop's fables.

'azīnāh: invitation, from 'azām, to invite.

NS: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): the crow is replaced by the stork, al-laglag: Hanafi, no. 1232; Dabb., 1, p. 270.

"[Like] the tribe of Rmeezan: it would be better for it not to exist than to exist."

Rmeezan: Rumaizan: the well-known Rmeezān b. Ḍaşām who belonged to the Tamīmi tribe of Āl Bū Seʿīd. He was appointed an emir on Rūzat Sdeer (Rawjatu Sudair) by as-Ṣarīf Zayd b. al-Ḥusain of Mecca. He was killed by one of his cousins in 1074 A.H.1 The proverb alludes to Rmeezan's verse in which he satirizes his tribe:2


See Qāsim al-Ṭānī, Diwān aš-Šaik Qāsim al-Ṭānī wa Qaṣāʾid ʻUkra (Qatar, 1384 A.H.), p. 179.
'ašīraha ywafferha 'u şebībahya ymarmerha
"Her husband spares her while her lover courts her." Used of a topsy-turvy situation.

ymarmer: imperf. of marmar. Unusual term. Not used in normal speech.

şebīb: friend; lover.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 988.

'aṣa Ebu S-ḥeem 'an żharuh
"The rod of 'Ebu S-ḥeem ['Abū Suḥaim] is [used] for his own back." To make a rod for one's back. Cf. the English proverbs, "He makes a rod (staff) for his own back,¹ and "[he was] hoist with his own petard."² Cf. no. 61.

'eʃfūr hišeh dāymen ydʒǔdzi

dāymen: dā'imān

ydʒǔdzi: yuqawqi', twitter, chirp.

al-'eʃfūr yahaz ar-rāsa
"[Even] a sparrow bends down a strong rope."

SMDW: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 122; Lebanon: Landb., no. 54;

Egypt: Littm., no. 370.

'atāwḥ tselmeten ḥarša

¹ ODEP, p. 681.
² Ibid., p. 376.
"He gave him a rough word," i.e., he spoke to him bluntly (especially about an overdue debt or loan).

\[ \text{‘afn al-ma wala ‘afn ar-rajāl} \]

"Stinking water is better than a stingy man."

N.B. \( \text{jīnās tamm} \) between \( \text{‘afn umra} \), stinking water and \( \text{‘afn umra} \), stingy.

\[ \text{‘afen ṭuma‘} \]

"He is only craving for money." Although he may pretend to oppose something on different grounds, his only reason for opposition is that he wants to be given some money. Said of a skinflint whose main concern is always money.

\[ \text{‘geel dān ‘eglah} \]

"The ‘Geel will not allow their head-ropes [or camel fetters] to be taken."

‘Geel: see the comment at proverb no. 172 (above, p. 48).

\[ \text{‘ala at-ṭūl yaqta‘ al-ḥabl al-ḥajar} \]

"In time a rope wears away [even] stone [lit. at length the rope cuts the stone]." Cf. the English proverb, "Constant dropping wears the stone."^2

Sim. WM: Oman: Jayak., no. 111; Reinhardt, no. 43; Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., no. 775; Dal., 1, no. 443; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1168; Frayha, nos. 3648, 4015, 1259, 1348; Baum., no. 54; Tallq., no. 41; Landb., no. 100; a classical or post-classical Arab proverb: Zamak., no. 1459.

NS: Yemen: Goitv, no. 1149; Cline, no. 10.

\(^1\) Cf. Juh., no. 1309.

\(^2\) ODEP, p. 141.
"Still depending upon one's ablution in Bgee'a [lit. upon an ablution from Bgee'a]." Said of one who claims unconvincingly that the effect of some long-completed act has not yet disappeared.

Bgee'a: a village between al-Qaṣīm and Ḥā'il.

"No commodity will fetch [even] the amount for which it was bought from a person who does not [lit. from other than those who] appreciate it."

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 227

"The feet go in the direction the heart desires." Cf. no. 769.

SMRDW: G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 86; Baum., no. 80; Fegh., no. 1279; Frayha, no. 89; Landb., no. 56; Egypt: Taim., no. 1309; Littm., no. 438.

"The drier one is, the cleaner one stays." This is said by one who does not wish to get involved in a business he regards as undesirable.

"[Like] chewing gum which is not worth the movement of the

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1 Cf. Juh., no. 1327.
2 Also Juh., no. 1323 and cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 491.
3 Also ibid., no. 482.
jaws [lit. mastic which is not worth a shake of the beard]."
Said of a modest meal or a trivial project.

SMDW: a classical Arabic proverb: M., no. 3183.

Sim. WM: Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 396, ما أُغوَعُكَ الْيَهِّرُ الْدْتِينَ
الْعَلْمَ بِحَرَّ مَالِهِ سَاحِلَ

al-‘elm baḥaren māluh sāḥel
"Knowledge is a shoreless sea."
NS: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1452.

علَّمَنِي القَرَايِهِ رَبِّي رَاحَا
'allemni al-ḍārayeh rab'i rāḥaw
"Teach me how to read [in time for me to catch up with] my companions [who have] departed." Said of one who is in a precipitate hurry.

A bedouin is said to have come across a teacher instructing some children, with whom he sat down, while his companions continued their march. He said to the teacher,
"Hurry up! teach me how to read: I want to catch up with my companions."

rab'i: rab', friends, companions, one's group.

علَّكَ بِالجَانِّ، وَلَوْ طَالَتْ وَنَتْ حَمّ، وَلَوْ بَارَتْ
'aleek ba 'l-jādeh 'u lō ṭālat 'u bent al-'amm 'u lō bārat
"Keep to the road, though it be long, and marry thy cousin, though she be a wallflower."

Cf. the English proverb, "Better to go about than to fall into the ditch"² with the first part of the sentence.
NS: Palestine: Baum., no. 408.

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Baum., no. 312; Fegh., no. 1381;
Frayha, no. 1673; Landb., no. 74; Egypt: Taim., no. 1258;
Fā'iqa, no. 313; Baq., p. 319.

¹ Also ibid., no. 483.
² ODEP, p. 56.
'aleek baṭ-ṭayyeb 'u lō 'aldzek ad-deen
"Buy good quality at all costs [lit. keep to the good thing even if it involves you in debt]."
Ident.: among the Iraqi bedouins.¹

'alleenum 'amāyem we hum kamāyem
"They are empty-headed for all their fine turbans." Cf. nos. 668, 986, 1188.
Sim. WM: Egypt: Baq., p. 66, عماهم على بهائم

'amā 'l-qmū'
"[Like] the blind man of the date stems [qmű'—the singular is dzem']."

The inhabitants of a certain village were discussing ways of overcoming the hardship inflicted on them. Some of them suggested that the only good solution was to leave the village since it had no longer anything to offer, and they had nothing at all to keep them alive. The rest agreed to this suggestion except a blind man who preached patience and advised them to stay, wait, and not to be rash. While he was talking to them they noticed that a date-stem, dzem' (qum'), was stuck to his lip. Then they understood that he had enough dates to keep him for the time-being, and knew the reason behind his advocating staying.

'amā: fuṣ., 'a'mā, blind.
SMDW: Palestine: Stephan, no. 801; Egypt: Taim., nos. 2044, 2747.

al-'ama 'ama 'l-galb

¹ See F. Jamil, op. cit., p. 13.
"[Real] blindness is the blindness of the heart." Said when someone fails to see something, even though it is under his nose. 

NS: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 43; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1458; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 341.

The meaning of this proverb is an adaptation of the Qur'ānic verse:1

إنها لا تعني الأبصر ولكن تعني القلوب التي في الصدور

'ammi yāmerni wana 'āmr al-tsalb

"My master [lit. uncle] gives me an order [to do something] and I give an order to the dog."

SMDW: an old Arabic proverb: M., no. 2522; Zamak., no. 618; Baghdad: Tik., no. 9; Hanafi, nos. 1070, 2680; Palestine: Stephan, no. 472.

'āmr: 'āmer, fuṣ., 'a'mur, imperf. of 'amar.

'anāg 'u tees, tees 'u 'anāg

"A nanny-goat and a billy-goat, a billy-goat and a nanny-goat." They are still a pair of goats whether one mentions the he-goat first or the she-goat first.

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, nos. 658, 757; Tik., no. 923; Dabb., 1, p. 162 and Quṣ., p. 55: حسن كلّب وكلّب حسن; Egypt: Taim., no. 756; Littm., no. 481; Lebanon: Frayha, no. 1558.

'anz aš-šyūk tnāṭeb2

"The ruler's goat butts [with force]."

aš-šyūk: plur. of šayk. This is an example of the royal plural, once commonly used in Najd to mean "the king".

1 Qur'ān, 22:46.
2 Cf. Juh., no. 1352.
"A Bedouin goat has tasted date-stones [and it cannot be stopped from eating them]."

Goats usually do not eat date-stones, only cows do. Goats which are owned by nomads are even less likely to eat them, for they—unlike goats owned by settled people—are not familiar with them. However, a certain Bedouin goat tried some date-stones and liked their taste so much that it ate date-stones all the time.

Said of one who has acquired a taste for something and then indulges in it inordinately.

The verb ฑح followed by the prep. b., be, or fi means "to fill in", but it is figuratively used to mean, "to discover suddenly how good a thing or how tasty a dish is and then begin to go to it or eat it."

"[Like] the she-goat of Dgāš: there are no brains in her head."

Dgāš: another name for Ibrāhīm al-Ḥzeef who lived in al-Bkayriyyeh in al-Qaṣīm. They say he had a she-goat that did not sleep for a long time. When he slaughtered it, he found that there were no brains in its head.

Cf. ibid., no. 1348.
'anzen rebīṭeh

"[Like] a tethered goat." Said rudely of one who is fat, in reference to the fact that a tethered goat which is given fodder while comfortable tends to put on weight.

SMDW: Syria: Fegh., no. 357.

'anzen ratsbat jemal

"[Like] a goat riding a camel." Said of one who is set in a fixed routine, in reference to the fact that a goat once set on a camel cannot go its own way.

al-'anz mā tnāţ-ḥ al-jemal

"A goat does not butt [lit. butt against] a camel." Said of one who is not strong enough to compete with someone superior.

'ōd nsūr

"His age is like an eagle's [lit., an old one of the eagles]." Cf. the English phrase, "He is no chicken." In Najdi folklore, eagles are supposed to be very long-lived.

This phrase can also have a secondary meaning, being used to point to a person's tall thin stature, in reference to the spare frame of an eagle.

al-'awaz wala-'l-geṭī'eh

"A trifle saved is better than a total loss." Equivalent to the English proverb, "Half a loaf is better than no bread."²

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 236.

'yāl al-mefālis ketr al-ebālis

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, op. cit., no. 493.
² ODEF, p. 344.
"The sons of the bankrupt are as numerous as devils."

keter: as many as.

'eeb as-sābdzāt gī̀'ū'

"The [only] defect in horses which outstrip [the field] is scratches." (Sc. Great men may have their foibles.)

'ayyat tagezbuḥ al-arz

"The earth refused to hold him." Said of one who is restless and cannot stay long in one place. Cf. nos. 940, 941.

'iden ktāmeh (var. qādan 'aṣan 'iden ktāmeh)

"A feast and plough supper in one (var. a dinner, a supper, a feast and plough supper in one."

ktāmeh: a meal usually prepared when farmers have finished ploughing their land. The phrase is used to refer to something which serves two or more purposes.

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2543; the same proverb as mentioned by Hanafi is in Dabb., 2, p. 460; Egypt: Burck., no. 441.

al-'id 'īd Allah 'u 'īd al-kwandāt wella aṣ-ṣēḥāya kell yōmen lehum 'īd

"Feast days are a matter of religion and for the enjoyment of the women-folk, but every day is a feast day for young folk."

al-kwandāt: women (old usage).

al-'een besīreh wa-'l-yad gesīreh

Also Juh., no. 1369.
"The eye sees but the hand cannot grasp [lit. is short],"

i.e., although I see that the situation has to be corrected, I have not the least power to correct it.

Ident.: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 116; Hurg., no. 6; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 237, no. 79; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1322; Tik., no. 1488; Dabb., 1, p. 72; Qul., p. 171; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2969; Fegh., no. 648; Frayha, no. 2487; Egypt: Taim., no. 2014.

al-'een 'aleeh jereyyeh

"The eye of suspicion always turns to him [lit. the eye is bald against him]." Said of one whom people are quick to blame. Cf. nos. 191, 230, 415, 490.

jereyyeh: jari'ah

al-'een 'u mā šāgat wa 'n-nafs 'u mā ṣagat

"What the eye delights in, what the soul can bear." Equivalent to the English proverb, "Every man to his taste."^{2}

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1338; Qul., p. 150.

النفس ما تستحي والقلب ما يهوى

عين جميل (بصير)

'yūn jemal (be'īr)

"[As similar as] two camels' eyes." Equivalent to the English, "As like as two peas."^{3}

SMDW: four classical and post-classical Arabic proverbs: M., nos. 3120, 4521; 'Ask., nos. 1828, 1849; Zamak., no. 734; Bakri, p. 168; Ibn 'Abdi Rabihi, 'Iqd, 3,

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1 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 58.
2 ODEP, p. 230.
The story is told of a man of rank who owned many camels. He was captured by a band of highwaymen and was taken captive together with his slave. They were driven behind the man's herd of camels to be sold in a certain market. While they were on the march, the slave looked exultantly at his one-time master and said, "The withers and the hump have become the same." The man said nothing. When they reached the market, the merchants there recognized him and apprehended the thieves, and released the man who took back his slave and camels. On the way home he said to the slave, "The withers are withers and the hump is a hump."

**SMDW:** Baghdad: Tik., no. 1500; Egypt: Taim., nos. 706, 2230.

"He has [or I, you have] raided with Mhanna (var. al-Mhanna," i.e., he is a man of the world and has great experience. al-Mhanna: the name of a once eminent family in Buraidah who were prominent politically. It is possible that this is the source of the name in the proverb. However, this could not be positively ascertained. There was a famous chief of El-Hessenna, a branch of 'Anezeh of northern Arabia who was called Mhanna and he could be meant."

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1 See Juh., no. 565.
2 The variant, r was told by Dr. A. al-'Utaimln, is used in 'Unaizah.
3 See J. Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins and the Wahabys*, 1, pp. 5-6.

gayben šeēţānūh
"His demon is absent." Said of one who is in a benign mood, contrary to his usually uncertain and explosive one.

gadd 'ejrayyek yāklek
"You rear a cub, and it eats you." Cf. nos. 227, 578, 1192, 1197. Equates to the English proverb, "To bite the hand that feeds you."2

jravy: dimin. of jeru, a wolf or a dog puppy.

al-gerbeh 'ašwa men wjih ať-ţalālīb
"Banishment is better than creditors' faces."

'ašwa men: better than.

ţalālīb: plur. of tallāb, creditor.

garšt bdewi
"[Like] a bedouin's bowl." Said of something dirty or objectionable which may however be accompanied by something highly desirable (like refreshing milk in a grubby bedouin utensil). Cf. no. 398.

garšēh: a bowl made of porcelain.

gazw al-ḥkāk
"The raiders of al-ḥkāk," i.e., chasing after imaginary titbits.

1 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 508; Juh., no. 1390.
2 ODEP, p. 62.
This proverbial phrase refers to the following tale.

A group of simple men said to each other, "Let's make a raid like others do." They set out on their expedition but they forgot to take any water with them. They looked for a water well and found one but they had no buckets and ropes, so one of them although he could not swim, went down the well to fetch some water, and of course, he drowned. Some time went by without him coming up, so his friends said to each other, "He must be enjoying a good meal down there [lit. he must have found **hkāk** (the tasty bits of food stuck to the bottom of the cooking-pot)] and, one by one, they went down the well, although none of them knew how to swim, and therefore faced certain death.

**hkāk**: collective form of **hkākeh** (explained in the story above). In some parts of Najd it is called **grāreh**. The fuṣ. word is **kudādah**.

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558

gaṭṭ buh ḍāb

"A fly has fallen in it [i.e., a bowl of milk]." Said rudely when an uncongenial person has appeared in an otherwise agreeable group of people.

559

galāyeb gōmen 'ala'ahalah mā tegīz

"People's triumphs over members of their own family should not cause anger."

'ahalah: 'ahlihā.

560

gemr šnūk

"[Like a bunch of date-stalks," i.e., they slip each to a

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* Cf. Juh., no. 709.
different side and when one is put in again, another slips.

Said of an unpredictable group of people; in reference to the fact that date-stalks are smooth and slippery and are difficult to handle in a bundle.

\textit{gcmr}: \textit{germer}, a big bunch (of sticks, wood, reeds, stalks, etc.): \textit{fuš, gumr}, armful. (See Wehr, p. 684.)

\textit{snük}: plural of \textit{şenk}, a dry raceme of a palm-tree "which curves and from which the fruit-stalks are cut off."\footnote{Lane, p. 1997.}

\begin{align*}
\text{الغنم} & \text{ غنیه ولا تحوّله لک راسمال} \\
\text{Sheep are good booty, but do not make them your capital,} & \text{ i.e., they are too vulnerable to survive during a year of drought and can also easily be stolen.}
\end{align*}

The first part is identical with a post-classical Arab proverb: \textit{Ta'ālibi, Tamtil}, p. 346, and in modern Homs (Syria).\footnote{Cf. Juh., no. 1405.}

\begin{align*}
\text{ganam Karbala}. & \\
\text{"[Like] the sheep of Karbala." Said of naïve people who are easily deceived.}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{fātat ya Onayyān} & \\
\text{"It is too late Onayyān!" Said of a missed opportunity.}
\end{align*}

It is said that this Onayyān was with 'Abdullah 'Al Saud when the latter was taken prisoner by Ibrāhīm Pasha (in 1818, see proverb no. 33). On the way from ad-Der'iyyah to the Hijaz, they passed through al-Qaṣīm.\footnote{Dr. Ḥassān al-Ḥājj Ibrāhīm told this verbally to the writer. He lives in Homs.}

\footnote{Als o Juh., no. 1410.}
When they came near Mt. 'Eban (fus., 'Abān), Onayyān told 'Abdullah 'Āl Saud stories in which he made allusions to him about escaping and taking refuge in 'Eban where it was very unlikely that he would be found. 'Abdullah 'Āl Saud did not understand Onayyān's allusions until they were too far from the mountain. Then he addressed Onayyān saying, "The opportunity was missed. It is too late O Onayyān!"\(^1\)

Cf. nos. 589, 757.

SMDW: a number of classical and post-classical proverbs: see for example, M., nos. 1763, 791, 3072; 'Ask., nos. 928, 999; Zamak., 2, nos. 403, 730; Ḍabbi, p. 64, بيبته SCR الأر; Ta'ālibī, Kāṣṣu 'l-kaṣṣ, p. 20: فتت ما نمج والفائت لا يزغ; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1132; Goit., no. 902.

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farḥat 'umm bent\(^2\)
"[Like] the joy of the mother of a girl-child." Said of the short-lived joy of a mother who has given birth, only to find that the child is a girl.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 223.

Sim. MDW: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1236; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2583; Hanafi, no. 2665; Dabb., 1, p. 297, نرحه الم دمت وعين الشهر الما نامت, G. Syria: Aṣqar, nos. 562, 1689; Egypt: nos. 2092, 3079.

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al-fark ydzdżi bal-beezēh\(^3\)

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\(^1\) This tale was told to me by my uncle, Mḥammad as-Ṣāleḩ as-Sudais.

\(^2\) Also Juh., no. 1425.

\(^3\) Also ibid., no. 1429.
al-faras men tab’ al-fares
"Like horse, like horseman [lit. a mare gets its character from its rider’s]." The equivalent of "Like master, like man."

fasget at-tawwaf seeneh
"Fastidiousness is a bad thing in a beggar."
at-tawwaf: the beggar, from taf, to beg, especially by going around.
fasgeh: a masdar from fesedz, to exceed the limit.

fagren ‘adagg mn ‘l-‘anzarat
"Poverty ground more fine than sarcocol [Penaeus mucronata]."

Said of extreme poverty. This proverbial saying exhibits the same idiomatic reference to great poverty as the English
Truffles are found near *Helianthemum lippi* shrubs. Some people add the imper. *dawwer*, look for . . . 

\(\text{al-fage}':\) *al-faq\#:* truffles (in *fus*., also called *al-kama\#*).

\(\text{ar-rdzeh}:\) a desert shrub of grey colour with small leaves.

"Having nothing to do with Juha [Jheh is the dialectical form] is itself a gain." Said in a situation when one is grateful for having at least saved one's skin. See nos. 388, 888.

"So and so is [like] ground that is well trodden." Said of a harmless man who causes no trouble to anyone.

"So and so is [like] an upper molar," i.e., it bites down upon rather than is bitten upon. Said of one who turns things to his own advantage, or takes advantage of others' generosity.

"So and so is passed over when the [coffee] cup comes round." This refers to the insult which is suffered by anyone who is passed over in a *majlis* when coffee is circulated. Said of one whom one despises. See no. 576.

\(^1\) The transcription in parentheses is according to the pronunciation of the people in al-Jawf (north Najd) of the word *fakketen*.
This practice is referred to in an incident which occurred between Barakât aš-Šarīf and his uncle Mubārak b. Muṭlib over the former's misconduct with his uncle's wife. Mubārak told the coffee server: "أَلْلَهُ بِPK 1 النَّفَّالَ", "Pass over Barakât [i.e., do not give him the cup of coffee even if he is nearer to you than others]," the man did as commanded; then Barakât said: "لِيَ تَعْقِبِي النَّفَّالَ؟", "Why did you pass me over . . .." 1

فلان نفْسَة خُج

flān naifṣat kerj

"So and so is the shaking(s) of a camel bag," i.e., he is a nonentity.

فلان وفلان مثل الضَّوّ والطِّلع

flān we flān metl az-ẓaww waʾl-melḥ 2

"A and B are like fire and gunpowder." Said of two persons of diametrically opposed temperaments.

al-melḥ: gunpowder

SMDW: Mosul: Dabb, 2, p. 406; Gul., p. 53; نَاغ وَنَمْعَ نَحْجْ : G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1145; Frayha, no. 3946.

فلان يَعْدَد فلان النَّفَّال

flān y'addi flān al-fenjāl

"So and so passes over so and so when the coffee cups are circulated," i.e., when a person serves coffee or tea to people one after the other and comes to the man whom he dislikes, he may ignore him and pass on to the next man. This is considered most insulting.

Cups of coffee are usually handed to guests one by

1 See Socin, Diwan Aus Centralarabien, Gesammelte Texte, p. 124, no. 61.
2 Cf. Juh., no. 1514.
one moving from right to left after serving the most senior persons first. If the person who is serving the coffee happens to have a grudge against one of the guests, he may deliberately ignore him, thus offering him a deep insult. See also no. 573 above.

577

الفلوس نجيب بنت العلّاطان

al-flūs tejīb bent aṣ-ṣafātān

"With money one may obtain even the sultan's daughter [lit., money brings the sultan's daughter]," i.e., a rich man can marry even a sultan's daughter.

NS: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 246, no. 16; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 3160; Mosul: Dabb., 1, p. 301.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Tik., no. 512; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 797; Frayha, no. 373; Baum., no. 138; Fegh., no. 1361; Tallq., no. 48; Egypt: Taim., no. 805; Fā'iqah, no. 1951.

578

نئ حنين ويلدغي

fi ḥeẓni 'u yaldagni

"He is on my lap and [yet] he stings me." See nos. 227, 554, 1192, 1197.

Sim. WM: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 167; Egypt: Fā'iqah, no. 497.

SMDW: Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 491: يركب بالسنين وينتسع البالح; Gul., p. 105: قاعد بالسنين ربع عين البالح: قاطع (شباك) الفم حالك

579

gāṭ' (šārts) al-gōm ḥalālek

"Share your property with the robbers," i.e., when you discover, for example, that robbers are taking your animals and you cannot prevent them doing so, the only thing to do is to snatch away some of the animals, so as to avoid a total

† This proverb is no doubt recently borrowed from neighbouring countries. The word yaldagn is not a common Najdi word.
loss.

gāt': in pause it is ḍāṭ', imper. of gāta', to take a share of something.

gārtū: šārik

halāl: property. It is also applied to camels in particular.

"Was your father a marksman [lit., did your father shoot]?' he asked. 'No,' came the reply. 'Was your grandfather a marksman [lit., did your grandfather shoot]?' he asked. 'No,' came the reply. 'Why then do you try to be a marksman [lit., what are you shooting for]?' he asked," i.e., one should only try occupations which are customary to one's family.

SMDW: a post-classical Arabic proverb which was current in Egypt in the Middle Ages. Abūlīhi, 1, p. 36: تَقَالُوا لِلْكَلَّابِ أَحْرَنْهَا تَقَالُوا لِلْكَلَّابِ أَحْرَنْهَا G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2633; Ašqar, no. 2195.

"He said, 'My father and yours were friends.' 'May God forgive those old men, [i.e., that is something past and gone], came the reply. 'Hand beside hand is a blessing[i.e. it is better for several hands to partake of one dish of food], he said. 'Only for building [i.e., maybe one needs many hands to erect a building but one does not want to see them all as guests at the table],' came the reply."

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 2298.
Sim. WM: Lebanon: Frayha, no. 2802

قَالَ اخْلِقُنِّي قَالَ اخْلِقُنِّي لَهُ
gāl: 'ekelguh. gāl: 'ekleg luh

"He said, 'Create him!' 'Create someone [suitable] for him,' came the reply." Said of a man and wife who are strikingly similar in character. Cf. no. 264.


قال أبو ذاكرة قال راع العُلَّة أبي خمص

gāl: 'etsu da we-tsu da. gāl: rā' al-'elleh 'abkāṣ

"'Cauterize this, cauterize that,' said he. 'The sick man knows better [than you] which parts of his body need to be cauterized,' came the reply," i.e., one understands one's own problems best.

etsu: 'ikwi, imper. of kawa, to cauterize.
rā' al-'elleh: صاحب العلّة, the one of the illness.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: 'Ask., no. 170; Zamak., no. 1417.

قال الأمير اضطُروه مية رطبته، قال انت يا الأمير أ.Randoma عمرك دَبْت

gāl al-emir: ezerbūh myat retībeh. gāl: 'ant ya-l-emir

'uamma mā 'umrek dedz-dzīt wella mā ta'arf al-ḥsāb

"The emir said, 'Give him one hundred strokes of the cane.' The man answered, 'You, Emir, either have never been flogged, or you do not know how to count [i.e, to the extent that you thought a hundred strokes are a small matter]."

retībeh: green branch of palm-trees, used for flogging.
mā 'umrek: you have never in your life . . .
dedz-dzīt: didz-dzū, pass. perf. of dagg, to hit, to strike.

قال الجروعة يطْهُرُ الإنمَّ قَالَ عسَاهُ يطْهُرُ روْحَه

gal: al-jarbū' yṭāhhr al-ufum. gāl: 'asāwh yṭāhher rūḥuh

"Someone said, 'The jerboa cleans the mouth [of one who eats it],' 'Let the jerboa clean itself [first],' came the reply." Said of an attribute imputed to a third person by one party but denied by another.

قال أمه لما يجيك النيم. قال: رُكْرُعٌ عَنٌ جَان النيم

قال: eman lama yejik an-nom. قال: wakker 'an jann an-nom

"Walk until you feel drowsy," said he. 'Move over I feel drowsy now,' came the reply." Said of one who seeks to take advantage of a conditional offer.

'an: 'anni
jann: ja'ani, come to me.
lama: until
wakker: imper. of wakkar, to move over.

قال اننا أضحك بك قال أضحك بعتلك

قال: 'ana 'azhak bek. قال: 'ezhak b'aglek

"I laugh at you," said he. 'You should laugh at yourself [lit., your mind]," came the reply," i.e., a fool laughs easily at others.

قال بنافر حماك طية قال خذه (خذه)

قال: bhaifr hasanek jineh. قال: ked (ked-ha)

"'There is a piece of mud in the hoof of your horse,' he said. 'Then remove it!' the other replied." Said of someone who helpfully draws attention to something amiss but who is then saddled with the task of putting it to rights.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1608; Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 472.

قال بلفتح عند قال مضت

قال: blegma(K)k 'ud. قال: mezat

"'There is a piece of wood in what you are eating,' one said. 'I've already swallowed it,' came the reply," i.e., it is too late. Cf. nos. 563, 757.
"She said: 'I am the daughter of one who can cut and sew, slaughter and flay, and who travels near and far!' 'I am the daughter of one who is aware of things before they happen,' another [girl] said." Said of one who has the gift of foresight, the implication being that such a gift is superior to any other accomplishment.

This proverb tells of a little dialogue between two girls. One of them began by describing in detail what good things her father was capable of, but the second with one sentence, more eloquently said that her father was the better of the two men by owning one quality, "being so intelligent as to expect the occurrence of something before it actually takes place."

yalak: imperfect of salak (fus., salak), to skin.
yafra: imperf. of fara, to cut.

gal tedzaddam yâ môt gal tedzaddam yâ sebab
"'Come quickly, 0 Death!' he said. 'Then let a cause come quickly!' Death answered." Said in reference to the fact that death never supervenes without a specific cause.

NS: *Yemen*: Akwa', 1, no. 1280.
answered," i.e., the marriage was arranged on the basis of the nuptial gift, not on the basis of mutual attraction.

When one has paid good money for something, one is entitled to enjoy it without objections or carpings on the part of others.

warāk: why . . . you . . . The word wara, when affixed to personal pronouns, means "why . . . ."

ya ḫalāli!: My dear! lit. my property. A very common phrase especially when speaking to children.

SMDW: Mecca: Qurais:¹ مَجِينِينِ يَا كُلّ خُلْوَةٍ بِنَفْوَةٍ; Egypt: Taim., nos. 2778, 182; Fā'iqa, 2, no. 1383; Iraq: Tik., no. 303; Hanafi, no. 158; Socin, no. 274. G. Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 24: الأُفْرَعُ أَكْلُ خَلْوَةٍ قَالَ بُقْلِيِّسَانِ 

593

gāl: ḫānek jemūh. gāl: weld al-gabra fūgeh

"'Your horse is unruly,' he said. 'But a tough man is astride it.' came the reply." Said of people who are equally matched in some characteristic such as obstinacy, etc. Cf. the English proverb, "Diamonds cut diamonds."²

weld al-gabra: the son of the dusty one (i.e., the Earth). This term is often said by someone who boasts of his toughness and ability to stand austere hardships.

SMDW: eight classical and post-classical proverbs: M., nos. 13, 91, 113, 2406, 3588, 934; 'Ask., nos. 17, 552; Zamak., 1, nos. 330, 1717; 2, no. 201; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 932, 940, 941, 945, 2005.

594

cāl ḫalāyakum yā bīni mīl ʿaḥbākum cāl ma ʿaʿāfīni yā bīni ʿalām ʿaʿāfīn

gāl: kālātekum yā bay melī ʿummahātekum. gāl: mā ʿaẓeni

yā bay ba-l-ʿumm ʿayeq

¹ Qurais, 6 (1956), p. 16.
² ODEP, p. 185.
"Your (maternal) aunts, my dear are as your mothers,' he said. 'No one, my dear, has ever been able to act as a substitute for my mother,' came the reply."

The apparent confusion of singular and plural in this proverbial saying is due to the notional speaker addressing a singular person having in mind the plural, universal application of his sentiments.

yā bāy: O father. But it is often, as here, used to mean "my dear".

NS: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 661.

SMDW: Lebanon: Frayha, no. 3858; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 396.

قال دوك خير قال ما تأخذه شبابيّ، قال دوك شر قال حظه بطرف عباثي (قال دوك خير قال ما تأخذه شبابيّ)
"He said: 'Accept this good thing.' 'My pocket is not big enough for it,' came the reply. 'Accept this evil thing,' he said. 'Tuck it under the hem of my cloak,' came the reply." (Var. "He said, 'Accept this good thing.' 'My hand is not wide enough for it,' he said.")

Said of a person who will make the flimsiest excuse to avoid accepting a benefit but who will go to personal inconvenience to accept something harmful. Most people do not quote the second part.

duk: take. This word was probably originally dunak and then the n and the second vowel were elided.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 2856; Zamak., no. 676; a post classical proverb: Tāliq., no. 2716.

gal: remhi geşir. gal: dzarreb kêtweh yeţul
"He said, 'My spear is too short.' 'Move a step nearer and it will be longer,' came the reply."
gāl: saww keer. gāl: yejik šarr

"He said: 'Do good.' 'And evil will befall you,' came the reply." Said when someone is ungratefully troubled instead of rewarded for his good work.

saww: imper. of sawwa, to make, to do.

yejik: yaji' uk

**SMDW:** a post-classical proverb: Tāliq., no. 579; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 762; Socin, no. 161;
Mecca: Sāsi, no. 542; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 353, 1971;
Fegh., no. 1616; Egypt: Taim., no. 1191; Burck., no. 241;
Littm., no. 165; Fā' iqa, no. 1407.

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gāl: temart baš-šām sab'In bā'. gāl hada gā'en we ādak gā'

"He said: 'In Syria I leapt seventy fathoms.' 'That is a land and this is a land,' came the reply," i.e., that stretch of ground is no different from this stretch of ground. A challenge to a boastful person to substantiate his boast, i.e., if you can do it in Syria, you can do it here.

bā': the span of the outstretched arms. This word, aside from this proverb is not used, bā' being used instead.

**NS:** Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1569; Tik., no. 1722.


**SMDW:** Mosul; Socin (Der Arabische Dialekt von Mōsul und Mardin, ZDMG, 37 (1883), no. 631, p. 203; Amin

Using the word in its old English sense of the measure of the outstretched arms, that is, about six feet. See The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 4th ed., p. 432.
gāl: gah. gāl beden men lā yafgah¹ (var. men lā yūḥi wala yafgah)

"'Gah,' he said. 'In the ear of one who is dull of understanding (var. who neither hears nor understands), came the reply.

In al-Jawf (and probably some other parts of northern Najd) the second part is @Table Row spacing

Where is the one who understands,' came the reply.'

Said of an obstinate person who does not understand or does not want to understand.

gah: a meaningless syllable which is merely used as a play on the word yafgah.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3294; 'Ask., 2, no. 1731. Many contemporary proverbs current in Mecca, Iraq, G. Syria and Egypt. See, for example, Tik., nos. 311, 312, 310, 1724, 1802, 2279; Hanafi, nos. 165, 163, 166; Aśqar, nos. 1272, 1274, 1273, 3797, 3093; Stephan, no. 491; Taim., nos. 899, 2910, 3082, 3027.

gāl: lā hamm 'ella hamm al-'ers 'u lā weja' 'ella weja' az-zers. gāl: lā hamm 'ella hamm ad-deen 'u lā weja' 'ella weja' al-'een²

"'Nothing causes more anxiety than marriage, and nothing greater pain than toothache,' he said. 'Nothing causes more anxiety than a debt, and nothing greater pain than the pain of the eye,' came the reply.'

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 1595.
² Cf. Juh., nos. 1820, 1851; 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 665.
The second part of this proverb is a quotation of 'Ali b. Abī Ṭālib's saying, 

لا وجد كوجه العين ولا تهم كهم الدين

NS: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4056. In other places, each part of this proverb is used independently (this is also the case in probably most parts of Najd). The first part is identically used in: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1828; Lebanon: Frayha, no. 3416. The second part is also identically used in: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2633; Tik., no. 1827; Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 121; Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 110.

gal luh: 'ersd al-'nebeh. gal: twahḥṣan al-'anādzid as-sūd

"He said to him, 'Guard the grape-vine.' 'The ripe bunches frighten me,' came the reply." Said of a person who although in fact very keen to have something, pretends otherwise.

twahḥṣan: twahḥašni, it frightens me.

'ersd: in pause this verb is pronounced 'ersed, imper., watch, guard.

SNĐW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1734; Hanafi, nos. 1530, 1535; Dabb., p. 72; al-dib šarhanu ba'alam name yamikī, 2, p. 539, aš-šīr; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2891; Egypt: Taim., no. 2180.

 قال ما احلتك زمان؟ قال على الناس من الناس
gal: māblık ze'mān! gal: 'ala nāsen men nās

"'How sweet this life [lit. time] is!' he said. 'For some people,' came the reply."

māblık: this pattern has survived in its classical form. It is not usually used. yā ḥelwek (يا حلوك) is the usual way of expressing wonder or surprise (تعمج).

 Called مانك ضيق قال حاجى وسيع
gal metsānek ṣayyedz gal ḥāji wesī

"'Your dwelling [place] is mean,' he said. The other replied,
"But my eyebrow is broad [i.e., I am generous]." Even if my house is small this should not worry my guests, for I am pleased to receive them and this compensates for the inconvenience of staying in a small or narrow place.

The phrase \( \text{wes} \text{i' hjāj} \), "A man with wide eyebrows" is applied to a generous man who is happy to receive guests. The other expression in which the eyebrow is figuratively used in connection with hospitality is \( \text{'agad hjājuh} \), "he knotted his eyebrow," i.e., he felt uneasy, he showed displeasure (it refers especially to the scowling of an irritable mean man, as the eyebrow looks narrow and knotted).

604

\( \text{gāl men 'ekūk yā a'rābi? gāl: men nefa'ni 'u nefa'tuh} \)

"'Who is your brother O Bedouin?' he asked. 'He who is useful to me and to whom I am useful,' came the reply."

SMDW: a classical proverb: 'Ask., no. 471; Oman: Jayak., no. 229; Iraq: Hanafi, no. 24; Tik., no. 59; Dal., 1, no. 34; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 554.

605

\( \text{gāl: men 'amark? gāl: men nahān?} \)

"'Who commanded you [to do that]?' he asked. 'Who forbade me [to do it]?' came the reply."

This proverb is in reference to a man who stood at a cemetery gate, and whenever a corpse was brought in he charged a riyal for allowing it to be buried there. He continued earning illicit money in this way until the daughter of the Pasha died. When she was brought to the cemetery, he asked for his usual fee. People protested to him, saying that she was the daughter of the Pasha. "Then the fee is two riyals!" he said. When he was brought in front of the

\( ^1 \text{Cf. Juh., no. 1585.} \)
Pasha and the latter asked him, "Who commanded you to do this?" He answered, "Who forbade me [to do it]?"

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 74; Mosul: Ġul., p. 160.
SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1740; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3246; Frayha, nos. 2714, 4207; Fegh., no. 476; Egypt: Taim., no. 3080.

606 قال من اين عالى النسيم؟ قال من هالسيئره

"'Whence comes this small branch,' he asked. 'From this little tree,' came the reply." Equates to the English proverbs, "The acorn does not fall far from the tree" and "A chip of the old block." Cf. no. 565.

607 قال من هو اليليل قال تجيك اختياره (واملك عليه)

There is a great number of proverbs which express the same or a similar meaning but with different wording in all the regions concerned.

608 قال من ورد اللام بجبال شرب قال من ورد اللام بجبال شرب

Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 532.

ODEP, p. 121.

A. al-Juhaimān mentions this as two separate proverbs, nos. 2285, 2286.
"He who reaches water with [his] ropes will drink," he said. "He who reaches water with [his] men will drink," came the reply." This refers to the fact that sometimes in the past, drawing water for animals to drink was a task which required a number of men to force their way to the well.

قال اذ هلّ بالعده رَبّ (شهر هِلّ بالعده رَبّ)
gål: hall. gàl: 'eddudh zall (var. šaharen hall 'eddudh zall)
"The new month has begun," he said. 'It is as good as gone,' came the reply." (var. a month which has begun is as good as gone). Said in reference to the fleetingness of time.

قال وراك تِهالِشَايْب نشى تِقَّيد قال اللّي قَدْن ينتَل قِادَك
gal: warāk ya hāš-šayeb tamši mgayyad? gàl: 'alī gayyedan yaftel gyādek
"'Old man [lit. O this old man], why are you walking [as if you are] fettered?' he asked. 'He Who has put me in fetters is making yours,' came the reply."
warāk: why are you . . .?
gayyedan: qayyadani
The second part of this proverb is NS as an Egyptian proverb.¹
SMDW: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 913.

قال ورا هِالِجمِ يَرْفِي قال بلاوه هِالِجمِ
gål: wara hāl-jemal yargi? gàl: balāwh hāl-ḥemel
"'Why is this camel roaring?' he asked. 'Because of this [heavy] load,' came the reply." Said of one who has reason to complain.
warā: why?
balāwh: (lit. his cause is) because of. bala means "cause" or "reason" only in such a context.

¹ Taim., no. 329.
612

gal: wes hadik ya hâl-mesmâr? gal: hâl-meţregeh

"What is impelling you, O nail?" he asked. "This [heavy] hammer," came the reply." Said of someone who is forced by circumstances to take a certain course.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 4117; 'Ask., no. 1620; Zamak., 2, no. 1270; Mecca; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1586; Tik., no. 1743; Socin, no. 203; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 744; G. Syria: Aşqar, no. 3208; Frayha, no. 2262; Fegh., nos.1202, 1205; Baum., no. 453.

NS: Kuwait: Nuri, 1, p. 29, no. 51.

613

gal: wes haddek 'ala merrân (al-murr)? gal: 'amarr mnuh

"What made you [swallow] this bitter pill?" he asked. 
"[Something] which was more bitter," came the reply," i.e., to choose the lesser of two evils.

NS: Mecca; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2291; Tik., no. 2373; G. Syria: Aşqar, no. 2473; Frayha, no. 2059.

614

gal: wes yefekkek mn abgaz ma tebgez? gal: 'âhabb mâ t-ţebb

"What can save you from the thing (or person) you hate most?" he asked. 'The thing (or person) you love most," came the reply." For example, a man who is forced to go to war, can be exempted if he pays a large sum of money.

615

galaw: warâk mţawwlen 'aşâk? gal: 'ârffen gadri 'end tslâbekum (al-tslâb)

"Why are you taking such a long stick with you?" they asked.

al-lugh: Qalâ lâl masmar ant tilâqti Qalâ lâl lâk sînbârî wâruf dhâl lîlî, 'ûnâ yusâf kânt ürdînî, see Qurais, 51 (1960), p. 16.

Cf. Juh., no. 1596.

2 See Qurais, 53 (1960), p. 16. (This proverb is recorded by Hasan Naşîr Gâri.)
"I know what your (var. the) dogs think of me," came the reply." Said of one who does not take chances owing to his knowledge of the hostile intentions of those confronting him.

Sim. WM: Mecca.

"Whither?" he asked. "With them," came the reply." Said of one who lacks initiative and who blindly follows what others do or say. Cf. nos. 189, 430, 936, 987.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nüri, 2, p. 141.

NS: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1759.

SMDW: four classical proverbs: M., nos. 551, 3011, 4538, 4545; Ask., nos. 264, 1407; Zamak., nos. 1508, 1626;

two post classical proverbs: M., 2, no. 4663; 2, p. 428,

"How sweet is the taste of sugar!" he [a bedouin] said. "How do you know?" they asked. "A cousin of mine tasted it in al-Hasa the year before last year," he replied.

Applied in a jocular way to one who takes other people's

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1 See Qurais, 48 (1960), p. 16: "ليه كبر عمك قال خايف من الكل - "This proverb is recorded by Hasan Nasir Gari.

2 Also Juh., no. 1610.
reports for granted. One who pretends to know much about something which he has not even seen.

as-senker: some bedouins use this word for "sugar".

'ām 'awwala: some bedouins use this term for "the year before last". The ḫaḍr use 'ām al-awwal instead.

ya ḥelu: How sweet (it) is! ya is a particle of surprise or wonder.

An auctioneer exaggerated in describing the merits of a donkey. He was then told that there was no need for such exaggeration; with a much more modest and true description the donkey could still be sold.

Only the second part of this proverb is usually quoted. The last part of this proverb is of old origin. It is nearly the same as a classical proverb with a similar story, and a contemporary Kuwaiti proverb.

Cf. Juh., no. 853.

See M., nos. 1391, 1916; Zamak., 2, no. 298.

Nārī, 1, p. 141, no. 16.

Cf. Juh., no. 1606.
first asked. 'Haven't seen it,' the other answered.

The second part of this proverb is rarely quoted.

القتل كلب والنعاه مـ

al-dzetil tsalb wan-na''ayeh mureh

"The deceased [lit. the killed thing] is [but] a dog, and its mourner is [but] a woman," i.e., the whole matter does not deserve to be paid the least attention.

قد الـالـكـ (الـشـرـكـ) ما يخلـى (يفرح، ينجمع)

dzedr aš-šreka (aš-šerkeh) mā ygalī (yefūh, yanjah)\(^1\)

"A shared pot never boils (var. . . . does not cook)." Cf. the English proverb, "A pot that belongs to many is ill stirred and worse boiled."\(^2\)

NS: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 542; Tik., no. 696; Mosul: Gul., p. 65 and Dabb., 1, p. 193: نست الشركه ما يخلى
Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 463; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 249, no. 7;
Oman: Jayak., no. 38; Reinhardt, no. 35.
Sim. WM: Yemen: Goit., no. 201; Akwa', 1, no. 852;
G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1104.
SMDW: Yemen: e.g., Akwa', 1, no. 764; Egypt: Baq., p.

قد هزلت

qad hazulat

"It [e.g. a sheep] has become lean." Said in ridicule of someone who tries something above him.

This phrase is used in its formal Arabic form, since it is borrowed from the well-known classical Arabic saying:

قد هزلت وسامها كل مفس,

"It has become so lean [i.e. a sheep] that every bankrupt ventures to offer a price for it" (i.e.,

\(^1\) Cf. 'Ubūdī, 1, no. 546.
\(^2\) ODEP, p. 641.
since it is so cheap that he can afford to buy it. The saying is probably a quotation of, or is quoted in, the verse:

"It has become lean to the extent that its kidneys became visible, and that every bankrupt ventured to offer a price for it."

Ident.: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1865.

grād ramzā

"[Like] a tick in the burning sand." To be on tenterhooks, to be in a state of anxious suspense.

Said of one who has an appointment with somebody and waits anxiously without the other person turning up.

al-garʿa tefteker bṣaʿar bent ektah

"a bald woman boasts about the [fine] hair of her niece."

NS: a post-classical proverb which was common in Egypt about the eleventh century: تباهت الرغبة بشعر بنت خالته, see Abšīhi, 1, p. 38; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 162; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 458; Tik., no. 595; Socin, no. 280; Ġul., p. 109; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 1489; Tallq., no. 146; Fegh., no. 606; Frayha, no. 2745; Egypt: Taim., no. 2241; Littm., no. 346.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3018; Zamak., 2, no. 702; 'Ask., no. 1328; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1583.

† garwa, lā tašba' 'u lā tarwa


† Also Juh., no. 1638.
Garwa: name of a female dog.


geşireh tagتا' tewfileh
"A short [word] cuts off a long one," i.e., a long rigmarole may be cut short by a brief word.

NS: a classical proverb: M., no. 2887.

SMDW: Lebanon: Frayha, no. 3015.

geşab al-kadd
"He took to the plain [lit., he held to the land]," i.e., he retreated and gave in.

al-kadd: (here) plain land.

gazbet al-'ama źatuh
"[Like] the way in which a blind man grasps his sheep."

gazbeh: verbal noun (maşdar) of gezab, to hold (fus ■ , qabaz).


gezzi ḥawiyyits webneeh
"Demolish your house and rebuild it." Attributed to a woman advising another, who complained that she had too much money. In spite of the metaphorical meaning intended, at the present time this proverb is also used in reference to a person always making alterations in his house.

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1 Also 'Ubūdi, no. 565.
2 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 559; Juh., no. 1646.
3 Also Juh., no. 1649.
**hawi:** house, used in Riyadh and probably the 'Arel region.

**SMDW:** Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 77.

قطر مع قطر يجي غدير (قطره مع قطره يجي غدير)

gät'er ma' gät'er yeji gadîr (gät'reh ma' gät'reh teji gadîr)

"[A few] rain drops with [other few] rain drops make a rain pool (var. a dop with a drop makes a pool)." Cf. the English proverbs, "Many drops make a shower" and "Little and often fills the purse."²

**NS:** Kuwait: Nüri, 1, p. 252, no. 14.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1597; Syria: Fegh., no. 1210; Oman: Reinhardt, no. 82.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., nos. 683, 1456; 'Ask., no. 820; Zamak., no. 1322; Baghdad: Hanafi, nos. 446, 1400, 611; Tik., nos. 1551, 1753; Egypt: Taim., no. 1678.

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gät'ta' al-jawadd³

"He cut across the paths." He did not agree to any proposal but tried to find excuses. Said in particular of one who evades the payment of his debts by various excuses.

al-jawadd: plur. of jaddeh, foot-path.

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gät' al-kšüm walâ gät' ar-ršüm⁴

"[It is easier for a man] to cut off [his] nose than to give up [his] inherited customs." People cannot easily give up their inherited customs and traditions.

ršüm: traditions. This has the same meaning as slûm, plur. of salm, custom.

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¹ **ODEP,** p. 509.
² Ibid., p. 467
³ Cf. Juh., no. 1520.
⁴ Also ibid., no. 1653.
Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 252, no. 16; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1430; Gul., p. 107.
Sim. WM: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1570; Lebanon: Faraj, p. 355; Egypt: Taim., no. 2254.

getām ar-r̄āa
"He [i.e. a camel] stopped roaring." Applied figuratively to a man who suddenly stops complaining or making a noise after getting what he wants.

dzallebni 'asāy 'anfa'k
"Turn me over and over, perhaps I may be useful to you." Said often when reproaching someone who moves something from place to place without any reason.

This proverb is apparently a version of the classical proverb, اقتبس أنفسك, of which the origin is the following story: "A man of Ma'add saw a stone in the land of al-Yaman, in which was [this sentence] inscribed, and he exercised his skill in turning it over, and found [inscribed] on the other side ًالنامع, 'Many a coveting leads to disgrace' and he ceased not to beat with his head the great mass of stone, by reason of regret, until his brains issued and he died." ²

NS: a classical proverb.³

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 228.

gal' azzers al-fāsed wala 'alken 'aleeh
¹ Also Juh., no. 1666
² See Lane, p. 1881; M., 1, p. 439, and Ta'ālibi, Timār-ul-Qulūb, no. 916.
³ See note 2 above.
"Extraction of a decaying molar is better than chewing with it."

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1168; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1377; Egypt: Fā'iqah, no. 1433.

"Say 'Hallo!', even if there is ill feeling in [your] heart."

SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1060; Egypt: Taim., no. 206.

"Hearts are [good] indicators," i.e., if you feel you like somebody, he probably feels the same towards you.

This proverb has its origin in the hadīt: 

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 257; Lebanon: Frayha, no. 2776.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1607.

"[Even] the moon may miss his mansions." Cf. the English proverbs, "Homer sometimes nods" and "There are spots even in the sun."

SMDW: three classical proverbs: M., nos. 17, 3497, 3297; 'Ask., nos. 446, 1901, 1558; Zamak., nos. 1024, 1330; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1953, Tallq., nos. 51, 142.

"[Like] al-Baṣīrū's lark. It does not perch in the shade."

A lark was shot at by a certain al-Baṣīrū while it was perching in the shade, and so the bird learnt to avoid

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1 See Taʿālībi, Tamṭīl, p. 27.
2 ODEP, p. 379.
3 Ibid., p. 767.
the shade.
al-Ešeedźrawī: name of a man who comes from the town of Ešeedzé (‘Ušaiqir) in al-Wasm in Najd.
SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 84; Zamak., 1, no. 1632.

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قولت لا ما لها دوا’
golat la’ mā lhā dwa’
"There is no cure for saying 'no'." If someone says "no" to you, then there is nothing you can do about it.

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قولت ما ادري ما له عاقبه
golat mādri mā laḥ ‘adzbeh
"Saying 'I do not know' has no consequences," i.e., it may be better to say "I do not know" than to give an answer of which one is not sure.
SMDW: Yemen: Goit., no. 440; Oman: Reinhardt, no. 167; Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 447;

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قوم تعاونوا ما نلوا
gomen ta’āwanaw mā dillaw
"People who cooperate will not be humiliated." i.e., will not fail.
NS: Kuwait: Nāri, 1, p. 152, no. 12; Baghdad, Hanafi, no. 162.

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قوم حمرا
gomen ḥamra
"[They are] red raiders." Said of avaricious, unfriendly people.

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كان الذب أنجي فالصدق أنجي وأنجي
tsān al-tsādb anja faš-šedz-dz anja wanja
"If lying is safe, then telling the truth is yet safer."
tsān: if.

1 Cf. Juh., no. 386.
"If you are crying, my friend [because of your desperate need for something], I am [also] weeping [for the same reason]."

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{tsān}: if
\item \textit{'āṣīḥ}: imperf. of \textit{sāḥ}, to cry.
\item \textit{'āṣīr}: friend, husband or wife.
\end{itemize}

"As though he were a fly or the creaking of the door," i.e., take no notice of him.

"The stomach is smooth; it eats and forgets." Said of an ungrateful person who denies the benefits he has received.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{al-tsabd}: the stomach, the liver.
\end{itemize}

"Make an ass (var. a little donkey) appear big by saying 'aṣṣ' \textit{[loudly]}." By shouting loudly at one's beast one indicates that it must be a big strong animal.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{aṣṣ}: an interjection used with donkeys to make them stop.
\end{itemize}

"Kūbr (the burial) by way ofCASCADE
"As huge as Temeyyeh."

Temeyyeh: Tamiyya, a mountain on the way between Madinah and al-Qasim.

kubb luh 'u yâkel

"Throw [any food] for him and he will eat." Said of an unintelligent person who does not distinguish good from bad. kubb: imper. of kabb with a mufakkam and doubled bā', to throw. SMDW: Egypt: Burck., no. 43.

kebbeh lâ t-ḥâršeh

"Leave him alone, do not provoke him." Said of a hot-tempered person who is easily provoked. kebb: imper. of kabb with a murqqag doubled ba', to leave. It is used in al-Qasim by the bedouins only.

tsebir al-mhabbal

"[He is] the elder of the fools," i.e., they are all fools and he is the biggest of all. Said, for example, in criticizing an older boy who wastes his time playing with children who are much younger than he is. Cf. no. 488. al-mhabbal: plur. of mhabūl, crazy. The other plural, mahābīl, is more often used.

ketr al-jahām 'u lā šemāt al-'āda

"Better magnitude of appearance [although it may be false] than the malicious joy of enemies," i.e., it is better to appear to be numerous and strong even though this appearance

\footnote{Cf. Juh., no. 2839.}
is false than to run the risk of giving joy to your enemies. \textit{jahām}: an appearance in the distance, or on the horizon.

\textbf{NS: }\textit{Mecca,}\textsuperscript{1} \textit{G. Syria: }\textit{Ašqar, no. 346; }\textit{Fegh., no. 2097; }\textit{Frayha, no. 2814; }\textit{Landb., no. 30; }\textit{Egypt: }\textit{Taim., no. 2282.}

\textit{Kṭr al-kāţum ye'.mi}\textsuperscript{2}

"Repeated interruptions make one lose sight." Said of someone who becomes confused after being repeatedly interrupted.

\textit{Tsattet mālūh šattet šānuh}

"Increase his wealth and you will make his life hectic," i.e., the richer a man becomes the more demands are there made of him.

\textit{Al-katreh al-gubat aš-šejā'eh}

"Great numbers prevail over courage."

\textbf{Ident. : }\textit{G. Syria: }\textit{Ašqar, no. 2459; }\textit{Fegh., no. 1518; }\textit{Frayha, no. 2846.}


\textbf{SMDW: }\textit{Yemen: }\textit{Akwa', 1, no. 88}

\textit{Khekel bātsyeh}

"[Like] the antimony [in the eyes] of a crying woman." It is soon washed away by tears. Said of anything which is quickly wasted.

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Quraiš, no. 7 (1959), p. 10.}

\textsuperscript{2} Cf. \textit{Juh., no. 1686.}
"When a man farms in other than his own country [district, locality, etc.], the farm will neither belong to himself nor to his children," i.e., he will have to go home one day leaving it behind.

tsaddād: one who hires a farm or a palm-grove for a certain number of years. The verb is tsadd, not to be confused with kadd, to work.

NS: Iraq (Baghdad): Tik., no. 2188; Hanafi, no. 2121; G. Syria: Baum., no. 83.
Sim. WM: a post-classical proverb: Ta'ālibi, Tamtil, p. 195; Egypt: Taim., no. 3107; Littm., no. 236.

"Lying is [like] a weak ass." If one rides it, it is soon tired and cannot carry on, leaving one in a difficult situation such as a remote place. The same thing is true with telling a lie. It may let one down or put one in an awkward situation. Cf. the English proverb, "A lie have short (no) legs (wings)."

Ident.: Kuwait: Nurī, 2, p. 231.
Sim. MW: Egypt: Taim., no. 2339.
"He threw sand into the water," i.e., he made a mistake, he offended someone.

al-tsedūb yegdi šedz-dzuh

"A liar makes even the truth of no account [lit., a liar causes the truth (when he says it) to be lost]," (owing to people's reluctance to believe him). Cf. the English, "A liar is not believed when he speaks the truth."

yegdi: he wastes, loses.

šedz-dz: šidd

Sim WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2787; Egypt: Taim., no. 3168.

al-karam mgaṭṭi al-'yūb

"Generosity conceals faults," i.e., the imperfections of a generous man are often overlooked.

NS: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3484; Frayha, no. 2862.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1600; G. Syria: Ṭegh., no. 1554; Frayha, no. 3404.

karwat 'ahal Sdeer jezāk Allah keer

"[Like] the payment of the people of Sdeer. It is [just], 'May Allah reward you!'" Said of something which costs the giver nothing. Cf. the English proverb, "He is a friend at a sneeze; the most you can get of him is 'God bless you'."

karwat: karweh, rent.

Sdeer: Sudair, a district in central Najd


1 ODEP, p. 457.
2 Cf. Juh., no. 1279.
3 ODEP, p. 289.
tserimen men māl geeruh¹

"He is [only] generous with the money of others."

NS: Kuwait: Nārī, 2, p. 7; Baghdad: Tik., no. 2713.
Sim. WM: Mosul: Dabb., p. 503; Lebanon: Frayha, no. 1583.
SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 826; 'Ask., no. 443, Zamak., 2, no. 184; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1759; Frayha, no. 418; Egypt: Taim., no. 778.

kasser al-joz 'ala rāsek²

"He cracked walnuts on your head," i.e., he offered unacceptable conditions for a deal; he drove a hard bargain.

kesar 'ašāwh 'u lā ṭarah dzebīlūh

"He broke his stick and [still] did not throw his opponent down." Said of one who foolishly destroys his own means of defence without achieving anything.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3526; 'Ask., no. 1889.

kafā 'umm al-Baha mā baha

"What the mother of al-Baha is suffering is trouble enough for her." Said of one who has many problems and troubles, to a person who would wish him more ill as a punishment.

tslāben 'aleeha ṭyāb

"[They are] dogs in human shape [lit., dogs with clothes on

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 584.
² Cf. Juh., no. 2739.
them." Said of a disreputable group of people.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 746; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1022; Egypt: no. 1847.

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كلام يجمد على الشارب

kalāmen yajmed 'alaš-šāreb
"Words which set hard on the moustache." Said of serious talk which is claimed to be absolutely true and trustworthy.
NS: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 248.

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كلب تمام ولا كلب رخير

tsalben ta'as'as walā tsalben rubāz
"Better a questing dog than a dog which is lying down," i.e., one should strive for one's livelihood.
ta'as'as: to wander about in search of something, e.g., a dog in search of food.
Sim. WM: a post-classical proverb: Ta'ālibi, Tamtil, p. 354: كلب جويل خير من أسد رايض and Ibn 'abdi Rabbihi, p. 108: كلب طواف خير من أسد رايض; Iraq (Baghdad, Basrah and Mosul): Tik., no. 743; Hanafi, no. 2406; Dal., 1, no. 516; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3664; Fegh., no. 2828; Frayha, no. 2995; Landb., no. 192; Stephan, nos. 433, 522.
SMDW: Oman: Reinhardt, no. 83.

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كل يقره له قرون

kell(e)bgeren lah grün
"Every cow has horns."

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1 Also Juh., no. 1785.
2 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 591.
al-ṭalb mā yanbeh ella 'end beating 'ahaluh
"A dog barks only at the house of his family." Cf. the English proverb, "Every dog is valiant at his own door."²

NS: Mecca;³ Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 26; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 3670; Basrah, Dal., no. 514.
SMDW: Palestine: Stephan, no. 282.
Sim. WM: a classical proverb: M., no. 3009; Egypt: Taim., no. 1552; Palestine: Stephan, no. 458.

kellen buh ḥaggūh
"Everybody has his share [i.e., of unpleasant qualities such as anger, greed, etc. Lit. everybody's share is in him]."
Said, for example, when discovering that someone is not as amenable and docile as he may seem.

tsalb 'u demmi luh⁴
"[It is] a dog and was [shown] blood," i.e., a restless dog is provoked by the scent of blood. Said of a hot-tempered or troublesome person who over-reacts after being provoked. demmi: perf. passive of damma, to bleed, to make . . . bleed.

tsalb 'u luh selūgī
"[It is] a dog who has a greyhound with him." Said, e.g., of one who takes another person uninvited with him to a party.

tsalben yambeh lek wala tsalben yambeh 'aleek⁵

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¹ Cf. Juh., no. 1787.
² ODEP, p. 196.
³ Quraiş, no. 24 (1960), p. 16.
⁴ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 280.
⁵ Also Juh., no. 1711.
"A dog which barks for you is better than a dog which barks at you." Cf. the English proverb, "Better to have a dog fawn on you than bite (bark at) you."¹

Ident.: Lebanon: Frayha, no. 3005.

NS: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2808; Frayha, no. 330; Stephan, nos. 465, 523; Egypt: Taim., no. 2370; Fā’iqah, no. 1598.

"A dog that barks does not bite." Equivalent to the English proverb, "Barking dogs seldom bite."²

NS: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 586; Lebanon: Frayha, no. 2991; Egypt: Taim., no. 2442; Burck., no. 534; Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 341.

"Every [bunch of] dates has some that are shrivelled." Cf. the English proverb, "Every white has its black, and every sweet its sour."³

Sim. WM: Oman: Jayak., no. 250.

"Every grain [of corn] knows the way to the door (house) of its owners." E.g., if you give away money which is not your own, the real owners will be rewarded in the Hereafter.

¹ ODEP, p. 56.
² Ibid., p. 31.
³ Ibid., p. 885.
tdell: imperf. of dāll, to know the way.
halah: 'ahalah: 'ahlūhā

kellenḥader najem
"Everyone is under a [different] star," i.e., people once together have now been scattered in different regions or countries.
N.B. "Star" in this proverb does not have the astrological connotation which it would have in English.
Sim. WM: a classical proverb: M., no. 1488; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1550.

kellḥeren yešeb'uh (yīzīh)mengāruh
"The beak of a thoroughbred falcon is sufficient for it," i.e., it will obtain enough food with it.
ḥerr: free, but here it is a noun meaning "thoroughbred falcon".

kell(e) ḥeenyen tāb'etuh 'ajājetuh
"Each little fox is followed by its cloud of dust," i.e., everyone leaves his mark.

kel ḥneeni wešrab leban welbas jōkakk al-ḥamra
"Eat ḥneeni, and drink butter milk, and put on your red broadcloth jacket."

This statement is attributed to a boy from a rich family of 'Unaiżah in al-Quṣūm talking to a friend of his whose family were poor. He asked him to come out to play but

1 Cf. 'Ubūbi, 1, no. 616; Juh., no. 1741.
the boy from the poor family said he was hungry and cold, so the rich boy said, "Why don't you eat some hneeni . . ."

Cf. Marie Antoinette's famous saying when crowds were clamouring for bread, "Let them eat cake."

hneeni: a traditional Najdi meal made of dates mixed with ghee and bread.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 4677; Zamak., 2, no. 1523; Yemen: Akwa', 1, p. 129; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1728; Dabb., 2, p. 448; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1048; Frayha, no. 1513; Egypt: Suqair (quoted by Akwa'), p. 98; Bajuri, p. 120

kell kayyneh (kayneh) 'alyah mn 'Allah bayyneh (bayneh)
"God is aware of every wrong doing."

kell derrehe 'endah sadub
"There is a shark near every pearl." Cf. the English, "Every rose has a thorn."

kellen dün 'āni: "Everybody is able to look after his visitor" or "Everyone does what his responsibility demands." An optimistic proverb which claims that everyone may rise to what is demanded of him.

'āni: visitor; things which concern someone.

kell sābdzen lā yajza' memmen sbegeh
"A person who outstrips others should not be annoyed if others
outstrip him." Cf. no. 786.

"The animal which gets to the water first, may drink its fill [lit. the hand of each outstripping animal gives it to drink]," i.e., a man who works hard will be able to reap the benefits of his own effort.

tagabghā: (tagbiqūhā) from ḍabag (fus., ḍabag), originally, "to give to drink in the evening," but later meaning simply "to give to drink."

vedah: yadūhā.

"Each tree provides shelter [from wind and cold] for its own trunk," i.e., one must help one's family, relatives and dependants.

tdarri: imperf. of darra, to give dara (shelter).

"Nothing is too shy [to appear] at its [appointed] time."
A reference to the fact that certain animals and plants which only appear at particular seasons of the year can be relied upon to be seen as soon as these seasons begin.

kell šen: kullu šay'īn

"Anything [can be tolerated] but the touching of [one's] nose."

This proverb refers to the following story. A number

1 Cf. Juh., no. 1741.
2 In al-Jawf, ʾšin is used instead of šen or šayyen.
of men were once travelling when a gang of outlaws attacked them. They put up little resistance and soon were captured and taken away. On their way to captivity their captors showered them with all kinds of insults, but there was no reaction from these helpless people until one of the gang touched the nose of one of them. The offended man, at this final insult, broke his fetters, attacked his enemies who took to their heels, and freed his comrades. When his astonished comrades blamed him for not using his physical strength before, he answered, "Everything is tolerable except the touching of one's nose."

Kelleš: kullu šay'in.

Sim. MDW: two classical proverbs: M., no. 94; Zamak., 2, no. 766; Mecca: قطع الrous ولا هد السايم; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 633; Egypt: Taim., no. 1366.

Kell šayyen zahāwh temāmuh

"Everything is at its best when it has reached its climax [lit. at its completion]."

Kellš yanfa'

"Everything is of some use."


Kell (e)šgayyer buh melh 'ella wleed ad-dābb

"Every young thing is beautiful save a young snake."

Melh: beauty.

Sim. WM: Yemen: Goit., no. 918.
"Every man's children resemble him." Cf. no. 606.

kellen 'ala gader ḫāluh yešteki balwāwth

"Everybody complains of his misfortune in his own way." For instance, a baby cries when not given enough milk, a woman grumbles when she is not having a new dress, and so on.


kellen 'ala hammuh sara [sera in al-Jawf] wana 'ala hammi sareet

"Everybody went to do his own business, and I went to do mine."

kellen 'alech(e)mn az-zemān watṣer

"Everybody has their sufficient share of trouble."


kell (e)ḥamten lah magṭā

"Every piece of meat has a joint at which it should be cut."

kellen lō mōtuh bhawāwth mā māt

"If a man's death were decided by himself, he would never die."

bhawāwth: according to his wish; bhawāk: as you like.

1 Also Juh., no. 1707.
2 Cf. ibid., no. 1725.
3 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 623.
tselmeten ḥarša wala 'aşren temālīs
"One firm [lit. coarse] word is better than ten mild ones."
ḥarša: fem. of ḥaraš, rough, coarse, harsh.
Sim. WM: Lebanon: Frayha, no. 3015.

kell nafsen dwāh gdāh
"Everybody's [best] medicine is their [customary] nourishment."
Sim. MDW: G. Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 87:

kellen yākel men kweesuh we ywannes behseesuh
"Every man eats from his [own] knapsack and entertains with his own voice." Said of a group of people who entertain each other and do not cause any of their number any expense.
Sim. WM: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 446.

kellen yḥatsi 'ala gadr jmālūh
"Everyone talks [about the business of carrying goods] according to [the ability of] his own camels." For instance, a man who owns a strong and healthy camel talks of carrying a large load of goods and vice versa.

kellen yasni wala kellen yerūs
"Everybody can make a camel draw water from a well but not everybody can control water for irrigation." Some jobs can only be done by qualified people. This proverb is of an agricultural origin.
yasni: to drive water-drawing animals to and from a well.
yerūs: to irrigate by conducting water into the various

1 Also Juh., no. 1776.
2 Cf. ibid., no. 1784.
field-plots one by one. This operation, unlike the last mentioned, needs a certain skill.

kellen yeşubb men rāsuh šōt

"Everyone pitches in with his suggestion [lit. everyone pours a shout (or a sound) out of his head]." Often said by a person who asks people's advice about the way to treat a sick relative and is then puzzled by the numerous suggestions offered.


kellen ygaṭṭ‘ al-laḥam ‘ala gadr efmuḥ

"Each one cuts the meat [into pieces] to suit his [own] mouth."

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 1425; Frayha, no. 2960.

tsamm ḥarfren ṭāh fīma ḥafar

"Many a man who dug a pit he [himself] fell into it." Cf. the English proverb, "To dig a pit for another and fall into it oneself."

Sim. WM: a classical proverb: 'Ask., no. 1701; Zamak., 2, nos. 1302, 1303; a post-classical proverb: Ta‘ālibi, Kassul-kāss, p. 19, Mecca: Sāsi, no. 577; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2143; Tik., nos. 2218, 2567; Gul., p. 177; Dabb., 1, p. 81; Socin, no. 154; Yemen: Goit., no. 1346; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 5017; Fegh., nos. 1982, 2686; Egypt: Singer, no. 89.

1 Cf. Juh., no. 2600.
2 ODEP, p. 187.
Many a camel I have lost with the nomads." Said as an answer to one who complains about a trivial loss.

al-'erbān: the bedouins.

"Many an old she-camel [lives to] drink from the hide of a young camel [from a bucket made from its hide]," i.e., death does not always come according to age. Cf. the English proverb, "As soon goes the young sheep to the pot as the old."

fāter: old she-camel.

"Many a hand torments a foot." Many people act against their own interests.

ken reḥīm (nesīb) 'u lā tekūn eben 'amm

"Better to be a relative by marriage than a cousin." Ties are often supposed to be stronger between relatives by marriage than between blood relatives.

reḥīm: a relative by marriage.

Ibid., p. 753.

Also Juh., no. 1812.
"As if he were a mosquito in ad-De'īseh (var. . . in a wide plain)," i.e., do not take any notice of him or worry about his threats.

ad-De'īseh: a village in al-Kbūb (al-Buṣer) in the outskirts of Buraidah in al-Qaṣīm. A mosquito in ad-De'īseh is not noticed owing to the numerous mosquitoes in the swamps of this village.

ad-Dewiš: Faisal ad-Dewiš (or Duwiš), a chief of the Mutair tribe who, with his followers, participated in the Ikwan rebellion against 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Saud in 1929. He died in the same year. He was a formidable fighter and a clever conspirator who caused Ibn Saud great trouble, and to have slain him would have been a tremendous feat.

Kleeb: the famous pre-Islamic hero Kulaib b. Wā'il, chief of the Taglib tribe.

The version in which Kleeb is mentioned is NS in

Egypt: Taim., no. 937, and Lebanon: Frayha, no. 1219.
SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 582; 'Ask., no. 316; Zamak., ı, no. 28.

"As if he were carrying the sky (var. the world) on his head."
Said of an extremely arrogant person.

"[Like] a customer's weight." Shopkeepers are generally thought to be more generous in measuring cereals, coffee, etc. to their regular customers. This phrase is said when something (e.g. a cup of tea or coffee) is overfilled.

"When you stand in need of asafoetida, [do not hesitate to] put it in your nose," i.e., in spite of its unpleasant smell, one should endure this disadvantage for its medical benefit. (People in Najd had a practice of smelling asafoetida gum for a long time to prevent toxic effects from wounds, etc.) Said to someone who stands in need of someone whom he does not like, and has no alternative but to swallow his pride.

"When the door of [overweening] ambition opens itself to you, close the door of despair on it," i.e., you should curb unrealistic ambitions by convincing yourself that they are impossible to attain.

"He who separates fighting people (var. a jailer) is bound to receive a blow."

Cf. ibid., 1, no. 643; Juh., no. 1826.
"A living [person] will [one day] see the rain," i.e., better days will come. Cf. the English proverb, "Live, horse, and you'll get grass."\(^1\)

"Let not guesswork be your guide in life and cool weather prevent you from taking your water-skin with you," i.e., the weather may change and become hot and you may need water to drink. This is a line of verse from a poem composed by the well-known poet 'Abd Allah b. Ṣbayyil.\(^3\) Cf. nos. 730, 1077.

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\(\text{hagwāt:} \) plur. of hagweh, from the verb haga, to think; e.g.,

hagwetī ennuh rāḥ, I think he went away;

hageet, I thought.

\(\text{ṣemīl:} \) milk-skin.

\(\text{al-barādī:} \) al-barād, cool weather.


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"Do not betray and do not be afraid ," i.e., if you do not betray you will not be afraid. An innocent man should not worry, for in the end his innocence will be realized.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 28.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 636.

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"Do not like and do not dislike," i.e., do not be over joyful

\(^1\) ODEP, p. 474.

\(^2\) Also Juh., no. 1817.

\(^3\) See K. M. al-Faraj, Dīwān an-Nabat, I (Damascus, 1952), p. 211.
when something happens; it may turn out to be unpleasant, and on the other hand do not be sad that something has happened, for perhaps it may turn out to be to your advantage. Ident.: Kuwait: Nāri, 2, p. 28.

لا تحرّك داب نيمه

lā t-ḥarrets dabben neemeh
"Do not stir a sleeping serpent." Equivalent to the English, "Let sleeping dogs lie."¹

لا تحقر من النّّار شرّه ولا من البني صغيره

lā t-ḥager mnan-nār šrayyreh wala mn al-bniyy ṣgayyreh
"Neither underestimate a little spark of fire nor a young girl," i.e., as a little spark can cause a great fire, a young girl can cause a lot of evil.

The first sentence is expressed with different wording in the classical proverb, al-šrayr biḏiḏiṣ ṣagār: see M., no. 1953; ‘Ask., no. 1011.
ał-bniyy: girls.

لا تحك بالبلن وانت حويشي

lā taḥakkak bal-bell wa(a)nt ḥweesi²
"Do not rub yourself against [fully grown] camels when you are [only] a young camel," i.e., be careful when approaching someone stronger than yourself.
al-bell: al-‘ibil, camels.
ḥweesi: dimin. of ḥaṣi, young camel.
taḥakkak: tataḥakkak
SMDW: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 47; two classical proverbs: M., nos. 115, 2933.

لا نزاع (تعداد) من إذا قال فعل

lā tṣā‘em (t‘aned) man ṭidā qāla fa‘al

¹ Browning, no. 8169.
² Cf. Juh., no. 1868.
"Do not set your face against one who will do what he says," i.e., do not challenge one who has the power to carry out his threats.

_tzā'ēm:_ imperf. of _zā'am_, to challenge in argument.

Ident.: _Baghdad_: Tik., no. 1789; _Hanafi_, 2583.

_NS_: _Syria_: Manch. MS, fol. 114.

_SMDW_: _Yemen_: Goit., no. 987.

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لا تطَأِح عبد ولا تسابق مره

_lā t-tāreḥ 'abd 'ulā tsābedz mereh_

"Do not compete with a slave or a woman [lit. do not play the _trāh_ game with a slave and do not race against a woman]," because if you lose you suffer humiliation, and if you win there is no honour in it. This proverb is rarely used.

_t-tāreḥ:_ imperf. of _tārah_, to play the game of _at-trāh_ (enṭārah or _treḥi_), a game played by two persons each of whom tries to throw the other down.

_SMDW_: _Yemen_: Goit., no. 988.

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لا تطع تحرم

_lā tatma' tehram_

"Do not covet, or you will be denied it."

Sim. WM: _Egypt_: Bajūrī, p. 16: الحریس محمّد: لا تحاب الماء پذِّك الغذیر المطر امامي لى يشرب منه

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لا تَأَشَف الـ _edd_ يدْجِب الـ _gadīr_ المـ _metār_ ما _dām_ _lalli_ yaṣrebūnūh

"Do not spurn [water from] the well because you are attracted by a puddle; a puddle does not last for people to drink from." One should not leave what is certain for something uncertain. Cf. nos. 721, 1077.

_SMDW_: _a classical proverb_: M., no. 2432; 'Ask., no. 1198; _Egypt_: Taim., no. 1599.
la tafrah be'jelt 'ummek 'ala at-tannur tarawh men gell mā ma'ah

"Do not be pleased at the speed with which your mother bakes; it is only because she has but little [flour]."

men gell: min qillat

NS: Lebanon: Faraj, p. 334.

lā tegul burr lama (leen) tūtsi

"Do not say 'it is wheat' until you have tied up [its sack]."

Equivalent to the English, "Do not count your chickens before they are hatched."

tūtsi: imperf. of 'ūtsa, fūs., 'awka, to tie up a sack full of grain, flour, etc., or a sheep-skin full of water or milk, with a cord (ṣūka).

Sim. WM: Yemen: Goit., no. 982.

SMDW: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 374; Oman: Reinhardt, no. 120; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 796; Hanafi, nos. 1639, 2589, 2591; Socin, no. 548; Syria: Aşqar, nos. 3813, 4863, 4861; Regh., nos. 2052, 2416; Frayha, no. 3127; Huxley, no. 56; Tallq., no. 149; Egypt: Baq., p. 244:V

lā temūt ya ḥmār lama yejik ar-rebī'

"Do not die O donkey until the spring comes!" Said by someone who badly needs something but is told to wait a long time before he can have it.

Sim. WM: a post-classical proverb: Abšíhi, 1, p. 34: اعد يا حمار حتى يبيض لك الشمـيـر; Kuwait: Māri, 1, p. 141, no. 61; Yemen: Akwā', 1, no. 485; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik.,

1 Cf. ibid., no. 1850.

2 Cf. ibid., no. 2122; also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 653.
"Do not ask a vagabond where he is going." The origin of this proverb is apparently the rhetorical question which occurred in the line of verse composed by Abūn-Našnāš an-Nahšali:

واسئلة ابن ارتحالي وسائل ومن يسأل الصالوك أين مذاهب؟

Tabrīzī explained the meaning of the last sentence by saying, "أي يجب ألا يسأل الصالوك عن مذاهبهم وطرقهم لأنهم لا تعلم"

(The su‘ulūks should not be asked about where they are going because it is not known (even to themselves).)²

"Do not ask a bride-groom [about his marriage] on his wedding night," i.e., it is too early for him to know.

tanšd: (in pause tanšed) imperf. of nešad, to ask.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3498; ‘Ask., no. 1898; Zamak., 2, no. 872; Mosul: Gul., p. 162: لا تندح الكني بيوئما: والراغي يبسوتو; Egypt: Taim., no. 2482.

¹ See A. al-İşfahānī, al-‘Agānī (Cairo, 1950), 12, p. 172.
"When we have plenty of corn we shall repay the creditor."
(Lit. When corn (or wheat) becomes plentiful . . . ) i.e., we will give others their due when we can.

"If your luck is generous it will serve you [lit. it sells and buys for you], you will then gain profits from all [the remote] parts of the earth."

This proverbial verse is expressed in old, post-classical and contemporary proverbs with different wording. See 'Ask., nos. 122, 436; Ṭaliq., no. 144; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 107; Mosul: Socin, no. 407; Egypt: Taim., no. 2293; Littm., no. 42.

"[He has] neither a large body nor a pleasant face."

This saying is attributed to 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān when he interviewed al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf before appointing him governor of Iraq. It is believed that 'Abd al-Malik was at first far from being impressed by the appearance of

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1 Cf. Juh., no. 388.
al-Ḥajjāj, who was said to be a one-eyed, short, and rather ugly man. Al-Ḥajjāj then answered him, "Having large bodies is a camel's quality and having a pleasant face is a woman's quality."

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3828; a post-classical proverb: Ta'ālibī, Tamtil, p. 337.

لا جل عين كفر

لاجل عين أكل من

"For the sake of one eye [one person] a town is honoured." Said, for example, when a group of people are given some benefits only for the sake of one of them.

NS: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 368; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1641; Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 91; مكة: ساسی، 368: بغداد: حانفي، 1641:Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 91; Egypt: Taim., no. 2487.


لبنة الزروع يسقي الفرع

بغداد: حانفي، 2723: Tik., no. 2632; Yemen: Goit., no. 1248; G. Syria: Aşqar, nos. 1275, 1405; Fegh., no. 1961; Frayha, nos. 2297, 2865, 2868; Huxley, no. 62; Egypt: Taim., no. 2488.

لا حجت البقر على قرن

"When cows make the Pilgrimage on their horns." Cf. the English, "If pigs had wings."

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 18, no. 22.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Zamak., 2, no. 214; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 134; Dabb., 2, p. 368; لم يبيض الديك عالود: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2971; Frayha, 

Cf. ibid., no. 279; also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 40.
"When Fate decrees, [one's] eyesight becomes blind," i.e., if that which is fore-ordained has to happen, he may do something fatal despite his good eyesight.

This proverb is originally a Ḥadīt related by al-Ḥākim from Ibn Ṭabīb. However, Ta'ālibi attributes it to Ibn Ṭabīb himself.

NS: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 304; Yemen: Akwā‘, 1, no. 358; Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., no. 122; Hanafī, no. 56; Dal., 1, no. 84; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 196; Egypt: Fā‘īqa, no. 747; a post-classical proverb: Zamak., 1, no. 485.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: M., no. 48; 'Ask., no. 113.

"[She is] neither 'This' nor the daughter of 'Who'!"

This proverb can hardly be interpreted in English.

Cf. no. 770.

SMDW: a classical proverb: Ta‘ālibi, Kāṣṣ-ul-Kāṣṣ, p. 25: 3

See I. al-'Ajluni, op. cit., no. 281.

See Ta‘ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 41.

Cf. Juh., no. 1873.
When a thing exceeds the limits it turns into its opposite," i.e., it causes the opposite effect; for example, too much joking can cause anger instead of enjoyment.

NS: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1038; Tik., no. 1243.

If the head is safe, a cap is [easily] found for it," i.e., one should care about the important things.

If you see a tall man who is intelligent, mention God's name [in order not to put the evil eye on him]," i.e., you will not see a tall man who is wise very often.

SMDW: Mosul: Socin, nos. 377, 379; Palestine.

If you see a wise man, you will see that care has rendered him very thin. The comfortable [person] is he who is devoid of sense."

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 1578; 'Ask., no. 139; Ibn 'Aṣim, no. 101; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 229; Egypt: Taim., no. 1842; Bājūri, p. 19: 

1 Stephan, "Lunacy in Palestine Folklore," JPOS, 7, no. 19.
2 Cf. Juh., no. 2239.
"If you notice that they [i.e., people with whom you are eating] do not like you, then eat and stare at them (var. people who do not like you, eat their dinner and stare at them)," i.e., do not care about them. If they have already taken a hostile attitude towards you, it will not make them change their minds if you are shy and diffident.

ma yabünêk: they do not like you (lit. they do not want you).
łayyr 'uyûnek: stare (lit. make your eyes fly).

SMDW: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 29; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1622; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 162; Fegh., no. 1530; Frayha, no. 310; Baum., no. 197; Egypt: Taim., no. 219; Littm., no. 447.

"When the Milky Way is over the navel, then it is very likely that the husbandman has spread [the unripe dates on house roofs in order that the sun should soften them]."

At the end of the summer the Milky Way is usually seen in Najd in the middle of the sky, or as this proverb puts it, "over the navel," i.e., if you lie down on your back and look at the sky you find it just above your body. This time of the year coincides with the season of date harvest (al-jedād, fuš., judād (جدار) or ṣrām (صرام)). It is a common practice for farmers in Najd to put unripe dates

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1 Cf. ibid., no. 353.
2 Also 'Ubūdi, "al-Amtāl al-‘Ammiyah," al-‘Arab, 2, p. 18, no. 1.
on roofs. These dates are called رحم (rejî).

This proverb is attributed to the bedouins.

al-Mejarr: رش, al-Majarrah, the Milky Way: it is believed by the common people in Najd that when the prophet Abraham wanted to sacrifice his son Ishmael and God sent a ram as ransom for him, the ram was pulled for a distance, and the way along which it was pulled became bright in the sky.

al-mesarr: the navel; not used in ordinary speech, as-serreh and as-serr are used instead.

tara: then, equivalent to نا in the conditional sentence.

al-hżeeri: dimin. of al-hzerei, the townsman, the sedentary man.

tsed: gad, is likely to be, nearly, has . . .

SMDW: a classical proverb: سطى هجر ترطب هجر

"If your beard is sure to be plucked out anyway, let it be plucked out soon [lit. be with the first men]," i.e., if you cannot prevent an evil from befalling you, it is better to get it over quickly.

The plucking out of a man's beard used to be considered a humiliating punishment.

mantufe: object partic. of netaf; however, it is here used to mean, "going to be, certain to be". The repetition of the

Dickson tells of a little incident which took place in 1935 in Eastern Arabia, in which Amir 'Abdullah b. Jluwi, Governor of al-Hasa, ordered that the beard of a certain Falah abu Ja'sha should be shaved off every Friday for a month. This was a punishment for Falah's negligence in his duty. He was told to conduct a prisoner (who stole two camels) to Hufuf. While Falah was having a siesta during the heat of the day, the prisoner managed to escape. See Dickson, op. cit., p. 265.
word is to emphasize the meaning.

kallek: be (lit. let you)

SMDW: Mosul: Socin, no. 566; Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 86:

If your opponent is the cadi, what is the point of litigation?" I.e., you should give in as there is no point in opposing one who has the upper hand.

NS: G. Syria: Aşıqar, no. 925; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 314.


"If you have a friend who is always promising you gifts, make straight for him to get what you want before he makes for you."

'tenşuh: go to him; from neşa, to go intentionally to someone; to proceed straight to someone.

"If you are thinking of doing something, do not act slowly," i.e., do it now.

hazīha: thinking of doing it (anything)
bālek: beware; equivalent to the classical ēyāk ān
tawanna: tata'annā

"When you laugh wink at me [so that I may laugh with you]."

1 Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 47.
This is often quoted after the phrase, "Like a deaf dog . . ." See no. 936. Cf. nos. 616, 936, 987.

لا طاع الجمل كثر السكائن

"When the camel falls many knives [are unsheathed]." Cf. the English proverb, "If a man once fall, all will tread on him."¹

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, no. 27.
Sim. WM: Yemen: Goit., no. 85; Akwa', 1, no. 214; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 320; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 372; Tik., no. 159; Dabb., 1, p. 37; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 194; Fegh., no. 1954; Burton, no. 56; Stephan, nos. 59, 101; Baum., no. 554; Egypt: Taim., no. 2542; Littm., no. 52. SMDW: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 690; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 1011.

لا تال حمن طي الريكي طي ترى طي الريكي طاح

"If one of the stones of the well falls, then all its stones will fall." The stones of a well support each other. If one stone falls, the others will also fall.

S.G. Champion, op. cit., p. 27, no. 317.
called nakkar or nekār, and a donkey which kneels down without warning is called rabbāz.

NS: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 61, no. 14; Basrah: Dal., 1, n. 89.

When she brokewind (var. after she had broken wind), she closed her thighs." Said of one who too late regrets what he did or said thoughtlessly to another.

ṣammat: ṣamm, to close (e.g., a fist, mouth, legs.)

NS: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1442; Gul., p. 94; Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 222, no. 33.

Sim. WM: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 895; Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 27.

When Canis Major rises, then you may fill up the [pouch behind] the cummerbund."

If a man wants to harvest dates and does not have a basket (met-han, see proverb no. 1033), he then may put on a belt and tie it round his shirt tightly so that the space between stomach and shirt is wide enough to act as a pouch for the dates.

Ripe dates are abundant at the time of the appearance of this constellation in Najd.

When Gemini rises, then you may fill your pocket with dates." I.e., there will be enough ripe dates to fill a pocket, but

1 Cf. Juh., no. 740.
not enough to be gathered in large quantities.

hoza: pocket, not used apart from this saying.

When Canopus rises, you may gather [lit. touch] dates at night." The appearance of Canopus coincides with the time at which ripe dates are plentiful to such an extent that the harvester can find them merely by groping in the dark.

Musil recorded the following version: "When Canopus rises, trust not the creek and gather dates even at night."

S-heel: Suhail, Canopus. Lane says, "it rises aurorally in central Arabia early in August . . . At the time of its rising the fruits ripen."

However Musil says, "Canopus reigns for forty nights after which the Pleiades take the helm for twenty five nights, to be followed by Gemini for an equal period. So the period of Canopus, the Pleiades, and Gemini, lasts for 90 days. This season is what is called the summer, corresponding approximately October, November, and December. But 'Abdulla b. Kamis mentions 25 August specifically as the day on which Canopus rises, which is most likely and which shows that the appearance of Canopus marks the final period of summer.

NS: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 65.
"When the two stars of Canis rise, you may find a handful of ripe dates in every two medds." Dates start to ripen when Canis is first visible in the sky.

al-Kleebeen: al-Kulaybayn, lit., the two little dogs, two stars which appear in the sky at the same time, known in Arabic as الكلب الأكبر the constellation Canis Major with its main star Sirius and الكلب الأسمر the constellation Canis Minor with its main star Procyon. They rise on 12 August.

hafneh: a large handful.

meddeen: dual of medd (mudd), a dry measure (about 2 pounds); a quantity of grain, dates, etc. equal to the filling of a medd.

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لا 'أد آلْحَمْرَر وَالْصَّدْرُ! "May the donkey not return, nor its driver!" Said of a person of whom one is glad to be rid.

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لا عَدَّةَ الدِّرَاَيَّا ما عَدَّةْ رَتَالُ "When villages are counted, Wtal is not included," i.e., it is too small and unimportant to be considered a village. Said metaphorically of someone whom the speaker considers insignificant.

Wtal: (pronounced 'utal) a village in 'Yün al-Jwa in northern Qašīm.

SMDW: two post-classical proverbs: Ţāliq., no. 88; Abšihi, 1, p. 35; نَذَكَرَا المَدِينَةُ جَائِتُ القُرُّي تَحِجُّلِ; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 62, no. 144; Oman: Jayak., no. 112., Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 673; Dabb., 2, p. 557: نُذِكُّرَا كُلَّ الْجَرَابِيَّاتِ: عِدَّةٌ كُلُّ الْجَرَابِيَّاتِ: 1


3 Cf. Juh., no. 1912.
"If she [i.e., your mare] bolts [towards the battlefield] while you are on her back, then show fight," i.e., when you are obliged to participate in some action it is better to behave as if you have chosen to do it, and to make a virtue of necessity.

'zemāt: she ran against the will of her rider.

entak: imper. of 'entaka, to shout one's war cry (nakwāh).

Members of each clan have their own distinctive war cry.

"When the cat is away, play O ye mice." Equivalent to the English, "When the cat’s away, the mice will play."¹

Ident.: Mecca: Sāsi no. 302.

NS: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 295; Ḫarāq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1340; Tik., no. 1503; Dabb., 2, p. 291; Gul., p. 95; G. Syria: Stephan, no. 412; Landb., no. 138; Frayha, no. 2504; Baum., no. 416; Aṣqar, no. 2991; Egypt: Taim., no. 2033; Amin, p. 66.

Sim. WM: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 294; Goit., no. 78.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Abšīhi, 1, p. 36:

¹ ODEP, p. 109.
"When your boat is sinking then stamp hard on its rudder," i.e., since there is no hope of saving it, make it sink quickly; for example, if you are already heavily in debt and there is little hope for you of being able to give your creditors their due, spend still more freely.


لَا غَلِبَكْ بِالْكَثِّرِ فَنَاغَبِلِهِمْ بَالْسَمِّ

lā(e)glebōk bal-keter fe(e)glebhum bas-samen

"If you are overwhelmed by the number of guests, give them food with a lot of fat in it [lit. if they overwhelm you by their large number, overpower them with fat]," i.e., if you have many guests and you do not have enough food for them all, then give them what you have and increase the quantity of ghee on it. When they eat they will soon feel satisfied, for too much ghee with food reduces the appetite.

لِنَفَّاتِ النَّفَثِ مَا يَنْفَعُ الصُّوُّوت

lā fāt al-fūt mā yanfa' aš-ṣōt

"Calling for help too late is of no avail."

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 56, no. 127; Iraq: Hanafi, no. 1718; Dal., 1, no. 72; Žafīrī, no. 210.

لِلَّى قَرْنُ الْقَلْبِ سَارَتِ الْرِّجْلِ

lā fazz al-galb sārat ar-rejel

"When the heart remembers [someone] the foot responds [lit. walks]." Cf. no. 522.

fazz: to move, to be excited with emotion.

لَا قَارِى وَلَا حَصْطٌ لِلَّلَّهِ عَزِّ وَجَلِی

lā dzārī wala mhețṭen lal-akwān š-ḥafeh

"He will neither read [i.e., the Qur’ān and religious teachings with the scholars] nor invite them to a good meal [lit. he will not read nor offer the readers of religious studies a s-ḥafeh [full of food]]." Said of someone who is absolutely passive and will not bestir himself.

mḥēṭṭ: active participle of ḥatt, to put; here means "to offer or give a meal".

s-ḥafeh: a wide wooden plate, formerly commonly used in Najd. The word is classical and is mentioned in the Qur’ān:1 "يطاف عليهم صحاف من ذهب وأثراب... "الآية"

al-akwān: applied to those who study, read, and are concerned with religious knowledge.

Cf.nos. 742, 787.

771 لا أن الصياح بصياح تسلم
lādż as-ṣyāḥ beṣyāḥen taslam2
"Meet the outcry with [your own] outcry and you will be safe," i.e., attack is the best method of defence.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, no. 164.
SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 504; 'Ask., no. 222; Zamak., 1, no. 38; Egypt: Fā‘iqa, no. 88.

772 لى قام أبا زيد قوة سرئي بها ميران أبا زيد متى يقر؟
lā gām Ebdā Zeeden gōmen sarrenī baha meer enn Ebdā Zeeden meta yegūm?
"When Ebdā Zeed rises to his feet, I am very pleased, but when does he rise to his feet?" Said of one who, when he agrees to something, does it well, but who rarely agrees in the first place.

meer: originally mā geer, but.

1 Qur’ān, 43:71.
2 Cf. Ubūḍi, 1, no. 659; also Juh., no. 1830.
"If you [can] catch the dog, lop off its ears." An unsympathetic saying directed to a person who has suffered some depredation but who will never catch the culprit.

gezabt: gezab, to hold: fuṣ., qabada.
al-j'ari: a rarely-used word for "dog".

SMDW: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 22, no. 32; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 3203; Fegh., no. 300; Frayha, no. 2659; Egypt: Taim., nos. 600, 667; Burck., no. 56; Littm., nos. 340, 341; Fā'iqa, no. 793.

"If you cut off the head, the tail will not live."

"If you cut off my head with [your] folly, when will you put it back?"

"If your guest is content with water, give him water until he is [fully] satisfied." People are expected to be generous when they are asked for a cheap thing.

"Meet the water carrier with water," i.e., take water for him. A water carrier may be thirsty even though he is carrying water.

lā dzene' kāterkum bal-ma fa(a)rwūh
"If your guest is content with water, give him water until he is [fully] satisfied." People are expected to be generous when they are asked for a cheap thing.

kāter: guest.

lā dzene' kāterkum bal-ma fa(a)rwūh
"If your guest is content with water, give him water until he is [fully] satisfied." People are expected to be generous when they are asked for a cheap thing.

kāter: guest.
"Too much twisting breaks the rope [lit. when the twisting is much, the rope breaks]," i.e., one should not be too hard with one's children or juniors.

al-ḥkumeh: the state of the rope when it is fully wound; from ḥkam, to wind a rope until its cords hold fast.

When God's bounty [i.e., pasture] is abundant, the animals at pasture become content." Since they have plenty of grass, they will be satisfied no matter how greedy they are; and they are never too many.

"Only tight-fisted men acquire money." Said when reproaching a spendthrift. Cf. the English proverb, "Who will not keep a penny, never shall have many."

"When I die I shall not care about rainfall, nor about who digs my grave, nor who buries me." Cf. the French phrase

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1 Cf. Juh., no. 1691.
2 ODEP, p. 417.
"Après nous le déluge."

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2205; Hanafi, no. 1236; Dabb., 2, p. 439:

من بعد حماري ما يظل حمارة شهد

المالك ويقع عالمين نار

G. Syria: Aṣqar, nos. 1210, 176; Frayha, nos. 3785, 922; Stephan, no. 195; Mak, nos. 8, 34;

Tarjamān, p. 138:

"When the cat is praised, it shits into the flour." Said of those who change for the worse in their work, manners, etc. in consequence of praise.

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2947; Baum., no. 366; Stephan, no. 395; Egypt: Burck., no. 345; Littm., no. 151.

SMDW: Iraq: Hanafi, no. 2068; Dal., 1, no. 628; Dabb., 2, p. 422:

لَا مِدْح الْبَسَّ رَق بالْطَلْحِين

لأ مِدْح الْبَسَّ رَق بالْطَلْحِين

"When it blows it faces caves," i.e., a violent wind may gust in anywhere. This proverb is often used in speaking of a strong wind which appears to face (i.e. to blow) from all directions.

Sim. WM: Yemen: Akwa‘, 1, no. 363; Mosul: Dabb., 1, p. 628; Egypt: Burck., no. 24.

"If you commission one cameleer, commission ten."

Cameleers were famous for not keeping their promises. The proverb advises one to take a promise from several camel-eers so that at least one will not fail to turn up.

jammāl: a camel driver whose occupation is to use his camel
for transporting hay, straw, wood, building material, etc. The cameleers in Najd formed a district social group.

لَيْ رَافَعَ كَيْرَا نَوَافَقِه
lā wāfagk keeren fwāfdzuḥ
"If you meet a good thing introduce yourself," i.e., if you come across a good thing do not hesitate to benefit from it.

لا يجزع سابق مَنْ سيقه
lā yajza' sābdzen memmen sbegeh
"A man who outstrips others should not be annoyed if others outstrip him." This proverb is a version of proverb no. 687 above.

لا يهون، ولا يلقي حصى
lā yehūs 'u lā ylagget ḫaṣa
"[He] neither fights nor gathers stones [for others to fight with]." Cf. the English proverb, "He is a fifth wheel." SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2632; Dabb., 2, p. 2632; Gul., p. 161: لا يسج ولا لم حجار; الخ يعطي الجناب; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1171; Frayha, no. 3079; Manch. MS, fol. 110; Egypt: Taim., no. 1428.

Cf. nos. 742, 770.

لا Hass صوابه
lahās ṣawāibuḥ
"He [it, she, etc.] licked his wound," i.e., his injuries are healed. Cf. the English phrase, "to pick up one's crumbs [i.e., to pick up or recover strength or health]." N.B. This does not imply the same meaning as the English expression, "he went away to lick his wounds."

لحم العلماء (الشاعر) مسمم
lahām al-ʿulama (al-meṣāyek) masmūm

ODEF, p. 623.
"The flesh of religious scholars (‘ulama) is poisoned," i.e.,
one should not backbite them; to do so is offensive and
wrong. Cf. the French, "qui mange du pape en meurt."

Ident.: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1649.

اللحم نطف من القدر

al-lḥameh teneṭt mn al-dżeder

"The piece of meat leaps from the pot," i.e., one feels a
strong affinity with one's relatives. The proverb refers to
the jumping of a piece of meat when quickly cut from an
animal's body as if it wishes to go back to it.

al-lḥameh: also metaphorically used for one's relatives.
teneṭṭ: imperf. of natt, to jump.
al-dżeder: al-qidr

Cf. the English proverb, "Blood is thicker than water."

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3053; ‘Ask., no. 1909;
Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 21, no. 29; Iraq: Hanafi, nos. 125,
1257, 2247; Tik., nos. 974, 1651, 2326; Dal., 1, no. 88;
Socin, no. 196; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 205, 713, 2048;
Fegh., nos. 966, 976; Frayha, no. 521; Egypt: Taim., nos.
195, 1768, 2672; Littm., no. 488; Fā’īqa, no. 2011.

لاحمة لا تعلب مسكت عند

lḥamat t’alab maskūten ‘anah

"[Like] fox's flesh: nothing has been said regarding it,"
i.e., eating its flesh is a matter of indifference from the
legal or religious point of view.

t’alab: ta’lab: not used in ordinary speech, ḥeṣni and
ebal-ḥseen are used instead. See proverbs nos. 257, 682,
934.

NS: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3752; Fegh., no. 2894.

Also ‘Ubūdi, no. 678; cf. Juh., no. 1877.
lehyeten ganmeh

"[He is] a gaining beard," i.e., he is a good man.

lehyeh: beard. It here signifies "man" by synecdoche.

lehyeten yerzyah medd aš-še'ir weš yeze'lah?

"What will anger a beard [i.e., a man] that can be placated with a pound [lit. medd] of barley?" Said of a person too easily placated.

yerzyah: yurđīha.

medd: see nos. 427, 761.

yeze'lah: yez'elha: makes it angry

yal-sān habreh

"The tongue is [only] a piece of meat," i.e., it is an insignificant member which cannot be expected to exercise tact and self-control at all times. Some people add: ما بغي تال "It says what it wants to say."

lsānuh yelūṭ edānuh

"His tongue reaches his ears," i.e., he is talking very loudly.

yelūṭ: not used in everyday speech in this sense.

edānuh: his ears. edān plur. of 'eden.

legmet al-yetim tsebireh

"An orphan's mouthful is [considered] large." Cf. nos. 415, 943, 959.

legmeten 'ala fāgeh 'azyan men myat nāgeh

1 Cf. 'Ubūdi, no. 681.
"One mouthful [of food] when badly needed is better than a hundred she-camels."

"Do you want to make love or do you want to run races [with her]?": A man married a woman without knowing that she was lame. When he discovered this defect, he took her father to court. There the latter protested, "Do you want to make love with my daughter or do you want to run races with her?"

"The smallest ants have a share in man's property," i.e., it is impossible to prevent the weak from sharing in the wealth of the rich.

"A guest has not been entertained well until his mount has been entertained well."

"Were the bedouins to have the dates they would not sell them [to others]."

Although Najdi bedouins eat a lot of dates, they do not grow palm trees themselves owing to their unsettled pattern of life. They have to buy them from farmers and palm-grove owners. Their predilection for dates, however, is well known.

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1 Cf. Juh., no. 1898.
2 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 683.
"If cursing could cause harm [lit. hit] it would have harmed the wolf," i.e., malediction and ill-wishing are things that have no practical effect.

People often curse the wolf, especially when it attacks their flocks. This proverb is rare.

ad-d'ā: often used for invoking God's name against someone. It can also mean "wishing good to someone by praying to God."

šāb: ʿašab, to hit (a target or an aim).

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1686; Socin, nos. 32, 33; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 424; Fegh., no. 2641; Burton, no. 13; Baum., no. 514; Egypt: Taim., nos. 631, 2553, 1228; Fāʾiqa, no. 1587.

لو به خير ما عانه الظبر

lā buh keer mā ʿafuh aṭ-ṭeer

"Had there been any good in it [i.e., something], birds would not have refused it."

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 42; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3820; Stephan, no. 713; Manch. MS, fol. 92; Fegh., no. 2994; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 378; Egypt: Taim., no. 2555; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1883; a post-classical proverb: Abūlhi, 1, p. 31.


لو بهم عاقل ما اخذوا صولي

lā behum ʿadzīlen mā(a)ṣadaw šāli!

1 Cf. Juh., no. 1902.
"Had there been even one intelligent man among them, they would not have taken my stone!"

This proverb derives from the following tale: a group of men were playing a children’s game for which they needed a stone. They took a stone from one of their number but this angered him and he protested by walking out. He sat down alone some distance away. A newcomer was surprised to see these grown up men playing a childish game and spoke to the aggrieved man about them. He began by saying, "Look how foolish these people are! Playing like children!" The aggrieved man mumbled, "They are all stupid. Had there been a single wise man among them they would not have taken my stone!" See no. 488.

لَوْ تَدْرُى وَشَنَّي جَرْجِيرَكَ مَا عَطِيَتِهِ بِعِيْرَكَ

لَوْ تَدْرُى وَشَنَّي جَرْجِيرَكَ مَا عَطِيَتِهِ بِعِيْرَكَ

"If you knew what [good things were] in your water-cress (eruca sativa) you would not give it to your camel," i.e., you would eat it yourself.

weš: interrogative particle, originally: آي شى?

jarjir: (known in Mecca and Egypt as jirjir) the garden variety (eruca sativa) of eruca as distinct from the wild variety or eruca sylvestris.

Said in its literal meaning, that is emphasizing the use of this vegetable.

لَوْ تَدْرُي وَشَنَّي جَرْجِيرَكَ مَا عَطِيَتِهِ بِعِيْرَكَ

lotwi ِلا َكَلُب ِلا َسَلَوْقِي

"[He is like] a half-bred hound. It is neither a dog nor a greyhound."

NS: Kuwait: Ṣa‘īd, 1, p. 105, no. 1.

1 Also ibid., no. 1915.
2 Also ibid., no. 1919.
"Had it not been for him who educated me, I would not have known my Lord."

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 233; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1720; Tik., no. 1917; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 3840; Manch. MS, fol. 91.

"Had it not been for their horses, we would have knocked them down [one by one]," i.e., defeated them. Said of one who tries to find excuses for his failure.

"Had it not been for small money, big money would not have come." Cf. the English, "Look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves."

"[Even] if he takes my clothes," i.e., I do not know him at all.

Also ibid., no. 1906; 'Ubūdi, no. 687.
811

lō ydarr 'alal-jarḥ tsān yabra (yeswi)

"If he were put on a wound it would heal up," i.e., he is very pious. Cf. no. 1177.

ydarr: passive imperf. of darr, to sprinkle or put a powder on something.

yeswi: imperf. of 'ašwa, to heal.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Mārī, 2, p. 233; Egypt: Amin, p. 434;
G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 3137.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 2442; a post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 330: Mosul: Dabb., 1, p. 69:

812

al-leel ma‘ men ‘adā buh

"The night is on the side of him who raids in it."

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 258:

813

leelt ad-dakleh jāha al-ḥeeż

"At [her] wedding night she menstruated." Said of anything which is not available when needed.

Ident.: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1776.

814

mā(a)ḥaden yakteb rūḥuh šedziyy

"Nobody puts himself down as unlucky," i.e., nobody admits his own shortcomings, speaks unfavourably or himself, or behaves in a manner contrary to his own interests. Cf. the English, "No man is bound to criminate himself."²

Sim. WM: Mecca: Hurg., no. 15; Sāsi, no. 236; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 718; Frayha, no. 427; Egypt: Taim., no. 1031;

¹ Also ibid., no. 690.
² ODEP, p. 570.
mā(a)błāk sāket!

"How sweet you are [when] silent!" Said to one who is quick to forget his manners and often talks in a rude way.

mā(a)dri ana arūḥ liās-Sām wella ar-ja al-bartseh

"I do not know whether I shall go to Syria or open the pool [and water the field]." Said by a very busy man. It is also said jocularly of one who does not differentiate between ordinary routine work and something important. This proverb is an example of anti-climax.

al-bartseh: the pond. Every farm in Najd has a pond which is filled with water brought up from wells (traditionally by means of water-drawing animals—mainly camels—and now by pumps). When the pond is full, water is allowed to flow through a channel to irrigate the fields.

mā(a)rda men ḍemīnāh ella dayyānāh

"The creditor is worse than the guarantor [lit. nobody except the guarantor is worse than the creditor]," i.e., there is not a fig to choose between them.

mā(a)nšaggat meer ennah tekerr

1 Cf. Juh., no. 2075.
2 Qurais, 50 (1960), p. 16.
"There are no holes in it [a water skin] but it leaks."

Said of a contradictory statement.

\textit{meer}: but.

\textit{tekerr}: imperf. of خر, to leak.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2133.

ما بالبر يدّيه المغراف

mā bal-bīr yeddīh al-megrāf

"Whatever is in the well, the scoop brings up."

\textit{megrāf}: a scoop or any bowl, pot, etc., which is used to

scoop up something, especially liquids.

\textit{yeddīh}: yeddī: imperf. of ‘adda, to give.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., no. 3159; Zamak., no.

754; M., no. 3352; Mecca: اما الذي يكون في القدر تطلعه الطفقة;\footnote{Quraiš, 36 (1960), p. 16.}

Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, no. 89; Yemen: Cline, no. 72; Iraq:

Hanafi, no. 218; Tik., nos. 348, 1612; Dal., no. 261;

Socin, no. 119; G. Syria: Landb., no. 31; Fegh., no. 1100;

Frayha, nos. 368, 517; Egypt: Taim., no. 320; Burck., no. 44; Littm., nos. 28, 380.

ما بالحِف يّاذٌ

mā bal-ḥamz ḥaḥa\footnote{Also Juh., no. 2085.}

"There is nobody in the saltwort (salsola kali) bushes."

This phrase is used to refer to someone (especially in his

presence) and means that he is a nobody, a good-for-nothing.

\textit{al-ḥamz}: (saltwort or salsola kali): "one of six bushes

all of them known under the common name of ḥamz (chenopodiaceae)

such as "\textit{ʃraru, ʃraru, ʃraru, ʃraru, ʃraru, ʃraru}.\footnote{See H. Dickson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 632.}

ما بالفار تاهب (ما بالفار نار ظاهرة)

mā bal-fār tāher (mā bal-fār fāren tāher)\footnote{Also ‘Ubūdi, 1, no. 695; also Juh., no. 1937.}
"There is no such thing as a clean mouse." Cf. the English proverbs, "We may not expect a good whelp from an ill dog," and "Of evil grain no good seed can come." SMDW: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 57: [ما نئى الحبيّتين حيّين سلمه] 1

Iraq: Socin, no. 134; Weissbach, no. 232; Hanafi, no. 1832; Tik., no. 2004; Quî., p. 16; [بَاَكُو حَيّ صَالِحٍ] 2; Dabb., 2, p. 575: [بَاَكُو حَيّ بِيِن الحيّ صَالِحٍ] 3; G. Syria: Aṣqar, nos. 4029. 3221; Stephan, nos. 476, 962; Egypt: Taim., no. 2430; Littm., no. 511; Baq. p. 858: [نّى التعليمين نفاس طيب] 4

mā ḥāṣidetuh legāṣ (legāṭ) 5

"No gleanings [can be found] in the field which he harvests," i.e., he does not leave anything. Said of a very thrifty person. Cf. the English proverb, "A goose cannot graze after him." 6

ḥāṣideh: part of a plot or field which has already been harvested.

legāṣ: verbal noun, from talaggas, to clean. Cf. no. 870.


al-ma bekrūt ('ergāt) ad-dalu

"Water is at the bucket's brim." Said of something which is very close at hand.

krūt: (in pause pronounced krūbeh): two sticks put across each other at the neck of buckets used for drawing water in order that the rope may be attached to it. It is also called 'ergāt.

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1 ODEP, p. 234.
2 Browning, no. 8510.
3 Also Juh., no. 2095.
4 ODEP, p. 328.
ma buh 'erdzen yesdzi 'erdz

"He has not a single vein that can carry blood to another vein [lit. he has not a vein that gives drink to another vein]," i.e., he is extremely tired. Cf. no. 183.

'erdz: 'irq

yesdzi: yusqi

ma behum 'ašeb rāsuh

"There is no one amongst them with a bandaged head," i.e., they are all safe and sound. They do not suffer from any ailment.

Some people bandage their heads when feeling headache.

ma buh netāṣ

"There is no movement in him," i.e., there is no sign of life in him. Also used figuratively to mean, "he does not intend to do anything important for it is beyond his physical or intellectual capacity."

NS: a classical phrase: Zamak., 2, no. 1150.

ma been S-heel wal-Merzam najmen yībes gazīr al-jamm

"The star which rises in [the period] between Canopus and Canis Major dries out abundant water [in wells and springs]."

The reference is to the constellation of Canis Major (الكلب الأصغر) and the constellation of Canis Minor (الكلب الأكبر). When these two stars rise, the heat reaches its height in Najd. Water goes down in wells and springs owing to the severe heat and the increase in water consumption.

See also Abdul-Raḥmān Şādiq aš-Šarif, Mantiqat 'Unaizah (Cairo, 1969), p. 63.
ma tabrek ella 'end alayfah

"She [i.e., a she-camel] does not kneel down except with her fellow camels," i.e., one always prefers to be with one's friends, rather than with strangers. Cf. no. 485.

tabrek: imperf. of bark, to kneel down.

alayfah: alayef: plur. of 'elif, fellow beast; the equivalent of "friend" for people.

ma tehram yemnan fa'aylah

"A hand will suffer [the consequences of] its own actions [lit. a right hand cannot be deprived of its own action]," i.e., one suffers for one's foolish conduct. Cf. no. 999.

fa'aylah: f'ayel: plus. of fe'l, action

SMDW: a number of classical proverbs: see M., nos. 679, 2088, 4146, 4655; 'Ask., nos. 106, 117, 1961; Zamak., 1, nos. 193, 1627; 2, nos. 73, 1526; Oman: Jayak., no. 61; Iraq (Basrah and Mosul): Dal., 1, no. 211; Dabb., 2, p. 521:

ma tzahhi 'ala m'aassawh

"You cannot reach in the late morning the place which he reached last night," i.e., he is ahead of you. Used metaphorically to mean, "He is better than you; you are no match for him."

tzahhi: imperf. of zahha, he (e.g., a shepherd) stayed with his flock in a place in the late morning to allow animals to graze.

m'aassha: place where a shepherd lets his animals graze in the evening.
"The crooked word [i.e., an unpleasant word] is only uttered because of the absence of a good one [i.e., polite speech]."

A person with rough manners and speech is only as he is because these things reflect his nature.

al-'adleh: the straight one, i.e., a good word.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 204.

"His slice of meat never gets well cooked." Said of someone who cannot make up his mind.

tanjaz: imperf. of nejaz, to be [i.e., food] ready, well cooked.

"What comes through water is lost in water," i.e., what is easily obtained is easily lost. Cf. the English, "Easy come, easy go."

gada: to be lost.

A milk seller, who used to adulterate milk with an equal quantity of water, was returning home in his boat accompanied by his monkey. He placed the sack of money which he had earned that day at the stern of the boat. The monkey opened the sack and started taking out the money, throwing first one coin into the river and then one into the boat, saying, "What comes through water is lost in water!"

Many people use this proverb without being aware of its origin.
Dabb., p. 302:

SMDW: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 34; Frayha, no. 459; Egypt: Taim., nos. 2644, 2970.

834

mā ḥarrek dāwāk

"That which heats, cures." Said to a person who complains when taking medicine that it is unpleasant.

835

mā ḥāṣṣaleet kaleetuh

"What I earn I eat," i.e., I save nothing.

The form of which is used in this proverb (i.e., the deletion of the initial hamza in the hamzated verb) is not common--though used--except in the northernmost parts of Najd. The first verb, ḥāṣṣaleet, is used in this peculiar form to parallel the form of the second.

836

mā kalla bjelduh meṣahh

"He did not leave a single sound patch on his [i.e., someone else's] skin." Used figuratively to refer to someone who thoroughly disparages another.

meṣahh: a safe place (in the body, i.e., not hurt).

837

mā dāм lek mā ṭāb lek ya Ben Rawwāf

"What you like will not last you for ever (E)Ben Rawwāf," i.e., good things do not last.

838

mā dri bets ya beḍ'āzeh

"You are not noticed, O mosquito." Said contemptuously of a

1 Also Juh., no. 1952.
2 Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 714.
3 Cf. ibid., no. 965; Juh., no. 2047.
A mosquito was resting on a palm tree. After a while she said to the palm tree, "I'll soon fly away: prepare yourself!" The palm answered, "You are not noticed, O mosquito!"

Sim. WM: a post-classical proverb: Ta'ālibi, Tamtil, p.376:

"He who does not make his moustache dusty will not make it greasy," i.e., he who does not work hard in dusty land which makes his moustache dusty will not earn enough money to enable him to eat rich fat food. Said in justification of working in a dirty or dusty place to obtain one's livelihood.

NS: Mecca, Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 93.

"The eye is preserved for nothing but weeping." As the eye when weeping is doing one of its main functions so is someone when helping one's family members or coming to help his friends when they are in need.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 2628.

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1 Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 883; Juh., no. 2338.
2 See Quraiṣ, 24 (1960), p. 16.
Who ever heard of a [good] blue camel?” Cf. nos. 842, 843.

Musil says, "They [the bedouins] dislike white animals with some black hair (zerka). Calves of this colour are generally killed. Those that are not killed are sold to the settlers but never used for breeding."²

"Who ever heard of a thrust of Zeed’s?” i.e., Zeed is feeble.

"Who ever heard of a valley in spate when the Hyades rise?"

This proverb is the second half (slightly changed) of the following line of verse (probably composed by the well-known Rashid al-Kalawi):

"The Hyades are of lightning and clouds, but who ever . . . ."

For a period of about three weeks at the beginning of the summer, coinciding with the rise of the Hyades, thunderclouds with little or no rain are common in Najd. Musil noticed this and commented, "Sometimes at the end of the (gozáwi) rain period comes a rain called twejbe' (of Aldebaran) which completes the fertility brought by the rains of Gemini, although not sufficient in itself to take their place altogether."⁴

at-Tweebe': dimin. of at-tabi': the Hyades. It is also called

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¹ Cf. Juh., no. 2067.
² Musil, op. cit., p. 334.
⁴ Musil, op. cit., p. 9.
by Muslim astronomers or the Pleiades. so called because it follows the Pleiades.¹

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., nos. 167, 3990; Zamak., 2, no. 726.

ما زائد من ليلك (ما زاده من ليله) إلا ظلما
mā zāyedk men leelek (mā zāduh men leeluh) ella ḥalma
"You will have nothing from night [lit. your night] but more darkness (var., he had nothing from night [lit. his night] but more darkness)," i.e., the situation will if anything only get worse.

ما سد الانتهين سد الثلاثة
mā sadd al-atneen sadd at-talāteh
"What is enough for two is enough for three." Equivalent to the English proverb, "What is enough for one is enough for two."²

sadd: (here) to be enough; to suffice.

The idea of this proverb is borrowed from the ḥadīth:
طعام الانتهين يكفي الثلاثة وطعام الثلاثة يكفي الأربعه
"What you do [to others] will be done to you [by them]."
Cf. the English proverb, "Do as you would be done by." Cf. no. 999.

sawweet: sawwā, to do.

¹ See Lane, p. 295.
² ODEP, p. 224.
³ al-ʾAjlūnī, op. cit., no. 1527.
sewwi: Passive perf. of sawwa.

Ident.: Kuwait: ḇūri, 2, p. 54.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3093; ‘Ask., no. 1460; Zamak., 2, no. 781; Yemen: Goit., no. 1102; Mosul: Ǧul., p. 141; مَلِمَا َصنعتُهُنَّ; G. Syria: Aṣqar, nos. 508, 512, 516; Frayha, no. 3622; Stephan, no. 43; Egypt: Taim., no. 276; Fā'īqa, no. 1813; Burck., no. 659.

ما ضاع حق وله طالب

mā ẓā' ḥaggen 'u luh ẓallāb

"No right was ever lost so long as it had a claimant."


ما ضر مقتل طعنه

mā ẓarr madztūlen ʾt'aneh

"A stab will not harm a slain man."

Sim. WM: Kuwait: ḇūri, 2, p. 120; Yemen: Goit., no. 1095.

ما طالح راح

mā ṭahl rāḥ

"Whatever falls, disappears." Said when something is lost immediately after being put down.

Sim. WM: Oman: Jayak., no. 260.

ما عاشت بالللم

mā 'aṣat bal-lgaṭ

"I cannot live on gleaning [lit., it (i.e., my soul) did not . . .]," i.e., trivial things will not be of much use to me.

Cf. Juh., no. 2049.
Barakat aš-Šarif of Mecca had a servant whom he wanted to test and see how trustworthy he was. While they were out travelling, Barakat, who was riding a camel, threw a sack full of money to the ground and asked his servant, who was walking, to pick it up. The latter, however, left it and made the above remark, which became proverbial.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., nos. 619, 3748; 'Ask., no. 359; Zamak., 2, no. 68; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 440; Tik., no. 599; Egypt: Taim., no. 435.

ما عقب هدم الربايا صدقه

"No friendship [can be restored] after the demolition of the wells."

A man who, when angry with his friend behaves immoderately and, for instance, goes as far as to demolish his friend's wells, makes it impossible for the two of them to be friends again.

ما على رأسه شجره

"There is no tree on his head," i.e., he is not easily distinguished, he does not stand out in a crowd.

ما على گرم نشرط

"No stipulations should be imposed upon a generous man," i.e., whatever a generous person or a host offers should be accepted without making any conditions. Cf. the English, "Do not look a gift horse in the mouth."

NS: Kuwait: Mūri, 2, p. 55; Oman: Jayak., no. 265.
"A wolf has no supper for a [another] wolf." Cf. no. 855.


855

ما عند زيد لمبيد شيء

mā 'end Zeeden l-'Beeden šayy

"Zeed owes 'Beed nothing," i.e., there is no reason for them to be not on good terms with each other.

856

ما عندنلَه للفشائع المدين

mā 'enduh ella mefāṭīḥ at-teben

"He has nothing but the keys of the straw [store]." Said of one with the least important responsibility in a business.

857

ما عندنُه باللِّهِي شعر

mā 'enduh bal-lḥeyy ša'ar

"According to him there is no hair in [men's] beards," i.e., he is shameless; he has no respect for anybody regardless of who he is.

858

ما عندنُه سالفة

mā 'enduh sālfeh

"He has no story," i.e., he does not know the facts of the matter. Cf. no. 859.

sālfeh: story; tale.

859

ما عندنُه ما عند جدتي

mā 'enduh mā 'end jeddeti

"He does not know [lit. have] what my grandmother knows [lit. has]," i.e., he is utterly ignorant of the matter. Cf. nos. 858, 901.

Ident.: Kuwait: Mūri, 2, p. 235.

860

ما عندنُلُك الا ما طَرَق الحداد

mā 'endī lek ella mā ẓarrag al-ḥaddād

1 Also ibid., no. 2042.
2 Cf. ibid., no. 2032.
"I have for you nothing but that which the blacksmith hammers [i.e., a weapon]," i.e., I am going to deal harshly with you.

Sim. WM: a post-classical proverb: Ṭāliq., no. 152; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1020; Baghdad: Tik., no. 577; Egypt: Amin, p. 433; Taim., Kināyāt, p. 8.

861

mā 'eenen gāyleten 'āh men keer

"Nobody gives a groan without good reason [lit. because he feels well]," i.e., one only says "'āh" when one feels pain.

N.B. "eye" becomes "man" by synecdoche.

SMDW: a classical proverb: 'Ask., no. 159; Oman: Jayak., no. 262.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 46.

862

mā ṭāk mn az-zar' ella as-sebal

"You have lost nothing from the corn but the grain [lit. ears]," i.e., you have missed everything, or the most substantial part of a thing.

as-sebal: plur. of sbeleh (class. sunbulah), an ear of corn.

863

mā fiha mūmi šeliluh

"There is no one in it [e.g., a house] wearing a shirt," i.e., there is not a soul there (lit. there is no one of a moving shirt in it).

mūmi: active partic. of 'ūma (class. 'awma'a) (here), to move (e.g., a long shirt, a tree).

šelil: long shirt.

SMDW: a number of classical proverbs: e.g., M., nos. 3848, 3967; 'Ask., no. 1625; Zamak., nos. 1128, 1129, 1130, 1131, 1132, 1133, 1134, 1135, 1136, 1139; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1953.

Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 725; cf. Juh., no. 3005.
ما كان شرط كان سلام

"So long as there are conditions there will be peace," i.e., it is better to impose stipulations at the commencement of a business transaction than to dispute needlessly afterwards.

NS: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 5.
Sim. WM: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 67; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 2431; Fegh., no. 2500; Frayha, no. 362; Egypt: Taim., no. 243; Littm., no. 228.
SMDW: Yemen: Goit., no. 610; Oman: Jayak., no. 144; Reinhardt, no. 189; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 2433; Tallq., no. 81; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1661, 1662, 1663.

ما كثير من شيء مله

"Too much of anything makes it distasteful [lit. what is much becomes tasteless]."

meleh: to be tasteless.

ما كل بيسا شحده

"Not every white thing is a piece of fat."

Ident: a classical proverb: Zamak., 2, no. 1199; Mosul: Qul., p. 130.
SMDW: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 60; Mosul: Socin, no. 397; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1117; Baum., no. 566; Mecca: Sāsi, nos. 464, 465, 466.

ما كل رجال بعيضك برجال وما كل من ركب العطاء بدل

"Not every man can be a substitute for another; and not every

Cf. 'Ubūdi, "al-'Amtāl al-'Ammiyya", al-'Arab, 2 (1968), p. 532, no. 56.
one who rides a mount knows the way." Cf. the English, "All are not hunters that blow the horn." ¹

SMDW: a classical proverb: 'Ask., no. 1697; two post-class. proverbs: Ṭāliq., no. 416; M., 2, p. 257: ليس كل من سود وجه قال أنا حداد; Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 235; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, nos. 2238, 2239; Tik., nos. 2291, 2294, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2300; Yahuda, no. 13; Socin, nos. 389, 393, 394, 395, 396; G. Syria: Aṣqar, nos. 4329, 4333; Singer, no. 86; Landb., no. 71; Fegh., no. 1118; Stephan, no. 61; Egypt: Taim., nos. 2637, 2639, 2640; Burck., no. 591.

868

مال المحرم للظلمه (ياكله النبي)
māl al-mahrūm laẓ-ẓalameh² (yākluh al-ʿayyār)
"The wrongdoers (var. the trickster) get(s) the mean man's money."

al-mahrūm: in Najd a miser is often called mahrūm. The term implies that by being tight-fisted he has deprived himself of many enjoyments.

al-ʿayyār: the trickster.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 103; Yemen: Goit., no. 1243; Akwa', 1, no. 813; Oman: Jayak., no. 297; Egypt: Taim., no. 2647; Littm., no. 492.

869

المال شعرة القلب
al-māl š'art al-galb
"Possessions are the hair of the heart," i.e., one feels strong attachment to one's possessions.

870

ما لني الحماد بلني المثلث
mā lega al-ḥassād yalga al-mtalagges
"The reaper did not find [any grain in the field] how much less the gleaner!"

¹ ODEP, p. 394.
² Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 738.
al-mtalagges: act. partic. of talaggas, to glean.

mā lk ʾllā ʾl-wād yāgra

"You will have a boy who can read."

The proverb was apparently said by a teacher to a man who made a contract with him to teach his son how to read. When the father questioned the teacher's ability to do so and enquired about the manner which he would employ, he received this reply, i.e., do not worry about the means which I would use or my ability to do the job--your concern is to find your son able to read and this would certainly happen.

mā lai-barārī was-seʾeh mēftīl

"There is nothing like the wide open places." Said in disparagement of airless cities and in praise of the open countryside.

mā laṣ-ṣalāyba ella (a)halah

"Kinsmen only have their relatives." This proverb is used to imply, "People have nobody (i.e. to help them when in need or trouble) save their next of kin." The word as-ṣalāyeb (it is not used apart from in this proverb) apparently means "relatives" or literally, "people who descended from ones loins (صلب).

SMIDW: Baghdad: Tik., no. 2360; Egypt: Taim., no. 2663;
a classical proverb: M., no. 3529.

"There is no air blowing in him," i.e., he is not likeable.

ma luh zebdeh

"There is no butter in it." A remark made in the dairy in disparagement of thin milk. Used proverbially of idle talk.

ma luh sadd

"He has no lid," i.e., he does not keep a secret.

ma luh madra

"He has no [fixed] direction for winnowing." Said of one

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In al-Qasim the classical meaning of حَرْث, to plough, is not known except in the word "الفراء", used as a variant for الفلاح, (agriculture).
whose intention is fickle and easily changed. Cf. the English proverbs, "His mill will go with all winds"\(^1\) and "Like a weathercock in the wind."\(^2\) Cf. nos. 189, 616, 661.

SMDW: a classical proverb: Zamak., 1, no. 339; 'Ask., no. 648; Yemen: Akwa’, 1, no. 973; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1637; Hanafi, no. 2041; G. Syria: Aşqar, no. 3155; Fegh., nos. 2384, 3041; Frayha, nos. 2902, 3061; Stephan, no. 860; Cannan, JPOS, vol. 8, p. 146; Egypt: Fa‘iqa, no. 204; Amin, p. 67:

mā li tees

"I have no he-goat," i.e., it is nothing to do with me; it is none of my business.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3538; Zamak., 2, no. 929; 'Ask., no. 1884; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1825; G. Syria: Aşqar, no. 4049; Frayha, nos. 617, 345; Egypt: Amin, p. 465:

al ma ma samman ʿaż-ẓefāde\(^3\)

"Water did not fatten frogs." Although frogs spend almost all their lives in the water they are still very lean. I.e., water is of little use to the body.

N.B. While in England, frogs are usually considered fat, it Najd, as this proverb implies, they are considered as lean and ill-favoured physically.

al ma ya’raẓ ‘ala ‘ādzl ‘u ya’āfuh\(^4\)

\(^{1}\) ODEP, p. 531.
\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 875.
\(^{3}\) Also ‘Ubūdi, 1, no. 748 and Juh., no. 1966.
\(^{4}\) Also ‘Ubūdi, 1, no. 749 and Juh., no. 2063.
"A wise man does not refuse water when it is offered to him," i.e., a sensible man will not refuse a drink of water when it is offered to him since he can drink a little without causing any harm to himself.

883

\textit{الما ما يغطيه الكئم} (الْفِحْ) \textit{al-ma mā ygaṭṭih an-netsīh} (an-nedzīh)

"Water is not covered by the seeping sand [i.e, sand which trickles into a well from its sides when it is being dug]."

Cf. no. 420.

\textit{an-netsih}: (in 'Unaizah, an-nedzīh): sand which gathers in a well from its newly-dug sides.

884

\textit{مَّا مع الْا أَمْسَهات} mā ma' al-ma 'ummehāt

"A huge torrent makes little streams disappear [lit., with the (much) water, there are no little (streams of) water]."

Said of someone or something which combines many good qualities and therefore makes other persons or things dispensable.

Cf. nos. 196, 1194.

\textit{SMDW}: many classical proverbs: e.g., M., nos. 823, 3153, 3010; Zamak., 2, nos. 192, 240, 608, 1246; two post-classical proverbs: Tāliq, no. 70; M., 1, p. 88: إذا جاء نهر الله ، البلد ولا ملك يا بغداد; Ta'ālibi, Kāṣṣul-Kāṣṣ, p. 12: الدُّنِيَا هي بطل نهر معتل; Yemen: Goit., no. 1410; Mosul: Gül., p. 70; G. Syria: Burton, no. 99; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 745.

885

\textit{ما ملحوِّن لَلَّدْنِيَا طَرِف} mā malḥūn lad-denya ṭaraf

"The end of the world will never be reached," i.e., the world has no end. I.e., one should not overwork oneself or be obsessed with money and business.

\textit{ad-denya}: the world. It is also occasionally used to mean
"money", e.g., "So and so has great wealth."

"No good [lit. spoil] can be extracted from the backbone of a swallow," i.e., it is vain to hope to obtain a useful thing from a miser or a person in wretched circumstances.

mā men wa ra 'ess ar-rgee'i ǧānimēh

"They [i.e., women] never had [the opportunity of] cradling him," i.e., he was a highly exceptional man. Cf. no. 1194.

mā nabi men keerek ella kfāyat šarrek¹

"Being crafty did not profit the wolf [i.e., it did not save him from falling into a pit] which had been dug for him." Digging pits was a common method of trapping wolves.

mā nfa'at ad-dīb dahānetuh

1 Also Juh., no. 2020; cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 750.
māwh grayyeb

"Its [i.e., a well's] water is very near [the surface]."
Said metaphorically of a person whose irritability quickly comes to the surface. Cf. nos. 877, 878.

mā hna dammen ella bfaṣd ʿerḍ 1

"Blood cannot be drawn off [lit. no blood] except by opening a vein." Cf. no. 1004.

mā hna: there is not . . .

mā hna ʿemren yeswa at-tōbeh

"There is not enough time [lit. age] left for repentance to be worthwhile." Said jocularly by a reprobate.
Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1785; Tik., no. 1948; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4010; Manch. MS, fol. 21.

mahīb aš-ṣarheh 'ala alli yazra' baṭ-ṭāyeh aš-ṣarheh 'ala alli ydayynuh 2

"He who sows on rooftops should not be blamed, but only he who grants him loans." I.e., a person who sows seeds on roofs must be out of his mind, but no excuse can be found for the person who gives him the money that enables him to do so!

aš-ṣarheh: blameworthiness.
baṭ-ṭāyeh: house roofs

Sim. WM: Yemen: Goit., no. 320; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1816; Fegh., no. 750; Frayha, nos. 1937, 3935.

2 Cf. ibid., no. 1934.
mā weṭā al-ḥmār weṭāwh satydzuh
"Whatever the donkey sets foot on, his driver [also] sets foot on."

mā yabī lah šeek (mtawwa')
"It [e.g., an obvious question] does not need a judge (var.
a religious scholar) [to answer it]," i.e., it is too obvious to need an explanation.

yabī: yabgī: imperf. of baga, to want, to need.
lah: lahā.
šeek: šayk, judge.
mtawwa': religious scholar.

Sim. WM: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2264;
Dabb., 2, p. 386:

al-ma yatba' al-meṭāmen
"Water gathers in [lit. follows] low-lying ground." Said of a rich man who is mean.

meṭāmen: plur. of matman, a low place.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1719; G. Syria: Burton, no. 164;
Fegh., no. 1876; Frayha, no. 173; Ašqar, no. 220;
Egypt: Taim., no. 2911; Fā'īqa, no. 9400; Bājūri, p. 40:

mā ytaḥassaf ella rā' ar-rediyyeh
"Only the person who has done something bad will have regrets afterwards."

ytaḥassaf: imperf. of taḥassaf, to regret; to feel sorry,
to repent, originally ta'assaf.
ra': ẓā'i: equivalent of the classical ذو, of.
ar-rediyeh: ar-rādi'ah: misdeed.

ما يركن الفرس سلم
ma yejik mnuh al-gerṣ matlûm
"A loaf from him has not been tampered with," i.e., he rarely makes any mistake.

ما يحرك الرابض
ma yḥarrts ar-rabţeh
"He cannot shift a resting animal," i.e., he is a good-for-nothing.

SMDW: a classical proverb: Zamak., 2, p. 124; a
post-classical proverb: Tāliq., no. 465; Baghdad: Hanafi,
nos. 226, 1843.
Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 234.

ما يخلل جمل بالقاع بإخذونه الهله أو تأكل السبع
ma ykalla jemalen bal-gā' yākbdûnuh 'ahaluh 'ū tākluh as-sbâ'
"No camel should be left alone in the desert; either its owners collect it or else wild beasts devour it."
al-gā': the desert. In normal speech, however, this word means either "the ground" or "a particular piece of ground with a hard and even surface."
SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2248.

ما يدري وش عشاو البان
ma yadri weš 'ašāwh al-bāreh
"He does not know what he had for supper last night," i.e., he knows nothing. Cf. nos. 858, 859, 913, 911.
al-bāreh: al-bāriḥah: last night.
Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1363; Tik., no. 1944.

al-ma ydell al-kubz
† Also Juh., no. 1519.
"Water finds its way to bread [in the stomach]." If a man asks for water he is likely to have eaten, for a hungry man is less likely to want to drink water.

SMDW: Mosul: Gūl., p. 56:

ما يرغي

mā yargī

"He [i.e., a camel] does not roar." This phrase is used figuratively for a composed and self-possessed person who seldom complains.

yarqī: (fus., yargu): to roar (a camel).

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 2167.

ما يسوي الجربوع حطبه (جربوء ما يسوي حطبه)

mā y̱s̱aw̱a al-jarbū' ḥṭebuh (jarbū'en mā y̱s̱aw̱a ḥṭebuh)

"A jerboa is not worth the firewood with which it is roasted." Cf. the English, "The game is not worth the candle."

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., no. 3965; Ibn 'Āṣim, no. 10; Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 234:

مَا يسوي مَلَى اَنْدَهُ شَمْر

mā y̱s̱aw̱a maly ednuḥ śe'īr

"He is not worth his earful of barley," i.e., he is a good-for-nothing.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., no. 3965; Ibn 'Āṣim, no. 10; Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 234:

مَا يسوي تْرِس بْطِنَهُ:

ma y̱s̱aw̱i ṯṟis baṯṉi

Sim. WM: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2668;

ما يسوي ثلاث ابنو نخالي

Sim. WM: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2668;

ما يستاهلي مل ودند نخاله: 469

ma y̱s̱as̱taḥli mḻ w̱ḏnḏ ni̱x̱aḻi̱: 469

مَا يشِدّ حاشي وبالبيت جمل

mā y̱ṣ̱add ḥāṣī 'u bal-beet jemal

"A young camel is not saddled if there is a [full grown] camel around [lit. in the house]."

y̱ṣ̱add: passive imperf. of ṣ̱add, to saddle.
hani: young camel, male or female. See no. 726.

ما يصبر على جهلي الآهلي

mā yāṣber 'ala jhali ella ahali

"Only one's [lit. my] family puts up with one's [lit. my] folly."

SMDW: two post-classical proverbs: M., 2, p. 257: لينLEN

ما يصبر على الخلل إلا دوده

mā yāṣber 'ala al-jūr ella at-tūr

"Only an ox tolerates oppression."

NS: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2269; Dabb., 2, p. 390; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3937; Fegh., no. 1943; Frayha, no. 3297.

ما يضرب للمثل

mā yaṭrab l-meliḥ

"He does not rejoice at anything beautiful," i.e., he is a fastidious person who is difficult to please.

meliḥ: beautiful, fine.

SMDW: Mecca: Baghd; Baghdad: Tik., no. 2344; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3939; Frayha, no. 3252; Egypt: Taim., nos. 2678, 2683; Littm., no. 117.

ما يعرف الخيل الآكلة

mā ya'arf al-keel ella rekkaḥa

"Nobody knows horses except those who ride them."

ما يعرف المصدر من المورد (الموردة)

mā y'arf al-mṣaddreh mn al-murdeh (al-mwarrdeh)

"He does not distinguish between [the camels] which are coming from the well and those which are going towards it." Cf. no.

1 Aiso 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 772.
2 Quraiši, 94 (1961), p. 16.
3 Also Juh., no. 1939.
4 Cf. ibid., no. 1971.
913.

**al-msaddreh:** f. active partic. of saddar, it (a water-drawing animal) went away from the well.

**al-mürdeh:** f. active partic. of 'örd, it (a water-drawing animal) went towards the well.

Sim. WM: among the Iraq bedouins: Zafiri, no. 241.

912

ما يعرف كوكه من كروسه

mā y'aref dīts al-'Abbās

"He does not know the rooster of al-'Abbās." Said metaphorically of (a) a serious-minded person who reacts seriously; (b) a person who does what he intends to do regardless of the objections of others. The memory of the story on which this proverb is based seems to have died out.

913

mā y'aref kā'uh men kersū'uh

"He does not know his wristbone from his elbow," i.e., he is grossly ignorant; he cannot distinguish anything.

**al-kā':** the elbow

**al-kersū':** despite this saying, most people do not know what it is. However, Abū Hilāl al-'Askari defined al-kū as "the very end of the arm nearer to the thumb" and al-kersū as "the very end of the arm nearer to the little finger":

Cf. nos. 911, 858, 859, 901.


1 Also Juh., no. 2083; 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 774.

2 'Askari, Jamharat al-'Amtāl, 1, p. 355.
Sim. WM: Oman: Reinhardt, no. 63.

SMDW: many classical proverbs: see e.g., M., nos. 3765, 3501, 3797, 3902, 3903; 'Ask., nos. 1681, 1906; Zamak., 2, nos. 1234, 1235, 1236, 1237, 1238; Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 235: ما يدري وين رئة حاطه نيه: 66, p. 69: ما يعرف طعم حلقه and ما يعرف اليا من الْنَّا

Iraq: Weissbach, no. 52; Tik., nos. 2346, 2357, 2359, 1345; Dabb., 1, p. 107: يفرق بين ما يعرف الحنطة من الشعير; p. 253 and Gul., p. 82: طرطيسي ما يغفج الجمجمه من الخمس

الْجِرْجَة وَالْكَجَا; Gul., p. 132: ما يغفج اش اكرو بالانجيل; Zafiri, no. 242.

al-ma'yasal al-summ
"Water cleanses away [even] poison," i.e., water cleans even utensils in which there was poison.

mā yqammuz 'ala al-dzedāt
"He does not close his eye on the slightest speck," i.e., he cannot bear the least annoyance.

al-dzedāt: al-qada: the speck


mā ygal lsāket ween ant gādi
"A silent person should not be asked 'Where are you going""

mā ygdar yēhekk rāsuh
"He cannot [even] scratch his own head," i.e., he is too busy even to scratch his head.

Sim. WM: Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 392: مَا يطِّق يَهِكْ رَأْسُه; G. Syria:

1 Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 777; Juh., no. 1944.
2 Cf. Juh., no. 2041.
"Only lambs [lit. the sons of sheep] stay on the rebdz." The rebdz (ribq) is a cord which connects a number of lambs and is tied to a stake. Thus only submissive persons allow themselves to be tied up and restricted.

SMDW: Palestine: Stephan, no. 57; Egypt: Taim., no. 2692; Littm., no. 32.

"He does not imitate the sultan in his kingdom," i.e., he feels sufficient well-being not to want to imitate even the sultan. He is as happy as a king. Cf. The Scottish proverb, "I would not call the king my cousin."  

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 74.

"The tongue should not be scratched for him," i.e., one should not show him any sign of friendliness or else he will take advantage of it.

"He cannot be driven, nor can he be led (var. like a donkey of Šalab, he cannot be . . .)." Said of an impossible person. Šalab: Šlebāh (also called Šleeb): see nos. 270, 206. A donkey owned by the Šalab, who live permanently in the desert, is of course not accustomed to seeing irrigation channels; such a donkey usually refuses to jump over them whether it is

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1 Cf. ibid., no. 1983.  
2 Cf. ibid., no. 1543.  
3 ODEP, p. 99.
driven or led.

yensāg: pass. imperf. of 'ensāg, to allow oneself to be driven.

yengād: pass. imperf. of 'enganād, to allow oneself to be led.

Sim. WM: Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 356:

"His breath cannot be captured," i.e., he is very difficult to please.

yensād: pass. imperf. of 'ensād, to be captured.

nfesuh: nafasuh

mā yensād nfesuh

"His head cannot be reached," i.e., he is proud.

yentāl: pass. imperf. of 'entāl, to be reached (by a stretched-out hand, etc.).

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 298; Frayha, no. 323.

mā yentāl rāsuh

"Only a horse can face up to horses [lit. nothing faces up to horses except their cousins]." Cf. no. 593.

yantāh: imperf. of netāh, to meet, to face up to.

mā yantāh al-keel ella banāt 'ammah

"To say to a scared (fleeing) man 'Don't be afraid,' does him no good."

ad-dall: act. partic. of dall, to fear, to be scared.

al-hājj: act. partic. of hajj, to escape, to flee.

mā 'aleek: you have nothing to fear (lit. not on you). A common phrase said to a scared person especially by one whom he fears.
"An arrow of his cannot be nibbled." This metaphorical expression is used by someone who speaks of another whom he does not necessarily like, with the meaning, "I will speak the truth of his merits. I should not conceal what good he has done regardless of what I think of him." This phrase is used in the same way as the English phrase, "to do him justice . . ." The precise reference of "arrows" is not entirely plain, but the general meaning of not wishing to cause harm is clear.

"None feels the hot ember except the one who treads on it." Cf. the English proverb, "None knows the weight of another's burden."¹

"Only [the clan of] Hteem is plundered after it has been forewarned [of a raid]," i.e., one should take all precautionary measures after being forewarned. This saying depicts the clan of Hteem as careless or incapable of defending itself. Hteem: name of a large non-aristocratic tribe.

¹ Ibid., p. 438.
² See Qurais, 39 (1960), p. 16.
ma yulad 'alem (ma wled mn an-nas 'alem)

"No man is born a scholar." Cf. the English proverb, "No man is born wise." ¹

SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., no. 2117.

mabṣūṭ zemānuh

"[So and so] is happy in his time." Said of a carefree person who is happy for the moment and does not think of the morrow.

meta bal-'emur temurr?²

"How often does it occur in a lifetime?" This implies that it occurs very rarely. Said, for example, when urging someone to be hospitable to a rare visitor.

meta teebas al-jalleh, 'u meta yanjaż al-'aša, 'u meta yenteli batn al-yetīm 'asīd

"How long do camel droppings take to dry! and when does supper become ready! and when does an orphan become full of food!" i.e. after a very long time. The reference is to camel droppings which are moist and therefore take a long time to dry and therefore to burn as fuel; thus the supper itself takes a long time to prepare, and when it is ready an orphan can go on eating for a long time. This proverb is rarely used.

al-jalleh: camel droppings. See no. 313.

vanjaż: (fuṣ. vandaj), to be well-cooked.

yenteli: imperf. of 'entala (fuṣ. 'imtala'), to be full.

'ašīd: thick paste made of flour and ghee.

¹ See Browning, no. 8455; Apperson, p. 449.
² Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 790.
Mteēh mdawwr at-ṭalāyeb
"[He is like] Mteēh the seeker of lawsuits." Said of one who looks for trouble or who is litigious. Cf. the English proverb, "He will go to law for wagging of a straw."¹

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2101; Tik., no. 2160.

"Like the fox: he chooses the lean sheep [lit. the sheep whose nasal mucus is dribbling]." The nasal mucus usually hangs down if a sheep is emaciated.

Some people, having in mind this proverb, when seeing something badly chosen refer to it by saying "[Like] the sheep of the fox." Cf. the English proverb, "Humble hearts have humble desires."²

'ebal-Ḥseen yanḥar allī yagṭer nekrūrah
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'ebal-Ḥseen: (fuṣ. 'abal-Ḥusain), the fox.
yanḥar: imperf. of nahār, to go to.
nekrūr: nasal mucus (ـخاطـ).

SM DW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1105; Gul., p. 78; G. Syria: Burton, no. 183; Faraj, p. 349: Egypt: Taim., no. 1422; Baq., p. 56, no. 43:

metl 'arnāb al-ʿabd tarfa' eden wetṭammn eden
"Like the rabbit of the slave: it raises one ear and lowers the other."

A certain slave told his companions that he saw a rabbit. When they asked him to describe it, he answered, "It raised and lowered its ears (showing them with his index

¹ ODEP, p. 449.
² Ibid., p. 391.
and middle fingers each raised and lowered in turn, how the rabbit's ears were moving). 1

eden: 'udun, ear.
t-tamman: imperf. of tamman, to lower.

"Like a deaf dog: when he sees [other] dogs yawning, he barks." A deaf dog when it sees other dogs' mouths open thinks they are barking. Cf. nos. 189, 661, 987.


'asgah: (fuṣ., 'asamm), deaf.

"[He is] like the needle: it moves and covers its tracks." This refers to the fact that a needle fills the holes it makes on a cloth with thread. Said of someone who quietly and secretly does his business.

jerretah: jerrat-ha: its track, its trace.

"Like the hare: it runs [lit. meets] to the stick [with which it is then struck]." Said of someone who behaves foolishly, causing harm to himself. Cf. nos. 61, 946, 951.

For the full story, see the tālīq "مختطي من طَبِّ اللَّحم", in A. Juhaimān, 'Asātir ẓa'biyyah min qalb jazirat al-'Arab, 2 (Beirut, 1968), p. 200.


Cf. ibid., p. 619, no. 126.
"Like a bad hen: it spoils its eggs with its excrement."
Cf. the English proverb, "Like the cow that gives a good pail of milk and then kicks it over."

'Aṭleḥ: useless, bad; an old-fashioned word.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., no. 1925; 'Ask., no. 138;
a post-classical proverb: Ṭāliq., no. 160; Mosul: 2

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., no. 1925; 'Ask., no. 138;
a post-classical proverb: Ṭāliq., no. 160; Mosul: 2

metl ad-dejājt allī ḫāṣretha al-beezeh
"[He is] like a hen trying to lay an egg," i.e., he is restless and fidgety; he moves quickly to and fro all the time.

Sim. WM: Egypt: 'Arif, p. 64; G. Syria: Frayha, no. 1330; Stephan, no. 772.
Cf. no. 941.

metl addaffā' (az-zembūr) allī bejebehu kūšeh 3
"Like a dragonfly whose tail has a piece of palm leaf [attached]." Cf. no. 940.

ad-daffā': (also called in some parts of Najd, az-zembūr) dragonfly.

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2018; Dabb., 2, p. 410; ḫulūb al-ḥājirah, p. 89; ḫulūb al-ḥājirah, p. 35; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4266; Landb., no. 112.

1 ODEP, p. 151.
3 Cf. Juh., nos. 1807, 2154.
metl ad-dits yedden wala ysalli
"Like a cock: he calls to prayer but does not pray [himself]."
yedden: (fuṣ., yu’adden) imperf. of ’addan, to call to prayer; to crow (a cock).

Said of one who preaches piety but is himself impious.

SMDW: Iraq: Weissbach, no. 104; Hanafi, no. 1885; Lebanon, Frayha, no. 3605.

metl ad-dib mgabuṭ al-ḥaša jaye'†
"Like a wolf: hungry but thought of as well-fed." Cf. nos. 796, 959.

Sim. WM: a classical proverb: M., no. 1463; Zamak, 1, no. 1371; ‘Ask., no. 819; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 110; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 921; Tik., no. 1130; Socin, no. 281; Lebanon: Frayha, no. 1696.

metl ar-Rāfiḍeh yaqatłuṭ as-sahābah wa yetḥāharun men damm al-ba'ūţ
"Like the Rafidites: they kill the Companions [of the Prophet] and [yet] clean themselves of mosquitoes' blood."

Said of a hypocrite. Cf. the English proverb, "Some make a conscience of spitting in the church yet rob the altar."²


SMDW: two post-classical proverbs: M., 2, p. 429; Yağlı def: Tāliq, no. 515; Mecca:³

† Cf. ibid., no. 1798; ‘Ubūdi, 1, no. 818.
² ODEP, p. 767.
³ See Quraiš, 10 (1960), p. 16.
"Like a short lance: it is always close to its bearer's throat." Said of someone who persists in opposing his parents, friends, or relatives.

gubalen: gubal, always plus the "en" of the nunnation tanwin.

"Like a goat which uncovers a knife [from underneath the sand, only to be slaughtered by it]." Applied to a man who brings a misfortune on himself by his own act. To bring about one's own destruction. To dig one's own grave. Cf. the English, "To whet a knife for one's own throat." 1

t-haret: imperf. of harat, to move sand, straw, etc; to uncover something under it. The fusha meaning of harat (to plough) is rarely used. Cf. nos. 61, 951.

Sim. WM: two classical proverbs: Zamak, 2, no. 701; Bakrî, p. 359 and Ta‘ālibi, Kassul-kass, p. 14: لاكتن كا لعمر تبحث عن الدية


"[He is] like the devil: he leads [astray] and then casts reproaches." The meaning of this proverb is taken from the Qur‘ānic verse: 2

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1 ODEP, p. 882.
2 The Qur‘ān, 59:16
al-Meb'ad: the one who is cast away; a euphemism for the devil or Iblis. It is used to avoid mentioning him by name, something which is considered unpleasant.

SMDW: **Iraq** (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2841; Dabb., 1, p. 137

metl al-menšar yâkel bar-rōheh wal-jayyeh
"Like a saw: it makes progress [both] by going backwards and forwards." Said of one who benefits in every circumstance.

Sim. WM: **G. Syria**: Ašqar, no. 4267; Fegh., no. 1779; Frayha, no. 3604; Baum., no. 347; **Egypt**: Taim., no. 1540.

ar-rōheh: the going.
al-jayyeh: the coming.

metl an-nkalt al-'oja (nkalten 'oja) beţatâh (ţubābha) bgeer ḥoţah
"Like a crooked date-palm: its dates fall beneath other trees [lit. in another bed]." Said of a person whose gifts and good deeds go to recipients beyond his intimate circle. The attitude of such a person is criticized in the English proverb, "Charity begins at home."

beţat: (in the Jawf district ūţub) dates which fall down because of wind or when the bunch is touched.

NS: **Kuwait**: Nūri, 2, p. 128.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 2692; a post-classical proverb: Ta'ālibī, Tamṭīl, p. 304; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 232, no. 63; Yemen: Goit., nos. 662, 799; **Mosul**: Socin, nos. 31, 88; Qul., p. 38; **G. Syria**: Fegh., no. 757; Frayha, no. 3668; Landb., no. 82; **Egypt**: Taim., no. 1499; Amin, p. 65.
"Like a bride's mother: she has time on her hands but still is very busy [lit. free and occupied]."

Ident.: G. Syria: Frayha, no. 3476; Ašqar, no. 3065.
NS: Egypt: Taim., no. 1368; Littm., no. 204.

"Like the moth: it throws itself into the flame." Cf. nos. 61, 938, 946.

umm Gbees: (mother of Gbees), the moth, also called umm al-Gbees and umm Megbās in different parts of Najd.
tajdaː: imperf. of jedaʿ, to throw.
az-zaww: fire (from the fus., ad-dawʿ, light).

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 1000; 'Ask., nos. 56, 1156; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2052; Dabb., 2, p. 409; Gul., p. 33; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4239; Stephan, no. 910.

"Like the door of the Kaaba: only Ebu Šeebeh can open it."

Said of one who is amenable only to the representations of a particular person.

Ebu Šeebeh: (Abū Saybah) is applied here to anyone from the Meccan family of Banī Šaybah who traditionally keep the key of the Kaaba. When one of them dies another takes over this privilege. The common people in Najd entertain a superstition that the door cannot be opened except by an Ebu Šeebeh.

NS: Iraq (among the bedouins).1

1 See F. Jamil, op. cit., p. 9.
"Like the man breaking date-stones who threw away (var. left) the last date-stone [without breaking it]." I.e., he had persisted in his task of cracking a whole pile of date-stones and had then given up when there was only one more left to do.

Date-stones are good food for cows and are usually broken and soaked in water till they become tender and edible.

razzāh: one who breaks something (e.g. date-stones) with a stone, hammer, etc. From the verb rezah.

al-'abas: date-stones, the sing. is 'besēh. They are also called fesam (plur. of fšemeh) by bedouins and in southern Najd.

yōm: when.

lāf: to throw away.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: ʿAbū Dabbī, p. 82: ʿAsk., no. 145.

"Like the beauty of a blind man's wife [never appreciated by him."

zeen: beauty

mert: mereh (imraʾah): wife, woman

al-ʿama: (al-ʿaʾma) the blind man

"Like [the waters of a] torrent which are covered by straw: you think they are behind but they are ahead," i.e., the
rush of water is concealed.

Sim. WM: a post-classical proverb: Ṭāliq., no. 551.
SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., nos. 1864, 3148; ‘Ask., no. 1464.

metel ẓaww al-kūṣ
"Like the fire of palm-tree leaves," they burn up quickly and just as quickly burn away.

ẓaww: fire, see no. 951.
SMDW: two classical proverbs: Zamak., 1, nos. 950, 951; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2026; Tik., no. 2104.

metel tsālāb ar-ramyeh kellen rāḥ ma’ wāḍī
"Like dogs which are being shot at [lit. like the dogs of the shooting]: each one goes [lit. went] by a [different] valley."
Used impolitely about people dispersing.

metl lḥamṭ al-bgereh (lḥamat bgereh) mā tangz al-wēṣi
"Like the meat of a cow: it does not render the ablution invalid." Unlike camel’s meat, beef does not make it necessary for one who eats it to perform a new ablution for worship.
Said impolitely of an ineffective person.
Sim. WM: G. Syria: Frayha, no. 3178.

metel mert al-‘ama gubalen malyūmeh
"[He is] like the wife of a blind man: she is always blamed [for the trouble he may face owing to his defect]." Cf. nos. 191, 230, 548, 415, 490.
al-‘ama: al-‘a’ma. See proverb no. 954 above.
mert: mereh (‘imra‘ah), wife. See no. 954 above.
qubalen: qubal: always: see no. 945.
malyümeh: (fus: malümah) obj. partic. of láma, to blame.

metel yebís 'Ebu Tallál ḥṣáfetn 'ala al-atsel
"Like the dry dates of Ebu Tallál: They are too good to be eaten."
yebis: a type of hard dry dates, one of the best types of dates.

Ebu Tallál: a shopkeeper in al-Bkayriyyeh, who sold good dates saying they were too good to be eaten, since looking at them in itself was enjoyment enough.

ḥṣáfetn: something whose loss causes regret. From ḥasaf, tabassaf, he felt sorry (see no. 897 above).

mejra Ngeemes lá yadkel 'u lá yaṭla'
"[Like] the door-latch of Ngeemes: it neither goes in nor comes out." Said of a difficult person who will not agree to anything.

mejra: a latch of the traditional Najdi wooden door. It is inserted into a hole in the wall. It is provided with wooden teeth which engage with small holes and so lock the door.

SMDW: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4201.

al-mehteri sab'an
"He that is waiting [i.e., for food; for the table to be laid] is as if he were full." Since he hopes to eat his fill soon, his hunger lessens.

al-mehteri: the waiting; active part. of 'ehṭara, to wait for:

mehrat an-nar
"[he is] the poker of the fire," i.e., he is a firebrand. A
phrase applied to one who sows dissension or causes enmity between others. Cf. no. 995 below.

ْخُرُقُ كُفَّ

mkarūg tsaif

"There is a hole in his hand [lit. of a pierced hand]." Said of an openhanded generous person.

mkazzyetuh ḏnūbuh

"His offences have made him ashamed." Said of someone who avoids meeting another whom he has offended.

mkazzyetuh: mkazzi, the act. partic. of kazza, to make someone ashamed, plus the ta' of feminization تأ للفت (تا’ التأئيث) plus the 3rd person masc. sing. suffix -uḥ. Note: the active participle is used here to mean "has" or "have" plus the meaning of the verb as usual in the Najdi vernacular, one says أنت عارِثن "I have invited him"; أنت عارِث "You have known me."

al-mdawi mā yawi

"The one who cures [patients] does not pity [them]," i.e., he does not heed their complaints about the pain resulting from the treatment, and he may resort to using a harsh method of cure if necessary.

mdabbren bad-dar 'akeer men ḥaddār

"A careful spender in the home is better than a trader in provisions [who can fetch a lot of food home]." Said in praise of thrift.

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2 Cf. Juh., no. 2227.
haddār: one who comes with al-ḥadrah (الحمد), "a caravan which arrives from Iraq and/or Syria with provisions to be sold or distributed in Najdi towns."

'akeer men: better than.

SMDW: two post-classical proverbs: M., 1, p. 151

Mecca: Sāsi, nos. 220, 428; Yemen: Goit., no. 446; Akwa', 1, nos. 1055, 1056, 1057; Syria: Asqar, no. 1501; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., nos. 603, 952, 2375; Gul., p. 134; Egypt: Fā'iqa, nos. 1364, 1862.

mdawwer ge'ūd jeddetuh

"He is looking for the young camel of his grandmother," i.e., he is looking for unnecessary trouble.

mdawwer: act. partic. of dawwar, to look for.

gē'ūd: young male camel.

al-marjleh ṣablah ṭewilen 'u mamādūd, 'u weld ar-reḍi tāgṣer 'an al-ma ḫbāleh

"The cord of manly excellence is long and extended, but the cords of a mean person [lit. a son of a good-for-nothing] are too short to reach the water," i.e., a mean person cannot achieve much.

marjleh: (faṣ., ruṭūlah) manliness.
weld: waład: son.
ar-reḍi: ar-reḍî
own home," i.e., a host should not be treated in either of 

these extreme ways.

maradd (darb, ṭerīḍ) al-tsālīb 'ala al-gaṣṣāb

"The dog will return (var. the dog's way leads) to the butcher."

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, pp. 107, 203; Iraq (Baghdad and

Mosul): Hanafi, no. 783; Tik., no. 961; Dabb., 1, p. 192;

Gul., p. 65.

SMDW: two post-classical proverbs: M., 1, p. 230:

الحیة تدور في أصحاب المجاد وطرق ترجع 

الأصل على أصحاب الفئات

الحبائی: 

G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1732; Fegh., no. 2033; Baum., nos. 55,

56; Tālīq., no. 46; Landb., no. 179; Singer, no. 126;

Egypt: Taim., nos. 1976, 2282, 2742; Burck., no. 122; Amīn,

p. 322.

الرسال ما يوضع له رأس

al-mersāl mā yūṣa' luh rās

"A messenger should not be beheaded." Cf. the English proverb,

"Messengers should neither be headed nor hanged."

Sim. WM: Egypt: Taim., no. 2723.

اللزعة ديب مثل الأم

al-mers‘eh mahīb metl al-umm

"A wet-nurse is not the same as a mother."

mahīb:

ما هي ـ)

مرّ على بر وّتر اسمه ولا يذرى البردان كثير الهدم

marren 'ala barden 'u marren ṣemūm 'u lā yedría al-bardān

ketr al-ḥdūmi

1 Also ibid., nos. 829, 2238; 'Ubūdī, 1, no. 246. 

2 ODEP, p. 529.
"Sometimes [we are] cold, sometimes very hot. Many clothes will not keep a cold man warm [lit. will not protect]."

**marren**: marr plus the tanwin: sometimes.

**samūm**: (samūm): name of a hot wind which sometimes blows in Arabia.

**ketr**: verbal noun, equivalent of katrat

**al-hdūm**: plural of ḥādem, clothes.

**merten šeeneh 'u 'ašan šwayy**

"A repulsive wife and a paltry supper." Cf. nos. 170, 206, 234, 267, 377, 495.

**merten**: mereh plus -en of the tanwin.

**merhfen an-nettāgeh**

"He is making the [soil over his] escape hole very thin."

This phrase is said metaphorically of one who is preparing to leave or flee.

**merhfen**: merhef: act. partic. of arhaf, to make thin.

**an-nettāgeh**: (lit. the place at which something gets out quickly (yanṭeg)): the colloquial word for نافثة البرم، a small concealed hole which a jerboa makes in the middle of the ceiling of its burrow to escape from in time of danger. The jerboa makes the soil covering it so thin that it is easily pierced from below when he wants to escape.

**maržhen brazh**

"[It is] joking mixed with serious talk."

Sim, MDW: a post-classical proverb: M.,1,p. 318: رَبّ منّي في غوره جَدّ: منّيِ قرة ملح

**al-mażḍ grażat melḥ**

"Jesting should be as little as a small piece of salt to be
tasted," i.e., just as only a very small quantity of salt is usually tasted at one time, likewise jesting should be limited.

Mas'ūd b'een ummuh gazāl

"In the eyes of his mother, Mas'ūd is a gazelle," i.e., she thinks he is as beautiful as a gazelle. Mas'ūd is said to have been an ugly child who nevertheless was always an object of admiration by his mother who thought he was most handsome. Said to or about someone who can see no wrong in his own children, friends, or other persons close to him, especially someone who lavishes affection upon a troublesome and worthless child. Cf. the English proverb, "The owl thinks her own young fairest"¹ and "She thinks all her geese are swans."

N.B.: Like most people in the East, Najdis consider the gazelle the most perfect example of beauty.

SMDW: five classical proverbs: M., nos. 16, 1723, 2855, 3006, 4068; 'Ask., no. 413; Zamak., 2, nos. 773, 394; a post-classical proverb: Ta'ālibi, Tāmtīl, p. 379

G. Syria: Fegh., nos. 893, 3030; Ašqar, nos. 462, 1950; Baum., nos. 68, 449; Stephan, nos. 737, 696, 897, 899; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 132, no. 29; Oman: Jayak., no. 102; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 647; Egypt: Taim., no. 1183; Burck., no. 60.

NS: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 176; Iraq: Hanafi, no. 265; Tik., no. 1189; Dal., 1, no. 583; Dabb., 1, p. 148; Gül., p. 109; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3335; Fegh., no. 2867; Stephan, no. 382; Frayha, no. 2739; Singer, no. 7; Mak., no. 40; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 168; Egypt: Taim., no. 2234.

Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 168; Egypt: Taim., no. 2234.

massaha layyen was-summ ba(a)nyābah

¹ Ibid., p. 604.
"Its [i.e., a snake's] touch is smooth yet poison is in its fangs." This proverb is apparently a slightly modified quotation from 'Alī b. 'Abī Tālib's saying: \(\text{الدُّنيا كَالْحَيَةِ لَا يَلِفُن} \) مسحاً وإسلامًا الناقلي في أنيابها; cf. nos. 668, 986, 1188.

**SMDW:** four classical proverbs: M., nos. 746, 1387, 3580; 'Ask., no. 79; Bakri, p. 107: الدَّعَبِ يَكُنِّي أبا جَمِيدَ; Mecca: Hurg., no. 57; G. Syria: Asqar, no. 4175; Baghdad: Tik., nos. 880, 1169.

"One day's walking with honour is better than a thousand years with humiliation." Cf. the English proverb, "Better die with honour than live with shame." ²

**Sin. WM:** Egypt: Taim., no. 2007.

Egypt was not built all at once." Cf. the proverb, "Rome was not built in a day." ⁴

\(\text{'مَرِ: pass perf. of 'أَمَرُ, to build.} \)

**NS:** Baghdad: Tik., no. 2152; Hanafi, 2, p. 252.

**SMDW:** Egypt: Baq., p. 339.

"Egypt builds the world and the world does not build it."

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2. ODEP, p. 52.
3. Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 816.
4. ODEP, p. 683.
Said in praise of Egypt.

mzahha hal al-'Yūn

"[Like] the gathering of the people of al-'Yūn (al-'Uyun) in the forenoon." Said of people who, having nothing to eat, pass the time talking and telling tales to each other.

mzahha: (fus., mudahha) place where one has breakfast, or where a shepherd lets his flocks graze in the late morning (see proverb. no. 830), or, as here, the gathering in the late morning (الضحي) for a meal.

hal: 'ahl

al-'Yūn: (fus., al-'Uyun plur of 'ayn) this is understood to be 'Yūn al-Jwa ('Uyun al-Jawa), in al-Qaṣīm, which is some 25 miles north-west of Buraidah. But A. Juhaimān understood the reference was to al-'Yūn (the water springs) of al-Ḥasa. See Juh., 3, p. 113.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 238.

mṭaw'a'en bal-kafa wen šāf šen laššuh wen dzīl hāda ḥāramen rāh yekraššuh2

"[He is] a religious man in secret, although if he finds something he will filch it, and if he is told 'this is a forbidden thing [e.g. money belonging to other people]', he will appropriate it." Said of a hypocritical man who feigns righteousness, but this does not cause him to refrain from helping himself to the property of others. Cf. no. 1188.

N.B.: most people know only the first half of this proverbial verse.

1 Also Juh., no. 2244.
2 Cf. ibid., no. 2249.
mtawwa': a religious person. See nos., 260, 895.
al-kafa: in secret. This word, for poetical necessity is placed before its proper place. It is therefore overlooked in translation.
šen: a thing.
lāššuh: he ate it. lāšš is a rarely-used word for "to eat".
yektaššuh: he eats it. A word made to suit the rhyme. Not used.
SMDW: a classical proverb: Zamak., 2, no. 111; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 596; G. Syria: Manch. MS fol. 93; Littm., nos. 300, 329.

"[Run] with the horses O Šagra." Said of one who does not think for himself but thoughtlessly imitates others. Cf. nos. 189, 616, 936.
Šagra: "fair", the name of a mare.
Sim. WM: Basra: Dal., 1, no. 118.

"[Like] the man who went to the two villages to say 'Blessed feast day to you'." Said of one who, by being too keen, misses both of two chances.

m'āyd al-dzaryeteen
"Like the man who went to the two villages to say 'Blessed feast day to you'," Said of one who, by being too keen, misses both of two chances.
m'āyd: act. partic. of 'ayad, to go to see others on a feast day and give them felicitations. The man to which this phrase refers, supposedly attended the 'īd prayers in his village, and instead of going with other people to partake of the feast, decided to go to another adjacent village to give the villagers the compliments of the season. When he arrived there he found that they had finished their feast. He then hurriedly returned to his own village, only to find to his
disappointment that they too had concluded their festival meal.
SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2595; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4254; Frayha, no. 3029.

meʿeldzen braṭub

"He is starting a fire with wet [wood]," i.e., he is in too much of a hurry. If one is in a hurry one may put any wood one can get under one's pot, as one has no time to look for dry wood.

mʿalledz ʿabatuh bal-krubeh

"[He is] hanging his cloak on the stump of a date-palm," i.e., he is leaving soon; he is ready to leave at any moment.

al-krubeh: (fus., al-karabah) see no. 262 above.

maʿha siqāha wa ḫidāha

"She [i.e., a camel] has its water-skin and shoes [always] with her." A camel drinks a lot of water and stores it in its body. Unlike man, therefore, it does not have to carry a sheepskin full of water. In addition, its feet are so tough that it does not have to wear shoes. Said of the ability of camels to travel anywhere and go for a long time without drinking water. The origin of this saying is in the hadit: 2

کیف تری نی ضالة النمن تال على الهدعه وسلم: "خذها فإنما هي لك أولأخيك أو للذئب" ثم تاء: كيف ترى نى ضالة إلا بل؟ تال: نقال: "دعها فإنن صفا حذاءها وسقاها ترد الماء وتأكل السجرحتي يجدها بسها."

al-mgaṣūbeh mā bah leban (mā t-ḥaleb) 3

1 Also ʿUbūdi, 1, no. 817; Juh., no. 2254.
2 See Bukāri, op. cit.
3 Also ʿUbūdi, 1, no. 819.
"A forced cow gives no milk."

mgaṣūbeh: fem. pass. partic. of gaṣab, to force someone to do something.

SMDW: three classical proverbs: M., no. 1988; 'Ask., nos. 236, 537; Zamak., 1, no. 604; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 116:

G. Syria: Frayha, no. 2992; Egypt: Taim., nos. 2055, 2441.

al-megenyāt al-keel wal-māl an-nakal
"Horses bring wealth but date-palms constitute true property," i.e., by means of horses a man can get booty and be rich. However, they are in themselves of no significant economic value, whereas date-palms are in themselves of lasting economic value.¹

NS: Iraq: Weissbach, no. 81.

al-mdzaddi mā yaba al-mdzaddi
"A beggar does not like a beggar." The meaning of al-mdzaddi in the Najd dialect is, however, obscure. This interpretation had to be obtained by consulting other collections of contemporary Arabic proverbs. This showed that this proverb is current with slight formal changes in Kuwait and Iraq with the word mdzaddi pronounced mkaddi in the former and mjaddi or mgaddi in the latter.

Another interpretation may be based on the fact that mdzaddi in Najd is the active participle of dzadda, "to aim one's gun". It would then mean: "A man who is aiming his gun [at some game] does not like a person who is also aiming his gun [at the same game]." Whatever the precise

¹ A. Musil, op. cit., p. 371, talks about this theme and mentions that horses are called al-murrejat, the enriching ones.
meaning of al-mdzaddi may be, the proverb is used of occup­
utional rivalry or jalousie de métier.

**NS: Kuwait:** Nūrī, 2, p. 112; **Iraq** (Baghdad and Mosul):
Hanafi, no. 2501; Tik., no. 2881; Gul., p. 30; Dabb., p. 93.
SMDW: M., 2, p. 129 and Ta'ālībi, Tamtil, p. 170;

الغامض يحب شخت يدرك شحات وراميج البيت يره الخبيّع;
M., 2, p. 129 and Ta'ālībi, Tamtil, p. 170;

NS: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 112: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul):
Hanafi, no. 2501; Tik., no. 2881; Gul., p. 30; Dabb., p. 93.
SMDW: M., 2, p. 129 and Ta'ālībi, Tamtil, p. 170;

غامض يحب شحات يدرك شحات وراميج البيت يره الخبيّع;
Yemen:
Goit., no. 1093; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, nos. 386,
1215; Tik., no. 1403; Gul., p. 15; Āṣā'īn Mīhak 15;
G. Syria: Fegh., nos. 1602, 1799; Manch. MS, fol. 59;
Egypt: Taim., no. 1648; Burck., no. 233;
Fā'iq, no. 233.

mgarren šwaš

"He is a connector of hair [on people's heads]," i.e., he
stirs up trouble between people, as though he had tied together
the hair on their heads without their prior knowledge. Thus
as one moved away he would feel a tug and quarrel with the
other, thinking that he had done this. Cf. no. 963.

šwaš: plur. of šī십시오, the long hair of the head.

malak al-mūt yemūt

"The angel of death [also] dies." Said of someone who mal-
treats or troubles other people, and ends by being troubled
himself.

men ehtāl etstāl 'u men dawwar lega

"He who endeavours [e.g., to find grain], will weigh [it], and

1 See also 'Ali b. Muḥammad at-Tawḥīdi, 'Aklāqul-Wazīrain,
2 See Qurais, 70, p. 16. (This proverb is recorded by
Huṣain Ahmad Sāwli.)
3 Also 'Ubūdī, 1, no. 826.
4 Cf. Juh., no. 2381.
he who searches [for something], will find [it]."

dawwar: to look for, to search.

lega: (fus., laqiya) to find.

Sim. WM: Mecca: Sâsi, no. 433; Yemen: Goit., no. 1194; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 59; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 815; Tik., nos. 212, 1007; Egypt: Littm., no. 229.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., nos. 3616, 4136.

mn aşluh tsalben nebah
"He who is a dog by origin, will bark."

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 475; Stephan, no. 463; Fegh., no. 1969; Egypt: Fâ'iqah, no. 1686; Taim., no. 664.


mn akal ḥmayyr an-nās yzōzi bal-grab
"He who devours the people's donkey will have to carry the water-skins [himself]." Cf. no. 646. This proverb refers to a common story among the folktales of B. Hilāl, which recounts an incident in which Mhalhel (Muhalhil), also called az-Zīr Sālem, the brother of Kulaib, forced a lion which had killed his family's donkey to do the donkey's job and carry the water-skins.

ḥmayyr: ḥmayyer: dimin. of huár, donkey.
yzōzi: imperf. of zōza: to walk with short steps under a load.
al-grab: plur. of dzerbeh (fus., girbah), water-skin.

NS: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 547; Fegh., no. 2272.

mn akal nefa' nafsuḥ
"He who eats, does himself good."

Sim. WM: Mecca: Sâsi, no. 269; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 43, 1 Cf. ibid., no. 2277.
mn anṣah ba(a)rzen wartah

"Whoever treats land well [e.g., farming it well], will inherit it."

'anṣah: to try to do something to the best of one's ability.
wartah: waritahā, he inherited it.

mn 'āfa deenuh namat 'eenuh

"He who repays his debt, sleeps soundly [lit., his eye sleeps]."


men bāg ḫalaf

"Whoever betrays [or steals] will swear an oath," i.e., a person who does not refrain from betrayal or theft is even less likely to refrain from swearing a false oath to his innocence.

bag: to betray; to steal.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 239. SMDW: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3279; Frayha, nos. 2702, 2703; Egypt: Taim., nos. 2176, 2178; Littm., no. 302.

men baga ad-dahh mā gāl aḥḥ

"He who wants to be hit, should not complain afterwards (lit., does not say 'aḥḥ]." ('Aḥḥ is an exclamation usually given in reaction to pain, cold or heat.)

ad-dahh: verbal noun "hitting". It is also probably a certain

\[^1\] Also ibid., no. 2308.
form of dancing. However, the word is not used in Najd for either of these meanings except in this proverb.

The proverb is directed at a person who chooses to follow a hard path and then complains of the difficulties encountered. Cf. no. 891. Cf. also the English proverbs, "No joy without annoy"\(^1\) and "No pains no gains."\(^2\)

NS: Yemen: Goit., no. 121; Mecca: Hurg., no. 74; Sāsi, no. 273; Egypt: Fā'iq, no. 1906.

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Burton, no. 149.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: ‘Ask., no. 1646; M., nos. 543, 4016; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 532; Frayha, no. 387; Egypt: Fā'iq, no. 1738.

\[\text{men bagā(w)h kelluh kallā(w)h kelluh} \]^3

"He who covets all, loses all."

This proverb is taken from the following tale: while walking in an out-of-the-way place, a man heard a voice calling out "'arba' miyyeh ḥadr at-tayyeh" (there are four hundred (pieces of money) under the rock). Without hesitation, he made for the nearby rock and, turning it upside down, found this very sum. He took it and walked away happily. Then the voice called out again: "lū kallāhen waffeenāhen" (had he left them where they were we would have increased them). On hearing this he quickly went back, put the coins in their place once more, and then replaced the rock over them. After a while he came back and moved the rock away again, but to his great dismay there was no trace of the money. After a long futile search he departed. As he did so the voice was heard again, but this time it said, "He who covets all, loses all." Cf.  

1 ODEP, p. 414.
2 Ibid., p. 572.
3 Also Juh., no. 2280.
the English proverb, "All covet, all lose."\(^1\)

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 77.

NS: G. Syria: Baum., no. 577; Ašqar, no. 4046.

Sim. WM: A post-classical proverb: 'Ask., 2, p. 190 and Ta'ālibī, Tamīlī, p. 44; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2666; Socin, no. 359; Dabb., 1, p. 86; 'Gul., p. 97; Yemen: Goit., no. 1191; Egypt: Taim., no. 3120.

men tejar bmal ar-rjāl afgarōh

"He who becomes rich through the wealth of others, will be made poor by them."

tejar: to become rich.

men teṭannaz bžal' al-yad zala' bar-rejel gabl aš-ṣebh

"He who mocks someone's disabled hand will soon [lit. before the morning] have a disabled foot."

teṭannaz: to mock, to deride.

SMDW: A classical proverb: M., no. 3623; 'Ask., no. 1904; Yemen: Goit., no. 969; Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 92; 'Ask., no. 1904; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1792; Egypt: Taim., nos. 272; 2846.

men jād g'aduh mā kāb ṣawīh

"The messenger of one who has good connections will not return disappointed." Said of the man who, owing to his highly-placed friends, gets what he wants.

g'ad: (pronounced qa'ad when not suffixed), lit. those with whom one sits, i.e., companions, friends.

ṣawī: act. part. of ẓawa, to arrive (especially as a guest or on an errand); ẓawīh is literally, "the one who arrives

\(^1\) ODEP, p. 9.
with a message from him."

"He who comes uninvited, sits without a mat."

Cf. the English proverbs, "An unbidden guest must bring his stool with him" and "He who comes uncalled, sits unserved."

1 da'awa: da'wah

Sim. WM: Oman: Jayak., no. 51; Yemen: Goit., no. 120; Akwa', 1, no. 401; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., nos. 2619, 2660, 2661; Gul., p. 173; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1577; Frayha, no. 4168; Egypt: Baq., p. 47.

men ja 'ala geer d'awa gar 'ad 'ala geer frās

"He who comes uninvited, sits without a mat."

Cf. the English proverbs, "An unbidden guest must bring his stool with him" and "He who comes uncalled, sits unserved."

2 d'awa: da'wah

Sim. WM: Oman: Jayak., no. 51; Yemen: Goit., no. 120; Akwa', 1, no. 401; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., nos. 2619, 2660, 2661; Gul., p. 173; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1577; Frayha, no. 4168; Egypt: Baq., p. 47.

men ja 'ala geer d'awa gar 'ad 'ala geer frās

"He who comes uninvited, sits without a mat."

Cf. the English proverbs, "An unbidden guest must bring his stool with him" and "He who comes uncalled, sits unserved."

3 d'awa: da'wah

Sim. WM: Oman: Jayak., no. 51; Yemen: Goit., no. 120; Akwa', 1, no. 401; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., nos. 2619, 2660, 2661; Gul., p. 173; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1577; Frayha, no. 4168; Egypt: Baq., p. 47.

men ja 'ala geer d'awa gar 'ad 'ala geer frās

"He who comes uninvited, sits without a mat."

Cf. the English proverbs, "An unbidden guest must bring his stool with him" and "He who comes uncalled, sits unserved."

4 d'awa: da'wah

Sim. WM: Oman: Jayak., no. 51; Yemen: Goit., no. 120; Akwa', 1, no. 401; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., nos. 2619, 2660, 2661; Gul., p. 173; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1577; Frayha, no. 4168; Egypt: Baq., p. 47.

men ja 'ala geer d'awa gar 'ad 'ala geer frās

"He who comes uninvited, sits without a mat."

Cf. the English proverbs, "An unbidden guest must bring his stool with him" and "He who comes uncalled, sits unserved."

1 Cf. Juh., no. 2284.

2 ODEP, p. 853.

3 Ibid., p. 136.

4 Ibid., p. 834.
be scabrous (var. he who mixes with mangy people will catch mange)." Cf. nos. 258, 1024. Cf. the English proverb, "He that touches pitch shall be defiled."

_al-jarba:_ collective of _ajrab._

_yetla:_ pass. imperf. of _tala_, to smear, to anoint.

_jrebi_ pass., "was afflicted by mange or scabies".

Sim. WM: _Lebanon_: Frayha, no. 2314.

SMDW: _Baghdad_: Hanafi, no. 432; _Egypt_: Taim., no. 1839.

"From an incline to a slope," i.e., from one bad thing to another.

_dehdeera:_ a slope.

Ident.: _Mecca_: Sāsi, no. 438.

Sim. WM: _Egypt_: Taim., nos. 1798, 2839; Littm., no. 53.

"He who has already performed his pilgrimage duty [i.e., once], should then stay at home," i.e., it is not necessary for him to repeat the pilgrimage with all the difficulties it may involve. Travelling on a Pilgrimage was in the recent past far from safe and was full of discomfort. Pilgrims often suffered from hunger, robbery, and other hardships. In such circumstances it was only natural to advise one who had already performed the pilgrimage once, not to do so again.

_yagzub aržuh:_ lit., "he holds his ground." An idiom which means "he should stay where he is."

"He who is deprived of good manners, is deprived of the best thing."
herm: (in pause pronounced ħram) pass. perf. of ħaram, to deprive of.

men ḥaṣṣ 'aleek raww 'aleeh
"If someone transports his hay on your back, then transport your water on his [lit., whoever transports hay on you, transport your water on him]." Cf. the English proverb, "To pay one in his own coin."

ṭṣṣ: (perf.) This refers to a common practice in Najd. In a good year with plenty of grass (ḥaṣṣ) people go to the desert (al-kala) to gather it and some people move to the place of their choice and stay there for several weeks, doing their best to gather as much grass as possible. They do this in order to store the hay at home and use it as fodder throughout the year. Some, however, merely go whenever their time allows it, collect what they can, and return carrying it on their heads or by means of their camels, donkeys or--at present--cars.

raww: imper. of rawwa, to fetch drinking water. Part of the business of going into the desert to gather grass is to make sure that the supply of water is assigned to someone who fetches as much as is needed every day. Thus these two things go together.

men ḥagar šeedetuh mā(a)njezah
"He who undervalues the game he catches will not cook it well."

anjez: (pronounced anjaz when not suffixed) (fus., 'andaj) to cook well. See nos. 832, 932.

men ḥatsā lek ḥatsa fik

Ibid., no. 614.
"Who chatters to you, will chatter of you."¹ This proverb is apparently a slightly modified quotation of a dictum of aṣ-Ṣarīf Muḥammad b. ‘Awn:²

> تَحْرَزَ بِسَوْا الْقَلْبِ، وَابْصِرْ بِحَالَكَ وَاحْدِ رُجُلٍ يَبْخَسُ الْرَّائِ يُغَيِّرُهُ
> مِن سَوْطِهِ، إِنَّ حَكَيْكَ يُكَكَ حَكَيْكَ لِي، يُرَضِي عَدْوَكَ بِالْحُبِّ وَبِرِضْيَكَ

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 878.
SMDW: G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 673; Manch. MS, fol. 97;
Egypt: Taim., no. 597; Fā’iqa, no. 2371.

من خَلَقَ عَشَا (وَا) أصْبِحَ يَلَقَا (وَا)
men kalla ‘ašā(ʷ)h ašbaḥ yalgā(ʷ)h

"He who keeps his supper, will find it in the morning." Cf. the English proverb, "He that saves his dinner will have the more for his supper."³

NS: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 78; Yemen: Goit., no. 1170.
Sim. WM: Mecca:⁴ من وَرَّفَذَاءِ لِعَشَا لِعَشَا; Egypt: Taim., no. 2883; Fā’iqa, no. 2311.

من دَخَلَ بِسْرَ بَلْشَ طَلَعَ مَحْ بَلْشَ
men daḵal ḫaṣṣ bī ṭal'ū mahn bīlāš

"He who enters Egypt with nothing, leaves it with nothing."

Said of a penniless man who wanders in various lands without acquiring riches in any of them. Egypt is here used in the sense of a place of wealth and riches; even in such a place, says the proverb, a man will not automatically become wealthy or indeed acquire anything.

bīlāš: bīlā šay‘.

من دِلِٰله الَّذِي ضَاعَ
men delīlūh al-būm ža‘

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¹ This translation is itself an English proverb. Cf. ibid., p. 116.
³ ODEP, p. 700
⁴ See Quraiṣ, 100 (1961), p. 16.
"He whose guide is an owl loses his way." Said of the consequences of foolish company. Cf. the English proverb, "He that takes the raven for his guide will light on carrion." ¹

N.B. Among the Arabs the owl carries no connotation of wisdom.

Sim. WM: Mecca; Mosul: Socin, no. 152; G. Syria: Stephan, no. 736; Ašqar, no. 411; Egypt: Taim., no. 49; Fā'iq, no. 311; Burck., no. 65.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 130;

قُدْ ضَلْتِ مِنْ أَنَّكَ نَعِيَّةٌ

العَمَيْنِ أَتْبَعَتْهُ

Ira (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1643, Tik., nos. 146, 1850; Socin, no. 150; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 412, 414, 913; Fegh., nos. 2906, 2935; Burton, no. 23; Baum., no. 60; Huxley, no. 78; Frayha, no. 3174; Stephan, nos. 773, 824; Egypt: Taim., no. 106.

1021

من ذا سليقة ومن ذا نعية

men da sleedzeh 'u men da nweedzeh

"A little hound from this [man], and a little she-camel from that [man]," i.e., a little from here, a little from there: every little helps.

SMDW: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 450; Tallq., no. 182; Egypt: Taim., no. 1678.

1022

من ذاق ما ذتنا فهبو عاذنا

men dag mā degna fehu 'aderna

"He who tastes [i.e., experiences] what we have tasted, will excuse us."


1023

من نذكر ما حفرك

men dekark mā ḥagark

"He who remembers you [e.g., by offering a present no matter

¹ ODEP, p. 802.
² See Quraiš, 92 (1961), p. 16 (recorded by 'Abdallah Muḥammad 'Id).
how small] does not despise you."
Sim. WM: Baghdad: Tik., no. 907; Egypt: Hanki, p. 91;
G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 1648; Singer, no. 44;
Burton, no. 173.

men ṭāfag al-mšallīn ẓalla 'u men ṭāfag al-mwallīn walla
"He who associates with people who pray prays, and he who
associates with wrongdoers, does wrong."
Sim WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 84; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1381;
G. Syria: Frayha, no. 2317; Egypt: Burck., no. 427.

men ṭād mā ẓṣennuh ṣ̄arad
"If a man returns it is as though he did not run away."
ẓṣennuh: ka'annahu.
ṣ̄arad: to escape.
NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 86; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 4539.

men ṭāgga' ad-denya tebedduh ftūgah
"The man who tries to darn this world's [rents] will find
the holes give him much trouble."

men ṣ̄āf mā ya'āf ṭārag mā yḥebb
"He who sees [i.e., suffers or experiences] that which offends
him takes his leave of that of which he is fond," i.e., a
person who observes that someone whom he likes is behaving
improperly towards him is liable to terminate their relationship.
Sim. WM: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 180.

men ṣ̄awar mā 'aṭa

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1 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 854 and cf. Juh., no. 2316.
2 Cf. ibid., no. 2334.
"He who consults [you] does not give." Said, often jokingly, to a host who asks his visitors whether they want to eat or drink. That is, he does not intend to give and merely asks them in the hope that they will say "No".

men šabb 'ala šayyen šāb 'aleeh

"He who grows up with a habit [lit., a thing], retains it in old age." Cf. nos. 486, 1030. Cf. the English proverb, "The wolf may lose his teeth, but never his nature."²

Ident.: Baghdad: Tik., no. 2228.
NS: G. Syria: Frayha, no. 3831; Tallq., no. 19.
SMDW: numerous proverbs: see no. 486 above.

men šār luh 'ādeten mā kallāha

"He who develops a habit will not give it up." Cf. nos. 486, 1029. Cf. the English proverb, "Custom (habit) is a second nature."³

men ṣalabk mā 'aqark

"The person who desires something of you will not excuse you [should you fail to grant him his request]."

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1936; Hanafi, no. 1756.

men ṭawwal al-geebat jab al-ğanāyem

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 861.
² ODEP, p. 907.
³ Ibid., p. 162.
"He who tarries long, shall bring rich booty."


NS: Lebanon: Frayha, no. 3841.

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1339; Dabb., 1, p. 90; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 879; Fegh., no. 1217; Egypt: Taim., no. 611.

men 'ādekum yā 'amm mā 'āduh al-'īd 'asāwī yangel metḥanuh fī ḍā'ūh

"If I come again [lit. he who comes again] to you O uncle, may I not attend next festival day [i.e., may I die before that; lit. may the 'īd not come again to him]; may I carry my basket on my arm [i.e., become a beggar]." This verse expresses the disgust of the person who uttered it towards an unnamed person. The use of imprecation against oneself is a form of oath, used particularly by women and children.

metḥan: small basket, made of palm-leaves. Used mainly for fresh dates.

men 'āš ḥilēḥ māt ḍager

"He who lives by cunning, dies poor."

NS: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 90; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1770; Tik., no. 2704; Gūl., p. 36; Dabb., 1,p.90.

Sim. WM: Yemen: Goit., no. 1176.

men 'edlakk ya (E)ben Barjas

"From your own sack O Eben Barjas." Said of the act of giving somebody some of his own property.

'edlakk: ('edlatk) the normal elision of the feminine "t" in final position before the suffix "k": 'edleh: sack, food-sack.
1036
men 'ana 'eleena wcjab ṭagguh 'aleena
"Whoever sets out with the purpose of visiting us, deserves our hospitality [lit. his right of entertainment becomes a duty on us]."
SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, nos. 534, 2717; Tik., no. 687.

1037
men 'enduh enţa 'u ġekar ḥamad rabbuh 'u šekar
"He who is blessed with a daughter and a son [lit. who has a female and a male], should praise his Lord and thank him."

1038
men 'ayya y'ašši meslem 'ašša kāfreen
"He who refuses to give supper to one believer [lit. Muslim], will [have to] give supper to two unbelievers."
'ayya: to refuse.

1039
men 'ayyan az-zebdeh 'ala šārb ad-dik?
"Who has seen [the speck of] butter on the moustache of the dog?" Cf. the following proverb, no. 1040, and proverb no. 1151. Cf. the English, "To look for a needle in a haystack."
men 'ayyan: who has seen (such and such)? A cry employed by someone who has lost something and who enquires for it in markets and gatherings.
ad-dik: the dog (originally the male hyena). The word is rarely used in its literal meaning, but often metaphorically of a person whom the speaker considers bad.

1040
men 'ayyan fāreten bednebah keet?

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1 Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 983.
2 See Lisān, 3 (Beirut, 1955), p. 16.
"Who has seen a mouse with a thread tied to its tail?" Cf. the preceding proverb and proverb no. 1151.

**bednebah:** bidanabiha: in its tail.

men greštuh al-ḥayyeh jefal (kāf) mn al-ḥabel 1

"He that has been bitten by a serpent, is afraid of a rope."

**jefal:** to be afraid, especially camels when they suddenly become frightened of something.

**NS:** Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 221; Tik., no. 351; **Egypt:** Baq., p. 115.

**Sim. WM:** Yemen: Goit., no. 1431; Oman: Jayak., no. 65; Mecca: 3

al-li ẓaqrush ʾl-ḥiṣn ʾl-khāf mn al-ḥabel ʿl-ʾlāli

Iraq: Weissbach, no. 86; Hanafi, no. 1637; Tik., no. 2187; Socin, no. 172; Dabb., 2, p. 360; Ghi., p. 45; **Kuwait:** Nūrī, 2, p. 91; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 550; Aṣqar, no. 4383; Stephan, no. 883; Baum., no. 171; Frayha, no. 3726; **Egypt:** Fāʾiqa, no. 1822; Taim., no. 2769.

**SMDW:** a post-classical proverb of several variations: M., no. 4132; Ṭāliq., no. 506; Zamak., 2, no. 1323; Taʿālībi, Tamtil, p. 377: 3

men kummuh lar-rḥa

"From his sleeve to the mill." Said of a very poor person.

The reference is to the fact that even a few grains of corn that such a person has tucked in his sleeve, must be taken straightaway to the mill, so that they can be ground and be eaten immediately.

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1 Also Juh., no. 2319.
2 This translation is itself an English proverb. See ODEP, p. 62.
3 Quraiš, 42 (1960), p. 16. The proverb is recorded by Sākīr Sulaimān aš-Šukūrī.
N.B. Some traditional robes have wide and long sleeves which can be used for carrying things.

SMDW: **Iraq** (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, nos. 2136, 2164; Tik., nos. 2202, 2234; Dabb., 2, p. 439:

من النجده للزريم من لا يستدرك لا تنطيه (لا تباديه بالثور)

Do not give advice [lit. do not give him; var. do not begin and offer advice] to one who does not consult you."

tenti: imperf. of 'anta, to give. The ن replaces the غ in this word. However, it is rarely used in normal speech except in the northernmost parts of Najd.

sör: advice, opinion.

SMDW: **Oman**: Jayak., no. 59.

من لطش اخیر من اهل بات
men lega akeer mn ahaluh bát

"Whoever finds a family better than his own, spends the night [with them]."

NS: **Iraq** (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2270; Gul., p. 172; Dabb., 1, p. 86.

من له حظ لا بد له لاقيه
men luh ḥaẓẓ lābedduh lādzīh

"Whoever has a destiny, is bound to meet it."

Sim. WM: a classical proverb: *Lisan*, 11, p. 186:

من له حيله فلاحتال (الله له حيله يحتال)
men luh ḥileh falyahṭāl (allih luh ḥileh yehṭāl)

"Whoever has an expedient, let him use it."

Sim., WM: a classical proverb: *Lisan*, 11, p. 186:

من له عنتر فيفزع
men luh 'anz fyafẓa

1 Also *Ubūdi*, 1, no. 884.
2 Cf. Juh., no. 2352.
3 Also *ibid.*, no. 2364.
"He who has a goat [e.g. among a flock which has been stolen] must hasten [to save it]."

من مضى الليمون عرف طعمه
men maṣṣ al-leemūn 'erf t'amuh
"He who sucks lemons, knows their taste."

من هين الذيب يقر؟
men hūn ad-ḏīb ygartad?
"Is the wolf so docile as to have its ticks picked?" Said metaphorically of a hard person.

hūn: ease, docility.
ygartad: imperf. pass. of garrad, to pick ticks off an animal's skin.

"The thirst for milk is not assuaged by having milk for one day."

menihāt leelah mā taṭred 'eemeh
menihāt (in pause pronounced meniheh): having milk; from temannah, to have milk, to have a cow, a ewe, etc. which gives milk.

'eemeh: n. from 'eeman, one who has not drunk milk for a long time and who therefore longs for it.
Ident.: Iraq (among bedouins): Ḥaḍirī, no. 240.
SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 218.

"Who can say to an ogre, 'Your eye is red'?"

من يقول للنخول عيناك حمراً?
men yegūl la-l-gūl 'eenek ḥamra‘?
"Who can say to an ogre, 'Your eye is red'?"

NS: Mecca: Qurāiš, 46, p. 16; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1033,2909.
SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Ḥanāfī, no. 2203; Tik., nos. 2184, 2280; Socin, no. 6; Ḍul., p. 133 and Dabb., 2, p. 431; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 5415; Egypt: Taim., no. 1615.
al-mehdi megdi

"He who gives presents is likely to be the loser [as he does not always receive gratitude or a reward for them]."
Cf. no. 391 above.

megdi: act. partic. of 'aqda, to lose.

al-mâr ma' al-jemâ'eh rehmeh

"Death with one's own people is a mercy."

Ident.: Mecca: Sâsi, no. 461.

NS: G. Syria: Singer, no. 50; Tarjamân, p. 133.


al-mût kâsen 'ala kell an-nâs

"Death is a cup given to all people."

mwallen al-šâbeh gabl al-fâlgeh

"He is preparing the bandage before he has been wounded."
Cf. the English proverb, "To cry out before one is hurt."

mwallem: act. part. of wallam, to prepare, to make ready.

falgeh: head wound

NS: Kuwait: Nûrî, 1, p. 163, no. 12.

an-nâs mêt1 an-namel mà yeji ella 'ala ad-desam

"People are like ants: they only gather on fat," i.e., people like to associate with a rich man. Cf. the English proverb,
"Rich folk have many friends."

SMDW: a classical or post-classical proverb: M., no. 168; Mosul: Socin, no. 207; Gul., p. 67: >U-J U V]\ U JJ i
G. Syria: Frayha, no. 4210.

الناس مدائن شوك

"People are [like] places where thorns are buried," i.e., one does not discover their bad qualities at first.

نافظعريمان: إن نارت نارت، وان نرت ما نارت

nāgt 'Aaremān: 'en tarat nārat we en nawwakat mā tārat
"[Like] the camel of 'Aaremān: if she gets up she bolts and if she has knelt down she will not get up." 'Aaremān (pronounced 'reemān) was said to be the name of a certain camel auctioneer who once jocularly shouted when auctioning a she-camel: "Who will buy this fine she-camel? . . . If she gets up she bolts . . ."

tārat: (tār) to rise up (e.g. an animal).
nār: to escape, to run away.
nawwak: to kneel down (e.g. an animal).


نام من نام، ورسى من سرى، وعند الصباح تحدث القيس السرى
nam men nām 'u sara men sara 'u 'end al-mesābih ytaḥammad al-gīm as-sra
"Some slept, and some spent the night a-journeying; but in the morning, the men [who had journeyed] felt pleased at having done so [as they realized that they were nearer to their destination]."
sara: to travel at night.

The second sentence is usually quoted without the first. It is clearly taken from the well-known classical

Ibid., p. 674.
proverb: ِنَبِيُّ بِرَاسُهُ نَخْلَهُ
"A palm-tree grew out of his head," i.e., he became extremely angry.

نَبِيُّ نَدَاوَهُ وَأَعْمِنَاهُ
"We wanted to cure it [i.e., an eye] but we blinded it [instead]."

نَاجِدُ يَكْنِي عَذَابًا عَن غَدَاحًا
"The healthy climate of Najd is sufficient, without its provender." Said in praise of the wholesome and healthy climate of Najd. The first word "Najd" is often omitted from this proverb when the context is clear. This proverb is either a misquotation of this half verse composed in a poem by Meṣ'ud al-Habdānī:2 or the poet quoted the already common proverb but changed its text.

1 Cf. ʿUbūdi, 1, no. 240.
2 See Muhammad as-Sudairi, ʿAbīlūn min ʾas-Ṣahāraʾ, i (Beirut, 1968), p. 218.
"He snorted into the ashes," i.e., he broke his promise. An analogy is drawn here between a man who breaks his promise and a donkey which snorts into the ashes when it wants to wallow in them and turn aside from its intended course.

"The palm-trees are more generous than their owners." The owners of a palm grove may be misers, but if you walk through it you are likely to find some dates.

"We fill up a hole [e.g., in our wall] and a bigger part [of the wall] falls down." Said of an irremediable state of affairs. telīm: a low wall with a part or parts of it fallen.

"Half of the war is a joke." Even in war-time, people do not take everything seriously.

"Half [the value] of belongings is how they look." An attractive appearance is an important element in the value of something.

Cf. Juh., no. 2243.
nesf 'aglek ma' kawiyyek

"Half of your intellect lies with your companion," i.e., two heads are better than one.

kawiyy: companion.

nat' (e) Tweedz

"He leapt [to the top of] Tweedz," i.e., he categorically denied the charge.

Tweedz: (Tuwaiq) the well-known range of mountains in southern Najd.

Some people refer to a man's denial simply by saying "Tweedz" which is a reference to this proverbial idiom.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nûri, 2, p. 216.

ne'edd al-layâli wal-layâli te'eddena wal-'emur yafna wal-layâli

"We count the nights and the nights count us. Man's life grows short and nights increase."

The first sentence of this proverb is NS in Iraq: Hanafi, no. 2358; Tik., no. 2433; Weissbach, no. 5; Gul., p. 148; Egypt: Baq., p. 21.

ne'matan majhulatan as-sehhatu fil-'abdan wal-'awtân

"Health in body and security in one's homeland are two under-valued boons." This proverb is a quotation (with modification) of the ḥadīt:


an-nafs arham an al-waldeen

"One is more solicitous of oneself than are one's parents [lit. the self is more merciful than the parents]," i.e., even though the parents of a child have more compassion for him than anyone else, yet they will still not be as compassionate towards him as he is towards himself.

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 512; Tik., nos. 58, 659, 1907; Socin, no. 51; G. Syria: Singer, no. 3; Landb., no. 58; Huxley, no. 73; Egypt: Taim., nos. 70, 1212; Fā'iqa, no. 86.

an-nafs ma lah redam

"The soul has no bar [to restrain it from wild desires]."

Said when talking of a covetous man, who when given something, desires more.

redam: a piece of wood used as a bar at the gate of an enclosure where animals are kept to prevent them from straying. Since the soul cannot be physically restrained from greed by a bar like animals, it may continue to desire more and more.

an-nafs mahib bya'leh

"The soul is not [as wide as] a field," i.e., one cannot restrain oneself for ever. Said by someone to warn another that the former's patience has a limit and that he may soon be angry.

bya'leh: farms in Najd usually consist of two sections, one in which palm-trees are planted, and the other in which cereal or vegetables are grown. The latter is called حياله, whether fallow or not.
nafsuh nafs țeer
"He has a bird's [or a falcon's] soul." Said of an irritable person.
SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., no. 2695; Egypt: Burck., no. 467; a post-classical phrase: M., no. 3795.

Nagl al-ma 'ala al-ma ḥazābeh (ḫazāmeh)
"It is prudent to carry water [with you] until you reach water." When travelling in the desert it is wiser not to dispose of any water you have until you actually reach the next source of water. Cf. nos. 721, 730.
ḫazābeh or ḥazāmeh: resolution, shrewdness. Neither word is in common use.
SMDW: three classical proverbs: M., nos. 129, 2432, 3841; 'Ask., nos. 136, 1198; Zamak., 1, no. 1597; 2, no. 550; a post-classical proverb: Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, 'Iqd, 3, p. 110: لا نصب ما احتى تجد ما

Nekas brihen 'afneh
"He returned with bad odour," i.e., he returned with empty hands, without having achieved his purpose.
Nekas: to return.
'afneh: fem. of 'afen, bad. See proverbs 516, 517.
SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., nos. 855, 1568; Zamak., 2, no. 355; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1145.

An-namleh lā rayyešat mātat
"When an ant grows wings, it will die." Said of someone who undergoes an extreme change for the worse in his conduct. It is most likely that this proverb is in people's
mind when they use the word rayyās (he grew wings) figuratively to mean "he became debauched."

Sim. WM: a post-classical proverb: M., 1, p. 68; Tāliq., no. 62; Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 174; Yemen: Akwa‘, 1, no. 297; Iraq (Baghdad and Easrah): Hanafi, no. 2376; Tik., no. 2447; Dal., 1, no. 194; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 3024; Egypt: Burck., no. 11; Fā'iqah, no. 706.

"Sleep is for the idiotic, dogs and women. A true wolf does not spend much time in sleep [lit., does not enjoy sleep]." Some people use only "Sleep is for the idiotic and women."

šāl-bāb men fāq hāl-karābeh
"This door is too good for this ruin [of a house]," i.e., however shabby and damaged this door may be, it is still superior to the hovel to which it is attached.

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1 See Lisan, 2 (Beirut, 1955), p. 392.
2 Cf. Juh., no. 2557.
contexts as this proverb to mean, "it is too good for . . . ."
NS: *Kuwait*: Nūrī, 1, p. 98, no. 3; *Baghdad*: Hanafi, no. 2480.
SMDW: *Baghdad*: Tik., no. 2482; *G. Syria*: Ašqar, no. 4699; Fegh., no. 2617.

1083

**hāl-kubz mahūb men hakal-'ajīn**

"This bread cannot be from that dough."
NS: *a post-classical proverb*: Abṣihi, 1, p. 35; *G. Syria*: Ašqar, no. 4690; Frayha, no. 4047.
Sim. WM: *G. Syria*: Fegh., no. 1060; Manch. MS, fol. 103.
SMDW: *a classical proverb*: M., no. 3260.

1084

**al-hbāl mahūb yegezz beerag**

"Madness does not raise a banner," i.e., a fool does not need to advertise his folly.
**al-hbāl:** madness, foolishness (*see* proverb no. 652).
**mahūb:** originally ـاـوـبـ
**yegezz:** imperf. of ژ(ت (to raise something).
**beerag:** banner, flag. The word is originally Turkish.¹
SMDW: *G. Syria*: Fegh., no. 716; Frayha, no. 1286.

1085

**hejj efmek 'u lek rezg aṭ-ṭeer**

"Open your mouth and you will get the sustenance birds get," i.e., you must make an effort to gain your own livelihood. The reference is to nestlings.

1086

**hajj 'ala jami'd al-mekk**

"He escaped on solid brains," i.e., he ran off as fast as

he could; he took to his heels.

**hajj:** to escape; to flee

**jāmd:** jāmid, act. partic. of jemād, to be frozen, to be solid.

**SMDW:** one classical proverb: M., no. 2269; and the two well-known classical proverbs: أطلق فر لا يلوى على سائر ساتي للرثح; a post-classical prov: Tāliq., no. 154.

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he fled from a raiding party only to be plundered by a battalion." Equivalent to the English, "Out of the frying pan into the fire."
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**NS:** Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 123, no. 3; Baghdad: Tik., no. 911.

**Sim. WM:** Oman: Jayak., no. 164

**SMDW:** two classical proverbs: M., nos. 2681, 3064; ‘Ask., no. 1445; two post-classical proverbs: Tāliq., no. 349; Ta’ālibi, Kāssu-l-kāss, p. 23: فر من القتال وفي الموت وقع; **idem.**

Ta‘ālibi, p. 237: فر من القتال وتم تحت السراي; Yemen: Akwa‘, 1, no. 1105; Oman: Jayak., nos. 163, 165; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., nos. 424, 2273, 2474; Dabb., 2, p. 439; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 1935, 4418; Fegh., nos. 2155, 2858; Huxley, no. 55; Tallq., no. 179; Frayha, no. 1920; Landb., no. 61; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1283, 1612.

**tāṭat:** to fall down. When it is followed by the propositions فر, or على it means, "to find suddenly", as in the proverb.

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Haddāj Teema meruyen kell ‘aṭṭān
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1 [Cf. Juh., no. 1422.]
2 ODEP, p. 292
"[Like] Haddāj at Teema [Taymā']: it slakes the thirst of every thirsty [person, animal, etc.]." Said of a very generous person.

Haddāj Teema: a large famous well in the town of Teema (Taymā') in western Najd.¹

al-hadm asra' mn al-bna
"Demolition is quicker than construction." Equivalent to the English proverb, "It is easier to pull down than to build."²

hāda al-'weed 'u hāda trefuh³
"This is the little rod and this is its little end," i.e., the end of a rod is similar to the rest of it. Said of the similarity of character between individuals belonging to the same family or tribe.


hāda bala Šleefeh
"This is the [insoluble] predicament of Šleefeh."

Šleefeh, according to the tale from which this proverbial phrase is taken, was a man who blamed the victims of accidents for having brought trouble on their own heads. For example, when told of someone who had drowned in the sea, he commented, "Serves him right. Why did he go to the sea?" Of someone who fell from a tree and was killed, he commented that he should not have climbed the tree, and so on. However, when at last he was told of someone who had

¹ For a description of this well, see Charles Doughty, Travels in Arabia Deserta (London, 1927), p. 292.
² ODEP, p. 653.
³ Cf. Juh., no. 2544.
died in his bed, he commented, "This is the predicament of Sleefeh!" i.e., I cannot escape death even if I keep away from all possible causes of danger.

hāda šelīlī we gṭāy
"This is my shirt and at the same time my coverlet," i.e., I have nothing to do with this; I do not want to be involved in this matter.

šelil: long Arab dress or its hem. The word is used by bedouins.

hāda yḥalef 'u hāda yeṣṭgafer
"This one swears, and that one asks God for forgiveness," i.e., this person swears by God that he did or did not do something, and that person--who is his accomplice--asks God to forgive his friend for perjury. Said of two persons who after committing an offence cooperate to avoid being discovered.

yeṣṭgafer: yasṭagfīr, "he says أَسْتَغْفِرَ اللَّهَ" which is usually employed when someone says something and then soon regrets it.


NS: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2505; Tik., no. 2474.

hādi terū'ek wa[t-ányeh bezlū'ek (wal-ekra teṣū'ek)
"This [i.e., stab] scares you, but the second pierces your ribs (var. the other [stab] hits you)," i.e., you may think this was bad, but something much worse will befall you if you do not do what I want.


NS: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2505; Tik., no. 2474.

harjen 'ala geer an-neṣāma qāṭa bāl
"Talking to other than worthy men is a mental burden."
harjen: (harj plus the tanwîn): talking, (from haraj, to talk, to speak).
an-nesâma: plur of našmi, worthy, meritous, good.
gâta: discomfort, trouble.

This proverb is taken from a few verses attributed to a poet nicknamed al-Mûtêbî (al-Muţawtîh) who, in one of his wanderings in the desert, lodged for a night with a bedouin family. His host, who seemed very dull-witted, was inhospitable and displayed no sense of duty towards his guest.

At length the host muttered, "Why doesn't our guest entertain us with some stories? Why is he so quiet?"

Upon which al-Mûtêbî, insulted by his host's behaviour, replied:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{I do not mind telling stories} \\
&\text{But to do so to other than worthy men is a mental burden.} \\
&\text{My host is sitting with me like a calf} \\
&\text{And I see that he is an ox, not a man.}
\end{align*}
\]

which translates as follows

The host, too stupid to realize that the verses were meant for him, repeated the last word of each line in customary acclamation of the poet. But his wife, hearing all that had happened, blamed her husband for his inhospitality and she belatedly offered al-Mûtêbî what was due to him as a guest.

SMDW: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 94.
"[Both] the healer and the healed [lit. who seeks medicine] perished!"

al-Hend 'ejez yegni darawisuh (‘asa al-Hend yegni ...)
"India is unable to enrich its dervishes [let alone other than Indians] (var. may India make its own dervishes rich [and never mind others!])." Said of a helpless person who is unable to help himself, much less other people.

Sim. WM: Oman: Jayak., no. 233.
SMW: a post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 257 and Ta'ālibi, Tamtil, p. 273 and Ţaliq., no. 429:
G. Syria: Fagh., no. 737; Manch. MS, fol. 46:

al-hūs 'ala aṯ-ṯāgiyyeh
"Quarelling is taking place over a skull-cap [i.e., over a trifle]." Cf. no. 1157.
al-hūs: quarrel; fighting.
aṯ-ṯāgiyyeh: the skull-cap.

al-hūs mahuḥ bat-tefetten
"Quarrelling does not admit of reflection." When in a quarrel it is not possible to wait for a long time to think what is the best thing to say because one has to answer immediately. Cf. "L'esprit d'escalier".

al-wāḥed mā yanṭah al-jemā'eh
"One man cannot hold out against a group [of men]."
yanṭah: imperf. of neṭah, to hold out against, to withstand. In other contexts, "to meet, to oppose".

1 Cf. ibid., no. 2567.
wa reks al-māl 'ala al-fgara
"How cheap is wealth to the poor!" Penniless people are often unaware of the value of money; when they earn something they soon spend it, unlike the rich. The idea of investment rarely crosses their minds.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3134; Zamak., 2, no. 769; G. Syria: Fegh, no. 741.

wā šen yabi yejikum ya(a)hl Šbeeh
"What a thing is going to happen to you O people of Šbeeh."
This proverb is attributed to a prayer leader (ʿimām) of Šbeeh, a village near ar-Rass in al-Qasīm (see prov. no. 120), who claimed before his gullible audience that he could foretell the future. He did this by making forecasts of such a general nature that they could be interpreted in any way he wished.

wā šen: wa is a particle of تحجب and šen is شيء. See proverbs 409, 690.

wa šīn al-kerj 'ala al-ḥmar!
"How ugly is the saddle bag on the donkey's back!" Said rudely of an article of clothing or an ornament, which although good in itself, is most unsuitable for its wearer.
Cf. no. 1105 below.

wā šīn: the colloquial equivalent to the fus.: بما شين
(how ugly is!)
al-kerj: a saddle bag, often ornamented, usually carried by camels and never by donkeys.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3758; Zamak., 2, no. 1231.
wa šīn ar-rqa 'egb al-hdaran (ar-rqa 'egb al-hdaran 'eeb) "How bad to bray after roaring (var. braying after roaring is a shameful thing)." Said of someone who has customarily been concerned with great matters and who is forced to eat humble pie.

al-hdaran: verbal noun (fus., al-hadir): camels murmuring and frothing at the mouth. Usually made by fully grown healthy camels, by which a camel "reiterates his voice in his throat (or wind-pipe, or the head of his wind-pipe)."¹ It is done mostly by stallions and signifies strength and confidence as opposed to ar-rqa (ar-ruga') the other, ordinary camel braying which expresses complaint and discomfort.

wa šīn as-serj 'ala al-bgereh;² "How ugly is the saddle on the cow's back." A saddle's proper place is a horse's back. It does not look as good on a cow. Cf. no. 1103 above.

Sim. WM: Mosul: Socin, no. 101; Dabb., 2, p. 403; Göl., p. 140.

SMDW: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 152: "بي شيء السنه على الجبل في وجه تعرفه ولا وجه تكره."

wajhen ta'arfuh wala wajhen tentseruha³ "The face you know is better than a face you do not know."
tentser: imperf of 'ankar, here meaning "to fail to recognize; to notice that something or someone is unfamiliar or unknown to one."

¹ E. Lane, 4, p. 2886.
² Also Juh., no. 2635.
³ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 941.
Ident.: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 560; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 137.
Sim. WM: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 621; Gūl., p. 45; Egypt: Taim., no. 274; Fā’iqah, no. 1809.

al-wajh feter

"[The length of a human's] face is a small span," i.e., a man's face is not too wide, he is therefore bound to feel diffident and not put other people to too much expense. Often said by someone to display his self-restraint in exploiting a benevolent person.

feter: (fitr) "small span (the space between the end of the thumb and the end of the index finger when extended)."

wajhuh mgasûlen bmarag

"His face is washed with soup," i.e., he is utterly shameless.

The origin of this proverb is probably the post-classical Arabic proverb: Kinect Munduţa al-dîb. See M., 2, p. 172; Tāliq., no. 405.

SMDW: Mecca: wajh Mansûl Sârît; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Dabb., 2, p. 408; Hanafi, no. 1341; Palestine: Baum., nos. 606, 392.

wedâ’ats-ts yaš-šjereh

"It is in your keeping, O tree!" This phrase was supposedly said by a person who deposited a valuable object in a tree to keep it for him. Said reprovingly to someone who neglects to make proper provision for the care of something in his absence.

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1 H. Wehr, op. cit., p. 694.
2 Also Juh., no. 2486.
3 See Qurā‘, 94 (1961), p. 16.
4 Cf. Juh., no. 943.
waddaʿ al-jeḥer ẓarṭeh

"He gave a fart as a farewell to the burrow [in which he found shelter]." Said of someone who eventually behaves badly to those who have benefited him.

Sim. WM: Mosul: Dabb., 1, p. 102.
Sim. MDW: Egypt: Fāʾiqah, no. 4.

weddek wala ar-rajjāl gōluh 'mā gāluh lā gāl gūlen tamm lū ḥāl ḥāl

"A man should be bound by his pledge. If he makes a promise he should keep it, come what may [lit., one wishes that a man's word is his bond. If he says something he carries it out, even if circumstances are adverse]." This is a verse composed by the well-known poet Muhammad al-'Abd Allah al-Gāzi. Another version of it is:²

 Cf. the English proverb, "An honest man's word is as good as his bond."³

weddek: lit. "you wish", but often used—as in this proverbial verse—to mean, "should" or "one should".

ar-rajjāl: man, the man, the true man.

wregat ferjeh


Cf. no. 142.

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³ ODEP, p. 380.
ferjeh: hole used in old-fashioned houses in Najd as a window.

wsūmah bekšūmah

"Their brands are on their noses," i.e., they have very clear signs of their character. Said when noticing that someone clearly reveals an attractive character.

wsūm: plur. of wasem, brand.


NS: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2176.

SMOW: three classical proverbs: M., no. 5; 'Ask., nos. 26, 60; Zamak., 1, no. 1163; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1433, 1942.

was al-arnab lōla edānah

"What is a rabbit without [lit., but for] its ears!" Said of something which even though apparently superfluous, completes the picture.

weis al-'esfur wemregtuh

"What is a sparrow and the soup made from it [lit. its soup]?" Said of something insignificant.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 144; Iraq: Weissbach, no. 151; Hanafi, no. 1012; Tik., no. 1233; Gul., p. 14; Lebanon: Faraj, p. 349;

Sim. WM: a classical proverb: M., no. 3901; 'Ask., no. 1679; Mosul: Socin, no. 417; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 144; Egypt: Fa'iqah, no. 278.

weis jāb besmellah l'āšāna

1 Also Juh., no. 2505.
2 Also ibid., no. 2519; 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 952.
"What has 'In the name of God' got to do with our dinner?"

Said in objection to something irrelevant.

weš jāb: lit., "What brought" but used to mean "what has it got to do with?"

NS: Mecca: Quraiš, 104, p. 16; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 29, no. 50.


wes 'allam al-begar redzy at-tawāya
"How can cows climb on rooftops [lit., how can cows learn the climbing of roofs]?" Said scathingly of one who attempts something of which he is incapable.

redzy: verbal noun of rega, to climb, to ascend.

at-tawāya: the roofs, plur. of ṭāyeh.

SMDW: Yemen: Goit., no. 1064; Akwa', 1, no. 742; Oman: Jayak., no. 309; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., nos. 208, 1215, 1232; Socin, no. 403; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2475; Frayha, no. 2068; Stephan, no. 196; Egypt: Taim., no. 714.

wes hāṯ-ṯweerāt bdārekum?
"What are these little birds in your house?" Said of one who, after a short absence, returns home and shows disdain for his people's customs and habits with which he had once been very familiar. It is attributed to a boy who, having bought some chickens, left them at his home and went away for a short time. Upon returning home, pretending ignorance, he exclaimed to his family, "What are these little birds in your house?"

1 Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 951.
It is interesting to find this English equivalent, "How about the long-tailed beggar," a reference to one who is drawing the longbow too freely. It derives from a tale of a boy who "on returning from a short voyage pretented to have forgotten everything belonging to his home and asked his mother what she called that 'long-tailed beggar' meaning the cat."¹

\[
\text{wes ykalli al-fager \text{ mn ar-rezg az'zehid}}
\]
"What does poverty spare of a meagre livelihood?"

\[
\text{wes yedri at-t\text{\-}\text{t\text{\-}r} \text{ enni ' Antar?}}\]
"How can the ox know that I am ' Antar?"

' Antar: the famous pre-Islamic poet-hero ' Antarah b. Saddād al-' Absiyy.

This proverb is attributed to ' Antarah in a popular anecdote, in which he was said to have once fled when attacked by an enraged bull. When the people, surprised, asked him why he had fled, he answered, "How can an ox . . . ." He meant that people knew how strong and courageous he was and this had its effect on their morale. His reputation, however, would have no effect on an ox of course and it would be harder to overcome.

NS: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 145.

\[
\text{wes yhemm as-sema men nabh al-tslāb}
\]
"What recks the sky of the barking of dogs?" i.e., it does not bother at all as they can do no harm.

² Also Juh., no. 2531 and cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 892.
323

Sira. WM: a classical or post-classical proverb: M., no. 3510; Abšihi, 1, p.37; Zamak., 2, no. 943; Ta‘Alibi, Tantil, p. 954; Baghdad. Tik., no. 2332; Hanafi, no. 1615; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4605; Fegh., no. 2849; Frayha, nos. 2007, 3165; Egypt: Burck., no. 81.

ShāDW: a number of classical proverbs: see, e.g., M., nos. 3031, 3950; 'Ask., no. 1216; Zamak., 2, no. 534; Baghdad: Tik., nos. 466, 2327; Hanafi, no. 329; G. Syria: Tarjamān, p. 146; Egypt: Taim., no. 747.

1122

wegaʃ al-bab 'ala šayrüh

"The door has got stuck on its hinges," i.e., it will move no more. Said of something which can no longer be tolerated.

šayr: (in pause, sayer) hinges.

1123

walad baʃni y'aref raʃni

"My son [lit., the son of my belly] knows well [the meaning of] my gibberish." Said of one who is thoroughly acquainted with the thoughts of another.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 141.

NS: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 420; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 24; Egypt: Fā'iqah, no. 174; Baghdad: Tik., no. 2120.

1124

weld at-Temīmī yātī gabul ḥinuh

"The child of a Temīmī [i.e., a man from the tribe of Temīm] arrives before his time." This proverb alleges that the Temīm tribe are impatient and that a Temīmī baby cannot wait in his mother's womb for the usual nine months.

weld: walad: son.

1 Also Juh., no. 2506.

2 Also ibid., no. 2515.
The son of the beloved man [my son] from the hated woman [the daughter-in-law] leapt into the well [to save me], the son of the hated man [son-in-law] from the beloved woman [the daughter] stood there laughing at me [while I was drowning]."

This saying is used by women and is attributed to the experience of an old woman when she fell into a well and was saved by her son's son, while her daughter's son looked on complacently although she was in danger of drowning.

*tabbah*: to jump down. This word is used in southern Najd and by bedouins everywhere.

*al-jammeh*: the large quantity of water while in the well.

*'alayyah*: 'alayy, on me. This form is used by bedouins.

SMDW: G. Syria: Aşqar, no. 25; Egypt: Fā’iqah, nos. 178, 179.

"A son is cheaply obtained [even] with the expense of the reward [paid to the one who brings tidings of his birth]." Said of a small expenditure for a precious thing.

*bēbšaretuh*: the bāšreh is a reward usually given to the person who brings the good news (ybaššer) of his birth to a boy's father.

Also ‘Ubūdi, 1, no. 957.
walad weldek weldek 'u walad bentek la'
aš-ša'ar yanbat bjeldek wella btsaffek la'
'u kellên b'agluh râzi ella bmáluh la'

"Your son's son is your son, but your daughter's son is not.

Hair grows on your skin, but on the palm of your hand grows not.

All are satisfied with their intellect, but with the wealth they possess they are not."

These three proverbial verses are also common, with slight modifications in wording, in Baghdad and Syria. In the latter, a fourth verse is added to them. See Aṣqar, no. 23; Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 71.

The first verse is common with some change in the wording in Yemen: Goitein, no. 229; Iraq: Tik., no. 30; Hanafi, no. 5; Dal., 1, no. 3; Gül., p. 12; Dabb., 1, p. 18; G. Syria: Frayha, no. 35; Egypt: Bājūri, p. 169.

The second verse, the meaning of which is insignificant, is common in G. Syria (with some modification): see Fegh., no. 631.

The third verse is nearly the same in Oman: see Jayak., no. 219; Mosul: see Gül., p. 112. Its meaning is expressed with different wording in Baghdad, G. Syria and Egypt. See Hanafi, nos. 1737, 1673; Tik., no. 1876; Fegh., nos. 230, 321; Frayha, no. 3204; Taim., nos. 2540, 2559; Littm., no. 190.

ýâ(A)llah behmayyren aṭsebuh wala ḫsanen yartseban

"O God! [rather] a little donkey that I ride than a horse that rides me." Cf. the English proverb, "Better ride on an ass that carries me than a horse that throws me." ¹

¹ ODEP, p. 55.
ya(A)llah sent ḍāḥ b' u lḥ sent(e)grād!

"O God! Grant us a year of flies and not a year of ticks!"

Despite the fact that flies cause more nuisance and harm than ticks, people prefer seeing the former to the latter. This appears to be due to the fact that flies abound in a year of plenty whereas ticks usually appear in times of drought when animals (particularly camels) are in poor physical condition.

sent: (in pause pronounced seneh): sanah, year.

ya(A)llah fleedzeh kūd nweedzeh

"O God! Let me receive a little wound that I might have a small camel!" Said in reference to the compensation paid, in accordance with Islamic Law and tribal tradition, to one who has received injury at the hands of another. Said of someone who is so greedy that he would undergo injury in order to receive compensation.

fleedzeh: dimin. of falqe, head wound.

nweedzeh: dimin. of nagē, she-camel.

kūd: a particle equivalent to لَمَّا.

yābedd aš-ṣayyād mn refdzt al-ṭsalb

"A hunter cannot avoid the company of a dog." Said when there is no choice given in the company one must keep.

yābedd: a variant of بَدَّ.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1103; Tik., no. 1312.
"Strength may breed weakness and weakness may breed strength."

mnah: minhā, from it.

"Grandmother! Tell your grandmother the camel of her mother's mother is lost." Said when information is unnecessarily passed from one individual to another via a group of intermediaries.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 149.

"O Hmūd, among enemies you may find friends and amongst your close friends enemies."

ar-rab’ (in pause pronounced ar-rabe’): the friends.

'edwān: plur. of عدو, enemy.

"He takes sandals from the bare-footed man." Said of one who accepts a favour or a present from a very poor man. Cf. the English proverbs, "To beg breeches of a bare-arsed man!" and "He would skin a louse, and send the hide to market." NS: Iraq (Baghdad): Hanafi, nos. 2769, 2773; G. Syria: Frayha, no. 821; Egypt: Burck., no. 162.

"O Lord! Either make things better for all, or make them

1 Ibid., p. 84.
2 Ibid., p. 740.
3 Cf. Juh., nos. 200, 2610.
worse for all [lit. straighten things; make no limping or tilting (affect anyone) or make things tilt for everybody]."  

az-zal': verbal noun of zala', to limp (especially an animal).  
al-meel: (al-nayl) verbal noun of mal, to tilt (for example, a load on an animal's back). Both limping and tilting of the load makes an animal uncomfortable.

"O you who buy the cheap thing for a small price, you think you are overreaching [others] but you yourself are overreached."

Quotation:  
yā šāri ad-dūn bdūn taḥasbek gāben wa(a)nt m̱gabūn¹ "O you who buy the cheap thing for a small price, you think you are overreaching [others] but you yourself are overreached.

dūn: small price, a thing of second-rate value.  
gāben: act. partic. of qaban, to overreach.  
m̱gabūn: (maqūbūn) pass. partic. of qaban  

Ident.:  
Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 151.  

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafī, n. 2681; Tik., no. 358; Sūl., p. 124; Mastroukh al-lamā' al-aqdīm: Dabb., 2, p. 61; Dabb.  

"How unbecoming is fastidiousness in a beggar."  

fasgēh: n. from the perf. verb fesedż which is used in the

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdī, 1, no. 972.
Najd vernacular to mean, "he became rich after having been poor and began to be finical."

*at-ṭawwāf*: the beggar

*ya sin*: equiv. to the fus., أَمَّن, how bad is . . .!

*SMDW*: a classical proverb: M., no. 3125; G. Syria: Frayha, nos. 3993, 346.

1140

َيا شَيْئَى لِمْبَبَ الفَنَّر

*ya sin le'b al-fettar!*

"How unbecoming is the playing of old camels!" Said of an adult who copies children in their play, or behaves in a way which does not suit his age.

*al-fettar*: plur. of *fater*, an old she-camel.

1141

ِياَطَا الْرَيْحِ عَالِد

*yāta as-serih 'nād*

"He treads on the rope out of perversity," i.e., he deliberately disobeys or ignores orders and challenges superiors.

*yāta*: fus., yata', to tread, to trample on something.

*as-serih*: the rope. This word is used particularly for a rope which, in the traditional operation of lifting water out of wells (*as-sawānī*), is connected to the lower part of the water bucket (*al-garb*) at one end, and to the saddle on the camel's back at the other, and which runs on a small pulley (*derrājeh*), as distinct from the other long--but thicker--rope used in this operation (*ar-r̄śa*), this latter being connected to the upper part of the water bucket and to the camel's saddle. To tread on *as-serih* while the *swāni* operation is going on is to disturb it and prevent the rope from functioning.

1 Also Juh., no. 2587.

2 Cf. Juh., no. 2478.
Eben (Ibn) Burman was supposed to have been the owner of a falcon. He took great care of it, feeding it the best pieces of meat, and spending many days training it. When he sent it for the first time in pursuit of game, the falcon brought back a snake and dropped it on Eben Burman's head.

이: we

رأيک: your owner.  

1. ODEP, pp. 60, 62.

2. Also Juh., no. 2593.
Ident.: Iraq: Hanafi, no. 2623; Tik., no. 2582; Dabb., 2, p. 479; Socin, no. 335; Gul., p. 177; Kuwait: Nuri, 2, p. 153; Oman: Jayak., no. 314.
NS: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3014; Frayha, no. 2522; Fegh., no. 1239.

"O you who rejoice at the troubles of others [lit. the war], the same thing will happen to you." Said of the inadvisability of gloating over the misfortunes of others.

This proverb is probably taken from the common proverbial verse:

"O you who are rejoicing about troubles [lit. wars, i.e., affecting others], you will face similar troubles. No wise man will be pleased at [the outbreaks] of wars."

al-kôn: the war. Old usage, akwán, plur. of kön.

"He eats [the sheep] with the wolf, and weeps with the shepherd." Cf. the English, "To run with the hare and hunt with the hounds."³

¹ ODEP, p. 689.
"Ya legtat Qlees alli haṭṭ bmehteluh\(^1\)

"O [what a thing! it is like] the find of Qlees which he put into the fold of his garment."

\(^{1}\) mehtel: (in pause pronounced mehtal): the space between one's shirt and body when one girds oneself. It can be used to hold something, for example dates, when picked from the palm-tree, when there is nothing else to carry them in. Poor Qlees was said to have found a snake frozen from the cold. He took it up tenderly and put it in his mehtal. As soon as it felt warm and comfortable, it bit and killed him. However, in another version, Qlees's find was said to have been the stock of a gun which he brought to his mother for use as firewood. It still contained a considerable quantity of bullets and gunpowder, and as soon as the unfortunate old lady put it on the fire, it blew up and killed her.\(^2\)

This proverb is used of ingratitude and requiting good with evil, or of something which is given as a seemingly useful present but which proves to be harmful, or of something which one involves oneself in only to be troubled by it.

Cf. nos. 227, 554, 578, 1142. Cf. also, the English proverb, "To nourish a snake (viper) in one's bosom" (referring to the ingratitude and treachery of the snake in Aesop's Fable, I, x).\(^3\)


SMDW: Basrah, Dal., 1, no. 221; Oman: Jayak., no. 55.

\(^{1}\) Cf. Juh., no. 1893.

\(^{2}\) This version was recounted by Mr. Muḥammad al-Hadlag.

\(^{3}\) ODEP, p. 747.
"Many a camel the pilgrims have lost!" Said by someone who has lost something to console himself: i.e., this is not the first, or the only thing, I have lost.

Ident.: Kuwait.

Sim W.M.: Baghad: Hanafi, no. 2638; Tik., no. 2585.

"O covered thing, you are uncovered!" i.e., a covered thing is as though it is not covered for the really inquisitive onlooker, who will guess what it is. For example, people in Najd used to cover things they carried such as food, especially meat, so that others might not know what they had. But this often had the opposite effect.

"O Mgeeṭ, take your [own] rope."

This proverbial saying is taken from the following anecdote: a man by the name of Mgeeṭ, accompanied by a friend, set off to climb a mountain in order to catch young birds. He asked his friend to hold the rope for him so that he might descend a cliff and search for nests. Finding a family of birds in a nest, he picked up the first bird and said, "This is for me," and then another and said, "And this one is for

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1 Also Juh., no. 2596.
2 Mr. Ḥamad al-Yaḥya, a Kuwaiti, says that this proverb is identically used in Kuwait.
3 Also Juh., no. 2588.
4 Cf. Juh., no. 2585.
my brother." He continued in this manner, picking up a bird and earmarking it for a member of his family, never once mentioning his friend's name. The latter, angered by Mgeet's ingratitude, let go of the rope, abandoning Mgeet to his fate. At the same time he called out, "O Mgeet! Take your own rope!" which became proverbial.

This saying, however, is usually quoted when speaking of the idea of "giving to others what pertains to them."

dūnak: take. An ʿāsim. It was originally Ṿānāk and then the second consonant and the second vowel were elided.

rṣāk: Ṿāṣa, rope, plus the 2nd pers. masc. sing. connected pronoun.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 156; Baghdad: Tik., no. 2590 (Tikrīṭī states, nevertheless, that this proverb is common among the bedouins).

Ya min ʿīn al-ḥaroter ṣawd abd al-ḥaraṣeh

"Who has seen the [lost] head cloth along the path of the grass gatherers?" Said of something that has been lost and which will certainly have acquired a new owner by now. People who go to collect grass in the desert are unlikely to return such a useful item as a head cloth to its real owner. Cf. nos. 1039, 1040.

Ya mweeṣ'eten ʿend al-ḥaṣer lōla dghayyde ʿaṣ-ṣahar!

"Were it not for the back-breaking toil, how delicious the townsmen's dish would be." This proverb is attributed to a bedouin who admired the delicious food he enjoyed while in
the employ of settled people but found that it did not out-
weigh the toil extracted from him.

mweedz'eten: (mweedz'eh plus the tanwin "en"), dimin. of
muge'eh, a traditional wooden Najdi dish in which cooked food
is usually served.

dgayydz: (in pause dgayyidz), dimin. of dgâq, thin.
dgayydz az-zahar, lit. "The thin (bone) of the back", i.e.,
the backbone.

SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1601; Egypt: Taim., no. 2186.

yawi luh 'aduwwuh
"[Even] his enemy pities him," i.e., he is in an extremely
miserable condition.

yawi: imperf. of 'awa, to feel sorry for, to pity.

yebi'aha bar-reks men lâ šarâha
"The one who did not purchase it [i.e. a thing or a commodity],
sells it cheaply." One can afford to sell a thing cheaply
if it has been obtained for nothing.

yta'allag behdebeh
"He clings to a tamarisk leaf." Cf. the English proverb,
"A drowning man will catch at a straw." 3

hdebeh: (hadabah) a tamarisk leaf.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Ta'alibi, Tamtil, p. 250:

2 Also ibid., no. 2647 and 'Ubûdi, 1, no. 986.

Also 'Ubûdi, 1, no. 988 and cf. Juh., no. 2662.
3 ODEP, p. 205.
ytanaffas ma' ebâţuh
"He breathes with his armpits," i.e., he is a man of very equable temperament.
SMDW: Mosul: Gul., p. 36:

ytahâwešûn (ytakânegûn) 'ala marbaţ al-bgereh
"They quarrel over where to tie up the cow." Said of people who argue about trivial matters. Cf. the English, "To wrangle for an ass's shadow."¹

ytahâwešûn: they quarrel; the perf. is tahâwaš.
ytakânegûn: they quarrel; the perf. is takânag.
SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 1533.

yejûz al-'îd bla ḥenna
"The feast can go on without the henna," i.e., although it is preferable for a woman to paint her hands and nails with henna, if she cannot obtain it, the feast will not be an absolute failure. Traditionally, women in Najd used henna to paint their palms and nails. This was especially necessary on the eve of the 'îd (festival) when almost every woman did so. This custom is virtually dead at the present time.

The proverb is used figuratively to mean that even though certain things appear to be necessary, one can in fact dispense with them. Cf. no. 487.
SMDW: Yemen: Goit., no. 771.

ykabeţ wala ysammi
"He strikes [the ground] without mentioning the name of God."

¹ See E. Brewer, op. cit., p. 54.
That is, he is rich and therefore confident of his financial capacity. If one strikes the ground hard (e.g., in the course of an argument), one is advised to say, "In the name of God" so as to protect oneself from evil spirits. One who does not follow this rule clearly must be very confident and self-assured.

يخلط الـحُرَّا مع البـسَاس

yakalt al-ḥuwwa ma' al-besbās
"He mixes al-ḥuwwa [a herb] with al-besbās [another herb]," i.e., he clouds the issue by talking of irrelevant subjects.

yakalt: (in pause pronounced ykalet) fuṣ., yakliṭ
al-ḥuwwa: (launaea capitata naudicaulis) a small green edible herb with tender leaves.

al-besbās: (pimpinella cretica) a small green edible herb

يـد بالـجال وـيد بالرـها

yaden bal-jāl 'u yaden bar-rša
"One hand on the rope and one hand on the side of the well."

A wise man while descending a well by means of a rope does not rely on it but holds it with one hand and supports himself against the side of the well with the other. Said of one who ensures that an alternative course of action is left open to him. Cf. the English, "Do not put all your eggs in one basket."

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 2535; 'Ask., no. 1861; Zanāk., 2, no. 938; Baghdad: Hanafi, 2, p. 255: يدك عالجائر وبالسدان; G. Syria: Aṣgar, no. 1448; Frayha, no. 85.

يـدخل بـين الـظـفر والـلـحم

yadkel been az-żefer wal-lāḥam
"He enters between the finger nail and the flesh." Said of one who takes great pains to interfere in the affairs of others. Cf. the English Proverb, "Put not thy hand between the bark and
the tree.\textsuperscript{1}

SMDW: \textit{a post-classical proverb}: Tāliq, no. 589; G. Syria: Aşqar, no. 1344.

1163 

\textit{yadkel 'alal-ḥayaya bejḥūrah}\textsuperscript{2}

"He enters the burrows of snakes," i.e., he keeps company with the most unlikely people.

1164 

\textit{ydawwr al-garš bdanab al-herš}

"He searches for a piastre in the anus of an old camel," i.e., he is a miser. Cf. no. 1135.

\textit{ydawwr}: (in pause \textit{ydawwer}) imperf. of \textit{dawwar}, to look for, to search for.

\textit{garš}: girs, piastre (about one half new pence).

\textit{herš}: old male camel.

SMDW: \textit{five classical proverbs}: M., nos. 570, 571, 3778; 'Ask., no. 434; Zamak., 2, nos. 1227, 1152; Ta‘ālibi, Timār, no. 321; Tantil, p. 4: _La yawṣū mā bī silsillmā_; Mosul: Socin, nos. 317, 454; Syria (Ḥims): Ḥassān al-Ḥājj Ibrāhīm (verbally): _wa mā yatru sīxūn_; Mecca: Hurg., no. 5.

1165 

\textit{ydawwr 'uleduh we hu 'ala tsatfuh}\textsuperscript{3}

"He searches for his son while he is on his own shoulder."

Cf. the English proverbs, "The butcher looked for his knife and it was in his mouth" and "You are like the man that sought his mare, and he riding on her."\textsuperscript{4}

Sim. WM: \textit{a post-classical proverb}: M., 1, p. 121; Iraq

\textsuperscript{1} ODEP, p. 30.

\textsuperscript{2} Cf. Juh., no. 2292.

\textsuperscript{3} Cf. ibid., no. 518.

\textsuperscript{4} ODEP, pp. 94, 506.
"The one already born will mention it to those who are in the loins," i.e., this event is of such a magnitude that it will be told by those now living to those who are still unborn.

This proverb is the second part of a verse in a poem attributed to Ḥmūd b. 'Ubaid ar-Rashīd. The first part is: يَمِّي جَدَرَى بِالْضَّلُعيْهِ لَهُ طَلَال. The poem describes a day of fierce fighting in one of the battles which took place on the plain of al-Mleeda (al-Mulaidah) in al-Qaṣīm near a village called az-Ẓalfe'eh (or Dalfa'ah) approximately eighteen miles north-west of Buraidah. The battle, which takes its name from the plain, was fought by people of al-Qaṣīm led by Zāmil b. Sulaim (of 'Unaizah) and Ḥasan b. Muhanna (of Buraidah) against the emir of Ḥa'il, Muḥammad b. Rashīd, in the years 1890-1891.

Describing that particular day of fighting, R.B. Winder writes:

"The decisive point in the engagement came in January 1891 when Muḥammad Ibn Rashid decided on the classic Najdi military manoeuvre of the feigned retreat coupled with a surprise counter-attack. He headed toward Dalfa'ah, a town [sic] some eighteen miles due west of Buraidah. The Qaṣīmis followed as Ibn Rashid had planned, and he counter-attacked. But the counter-attack was a spectacular one. Ibn Rashid massed several thousand camels in the centre and stampeded them forward against Zāmil's oncoming forces by setting fire to the bundles of brush which had been tied to those in the rear. The infantry followed close behind the camels, and cavalry and camelry simultaneously attacked the flanks. The Qaṣīmi army was destroyed and scattered with casualties between 600 and 1,200 killed—including Zāmil himself, his son and others of his House. Hasan ibn Muhanna' of Buraidah lost his hand and was interned in Ha'il for the rest of his life. Of those who were spared, many fled as far as Kuwait, Iraq or Syria."

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yer'd 'u yebredz

"He makes thunder and lightning." The analogy is drawn here between a cloud and an angry and threatening man. yer'd is in pause pronounced yer'ed.

Ident.: a classical proverb: M., no. 4667; Baghdad: Tik., no. 2656.

yasri bal-'gal

"It [i.e., a camel] travels with a hobble," i.e., it is so robust that it can travel a long distance even though it is tied. This phrase is metaphorically used of a strong man.

yasri: imperf. of sara, to travel at night.

yasni bala ma'

"He labours but gets no water." Said of one who engages in futile undertakings. Cf. no. 1174, 1184.

yasni: see no. 704.

SMDW: a post classical proverb: Ta'ālibi, Tamtil, p. 281: فلان يدهن من ثاررة، فارغه Palestine: 

yšūf al-dzadāt b'e'en reffdzuh wala yšūf al-jetl b'eenuh

"He sees the speck in his companion's eye, but does not see the stump in his own." The hadīt:

1 Also Juh., no. 1516.
2 See H. Stephan, "Lunacy in Palestine Folklore", JPOS, 5 (Jerusalem, 1925), no. 44.
3 Cf. Juh., no. 2712.
4 I. al-'Ajlūnī, op. cit., p. 312.
seems to have been the origin of this proverb. Cf. the well
known New Testament saying, Luke, ch. 6 v. 41; Matthew,
ch. 7, v. 3.

jetel: (in pause jetel) a stump (of a tree).
Sim. Wh: a classical proverb: M., no. 3095; Zamak., 2, no.
795; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2339; Gul., p. 131;
G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2679; Frayha, no. 894; Landb., no. 136.
SMDW: five classical proverbs: M., nos. 2405, 1312, 4716,
1824; 'Ask., nos. 1180, 693; Zamak., 2, no. 593; Yemen:
Akwa', 1, no. 651; Kuwait: Nuri, 1, p 92, no. 22; Iraq
(Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1348; Socin, nos. 188,
189; Dabb., 1, p. 284 and p. 292; G. Syria: Asghar, no. 81;
Fegh., nos. 215, 2186; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1226, 1401, 2031,
3105; Burck., no. 435.

1171

yüşuf sarḥat ams
"He can see the animals which went out to graze yesterday,"
i.e., his eyesight is so good that he can still see the
animals even if they are now a long way off. Cf. no. 424.

1172

yüşuf manāyer Mâṣer
"He sees the minarets of Egypt," i.e., he is very happy.

1173

yüşallat aṣ-dîb 'ala šât aṣ-še'lûk¹
"The wolf is always after the poor man's sheep," i.e., when
a wolf attacks a flock of sheep, it is likely, in the common
pessimistic experience of mankind, to kill a sheep which
belongs to a poor owner. The rich are often lucky.

1174

yeşîd bgûffetem mâ lah gâ'eh
¹ Cf. 'Ubûdi, 1, no. 278.
"He collects game in a basket which has no bottom." Cf. nos. 1169, 1184. Cf. the English, "To sow beans in the wind [labour in vain]." ¹
guffeh: a palm-leaf basket.
gā'eh: fus., ṭa, bottom (of a basket, pot, well, etc.).
SMDW: Yemen: Akwa', 1, nos. 451, 1016; Iraq (Mosul and among the bedouins): Gul., p. 163; Zafiri, no. 261; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1467; Egypt: Fā'iqah, no. 526.
yētegg luh be (e)šbe'
"He snaps his fingers at him." This idiom does not have the same meaning as its English equivalent, viz., "to ignore or despise the authority of someone." The Arabic phrase means that the person who snaps his fingers is characterized by a far greater degree of something than the person to whom he snaps his fingers. Cf. the English, "he knocks spots off someone."
yāṭla' benbal (bebdā')
"He does bizarre things [lit. he comes out with unusual things]." Often said of a person who shows occasional eccentricities.
benbal: the preposition be with nabal, plur. of nubaleh, a strange thing; something unusual.
bebda': the preposition be with bda', plur. of bed'eh (bid'ah).
yṭahhr al-ʿarḍ allī yāṭa bah
"He cleanses the ground on which he walks," i.e., he is

¹ ODEP, p. 736.
extremely pious. Other Arabic proverbs expressing the same meaning are referred to at no. 811.

1178

**yazhar lal-ḥarb rjal**

"There are men who will appear for battle [if needed]," i.e., do not underestimate people; you may find in the end that they are far better than you thought.

**ya'āf al-'aṭeyyah (al-'azīmeh) we ydawwr aṭ-ṭwāfeh**

"He refuses the gift (var. the invitation) and goes begging."

Said of one who throws away an opportunity or fails to accept an offer and yet goes out in search of the very thing he has spurned.

**ya'āf:** imperf. of *āf, to refuse.

**ʻaṭeyyah:** gift (lit. thing which is being given).

**ṭwāfeh:** begging; a thing which is given to a beggar.

**'azīmeh:** invitation, from *azam, to invite.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūrī, 1, p. 211, no. 1.

SMDW: Yemen: Goit., no. 428; Oman: Jayak., no. 107; Mecca: Iraq: Hanafī, no. 560; Tik., no. 719; Dal., 1, no. 679; Socin, no. 1; Gūl., p. 58: خطيروها اتَّصَلَّوا خِصْرُوا ۡتَرَمَّبُوا اتَّدَّبُوا; G. Syria: Frayha, no. 2368; Egypt: Taim., no. 1159; Burck., no. 229; Littm., no. 352.

1180

**y'ater bad-demneh**

"He trips over a[n animal's] dropping," i.e., he is very weak." Ident.: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2776.

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1 Quraiš, 72 (1961), p. 16. (This proverb is recorded by Şākir Sulaimān Šukūrī.)

2 Cf. Juh., no. 542.
y'ajaz 'an al-menżereh 'u yagzi jahāz al-mereh
"He cannot afford to buy a mirror, but he can afford a dowry," i.e., he pretends to be poorer than he is.

al-menżereh: the mirror.
jahāz: dowry

y'ani l-Bagdad 'alasan satmeh
"He goes to Baghdad for the sake of a curse," i.e., he makes a long journey only to receive a disappointing reward.

y'ani: imperf. of 'ana, to make for a place (particularly at a distance).
'alasan: for; equiv. to the fus., min 'ajl.

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2168; Gul., p. 135:

ye'is 'alaţ-tall
"He survives on dew," i.e., he is very contented and abstemious. Some people add before this phrase "[He is like] a cumin plant (cominum cyminum). It lives ..."

Ident.: Kuwait: Nuri, 2, p. 249.

ygazl 'u yangeż
"He spins and then unravels [the products of his work]." Said of someone who contradicts himself.

SMDW: a classical proverb: Zamak., no. 381; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2684; Dabb., 1, p. 131:

yegeşş bal-ma we yjarr' al-ba'āzin

1 Cf. ibid., no. 1455.
2 Cf. ibid., no. 2729.
"He chokes on water and [yet] swallows camels." This proverb is equivalent to the Biblical proverb, "To strain at a gnat and swallow a camel" (Matthew, ch. 23, v. 24). Cf. nos. 944, 1170, 1181.

Sim. WM: Lebanon: Frayha, no. 1042; a post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 429: يأكل الفيل ويغمس بالبلع

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 676; Zamak., 2, no. 99;

Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 374; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1369.

"He puts one foot forward and draws back the other," i.e., he is affected by indecision.


Sim. WM: Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 492; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1064;

G. Syria: Frayha, no. 88.

ydzaddem rejel we ywakker rejel

"He can read a letter from the back," i.e., he is very shrewd.

Cf. the English, "He reads between the lines." Cf. no. 590.

kaṭṭ: letter, written message.

Sim. WM: Egypt: Taim., Kināyāt, p. 35; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2789.

yagra al-ktāb 'u lā yahāb al-mzelleh

He reads the Book [i.e., the Qur'ān] but does not refrain from [lit. is not afraid of] sin," i.e., he is hypocritical.

Cf. no. 986.

al-mzelleh: the thing which leads (people) astray, i.e., sin.

This proverb is the second half of a verse in a poem composed by Muhammad b. Hindi b. Ḥmeed al-Bagāṭi, a former shaikh of
'Utaibah. The first half is: (the old man who carries arrogance and pride). He is referring to Muhammad b. Hadi, a former shaikh of G-ḥāṭān (Qaḥṭān). ¹

yatswi beskāt ²

"He burns [you] quietly." Said of one who, despite his seemingly serene nature, makes wounding remarks.

NS: Kuwait: Nūrī, 2, p. 250.

The following story gave rise to this proverbial saying. Abū Ḥanīfah, the famous Islamic scholar, was teaching, when a man of imposing appearance entered the class. The newcomer made him feel very self-conscious about his ailing leg, which he usually kept stretched out in front of him when he was teaching. He therefore tucked it under him. He continued with his lesson explaining that, when the sun sets, the fast is over. The newcomer asked "What if the sun does not set?"

Abū Ḥanīfah realized that the man was far from being as intelligent as his appearance suggested and he stretched out his leg once more in front of him and said, "If it does not set, then Abū Ḥanīfah [i.e., himself] stretches out his leg without worrying."

lā ybālī: (pronounced in its ?fāsīh? form) he does not care.

Sim. WM: Egypt: Fā'iqah, no. 56.

² Cf. Juhn, no. 2746.
"He stretches out a short hand," i.e., he asks for a modest amount.

"In the evening he is embers, next morning he is ashes," i.e., his enthusiasm soon disappears.

Ident.: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 401.

Sim WM: a post-classical Egyptian proverb: Abšíhi, 1, p. 34: Bait Nair and Sim WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, 2, p. 239; Egypt: Burck., no. 161; Hanki, p. 100; Littm., no. 7; Amín, p. 69.

There are two kinds of death which may happen to man: a natural death, and a death from losing one's lineage [by intermarrying with a family of lowly station or origin]."

This is a verse composed by Rıezān b. Gaššām at-Tamīmī.1

"Beautiful women die (var. become barren) before they give birth to [a man such as] Kleeb!" Said in praise of one who is thought to be an exceptional man. Cf. no. 884.

Kleeb: the renowned pre'Islamic character Kulaib b. Wā'il. al-bīḍ: the white ones--a reference to women.

"He forgets what he ate for his meal last night," i.e., he is

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1 See proverb no. 510 and for the poem see A. b. Kamīs, op. cit., note p. 179, and Qašīm Āl-Tānī, op. cit.
extremely forgetful.

al-Bāreḥ: last night.

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 1464: Egypt: ‘Arīf, 1, p. 239:

yantah al-gūm bes‘afeh
"He confronts the raiding enemies with a palm-frond," i.e., he has no effective weapon. Said of one who lacks a strong case.

yantah: imperf. of netah, to meet. Cf. no. 98.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., nos. 1793, 4111; Iraq: Weissbach, no. 273; Hanafi, no. 2806; Tik., no. 2732.

yām al-ḥaṣāyed melhyats-ts al-gēṣāyed
"At harvest time you were occupied with songs." Said of someone who wastes his time on frivolous things when there is an important matter at hand.

This saying is taken from the following Najdi tale which is equivalent to Aesop's fable of the ant and the grasshopper: at the harvest season while the ant was busily gathering seeds, the lark, 'Umm Sālem, was enjoying herself singing. The ant, without being asked, offered its advice to the lark to stop wasting her time in useless singing and to start collecting seeds so that in winter she would have something to sustain herself. The lark arrogantly replied, "One day of my good time is more precious than you yourself, O turned-tailed one (see proverb no. 1199), paying no heed to the ant's wise advice, and continuing as before, singing and playing. Then the harvest time came to an end and winter arrived. She could not find anything to eat and went to the ant begging for charity, but she received only the reproachful
Musil mentions another version of this saying in the tale which he records as follows: "Once the Umm Sāleem came to the ant and begged: 'Give me supper for my children.' The ant disposed of her by saying 'Depart! I am constantly attending to the harvest, but thou to singing (ana hammi al-ḥaṣājed w-enti hammeč al-ḥaṣājed).' The Umm Sāleem replied, 'And yet my voice is often more precious than the whole of thee with thy ragged tail (ana yowmin mn ajjām ṭrubī jeswāc jā ṭhazukat ad-dnebi).'

yōm: day. Here it is an adverb, "when, at the time of . . ."

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 3047; Frayha, nos. 733, 3047, 4155; Oman: Jayak., no. 177.

1198

yōm taʿašša we (e)rteka gāl rīḥat 'ašākum mesteka
"[Only] when he had eaten and relaxed [lit. reclined], he said, 'There is the smell of mastic in your dinner [which you served me],' i.e., only after he had had his fill of a meal did he begin to notice its shortcomings.

NS: Mecca: 2 G. Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 60; Egypt: Taim., no. 794; Burck., no. 141.

SMDW: Egypt: Fāʾiqah, no. 11.

yōmin men ṭrubī yeswāts yā mʾakūft ad-dnebi
"One day of my good time is more precious than you, oh you crooked-tailed one!" Mentioned in connection with proverb

1 Musil, op. cit., p. 41.

2 See Quraiš, 96 (1961), p. 16. This proverb is recorded by Zuhair Qādi.
no. 1197 (the lark) where another version of this saying which was recorded by Musil is mentioned.

yōmuḥ seneh
"His day is a year," i.e., he is extremely slow.
Sim WM: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2831; Tik., no. 2749; Gul., p. 169.

2. RESULTS OF COMPARISONS WITH PROVERBS OF OTHER PROVENANCES

The comparison notes added to some proverbs in the first part of this chapter offer material for a study on two important topics: first, concerning the question to what extent proverbs currently used in Najd are part of a more general stock used in neighbouring areas at the present day; and secondly, to what extent such modern proverbs are the direct continuation of earlier proverbs found in the classical and post-classical collections of Arab writers; and if not, when they came into existence.

An examination of the notes concerned results in the following conclusions:

1. The bulk of the Najdi proverbs in our collection (some 790 examples, i.e., c. 66% of the total) have equivalents from outside Najd which are either identical with the Najdi proverbs (indicated by the abbreviation "ident."), or differ only slightly in their wording (indicated by "NS": nearly the same), or are only partially different in wording and have the same meaning ("Sim. WM": similar in wording and meaning), for instance the proverb (no. 301) is
"Sim WM" to the Iraqi proverb.

2. A small number (i.e., the other 34%) are proverbs of purely Najdi wording.\(^2\)

In the following, the numbers of proverbs with equivalents elsewhere are indicated, together with the place where they are collected or the age, if known (e.g., classical or post-classical Arabic proverbs):

A. Najdi proverbs which are identically used elsewhere

I. In the past

1. Classical proverbs
2. Post-classical proverbs

II. In the present (other contemporary proverbs)

1. Mecca
2. Kuwait
3. Oman
4. Yemen
5. Iraq
6. G. Syria
7. Egypt

(c. 12%)

B. Najdi proverbs which are used elsewhere with only a slight difference in wording while their meaning is exactly the same

I. In the past

1. Classical proverbs

---

1) Proverbs which express the same meaning with completely different wording have not been included in this classification as they tell very little about the relationship between Najdi and other proverbs.

2) However, it is likely that this percentage could be lessened if other collections of contemporary Arabic proverbs had been available for consultation. Many proverbs, particularly from Oman, Mecca, Yemen, Kuwait, and the Syrian and Iraqi bedouins have not yet been collected, and those which have, have not been made accessible.
II In the present (other contemporary proverbs)

1. Mecca 28
2. Kuwait 66
3. Oman 4
4. Yemen 21
5. Iraq 63
6. G. Syria 54
7. Egypt 29

(23.5%) 282

C. Najdi proverbs which have other equivalents showing considerable differences in wording, while their meaning remains the same

I In the past

1. Classical proverbs 11
2. Post-classical proverbs 23

II In the present (other contemporary proverbs)

1. Mecca 22
2. Kuwait 27
3. Oman 18
4. Yemen 37
5. Iraq 75
6. G. Syria 80
7. Egypt 75

(37.5%) 368

The following table shows the total number of Najdi proverbs with equivalents elsewhere (whether identical, slightly different, or with considerable difference in wording).

I In the past

1. Classical proverbs 21
2. Post-classical proverbs 41

62
II In the present (other contemporary proverbs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mecca</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Syria</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

730 plus 62 (the total of the classical and post-classical equivalents) equals 792, c. 66\% of the total number of the collection.

However, attention should be drawn here to the fact that a limited number of Najdi proverbs have been counted more than once in the above classifications. This is a result of the fact that while some Najdi proverbs are used with one wording in a particular region or group, they are sometimes used with a somewhat different wording elsewhere, e.g., the Najdi proverb no. 1053 is identically used in Mecca; is nearly the same in G. Syria and is considerably different in wording from a post-classical proverb. One such proverb has been counted three times, each time in a different group. This applies to about 85 proverbs, i.e., about seven per cent of the total collection. This number should, therefore, be deducted from the 792 proverbs (i.e., the total of Najdi proverbs which are mentioned above and are used somewhere else whether identically, with little change, or with considerable difference in wording). There remain 707, i.e., about 58 per cent.

Of the remaining five hundred proverbs there are about 300 proverbs (i.e., 25\%) which seem to have no equivalents.
which show any similarity in wording or in meaning among Arabic proverbs, whether classical, post-classical (muwallad), or modern.¹ The rest (about 200 proverbs, c. 17%) have equivalents which express the same meaning but with completely different wording.

With which proverbs are contemporary Najdi proverbs most closely linked? As the tables above clearly show, Najdi proverbs seem to be more closely linked to Iraqi, Kuwaiti, and Syrian proverbs, in that order, than with other Arabic proverbs. However, this is only true when considering the total number of proverbs used elsewhere, whether identically or with some difference in wording. But the relationship is definitely closer with Kuwait when we remember that the highest number of proverbs (56, c. 4.5%) is used identically there, and also a similar number of proverbs which differ only slightly in their wording (66, c. 5.5%). After Kuwait comes Iraq, for forty-four proverbs in our collection (c. 3.5%) have identical Iraqi

Additional comparative study, including in particular proverbs as yet not collected or published might modify these results somewhat. However, one may doubt whether the major trends indicated by our figures would be substantially affected. Of these five hundred proverbs with no equivalents elsewhere which are similar in wording, 18 contain evidence which confirms their local character and makes this conclusion more certain. They refer to proper names of some Najdi areas, towns, villages, and mountains. The following are the numbers of those proverbs with the places to which they refer: 31--al-Mednab, a town in Southern al-Qaṣīm; 33--Ṣagra and Ṣruma, the first is the largest town in al-Waṣm and the second is a small town in al-ʿArez (ʿArāq); 1063 and 193--Najd; 520--Ege'e'a, a village between al-Qaṣīm and Ḥāyel; 320--Debādeo, the name of a well; 763--Wṭāl, a village in 'Yūn al-Jwa in northern al-Qaṣīm; 384--Feed (Faid), a village near Ḥāyel; 663-Sde'er (Sudair) a Najdi district; 492--al-Beṣur, a group of villages near Buraidah; 166, 256--al-Gwārēḥ, a village about 50 miles north-west of Buraidah; 1102--Ṣbeēḥ (Ṣubaiḥ), a village near ar-Rass in al-Qaṣīm; 713--ad-De'īsē, one of the forementioned villages of al-Buṣer; 298--Ḥreemmī (Ḥuraimīlā), the largest town in the district of aš-Še'īb; 1070--Ṭwēdz (Ţuwaīq), the well-known chain of hills in southern Najd; 185--al-Jāf (al-Jawf), a district in northern Najd; 985--al-'Yūn (i.e., 'Yūn al-Jwa, see above).

¹ Additional comparative study, including in particular proverbs as yet not collected or published might modify these results somewhat. However, one may doubt whether the major trends indicated by our figures would be substantially affected. Of these five hundred proverbs with no equivalents elsewhere which are similar in wording, 18 contain evidence which confirms their local character and makes this conclusion more certain.
equivalents and sixty three proverbs (c. 5%) are used with minor differences in wording.  

The factors which account for the close link between Najdi proverbs and those of Kuwait, Iraq, and Syria—a link which is so much stronger than between Najdi and other modern Arabic proverbs—are not far to seek. While contact between Najd and Oman, for example, has been virtually non-existent for the greater part of the last three centuries and that between Najd, Egypt and Yemen has been minimal—even contact with the holy city of Mecca has been largely confined to pilgrims performing their religious duty and quickly returning home—the case is entirely different with Kuwait, Iraq, and Syria.

As is well known, many Najdis travelled to Kuwait from about the eighteenth century onward, trading and looking for work. Some settled there, while others returned to their native towns and villages. Some tribes settled in both Kuwait and the adjacent parts of Najd (such as the Mu‘fair, the ‘Awāzīm and the Rešāydeh tribes).  

Nevertheless, this conclusion has to be treated with some caution. The comprehensiveness of the various published collections differs widely, some contain thousands of proverbs (as Aṣqar, Frayba, and Feghali’s collections of Syro-Lebanese proverbs and the "Baghdad proverbs" of Tikriti) and may be judged to provide an accurate survey in the area in question, while others only include a few hundred proverbs or less (as Jayakar’s Omani proverbs, Sāsi’s and Hurgronje’s Meccan proverb collections) and are therefore likely to provide no more than sampling from the locality from which they stem. This necessarily tends to give a somewhat uneven basis for comparison.

Despite the fact that Mecca is geographically closer to most parts of Najd than Iraq or Syria, far more people settled in the latter two countries in the past (up to about three decades ago) than in Mecca. This might have been due to the fact that Najdis generally prefer living in open country and plains to living in mountainous lands (see proverb no. 872).

It is well-known that a great number of inhabitants of present-day Kuwait are either recent migrants from Najd or are of Najdi descent. See inter alia: Ahmad Abū Hākimah, History of Eastern Arabia (1750–1800) (Beirut, 1965), pp. 45, 49 ff.
and Kuwait as well as in other aspects of oral folklore.

Najdis also had frequent contact with Iraq. The 'Geel (see proverb no. 172) trading merchants crossed the desert on regular journeys to Iraq and Syria on the one hand, and the oases of inner Arabia on the other. Some of these people settled in Baghdad, Basrah, az-Zubair, Damascus, Dair az-Zur, and other Syrian and Iraqi urban settlements. They doubtless continued using their Najdi proverbs, thus disseminating them throughout the various places in which they settled. On the other hand, those who returned may have used some non-Najdi proverbs which they had acquired in their travels.

Another factor which helped to create a similarity in the proverb lore of Najd and that of Iraq and Syria was the movement of some tribes like Ǧammar, 'Anazeh, and al-Muntafiq, which led a nomadic life in northern Najd, as well as in the Iraqi and Syrian deserts. They have a similar cultural background to the Najdis. These tribes naturally helped to spread proverbs between these three regions. 

Regarding the connections between present Najdi proverbs and earlier Arabic proverbs, our survey makes it quite clear that the continuity is negligible. This applies interestingly enough, not only to classical proverbs (only 21 examples—less than 2%—seem to be of classical origin) but also, as shown above, to post-classical proverbs which are both more recent in origin and perhaps sprang up in social circumstances which more closely resembled the present. (Table CII above shows that only 41 proverbs are similar in both wording and

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1 For the movement of tribes from Najd to Iraq, see e.g., A. Abū Ḥakimah, op. cit., p. 50; ʿAbbās al-ʿAzzāwī, ʿAṣāʾir al-ʿIraq (Baghdad, 1937), pp. 295-304, quoted by A. Abū Ḥakimah, op. cit., footnote no. 5, p. 36; Muhammad al-Bassām, al-Durar al-Mafakhir fi Akhbār al-ʿArab al-Awākhir, British Museum, MS Add. 7358, fol. 43, quoted by A. Abū Ḥakimah, op. cit. p. 36.
meaning to others from among post-classical proverbs.)

It would thus seem that proverbs in Najd which have
been in use for many centuries are very few in number.

This leads us to the history of the Najdi proverbs. What indications and clues do we possess concerning their age? In considering this aspect of the subject, it is important to bear in mind that proverbs are like people in that each one has a different age but exists in a generation which has more similarity with it than with others. In the case of modern Najdi proverbs, it is very difficult to distinguish one generation of proverbs from another owing to the scarcity of information about the language in which they were formed and used throughout the last few centuries. A proverb which is still used in Najd can be as young as a man living today (see for example no. 170 which refers to a person who is still living in this present year, 1975) or as old as a thousand years or more (for example, no. 252).

However, indications found in a small number of our collection suggest that by analogy many, if not most, of the proverbs current at present in Najd might have taken shape during the past four or five hundred years.

Only a few of the 1,200 Najdi proverbs included in the first part of this chapter have something indicative of the period in which they were coined, or the earliest date before which they almost certainly did not exist. Such evidence is contained in the proverbs themselves, or through their connections with stories, or incidents, referred to as being in the past. There is no indication of the age of the great majority.

In what follows, the attempt is made to assemble such evidence where it exists (this involves 40 proverbs, c.3%).
(i) Proverb no. 65 is composed by Jeri al-Jenubi, a poet who lived in the seventeenth century A.D. (eleventh century A.H.).

(ii) Proverbs 172, 292, and 518, speak of 'Geel' ('Ageyl or 'Uqail) merchants. These used to travel in caravans between al-Qaṣīm and Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, and Egypt, and were active until as recently as the fourth or fifth decade of this century. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure when they started this commercial activity. It is, however, presumed that their history as distinct groups could not have begun prior to the sixteenth century (the tenth century A.H.).

(iii) Proverb no. 185 refers to a certain 'Beed' ('Ubaid). This was presumably 'Ubaid b. 'Ali b. Raṣīd, who lived in the nineteenth century (d. 1865 A.D./1282 A.H.).

(iv) Proverb no. 266 speaks of 'Grāğūs', who lived in the twelfth century A.D.

(v) Proverb no. 361 refers to 'Helwān', who lived in the present century.

(vi) Proverb no. 372 is a verse composed by 'Ali al-Gebālī, who lived in the nineteenth century.

(vii) Proverb no. 390, which is locally known in one town in al-Qaṣīm, refers to the clan of 'al-Ḥamāda', who are among the inhabitants of that town (al-Bukayriyyah), the town is about 300 years old.

(viii) Proverbs 11, 46, 273, 438, and 772 mention "Ebā Zeed"

(ix) The subject of proverb no. 207 is a historical incident which took place in the year 1803.

(x) Proverbs 20, 342, 1071, and probably 843, were composed by the famous poet Rāšid al-Kalāwi, who apparently lived in the seventeenth century (eleventh century A.H.).

(xi) Proverbs 422, 445, and 1111, are verses composed by the well-known poet Mḥammad al-'Abdallah al-Gāzi, who died in 1867 A.D./1284 A.H.

(xii) Proverb no. 455 refers to "aš-Šawanwan"; he was probably still living in the 1930s.

(xiii) Proverb no. 341 refers to "aš-Šṭūḥi"; he apparently lived in the nineteenth century and was still living at the beginning of the twentieth century.

(xiv) Proverb no. 102 was composed by the contemporary poetess Nūreh al-Hōšān aż-Resţidiyyeh, who lived in in as-Sirr.

(xv) Proverb no. 536 refers to "Dgāš" who lived at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

(xvi) The poet Rmeezān, who was killed in 1663 A.D./1074 A.H. or in 1668 A.D./1079 A.H., is mentioned in proverb no. 510. This "Rmeezān" composed proverb no. 1193.

(xvii) Proverb no. 552 refers to "Mhanna", who was probably one

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1 See F. E. Boustany, op. cit., s.v., "Abū Zaid al-Hilāli".
3 See 'A. az-Zāmil, op. cit., p. 146.
4 The writer was told by several people verbally about this man and his age.
5 See 'A. b. Raddās, op. cit., p. 29.
6 The writer is personally acquainted with some of this Dgāš's grandsons.
of the well-known al-Mhanna family of Buraidah. This family name does not appear to occur earlier than about three hundred years ago.

(xviii) Proverb no. 563 mentions a certain "Onayyān", who was a party to an incident which took place in about 1818 (see the comment on the proverb).

(xix) Proverb no. 683 is attributed to a boy from the "al-Bassām" family, who live in 'Unaizah and are well-known in al-Qašīm. This family name is unlikely to have been in use for longer than two to three hundred years. Another proverb (no. 111) refers to a man who belonged to this al-Bassām family, and to Eben 'Awwād, who is supposed to have lived at the beginning of this century.

(xx) Proverb no. 714 refers to "ad-Dewīš", i.e., Faiṣal ad-Dewīš, a chief of the Muṭair tribe and one of the leaders of the 'Ikwān revolt against 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Saud in 1929. He died in that year.

(xx-i) Proverb no. 721 is a verse by the widely known poet 'Abdallah b. Sbayyel who died in 1938 A.D./1357 A.H.

(xxii) Barakāt b. Mubarak aš-Šarīf (usually called in Najd aš-Šerīf Brekāt), who was the Sharīf of Mecca in the seventeenth century A.D. (eleventh century A.H.), is mentioned in the story of proverb no. 850.

(xxiii) Proverb no. 960 refers to a certain Abu Tallāl, who lived in the first half of the twentieth century.

((xxiv) Proverb no. 1017 is the modified quotation of a verse

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1 See 'Umar R. Kaḥhālah, Mu'jam Qabā'il al-'Arab, 1 (Beirut, 1968), p. 79, s.v., "Bassām".
2 See H. Philby, Sa'udi Arabia, p. 312.
4 See 'A. b. Kamīs, al-'Adab aš-'Sa'bi, p. 64.
by the poet Mḥammad b. 'Awn aš-Šarīf, who lived in the nineteenth century.¹

(xxv) In proverb no. 1134, a certain Ḥmūd is addressed; he is doubtless identical with the Ḥmūd b. 'Ubaid b. Raṣīd who lived in the nineteenth century.²

(xxvi) Proverb no. 1166 is a verse by Ḥmūd b. Raṣīd (cf. xxv above), describing one of the battles of al-Mulaidā which took place in 1890-1 A.D./1307-9 A.H.³

(xxvii) Proverb no. 1063 is a verse apparently composed by the poet Meḥdā b. Faiṣal al-Habdānī who lived until c. 1883 A.D./1300 A.H.⁴

(xxviii) Proverb no. 1188 is a verse by Mḥammad b. Hindi b. Ḥmeed al-Maṭī who lived in the nineteenth century.⁵

In addition to the above references to people about whom something is known, a further number of proverbs in the present collection refer to particular persons who were probably historical but about whom nothing is now remembered.⁶ One cannot therefore determine the time at which these proverbs started to circulate. Not less than a dozen Najdi men, some of whom had a particular interest in local folklore were unable

¹ See 'A. az-Zāmil, op. cit., p. 105.
² See F. E. Boustany, op. cit., s.v. "Ibn Raṣīd".
³ See R. Winder, op. cit., p. 277.
⁴ See M. as-Sudairi, op. cit., p. 205.
⁶ The names concerned are given below; each is followed by the number of the proverb in which it is mentioned: Ḥreewel (153); Ḥayes (156); Eben 'Amireh (158); Skeet (211) -- there is a man by this name who lived until a few years ago in al-Bukayriyyah in al-Qaṣīm, whether he is meant is difficult to ascertain; Mhanna (215); Jneedan or Jleeidan (230); Ḥassūn (254); Ḥmūd (272); Jem'eṣ (325); Eben Bukit (370); Skeet (383); Sanda and Dbees (395); 'Odeh (479); Eben Ġannām (491); Ebu S-heera (512); 'Um al-Baha (667); al-'Abbās (912); Mteeṣ (933); Neeneṣ (961); Barjas or Eben Barjas (1035); 'Areemān (1058); al-Mṭeṭ (1095); Eben Burmnān (1142).
to say anything about the lives of the people in question when asked by the present writer. A few proverbial characters, on the other hand, are undoubtedly unhistorical, and were invented for purely stylistic considerations such as rhyme (Mhanna, for example, in proverb no. 215, rhymes with "temanna", and Sbeet in proverb no. 383, with "beet", and al-Baha in proverb no. 661 with "baha").

Below is a classification of these forty proverbs according to their approximate date of circulation:

a. Proverbs existing in the eleventh century A.D. 5
b. Proverbs existing in the twelfth century A.D. 1
c. Proverbs existing in the sixteenth century A.D. 3
d. Proverbs existing in the seventeenth century A.D. 9
e. Proverbs existing in the eighteenth century 1
f. Proverbs existing in the nineteenth century 13
g. Proverbs which cannot have existed before the twentieth century 8

If this group of datable proverbs (40) of which less than a quarter is older than the seventeenth century, is a typical sample of the collection as a whole, it suggests that over seventy five per cent of the present collection has come into circulation within approximately the last three hundred years.
Chapter Two

FORMAL TYPES OF THE PRESENT COLLECTION

In this chapter, our aim is first to establish a broad classification of the proverbs in the present collection according to their form. On the basis of this classification it is proposed to select from both verbally and nominally structured proverbs a range of distinctive types of frequent occurrences which may be used as models for comparison. Their distribution among other collections of proverbs will then be examined.

A. GENERAL CLASSIFICATION OF NOMINAL AND VERBAL FORMS

1. Nominal Sentences

About twenty-five per cent (290) of the proverbs of our material are nominal sentences. They, broadly speaking, can be classified grammatically as follows.

1.1 Proverbs Beginning with a Definite Noun: this type is quite frequently used in Najdi proverbs. It occurs in some eighty proverbs; for example, ۱العلم بحر ماء ساحل. This type is also quite common in classical Arabic proverbs; the Maidānī collection contains 267 proverbs beginning with a definite noun.²

1.2 Proverbs Beginning with an Indefinite Noun: this type is

¹ No. 525
much rarer in modern Najdi proverbs. Only about thirty examples are found in our collection, for example, جمّال الحكمة بالثبات نقص بالعقل.\(^1\) This type is also rare in ancient Arabic proverbs. Only fifteen examples are found in Maidâni.\(^2\)

1.3. **Proverbs Beginning with a construct (idâfa):** This type is made up of about a hundred examples which equals about a tenth of the total number in our collection, for example: أولى المأكولات أخص بالشام.\(^3\) The proportion is very similar in old Arabic proverbs. There are 372 nominal sentences beginning with an idâfa in Maidâni (c. 8\%).\(^4\)

1.4. **Proverbs Beginning with a Pronoun:** this type is very rarely used in Najdi proverbs. There are only seven proverbs in our collection beginning with a pronoun.\(^5\)

1.5. **Proverbs Beginning with a Proper Name:** this type occurs in thirteen proverbs, for example: مصري عمر بلغة.

1.6. **Proverbs Beginning with a Particle:** there are some 54 proverbs in our collection beginning with a particle. Below we list the particles, together with the number of proverbs which they precede:

(a) Negative (٠) mā: 37 proverbs.\(^7\)

(b) Interrogative (وش) weš: 3 proverbs.

(c) Particle (٠) mā expressing wonder or surprise: 1 proverb.

(d) Particle (٠) wā expressing wonder or surprise: 5 proverbs.

(e) Particle (٠) vā expressing wonder or surprise: 2 proverbs.

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1. No. 268.
2. See Dhubaib, op. cit., p. 39.
3. No. 137.
4. See Dhubaib, op. cit., p. 38.
6. No. 983.
7. In Maidâni, only 19 proverbs are found of this type. See Dhubaib, op. cit., p. 40.
(f) The interrogative (ْما من)، class. م: 3 proverbs.

(g) The particle of comparison or simile (كَانُ) baseen, class. كن: 3 proverbs.

2. Nominal Phrases

Nominal phrases are very frequently used (about twenty per cent (250 examples) are nominal phrases in our collection). They can be classified as follows.

2.1 Phrases in which idāfa is used: idāfa occurs at the beginning of some 110 proverbs. They can be sub-divided into two groups:

(a) Phrases consisting of an idāfa, e.g.: لْعَلْ نَهَّى 1 58 proverbs.

(b) Phrases beginning with an idāfa, e.g.: جَرَّ الْبَرْيْمَ وَلَا جَدِيدِ 2 68 proverbs.

2.2 Phrases followed by a dependent clause as: لِمَ عَلَّمَهُ بِجَعَلُهُ بِضَيْفٍ 3 56 proverbs.

2.3 Phrases beginning with مَن: 17 proverbs.

2.4 Phrases consisting of two or more Nouns and connected with the conjunctive و or the preposition بـ، as حُجَاجٌ و قَلَاعٌ 4 and بِحُجَاجٍ حَاجَةٌ 5 24 proverbs.

2.5 Phrases beginning with an Indefinite Noun, as عَمَّ بِلَا جَسَمٍ 6 46 proverbs.

2.6 Type A and not B (،. . .، . . .): 5 proverbs.

2.7 Miscellaneous Phrases: there are about forty miscellaneous
phrases, many of them consisting of a noun qualified by an adjective as:...

3. Verbal Sentences

Verbal sentences are the most common type among our proverbs. About half of them (540 proverbs) are verbal sentences. They are also common in classical Arabic proverbs. In Maidāni there are about 1,600 (c. 33%) verbal sentences.

The subject is at the beginning in some 180 (c. 20%) of the verbal sentence proverbs in our collection, and in about 100 proverbs in Maidāni (c. 2%) which shows that introducing the subject first is an old practice in Arabic, but has become more common in recent times.

Verbal sentences in our collection can be divided grammatically into several subdivisions:

3.1 Proverbs with the verb in the perfect.
3.2 Proverbs with the verb in the imperfect.
3.3 Proverbs with the verb in the imperative.
3.4 Proverbs with the verb in the passive (perfect and imperfect).
3.5 Proverbs employing impersonal verbs.
3.6 Proverbs in the interrogative form.

3.1 Proverbs with the Verb in the Perfect: nearly half of the verbal sentences in our collection begin with a verb in the perfect tense, e.g.: طارت الطيور بارزاقته—. This category seems to be also very frequent among classical Arabic proverbs. About 17 per cent of Maidāni's collection consists of verbal sentences

1 No. 243.
2 See Dhubaib, op. cit., p. 43.
3 No. 471.
beginning with a verb in the perfect.\(^1\) Among proverbs of this type we find the following categories:

(a) Sentences preceded by the conditional لام (لي): 46
(b) Sentences preceded by the conditional إلام (لي): 6
(c) Sentences preceded by the negative ما (لا): 19
(d) Sentences beginning with the interrogative واس (وش): 2
(e) Sentences in the formula فعل وفعل طالما ورضي: 5
(f) Sentences in the formula فعل ولا فعل: 1

3.2 Proverbs with the verb in the Imperfect: this type consists of 230 proverbs (c. 20% of the total proverbs). The proportion of this type among the ancient Arabic proverbs of Maidani is much lower. Only about four per cent (205 proverbs) are found. Among verbal sentences, the verb of which is in the imperfect, the following categories are recognised:

(a) Sentences beginning with the negative لا: 42 examples.
(b) Sentences beginning with the negative ل: 3 examples.\(^4\)
(c) Sentences beginning with the negative لم: 1 example\(^5\)
   but this particle is not used in the dialect.
(d) Sentences beginning with the conditional and hypothetical لر: 4 examples.
(e) Sentences beginning with the interrogative وش: 3 examples.
(f) Sentences beginning with the conjunctive pronoun اللئ: 17 examples.
(g) Sentences in the optative form, as: الله لا يميزنا لسوانى البقر 6: 3 examples.

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\(^1\) See Dhubaib, op. cit., p. 41.
\(^2\) No. 474.
\(^3\) No. 666.
\(^4\) There are 146 verbal sentences beginning with the negative ل in Maidani. See Dhubaib, op. cit., p. 41.
\(^5\) No. 800.
\(^6\) No. 79.
3.3 Proverbs with the verb in the Imperative: a considerable number of proverbs in our collection (about a hundred) consists of one or more sentences conveying a command, advice, suggestion, or warning, expressed by an imperative. This type, however, is much less common than other verbal sentences (about eight per cent of the total number of our proverbs). It is, on the other hand, much more common among ancient Arabic proverbs as there are 326 proverbs whose verb is in the imperative in Maidānī (that is, 23 per cent of the total of that collection). This type is expressed in various ways such as:

(a) The Simple Command: either an affirmative simple command such as أَيُرُدْ يَدَّ عَنْ الدُّلُوْجَةَ or a negative simple command such as لا تَنَجُّد التَّصْلِيْلَةَ عن مَرَضِيَّة; there are twelve proverbs of this kind.

(b) Conditional Sentences: there are eighteen proverbs of this type in our collection, some of which consist of a verbal sentence whose verb is in the imperative followed by another sentence or a clause whose verb is in the jussive as a جَواَبُ أَمَرٍ وَاتِّبَعُ مِنَ الْخُفُوْغِ تَامَّ. For example, أَبَدَ عَنْ العِبّ. For example, أَبَدَ عَنْ العِبّ.
(c) Double Imperative: some proverbs in our texts (25) contain two verbs in the imperative linked by ۷۷۷. As in the old Arabic proverbs of Maidâni, the majority of proverbs in this group are of the formula "Do . . . and do . . . " , that is, two affirmative imperative sentences, for example: اکرب رجبک وان ایدیک. ۲

Other double imperative proverbs are based on one or other of the following two forms:

(i) type "Do . . . and do not do . . . " , that is, a proverb contains two imperative sentences, one of which is in the affirmative and the other in the negative, for example: اک اکر موگرب ولا تشد طیب. ۳ there are four proverbs of this type.

(ii) type "Do not do . . . and do not do . . . " , that is, a proverb contains two imperative sentences which are both negative commands, for example: لا تتحب ولا تکرر. ۴ there are four proverbs of this type.

(d) Implied Imperative: an imperative in which the command is expressed through the use of what is called in Arabic grammar "الاغرا" (instigation) and "التحذیر" (cautioning) is very rare in our collection. Only three such proverbs are found. ۵

3.4 Proverbs with the Verb in the Passive: this type, though occasionally used, is infrequent in our proverbs (there are about 30 of them), for example: لکا ننکر تو کندا. ۶ Maidâni's classical Arabic proverb collection contains 66 proverbs of this

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1 No. 5.
2 No. 62.
3 No. 126.
4 No. 723.
5 Nos. 145, 527, 528.
6 No. 478.
type (c. 1% of the total).  

3.5 **Proverbs with Impersonal Verbs:** the only impersonal verb (نَقْلُ جَامِد) is which occurs twice.  

3.6 **Proverbs in the Interrogative Form:** there are 21 proverbs in our collection involving interrogation, thirteen of them are "dialogue proverbs", the other examples begin with وَشَى and وَش.

B. **A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FOURTEEN DISTINCTIVE TYPES OF ARABIC PROVERB**

1. Nominal Types

1.1 **Type 'af'al min**

This type is used in both classical and contemporary proverbs. Proverbs beginning with 'af'al min make up a high proportion (20%--953 examples) in Maidānī's collection of classical proverbs (4,765), while in none of the post-classical proverbs of Maidānī (1,110) is this formula used. However, it is very likely that most 'af'al min proverbs in Maidānī are post-classical, even though he included them in the classical section. Furthermore, it is doubtful whether all such proverbs were actually in common use, and it is also possible that many of them were introduced in later periods. As S.D. Goitein observes, "the majority of many expressions quoted might not have been in common use over large areas at any time, whilst their diffusion in literature was artificial and declined with active knowledge of classical literature in general."  

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1 Dhubaib, op. cit., p. 42.  
2 No. 83 and a version of no. 1097.  
3 See below, p. 389.  
al-Majid 'Abdīn may also be largely correct in saying:

"... a large number of proverbs of the 'af'al min pattern are phrases confidently, but wrongly, referred to the ancient proverbs of the Arabs; in fact there is no connection whatever.

Men of letters, rāwis and scholars found this form a convenient and suitable mould in which to cast every simile which their imagination afforded, or knowledge of which they were possessed. These proverbs were not current in those early times. ... However, their preservation in old [i.e., later mediaeval] collections, and their familiarity to students and teachers of Arabic, may well have caused some of them to acquire a certain popular currency in more recent periods.

These proverbs should more appropriately be included among post-classical or recent proverbs." ¹

Proverbs of this pattern make up about five per cent (30 proverbs) of Ta'liqānī's post-classical proverbs. ²

In our own collection, this type of proverb is less common. It is used in approximately two per cent (27) of proverbs only. 'Af'al min is used at the beginning of 13 of these and medially in fourteen. ³

Little effort has so far been made to collect proverbs at present current in western Arabia (including its urban centres) and this makes it difficult to determine the frequency or rarity of a certain type. From the small number of Meccan proverbs already collected, the 'af'al min type would not seem to be very common. In the eighty or so proverbs which make up Snouck Hurgronje's little collection, it is not used at all; and Omar Sāsi's collection (618) contains only three examples. ⁴

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² Ta'liq., nos. 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 92, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 104, 121, 122, 128, 129, 130, 131.
³ Nos. 3, 6, 30, 31, 42, 48, 50, 51, 54, 55, 56, 60, 112.
⁵ Sāsi, nos. 17, 51, 129.
The Yemeni Proverbs of Ismā'īl al-'Akwa' (1288) contains 28 examples in which ‘af’al min is used (about 2 per cent).

In Oman, ‘af’al is peculiarly followed by the preposition م and not م، in two proverbs among the 320 collected and translated by A.S. Jayakar. A third example in the same collection, however, shows that this is not always the case.

Baghdadi proverbs have a relatively large share of this type: there are 80 examples (about three per cent) of it in Tikriti's collection (2,749 proverbs).

‘Af’al min seems to be less common in G. Syria than elsewhere (apart from Mecca and Oman). However, while S. ‘A. ‘Ašqar's collection of proverbs current in G. Syria (5,330) does not contain more than seventeen examples (about 0.5 per cent) in which ‘af’al min is used, we find 63 examples of this type in Frayha's collection (c. 1.5 per cent), and 26 examples in Feghali (c. 1 per cent).

In Egypt, as in G. Syria, this type seems to be less

1 Akwa', nos. 29, 86, 87, 98, 99, 100, 108, 110, 121, 145, 146, 147, 373, 419, 443, 471, 503, 529, 530, 536, 552, 560, 574, 706, 404, 658, 798, 1254.
2 Jayak., nos. 117, 170.
3 Ibid., no. 209.
7 Fegh., nos. 62, 63, 64, 118, 123, 240, 329, 463, 644, 703, 1003, 1069, 1074, 1173, 1213, 1532, 1604, 1611, 1639, 1734, 2069, 2098, 2146, 2289, 2227, 2307, 3046.
common than in Najd, as it occurs in only one per cent (32 examples) of the Egyptian Colloquial Proverbs of Ahmad Taimur Pasha (3188).  

In summary, then, the figures and percentages set out above show that the type 'af'al min was very common among classical Arabic proverbs (20%). It continued to be used in later times but to a much smaller extent, both in proverbs current in the Middle Ages (that is post-classical proverbs) and in recent times.

Leaving classical proverbs aside, the use of the 'af'al min type varies between five per cent, the highest percentage, in Taliqani's collection, and about a half of one per cent in Sasi's Meccan collection. Its occurrence is thus widespread but nowhere does it form more than five per cent.

Proverbs of Comparison which begin with \(\frac{1}{2}\), or one of its Equivalents

The particle of comparison, mitl, very rarely precedes the sentence in ancient Arabic proverbs. Among Maidani's 4,763 proverbs only one begins with it. Another particle of comparison, \(\frac{1}{2}(ka)\) is more commonly used (60 examples begin with it).

2 Though, as we saw, part of this percentage may have to be credited to post-classical proverbs.  
3 M., no. 4018.  
4 M., nos. 3001, 3018, 3022, 3025, 2027, 3031, 3032, 3035, 3037, 3039, 3040, 3041, 3045, 3062, 3064, 3065, 3066, 3067, 3068, 3069, 3071, 3072, 3077, 3080, 3091, 3093, 3098, 3108, 3109, 3110, 3111, 3112, 3113, 3114, 3115, 3116, 3117, 3118, 3119, 3120, 3121, 3130, 3137, 3139, 3141, 3142, 3143, 3144, 3148, 3151, 3161, 3164, 3165, 3167, 3173, 3176, 3179, 3180, 3186, 3188, 3189.
A third particle, كن، is used though rarely (it comes at the beginning of eight proverbs in Maidānī). None of Maidānī's post-classical proverbs begin with كن, and in Ĥāliqānī's proverbs only one begins with it. On the other hand, we do not find any post-classical proverb in Ĥāliqānī beginning with كن but in Maidānī we find twelve of them.

كن comes at the beginning of nine post-classical proverbs in Maidānī, and seven in Ĥāliqānī.

كن precedes about two and a half per cent (27 proverbs) of the total number of our collection.

Another particle of comparison or simile is تغل (tgel) "as, like" which is probably a changed form of تغلل, the imperfect of لع (to say). This is supported by the fact that some people still use لع as a particle for simile. Although تغل is very common in every-day speech, it is rarely used in proverbs (only one example begins with it).

A third particle of simile is تنا (tsenn)(class. كن). It occurs at the beginning of three examples in our collection.

None of the Meccan proverbs in Hurgronje's group begins with a particle of simile, but Sāsi's collection contains four proverbs beginning with ضم (zayy), "as, like".10

1 M., nos. 2988, 2989, 3048, 3049, 3058, 3063, 3073, 3177.
2 Ĥāliq., no. 468.
3 M., 2, pp. 172-173.
4 Ibid.
5 Ĥāliq., nos. 387, 393, 404, 405, 406, 407, 409.
6 Nos. 934-960.
7 See also A. Socin, Diwan Aus Centralarabien, 3 (Leipzig, 1901), pp. 82, 83. تغل is also common in Jordan, see Rokos b. Zā'id al-'Uzaizi, ٍمامس al-'Adāt, al-Lahajāt wal-'Awābid al-'Urduniyyah, 1 (Amman, 1974), p. 157.
8 No. 201.
9 Nos. 714, 715, 716.
10 Sāsi, nos. 613, 614, 615, 616.
In Yemen, nine proverbs in S.D. Goitein's book, *Jemenica, Sprichwörter und Redensarten aus Zentral-Jemen*, begin with which is used instead of 1, and one proverb begins with 2. Jayakar's Omani proverbs contain no proverb beginning with or an equivalent particle. About two and a half per cent (70 examples) of Tikriti's Baghdad proverbs begin with 3, and the same proportion (75 examples) is found in Hanafi's collection.4 There is about four per cent (196 examples) of Frayha's *Modern Lebanese Proverbs* beginning with 5, and a little less than this number in Feghali (c. 3%).6 In Ašqar's collection there are some 183 examples (c. 3.5%) beginning with 7 and 32 beginning with its equivalent 8.

The of changes, on the whole in Syrian proverbs to a (this is in conformity with what occurs in the Syrian urban dialect in general where the dental fricative sound represented in classical Arabic by is replaced by the dental plosive ). In Egypt, as in the urban dialect of Mecca, is rarely used. It does not occur in Taimur's collection, and once more as in Mecca, it is replaced by with which about seven and a half per cent (239 examples) of that collection are

1 Goit, nos. 539, 577-584.
2 Goit, no. 1134.
3 Tik., nos. 2039-2110.
4 Hanafi, nos. 1885-2047.
5 Frayha, nos. 3453-3621.
6 Feghali, nos. 36, 37, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 368, 403, 503, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 662, 663, 664, 776, 821, 822, 916, 952, 958, 1114, 1172, 1173, 1174, 1207, 1208, 1341, 1415, 1448, 1449, 1479, 1480, 1652, 1748, 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, 1833, 1912, 1946, 1948, 1980, 2023, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2220, 2225, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2636, 2637, 2746, 2747, 2748, 2749, 2800, 2802, 2844, 2845, 2846, 2875, 2926, 2927, 2928, 2954, 2955, 2956, 2957, 2958, 2997, 2998, 2999, 3020, 3021, 3041, 3042, 3043, 3044.
7 Ašqar, nos. 4100-4283.
8 Ašqar, nos. 2249-2280.
To sum up, we have seen above that the comparative particle \( \text{ل} \) was almost never used at the beginning of classical or post-classical proverbs, the other particles \( \text{ذ} \) and \( \text{كن} \) being used instead. Among present-day Arabic proverbs, one finds \( \text{ذ} \) taking the place of \( \text{ل} \) in Mecca and Egypt, and alternatively in G. Syria. In Yemen, \( \text{س} \) is more common than \( \text{ل} \), and in Najd, \( \text{خ} \) and \( \text{ض} \) are used in addition to \( \text{ل} \).

Apart from Egypt where the percentage of this type is relatively high, Yemen and Mecca where it is very low, and Oman where, in the collection available, it does not exist, proportions of modern proverbs beginning with a simile particle do not exceed four per cent in any one collection.

2. Verbal Types

2.1 Proverbs beginning with the Conjunctive

The conjunctive pronoun "who, he who", is placed at the beginning of 82 proverbs in the Maidani collection which is about one and a half per cent of the total of its proverbs (4,765).

\( \text{من} \) seems to be more commonly used in later periods. Among the post-classical proverbs in Maidani, proverbs beginning with \( \text{من} \) account for about nine per cent (96 examples) of the total of all post-classical proverbs in that work.

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1 Taim., nos. 1361-1599.
2 In addition to these, we find \( \text{ذ} \) and \( \text{ي} \) (bee'ah) used in Jordan, see R.Z. al-'Uzaizi, op. cit., pp. 148, 151.
3 M., 3829, 3830, 3999-4005, 4009, 4011-4017, 4019, 4020, 4027, 4028, 4035, 4037-4042, 4044-4048, 4050-4052, 4057-4060, 4069, 4071, 4073-4079, 4090-4093, 4096, 4109, 4112, 4113, 4116, 4119, 4120, 4122, 4124, 4125, 4127, 4129-4132, 4134, 4136, 4139, 4141, 4150-4155, 4157, 4160, 4162, 4163.
4 See M., 2, pp. 327-331.
percentage is also relatively high in Tāliqānī's collection (about five per cent of its proverbs (32 out of 613) begin with ممن). ¹

من (in Najd pronounced men) comes at the beginning of four per cent (46 examples) of the proverbs in our collection.²

About five per cent (31) examples of Meccan proverbs collected by O. Sāsi begin with ممن which is the general Meccan pronunciation of من, ³ and one example (apparently borrowed from classical Arabic) with ممن.⁴

About 4.5 per cent (64 examples) of Goitein's Yemeni proverb collection begin with ممن.⁵

In Oman ممن (pronounced men) precedes about five per cent (15 examples) of Jayakar's collection.⁶ It is replaced in another 26 examples (c. 8%) by the peculiar conjunctive ي (bū)⁷ which is the colloquial relative pronoun generally used in Oman.⁸

This type does not seem to be as common in Baghdad where it does not exceed one and a half per cent (44 examples) of Tikriti's collection (2,749)⁹ and about half this number of Hanafi (23 examples out of 2,966).¹⁰

⁴ Sāsi, no. 404.
⁵ Goit., nos. 1153-1158, 1162, 1163, 1165-1167, 1169, 1170, 1172, 1173, 1175-1189, 1191-1194, 1197-1206, 1208, 1211-1213, 1215-1227, 1229, 1236, 1237, 1429-1431.
⁷ Jayak., nos. 46-71.
⁹ Tik., nos. 2191-2200, 2208-2210, 2212, 2216-2218, 2220, 2221, 2226-2229, 2232-2234, 2240, 2242, 2245-2249, 2251, 2253, 2263, 2264, 2266-2270, 2275, 2277, 2278.
¹⁰ Hanafi, nos. 2124, 2125, 2130, 2133, 2135, 2137, 2140, 2142, 2143, 2145, 2147, 2157, 2158, 2162, 2165-2167, 2170, 2189, 2194, 2198, 2200, 2216.
Feghali's collection contains 39 proverbs beginning with مَن making the small proportion of approximately 1.3 per cent.¹ The proportion is a little higher in Frayha's collection where it reaches a little less than two per cent (78 examples of the total 4,248)² and a similar proportion (1.7 per cent of 92 examples) in Aṣqar, of which eighty proverbs begin with مِن (min)³ and twelve with مَن (man)⁴

Seventy-nine Egyptian proverbs from those in Taimūr's book begin with مَن, a proportion of two and a half per cent of the total 3,188.⁵

To sum up, proverbs beginning with conjunctive مَن are almost as common among classical Arabic proverbs as among contemporary proverbs used in modern Arabic colloquial dialects spoken in Baghdad, G. Syria, and Egypt. This type was comparatively very popular in the Middle Ages (around the eleventh century A.D.). As regards other modern proverbs, this type is apparently more common in the Arabian regions (Najd, Mecca, Oman, and Yemen) than elsewhere.

As mentioned above, about five percent of both Sāsi's and Jayakar's collections begin with مَن and مِن and eight percent of Jayakar's proverbs begin with the other conjunctive مَن. In both Najd and Yemen, the proportion is nearly the same.

¹ Fegh., nos. 39, 40, 84, 152-154, 185, 327, 449, 484, 530, 554, 655, 686, 706, 918, 919, 935, 1262, 1264, 1343-1345, 1419, 1481, 1516, 1517, 1527, 1669, 1864, 2127, 2167, 2319, 2515, 2516, 2545, 2702, 2703.
² Frayha, nos. 3765-3777, 3790, 3791, 3793, 3794, 3797, 3799, 3801-3810, 3814-3816, 3819, 3821, 3822-3843, 3845, 3846, 3848-3853, 3855, 3856, 3858, 3861, 3865-3869, 3871, 3876, 3877, 3880, 3887.
³ Aṣqar, nos. 4499, 4502, 4503, 4506-4511, 4516-4528, 4530-4547, 4549, 4551, 4553-4573.
⁴ Aṣqar, nos. 4406-4411, 4419, 4420, 4430, 4434, 4449.
⁵ Taim., nos. 2783-2790, 2792-2798, 2802-2810, 2813, 2814, 2816, 2818, 2820-2822, 2825-2836, 2838, 2840-2847, 2849-2853, 2856, 2857, 2859, 2860-2865, 2871-2879, 2882-2885.
2.2 **Proverbs beginning with the Conjunctive Pronoun اللهٌ and its Equivalents**

Conjunctive pronouns اللهٌ, والذي and their dual and plural forms for feminine and masculine do not occur at the beginning of the sentence in classical Arabic proverbs. No proverb in Maidānī's collection begins in this way. This is also true of the post-classical proverbs quoted by Maidānī. However, in ﺉāliqānī's collection of post-classical proverbs, one proverb begins withالذي.1

Twenty-four proverbs in our collection (c. 2%) begin with the conjunctive pronoun اللهٌ ('allī)2 which is used in the Najdi vernacular in place of classical اللهٌ, والذي and their dual and plural forms (that is, اللهٌ is not affected as to number or gender).3

About ten per cent (60 examples) of Sāsi's Meccan proverbs begin with ىلٌ (i'lli)4 and eight examples in Hurgronje's collection (also about ten per cent).5

The classical اللهٌ is still common in Yemen. Eighteen examples of Akwa''s proverbs and 26 of Goitein's begin with this pronoun.6 أنى ('adī) which stands for اللهٌ is, however, used more often in Akwa''s book than in Goitein's (27 examples).7 These two groups together make up about three and a half per cent of the total of the first volume of Ismā'īl al-'Akwa''s book (1,285).

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1 ﺉāliq., no. 94
2 'allī is the Najdi pronunciation. It is pronounced i'lli in Mecca, Egypt, Syria (including Palestine and Lebanon), Baghdad and most other urban Arab regions.
3 Nos. 81-104.
4 Sāsi, nos. 226-285.
5 Hurg., nos. 8, 11, 15, 42, 54, 65, 66, 74.
6 Akwa', nos. 597-614; Goit., nos. 114-139.
7 Akwa', nos. 377-403.
The Omani equivalents of 

الى 

(lij) which

is used at the beginning of one example in Jayakar's small collection\(^1\) and 

لى (lij) which occurs at the beginning of two

sentences.\(^2\)

A hundred and twenty Baghdad proverbs among those

in Tikriti's collection (approximately five per cent) begin

either with 'illi (21 examples)\(^3\) or with 'il (99 examples).\(^4\)

The latter is very commonly used instead of the former, or

instead of the classical pronouns.

In Ḥanafi's collection, there are about 140 examples

(c. 4.5%) either beginning with 'illi (24 examples)\(^5\) or 'il

(75 examples)\(^6\) or with li as in

"What is in my heart is in my heart" (about 40 examples).\(^7\)

In G. Syria, as in Baghdad, there are three conjunc-
tive pronouns used at the beginning of sentences instead of

the classical ones. They are 'illi, which is used as previously

noted in most Arab countries, 'il, and hal or halli. Proverbs

beginning with these pronouns account for about five per cent of

\(^1\) Jayak., no. 231.

\(^2\) Jayak., nos. 236, 237.

\(^3\) Tik., nos. 344-364.

\(^4\) Tik., nos. 515, 578, 579, 596, 611, 621, 787, 1039, 1348,


2025-2027, 2029, 2030, 2037, 2289, 2304, 2322-2326, 2328-2331,

2334, 2335, 2338, 2341, 2345, 2350, 2351, 2365, 2372, 2374,

2596, 2600, 2601, 2603, 2605, 2606, 2609, 2610,

2612, 2616, 2617, 2619, 2622, 2623, 2626, 2628-2630, 2633, 2640,

2641, 2644, 2649, 2650, 2653, 2659-2661, 2665-2670, 2673, 2676,

2679, 2681, 2689, 2693, 2696, 2697, 2701, 2704, 2717,

2722, 2729-2731, 2733, 2734, 2742.

\(^5\) Hanafi, nos. 212-235.

\(^6\) Hanafi, e.g., nos. 1630, 1637, 1638, 1742-1746, 1748-1755,

1762, 1763, 1772-1775, 1779.
Feghali's collection (154 examples, 88 of them begin with *hal or *halli, 44 with *il, and 22 with *illi). In Frayha's book, proverbs beginning with *illi are much more frequent than those beginning with *illi, *halli, *hal, or *il, in Feghali's collection (about six per cent of Frayha's collection, or 254 examples). The same percentage of proverbs beginning with *illi occurs in Ašgar's collection. The other variants of *illi: *alladi, *halli, *hal, and *il, do not occur in either of Frayha or Ašgar.

Apart from Mecca, this type seems to be more common in Egypt than anywhere else. There are 277 proverbs (c. 8.5%) beginning with *illi in Taimūr's collection.

The above details clearly show that:
(a) neither *il, nor any of its dual, plural, masculine or feminine variants occur at the beginning of the sentence in classical Arabic proverbs.
(b) Although this last statement may also be true in regard to post-classical proverbs of the Middle Ages, there are hints (e.g., a proverb in Ṭāliqānī's collection beginning with this pronoun) that *al began at that time to find its way to the beginning of the sentence together with the other conjunctive which was more commonly used at the start of the sentence.

2 Fegh., e.g., nos. 94, 166, 214, 299, 334, 336-338, 540, 568, 571, 625, 626, 786, 787, 852, 964, 965, 1219, 1284, 1285, 1360-1362, 1457, 1959, 2113, 2461, 2567, 2647, 2760, 2937.
3 Fegh., nos. 167, 190, 257, 335, 570, 673, 711, 712, 741, 742, 788, 966, 1068, 1458, 1459, 1493, 1660, 1706, 1957, 1958, 2112, 2277.
4 Frayha, nos. 356-609.
5 Ašgar, nos. 474-806.
6 Taim., nos. 242-518.
(see above, pp. 376-378).

(c) While this type of proverb seems to be rather popular in Mecca, Egypt, and G. Syria, it is much less so in Oman.

(d) Contemporary proverbs beginning in this way are more frequent than those beginning in any of the other ways indicated in this chapter.

(e) في modern Arabic proverbs is conserved only in Yemen; 'illī is used in Mecca, Baghdad, Egypt, and G. Syria; 'allī is used in Najd; li in Baghdad; 'il in Baghdad and G. Syria; li in Oman; hali and hal in G. Syria; 'adi in Yemen.

2.3 Proverbs beginning with the Conditional ل (idā) and its Colloquial Equivalents

Contrary to what might be expected, the number of ancient Arabic proverbs in Maidāni beginning with the conditional particle ل is relatively small (40 examples--about 0.8%).

This type is more common among post-classical proverbs. There are about three per cent (30 examples) among Maidāni's own collection of such proverbs (1,100), and about two and a half per cent (16 examples) among Taliqānī's collection of proverbs current in Baghdad in the eleventh century.

ل rarely occurs in the Najd dialect and consequently is also rare in Najdi proverbs where it is replaced by لā and 'ela (lyā and 'elya in bedouin speech generally). About four per cent (44 examples) of our collection begin with لā; 'ela, apparently less common, precedes six proverbs. Only one

2 M., 1, pp. 88-89.
3 Taliq., nos. 1, 28, 29, 31, 34, 37, 38, 40, 43, 46, 48, 62, 70, 91, 103, 105.
5 Nos. 66-71.
proverb, which is also used in a classical form, begins with Ijl.1

As in classical Arabic, Ijl in modern Najdi proverbs is also immediately followed by a verb in the perfect. In every case la and 'ela are likewise followed immediately by a verb in the perfect.

About four per cent (24 examples) of Säsi's collection of Meccan proverbs begin with Ijl ('iza2) (in the dialect of the majority of the urban population of Mecca—as in Syrian towns—the dental fricative dāl ( ḍ in I.P.A.) changes to the other dental fricative "z").

This type, no doubt, is more common in Yemen than in any of the other countries, towns, or regions with which this thesis is dealing. A comparatively remarkable seven per cent (203) of the proverbs in the first part of Akwa‘1’s book begin with Ijl.3 Nevertheless, it has to be noted that proverbs in the book in question are arranged in alphabetical order, and as Ijl begins with an alif or a hamza, the first volume contains all proverbs beginning with this particular particle, and although the figure itself is the largest among proverbs beginning with Ijl in any collection of Arabic proverbs which come under the scope of this work, the percentage will prove lower when the full number of proverbs contained in the whole book is known after other parts are made available.

However, Ijl precedes only one example in Goitein's 1,432 Yemeni proverbs and idioms,4 whereas about three per cent (46 proverbs begin with 'ela,5 and about two per cent (27

---

1 No. 28.
2 Säsi, nos. 298-321.
3 Akwa‘, nos. 178-370.
4 Goit., no. 24.
5 Goit., nos. 36-47, 53, 57-59, 61, 67-69, 73, 76-78, 80-83, 86, 93, 95, 96, 96-113.
proverbs) begin with la which corresponds to ′ا. This lends strength to the probability that when al-ʾAkwaʾ was recording these proverbs he wrote the classical ′ا which is rarely used in modern Yemeni dialect in place of ′ela and la which are common (particularly in نيام and رواج).²

Nine examples (c. 3%) of Jayakar’s collection of Omani proverbs begin with ′ا.³

′ا is quite common in Baghdad; about one and a half per cent (46 examples) of Ḥanafi and about 1.6 per cent (50 examples) of Tikriti begin with this particle.⁴

Feghali’s collection of Syro-Lebanese proverbs contains forty examples (c. 1.3%) beginning with ′اج (′eza) (originally ′ا, but the ج changed in the urban Syrian dialect to a ج),⁵ while Ašqar records some fifty one proverbs of this type (c. 1%).⁶ The number of proverbs beginning with ′اج in Frayha’s Modern Lebanese Proverbs is no larger (34 proverbs, that is about one per cent of the total number of this collection).⁷ Ten other proverbs begin with ′اج which stands for حيما, ′ا or ′ما.⁸

The use of ′اج at the beginning diminishes to only four proverbs in Taimūr’s Colloquial (Egyptian) Proverbs,⁹ and

---

1 Goit., nos. 50-52, 54-56, 60, 62-64, 66, 70-72, 74, 75, 79, 84, 85, 87-92, 94, 97.
2 See Ahmad Ḥ. Šaraf ad-Dīn, Lahajāt al-Yaman (Cairo, 1970), pp. 81, 83.
3 Jayak., nos. 2-10.
4 Ḥanafi, nos. 50-95; Tik., nos. 110-159.
6 Ašqar, nos. 147-197.
7 Frayha, nos. 126-159.
8 Frayha, nos. 3195-3204.
9 Taymūr, nos. 96-99.
its equivalent ٌّّ occurs at the beginning of nine proverbs.¹

We may sum up by saying that proverbs which begin with the conditional particle ٌّّ are quite rare among ancient Arabic proverbs. This type is also remarkably rare among the Egyptian proverbs of the present time.

The contemporary proverbs of Yemen have the highest proportion of this type followed by Najdi, Meccan, and post-classical proverbs.

In proverbs of Baghdad and G. Syria, not more than 1.8 per cent begin with ٌّّ or any of its equivalents.

It is clear from the above comparison that the classical conditional particle ٌّّ is used in Mecca, Oman, Baghdad, Egypt--though rarely--and G. Syria, but is not used in Najd where it is replaced byباً and ّلا,² and rarely used in Yemen where it is also often replaced byلا and ّلا.

2.4 Proverbs beginning with the Conditional ٌّ ٌّ

Below are set out the figures and percentages of proverbs beginning with the conditional ٌّّ in front of the name of the country, region, or town, and divided into the kind of proverb (e.g. classical/post-classical):

Classical: Maidānī: 34 (c. 0.7%)³
Post-classical: Maidānī: 4 (c. 0.4%)⁴
Ţāliqānī: 3 (c. 0.5%)⁵

Najd: Our collection: 10 (c. 0.8%)⁶

¹ Taimūr, nos. 2537-2539, 2541-2546.
² However, with the spread of learning, ٌّّ has started to find its way into every-day speech in Najd.
⁴ M., 1, p. 88.
⁵ Ţāliq., nos. 12, 33, 83.
⁶ Nos. 122-125, 127, 128, 130-133.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mecca</td>
<td>Sāsi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hurgronje</td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>Akwa'</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goitein</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>Jayakar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baghdad</td>
<td>Ḥanafi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tikriti</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Syria</td>
<td>Feghali</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frayha</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ašqar</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Taimūr</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we examine the above figures and percentages, it is quickly apparent that this type is very rare in old, middle, and modern Arabic proverbs with the exception of Egyptian and G. Syrian (especially Lebanese) proverbs, where the proportion is comparatively high.

2.5 **Proverbs in the Vocative Form** (beginning with \( _{ } \))

**Classical:**
- Maidānī: 22 (0.5%)

**Post-classical:**
- Maidānī: none
- Tāliqānī: none
It will be seen that this type is particularly rare among ancient Arabic proverbs. It is likely that it ceased to be used in proverbs current in the Middle Ages. However, it once again became rather popular among proverbs used at the present time.

The proportion of proverbs of this type is higher in Egypt and G. Syria than elsewhere, where the occurrence of this type is comparatively infrequent (especially in Yemen).

The vocative ḫ is used everywhere and at all times without change.

1 Nos. 1128-1130, 1133, 1134, 1136-1138, 1142-1145, 1147, 1149, 1150.
2 Goit., nos. 1338-1351, 1357, 1360-1363, 1365, 1366, 1368-1370.
3 Jayak., nos. 313, 314.
4 Hanafi, nos. 2637-2646, 2650-2666, 2681-2689.
5 Tik., nos. 2562-2570, 2572-2584, 2587-2592, 2650-2666.
6 Sāsi, nos. 571, 572, 576-584.
7 Ašqar, nos. 4982-5012, 5015-5026, 5033-5050, 5053-5067, 5082-5096.
10 Taim., nos. 3026-3030, 3032-3040, 3045-3062, 3065-3087, 3089, 3095, 3105-3113, 3115-3123.
2.6 Proverbs beginning with the Negative Command ُلا تفعل

(Do not do)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Number (c. %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classical</td>
<td>Maidānī</td>
<td>58 (c. 1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-classical</td>
<td>Maidānī</td>
<td>23 (c. 2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tāliqānī</td>
<td>9 (c. 1.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Najd</td>
<td>Our collection</td>
<td>15 (c. 1.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mecca</td>
<td>Sāsi</td>
<td>5 (less than 1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hurgronje</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>Goitein</td>
<td>38 (c. 3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>Jayakar</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baghdad</td>
<td>Tikriti</td>
<td>24 (less than 1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ḥanāfī</td>
<td>24 (c. 0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Syria</td>
<td>Feghali</td>
<td>44 (c. 1.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 M., nos. 3492, 3500, 3506, 3511, 3513, 3515-3518, 3522, 3523, 3528, 3531, 3532, 3539, 3544, 3545, 3555, 3560, 3580, 3582-3584, 3590, 3591-3595, 3597, 3598, 3603, 3604, 3610, 3613, 3623, 3625, 3627, 3629, 3633, 3640-3645, 3602, 3654, 3656, 3672, 3689, 3695-3698, 3701, 3702, 3704.
2 M., 2, pp. 258-260.
3 Tāliqānī nos. 568, 569, 573, 577, 579, 587-589, 592.
4 Nos. 721-735. Some of the sentences of this type are made of double imperative or two sentences each of which begins with the prohibition particle ُلا and connected with the conjunctive ُو, e.g., "َلا تبَعُّ ُو لا تكَف" (no. 722), "Do not betray and do not be afraid." The second sentence in some of them is a conditional result to the first sentence (if you do not betray there is no reason for you to be afraid). However, in some it is just another prohibition sentence, as in no. 728: "Do not wrestle with a slave and do not race with a woman."
5 Sāsi, nos. 372-376.
6 Hurgr., no. 20.
8 Jayak., no. 227.
9 Tik., nos. 1779-1801.
10 Hanāfī, nos. 636, 1633-1636, 1939, 1640, 2515-2586, 2588-2592.
11 Fegh., nos. 31, 69-78, 365, 609, 655, 656, 909, 910, 1107, 1251, 1252, 1336, 1403-1405, 1512, 1514, 1562, 1563, 1565, 1829, 2052, 2092, 2310, 2385, 2386, 2416, 2434, 2438, 2485, 2486, 2635, 2743, 2744.
To sum up, proportions of proverbs beginning with the particle of prohibition, لا الناهي or لا لللليلة are relatively low among ancient, middle, and present-time Arabic proverbs. They are especially rare in Egypt, while the highest number of them is found in Yemen, followed by proverbs common in the Middle Ages.

2.7 Dialogue Proverbs

Dialogue proverbs are a type in which a proverb consists of two sentences each spoken by a different party in a short conversation or dialogue. The first of the two sentences comes either in the form of a question to which the second sentence is the answer, or as a statement which is explained, supported, or commented on by the second. This type is also found in non-Arabic proverbs and was so called by Archer Taylor in his book The Proverb.5

Dialogue proverbs are almost absent from old Arabic proverbs. Only two such proverbs are found in Maidanî,6 and even these are likely to be post-classical. Both of them begin directly with the question (that is without قال, or a similar verb).

This type is also rare among post-classical proverbs.

1 Frayha, nos. 3080, 3081, 3083-3141, 3107, 3112, 3118, 3166, 3167.
2 Ašqar, nos. 4854-4912.
3 Taim., nos. 2479, 2480, 2481, 2485, 2486.
4 Burck., nos. 724, 725, 729, 731, 734, 736, 737.
6 M., nos. 4086, 4647.
Only one of Maidāni’s 1,100 or so post-classical proverbs is a dialogue proverb. However, five dialogue proverbs which are almost certainly post-classical are included among the classical proverbs. Four of these begin with "(it was said to . . .). In Ṭāliqāni there are five dialogue proverbs, only in one of them do both sentences begin with ٢ل٢, while both sentences begin with ٢ل٢ in all proverbs of this type among modern Najdi proverbs; the other four begin directly with the question or the statement.

There are forty dialogue proverbs (c. 3.5%) in our collection, and nine in Sāsi’s collection (c. 1.5%). Each sentence of the Meccan dialogue proverbs begins with ٢ل٢ (galu, he said to him (i.e., another) . . .) or the first sentence with ٢ل٢ (galu, they said . . .) and the second with ٢ل٢ (galluhum, he said to them).

Only one dialogue proverb is found among Jayakar’s seventy-seven Omani proverbs.

Dialogue proverbs do not seem to be very common in Baghdad. Not more than seventeen of them are found in each of Ḥanafi’s and Tikriti’s collections (c. 0.5%). They are more common among Syrian proverbs. There are seventy-six dialogue proverbs in each of these collections. There are several examples of dialogue proverbs in the works of other writers, such as Ḥanafi, Ṭāliqāni, and Sāsi. Sāsi, for example, has recorded five dialogue proverbs in his collection:

"وقت أجرة وليمة شيء فقلت للآخر، وقلت لأبا،" "فقالت الـثـبـة، فماذا أقول أنا؟"

Ibid., no. 369.

1 M., 2, p. 382.
2 M., nos. 2838, 2856, 2904, 2922, 4663. 'Abd al-Majid 'Ābdīn also considers these five proverbs post-classical. See 'A. 'Ābdīn, op. cit., pp. 175 ff.
3 Ṭāliq, nos. 139, 201, 216, 369, 466.
4 Ibid., no. 369.
5 Nos. 580-619.
6 Sāsi, nos. 149-157.
7 Jayak., no. 170.
8 Hanafi, nos. 1569, 1572-1584, 1586, 2039, and the proverb: "قال له الفراغ ليش ترفع ظانة قال هذا طبيع" (2, p. 250), Tik., nos. 1721-1743, 1757-1759.
proverbs in Frayha (c. a little less than 2%),\(^1\) 35 in Feghali (c. 1%)\(^2\) and a higher percentage (c. 5%, 124 proverbs) in Aşqar.\(^3\)

Syrian dialogue proverbs begin either with لَمْ (he said), ضٰلْ (he said to him), or ۱۱۳۱۳ْ (they said), followed by a question or a statement followed by another sentence beginning also with ۱۱۳۱۳ْ، ضٰلْ، or ۱۱۳۱۳ْ؛ or they begin directly with the question, as happens in some classical Arabic dialogue proverbs. Twenty-three proverbs of those in Aşqar’s book begin directly with the interrogative particle ۷۷۷۷ٰٰ (what).

In the Yemeni proverbs of Goitein there are some thirteen dialogue proverbs (c. 1%).\(^4\)

Dialogue proverbs are certainly more frequently used in Egypt than elsewhere apart from Najd where the percentage is the same. They make up about three and a half per cent (108 examples) in Taimūr.\(^5\)

The above information, drawn from available sources, enables us to reach the following conclusions. Dialogue proverbs started to be used as long ago as pre-Islamic times although their use at that early stage seems to be very limited. They continued, through the Middle Ages, to be rarely used. Among the present-day Arabic proverbs, they would seem to be most common in Najd and Egypt followed by Syria and Mecca.

\(^1\) Frayha, nos. 1463, 1466, 2057-2061, 1519, 1875, 2074, 2137, 2659-2679, 2681-2684, 2686-2719, 2983, 4045, 4132, 4135, 4155, 4173, 4207.


\(^3\) Aşqar, nos. 2466-2488, 3201-3300, 5008.


\(^5\) Taim., nos. 527, 590, 600, 706, 710, 712, 716, 718, 719, 727, 728, 767, 896, 1034, 1064, 1127, 1126, 1290, 1671, 1724, 1831, 1853, 2045, 2058, 2072, 2084, 2414, 2149, 2151-2154, 2156-2207, 2460, 2590, 2654, 2655, 2657, 2658, 2661, 2931, 2940, 2966, 3027, 3035, 3037, 3038, 3046, 3053, 3055, 3056, 3072-3075, 3080, 3131.
They are very infrequently used in Baghdad and Oman.

3. Some Special Types (Verbal or Nominal)

3.1 Proverbs beginning with ﻦَﻣَكُل

کل (every, each) comes at the beginning of less than one per cent (42 proverbs) in مائدي، and a similar percentage (17-17 proverbs) in مائدي's post-classical collection; in two of them ﻦَلمَا (kullama, whenever) is used. In ﺗالقيقان's collection, four proverbs begin with ﻦَمِكُل and three with ﻦَلمَا (c. 1%).

کل (in Najd, kell) on the other hand precedes thirty proverbs in our collection (c. 3%), and in thirteen of them ﻦَلمَک (kellen). Three proverbs begin with ﻦَلمَک (kelle) and ﻦَلمَس (kell sén) which are the dialectical versions of the classical ﻦَلمَش (kullu say'in, everything).

This noun is used at the beginning of sixteen Meccan proverbs in Sǎsī's collection (c. 2.5%), in twelve of them it is pronounced kulli and kullan in four.

کل is not as common in Yemen. Only seven proverbs in Goitein's collection begin with it, and seven others begin with kullin (c. 0.5%).

---

1 M., nos. 2990-2997, 3003-3012, 3014-3016, 3081, 3082, 3084, 3087-3090, 3092, 3105, 3117, 3127, 3128, 3133, 3134, 3138, 3149, 3153, 3154, 3159, 3163, 3184.
2 M., 2, p. 171.
5 Nos. 673, 680, 686, 695-698, 700, 703, 704-707.
6 Nos. 690, 691, 693.
7 Sǎsī, nos. 345-356.
8 Sǎsī, nos. 341-344.
9 Goit., nos. 916-919, 1413-1415.
10 Goit., nos. 922-928.
Ten Omani proverbs in Jayakar's article begin with 
\( \text{kull} \) (kull) and in three of them it is nunated (kullun). \(^1\)

A little less than three per cent (77 proverbs) in
Tikriti's collection begin with \( \text{kull} \) (kull), in seven of them
\( \text{kul} \) (kulman) which is used instead of the nunated \( \text{kull} \) (kullun)
is used, and \( \text{kull} \) (kullma, as often as) in four. \(^2\)

Hanafi's book contains a similar number of proverbs
beginning with kull (78 proverbs, i.e., c. 2.6\%), twenty-three
of them begin with kullman and six with kullma. \(^3\)

Frayha's Lebanese proverbs contain 104 proverbs
(c. 2\%) beginning with kull, eighteen of which begin with
kullman (everybody, everyone). \(^4\)

The percentage is a little higher in Feghali where
eighty proverbs (c. 2.5\%) begin with this noun, eleven of them
begin with kullman, and two with kullma. \(^5\)

The percentage is higher still in Ašqar where about
three per cent (140 proverbs) begin with kull. \(^6\) Kullma occurs
in nine of them and kullman in eighteen.

This type seems to be a little less common in Egypt.
Fifty proverbs in Taimūr (c. 2\%) begin with kull, \(^7\) in two of
them kullmanhu (whoever) which is used as a substitute for kull
and the tanwin occurs.

---

1  Jayak., nos. 212-220, 222.
2  Tik., nos. 1609-1685.
3  Hanafi, nos. 1476, 1477, 1483-1558.
4  Frayha, nos. 2879-2982.
5  Fegh., nos. 29, 220, 223, 224, 319, 364, 500, 523, 524, 605, 652,
    653, 767, 768, 816, 1041, 1164, 1165, 1203, 1204, 1248, 1249,
    1331-1335, 1399, 1400, 1446, 1527, 1555-1557, 1598, 1740, 1741,
    1742, 1792, 1793, 1827, 1875, 1907-1910, 2018, 2019, 2048, 2062,
    2088, 2089, 2122, 2164, 2165, 2205, 2206, 2269, 2308, 2309,
    2433, 2454, 2481, 2482, 2539-2541, 2557, 2576, 2741, 2755, 2798,
    2836, 2870-2872, 2892, 2920, 2921, 2990.
6  Ašqar, nos. 3503-3642.
7  Taim., nos. 2350, 2351, 2353-2365, 2367-2388, 2390, 2391,
    2392-2401, 2403-2405, 2407-2422.
We may conclude that proverbs beginning with كل are fairly common among Arabic proverbs everywhere. The degree of the currency of this type in one group of proverbs (for example Egyptian) does not seem to be significantly different in another group. The highest percentage does not exceed three, and the type is rather less common among classical, post-classical and modern Najdi and Yemeni proverbs than elsewhere.

كُلُّ is used in its classical form (i.e., with كَفٌ مَدَمْمَة) everywhere except Najd where it becomes كَلُّ (i.e., with a كَفٌ مَكْسُورَة).

The nunated كُلُّ (kullun, everybody) becomes كَلُّٰنٰ in Najd, كُلُّمَانَ in Baghdad and Syria, kullin in Yemen, kullmanhu in Egypt, but is used without change in Oman.

3.2 The "A and not B" (... لا ..) Type

The "A and not B" (... لا ..) type, which is a way of evaluation by saying that something is preferable to something else, while used frequently in contemporary Arabic proverbs is very rare among classical proverbs.

The pattern ... لا ... occurs in not more than two proverbs in Maidānī.² It does not occur in Maidānī's post-classical proverbs, but the formula من أَنْسِل is used instead.³ However, تَلِيقَانُ's collection contains three proverbs in which لا is used⁴ which shows that لا existed even then by the side of من أَنْسِل.

This pattern is used in 25 proverbs in our collection (c. 2%).⁵

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1 As only the ending en is used as tanwīn in Najd.
2 م., nos. 271, 4032.
3 See e.g., the proverb: التَّحْسُن خِير من الحَسْن (M., 1, p. 151).
4 تَلِيقَانُ, nos. 186, 246, 298.
5 Nos. 10, 63, 190, 221, 224, 279, 314, 318, 371, 411, 426, 429, 431, 516, 541, 632, 635, 653, 670, 676, 691, 701, 981, 982, 1106.
It is also used in:

(a) ten proverbs in Sāsi's Meccan proverbs (c. 1.5%)\(^1\) and seven in Hurgronje's (c. 10%);\(^2\)

(b) thirty six Yemeni proverbs (c. 25%) of the first section of Akwa'\(^3\) s collection,\(^3\) and forty four proverbs (c. 3%) of Goitein's collection;\(^4\)

(c) eight proverbs in Jayakar's small collection (c. 2%);\(^5\)

(d) thirty seven proverbs in Ḥanafi's collection of proverbs from Baghdad (c. 1%) and the same percentage (but 31 proverbs) in Tikriti's collection;\(^6\)

(e) eighty three (c. 2%) in Frayha's collection,\(^7\) but only about half this figure (43 proverbs, c. 1.5%) in Feghali.\(^8\)

(f) seventy four Egyptian proverbs in Taimūr's collection

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\(^1\) Sāsi, nos. 107, 191, 471, 485, 489, 527, 548, 557, 559, 560.

\(^2\) Hurg., nos. 21, 27, 45, 52, 58, 70, 75.

\(^3\) Akwa', nos. 52, 61, 65, 66, 141-143, 615, 617, 927, 928, 933, 966, 1048, 1055, 1068, 1083, 1084, 1121, 1122, 1124, 1166, 1169, 1189, 1202, 1216-1218, 1239, 1253, 1257-1259, 1270, 1275.


\(^8\) Fegh., nos. 41, 61, 76, 115, 121, 177, 189, 225, 301, 386, 390, 397, 516, 806, 1052, 1127, 1128, 1150, 1347, 1355, 1368, 1395, 1456, 1544, 1725, 1814, 1970, 2028, 2087, 2188, 2258, 2329, 2406, 2462, 2473, 2662, 2692, 2763, 2808, 2828, 2835, 3005, 3025.
We see then, that proverbs of the "A and not B" pattern are very rare among both classical and post-classical Arabic proverbs. The mere fact that this pattern was known in olden times is very interesting. It is a pity that only a few examples in which it is used have reached us, thus making it very difficult to ascertain its history. They nonetheless show that it was used, though probably on a limited scale, as long ago as in pre-Islamic times. It continued to be used in the following few generations, gaining a little wider currency, until it became more common in most Arabic dialects and proverbs of today.

There is no striking difference among different Arab towns and regions concerning the use of the "A and not B" pattern. It varies between about three per cent in Yemen (Goitein) and one per cent in Baghdad (Hanafi and Tikriti).

3.3 The "neither . . . nor . . . " ( . . . Yj . . . Y) Type

Although proverbs of the correlative conjunctions pattern, . . . Yj . . . Y (neither . . . nor . . . ) are comparatively rare in some regions, they find their way into Arabic proverbs both old and new everywhere.

The pattern . . . Yj . . . Y illustrates a state of

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1 Tair., nos. 234-236, 238, 239, 962, 983, 984, 993, 1060, 1083, 1094, 1095, 1099, 1103, 1153, 1157, 1334, 1355, 1568, 1593, 1659, 1663, 1669, 1680, 1725, 1726, 1732, 1745, 1746, 1759, 1769, 1771, 1778, 1826, 1872, 1894, 1907, 1908, 1920, 2035, 2051, 2122, 2147, 2235, 2251, 2254, 2259, 2262, 2263, 2293, 2294, 2305, 2332, 2340, 2341, 2346, 2435, 2440, 2526, 2530, 2536, 2729, 2777, 2924, 2925, 2939, 2946, 2990, 2993, 2995, 3001, 3020.

2 Even though about 10 per cent (7 proverbs) of Hurgronje's collection of Meccan proverbs are "A and not B" type, this may not give a clear idea of the currency of this type of proverb in Mecca as the total of proverbs in that collection is only 77. It is likely that the comparatively high proportion is coincidental (i.e., it happened that he heard more of this type and not because it was very common. One's doubt is strengthened by the fact that Säsi's collection which contains 618 Meccan proverbs includes only 10 of this type).
non-commitment to one of two attitudes, positions, or stand-
points. They often refer to a person who does not do either
of two alternatives, or who lacks good qualities in the view
of the users of these proverbs.

This type is very rare among classical Arabic proverbs.
In Maidānī's collection there are a mere fifteen proverbs (c.
0.4%).

It seems to be even rarer among post-classical pro-
verbs and in fact does not occur in either Maidānī's or
Tāliqānī's collection of muwallad proverbs.

The "neither . . . nor . . ." type, however, is more
common among Najdi proverbs of the present-day than among
classical or post-classical proverbs, although it is still
rarer than in most other regions. There are less than one per
cent (9 proverbs) in our collection.

There are three proverbs of this type among the
seventy-seven Meccan proverbs collected by Hurgronje. Sur-
pringly, the conjunctive ْ precedes each of them. This feature
does not occur in any other place, nor in the three proverbs
of this type in Sāsi's collection, which makes one wonder
whether the introduction of the ْ was actually used last cen-
tury (i.e., when Hurgronje collected his proverbs) or whether
he mistakenly added it.

In the Yemeni proverbs of Akwa' totalling 1,288, only
one which comes under this category could be noted. This,

1 M., nos. 2, 1817, 1924, 3526, 3527, 3538, 3542, 3603, 3612,
3624, 3631, 3663, 3665, 3692, 3699.
2 Nos. 320, 325, 742, 738, 770, 787, 806, 921, 970 (in 921
mā replaces ِلا).
3 Hurg., nos. 15, 18, 55.
4 Sāsi, nos. 363, 371.
5 Akwa', no. 54.
however, is probably because other sections of Akwa'is book are not yet available and most proverbs of the "neither . . . nor . . ." pattern begin with $\forall$ which must thus come in an as yet unpublished section of the book which is alphabetically arranged.

Among Goitain's Yemeni proverbs there are ten proverbs of this type (c. 0.7%).$^1$ Similarly, among the 320 Omani proverbs of Jayakar this type is represented by no more than two proverbs.$^2$ However, this is most probably a result of the small quantity of proverbs in this work.

About two per cent (60 proverbs) are found in Hanafi's collection of Baghdad proverbs (2,966).$^3$ The same percentage (but only 49 proverbs) occurs in Tikriti's collection.$^4$

About one and a half per cent of each of Frayha's and Feghali's collections (49 and 59 respectively) are proverbs of the type "neither . . . nor . . .".$^5$ This type is much rarer in Ašqar's collection and makes up only about 0.7 per cent (37 proverbs).$^6$

1 Goit., nos. 946, 960, 968, 972, 974, 993, 994, 997, 1000, 1005. In nos. 946, 966, and 993, the formula is $\ldots \forall \ldots \forall \ldots \forall (\text{neither . . . nor . . . nor . . .}).$

2 Jayak., nos. 228, 298.


6 Ašqar, nos. 26, 2811, 4926-4930, 4932-4943, 4949, 4958-4965, 4967-4975.
Taimūr's collection of Egyptian colloquial proverbs contains sixty one proverbs of this type.\(^1\)

It will be seen that the pattern "neither . . . nor . . ." is, as noted above, rare among classical and post-classical proverbs.

In none of the modern Arabic proverb collections is the currency of this type noticeably great, and a frequency of two per cent is not exceeded in any of them. However, one has to bear in mind that although these percentages give some idea of the currency of this type, they can be misleading. For instance, the collection with the largest total among the three collections of proverbs current in Syria (including Palestine, Jordan, and Lebanon) which are used here, contain the smallest number of examples of this type. The pattern seems to be less frequently used in Arabia than elsewhere.

3.4 The "either . . . or . . ." ( . . .₁ or . . .₂) Type

Proverbs in which the correlative conjunctions "either . . . or . . ." occur, are rare among both classical and post-classical Arabic proverbs. There are only two proverbs of this type in Maidānī's classical collection\(^2\) and none in his post-classical collection. Ṣāliqānī's post-classical collection contains one "either . . . or . . ." proverb.\(^3\)

There are only eight "either . . . or . . ." proverbs in our collection (c. 0.7\%).\(^4\)

In neither Sāsi's nor Hurgronje's Meccan proverbs

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\(^1\) Taim., nos. 538, 586, 635, 719, 1333, 1368, 1369, 1408, 1417, 1420, 1428, 1478, 1492, 1498, 1507, 1550, 1555, 1568, 1626, 1643, 1675, 2115, 2174, 2175, 2464, 2469, 2471-2475, 2477, 2478, 2483, 2490-2504, 2507-2515, 2554, 2605, 2723.

\(^2\) M., nos. 225, 227.

\(^3\) Ṣāliq., no. 52.

\(^4\) Nos. 105-111, 255.
is there an "either . . . or . . ." proverb.

There are five proverbs of this pattern in Akwa‘s Yemeni collection. In all of them 'amma . . . walla . . . is used.¹

In Oman, the pattern 'amma . . . wamma . . . which is the closest form to the classical immā . . . wa’immā . . . occurs in three proverbs in Jayakar's collection,² and 'amma . . . walla . . . which is also used in Yemen as mentioned above, and very close to the Najdi variant--it is itself used by Najdi bedouins--occurs once.³

In Baghdad the pattern lō . . . lō . . . is used. It occurs in five proverbs in Tikriti (less than 0.2%)⁴ and in ten in Hanafi (c. 0.3%).⁵

Three forms are used in Syria:
(a) ya . . . ya . . .: it occurs in twelve proverbs in Frayha (c. 0.3%)⁶ and in eight proverbs in Ašqar (less than 0.2%).⁷
(b) yamma . . . yamma . . .: it is used once in Frayha.⁸
(c) yō . . . yō . . .: it occurs five times in Feghali (0.1%).⁹

In Egypt the form used for "either . . . or . . ." is ya . . . ya . . . It occurs six times in Taimūr’s collection.¹⁰

The above figures and percentages show that the "either . . . or . . ." type of proverb is rarely used in Arabic

¹ Akwa', nos. 631-635, 637.
² Jayak., nos. 19, 20, 22.
³ Jayak., no. 21.
⁴ Tik., nos. 807, 1881, 1888, 1904, 1910.
⁵ Hanafi, nos. 1677, 1678, 1679, 1698, 1699, 1715, 1721, 1733, 1741, 1954.
⁶ Frayha, nos. 169, 2315, 2369, 2370, 4143, 4159, 4164, 4191, 4193, 4198, 4199, 4211.
⁷ Ašqar, nos. 5101-5103, 5105-5107, 5326, 2519.
⁸ Frayha, no. 3566.
⁹ Fegh., nos. 89, 90, 408, 421, 2806.
¹⁰ Taim., nos. 3031, 3069, 3081, 3088, 3124, 3125.
proverbs anywhere and at any time.

The words used for "either . . . or . . . in Najd, Yemen and Oman are quite close to the classical form . . . $\text{L}_1$ . . . $\text{V}_2$, while different forms are used in different places.

3.5 Proverbs beginning with the Negative Particle $\text{L}_1$ and its Equivalents

Approximately three and a half per cent (157 proverbs) of the classical proverbs of Maidâni begin with the negative particle $\text{L}_1$, and about two per cent (19 proverbs) of Maidâni's collection of post-classical proverbs begin in this way. In Tâliqânî's post-classical proverbs, only eight (c. 1.3%) open with it.

This type is more common among Najdi proverbs of the present-day. About seven and a half per cent (87 proverbs) of our collection begin with the negative $\text{L}_1$.

Among Sâsi's Meccan proverbs, 23 (c. 4%) begin with $\text{L}_1$ and four others with its equivalent $\text{Y}_3$.

About five per cent (seventy proverbs) of Goitein's Yemeni proverb collection begin with $\text{L}_1$.  

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2 M., 2, pp. 327-330.

3 Tâliq., nos. 446, 464, 465, 467, 479, 503, 504, 510.


5 Sâsi, nos. 386, 390, 391, 392, 396-398, 402, 406, 408-411, 413-422.

6 Sâsi, nos. 463-466.

7 Goit., nos. 1052-1063, 1066, 1068, 1072-1075, 1077-1088, 1090-1099, 1101, 1103-1107, 1109, 1111, 1114, 1117-1122, 1124, 1125, 1127-1133, 1420-1424, 1448.
Proverbs beginning with this particle seem to be even more common in Oman where they make up about six per cent (19 examples) of Jayakar's collection.¹

This type is apparently much less common in Iraq. Hanafi's proverbs, for example, include only about two and a half percent (74 proverbs) which begin with ₄.² There are also two other negative particles which are common in the Iraqi dialect, مَكَفِّ، and مو. Each of these two particles occurs at the beginning of a dozen proverbs in Hanafi's collection.³ The proportion is a little higher among Tikriti's collection where about three and a half per cent (93 proverbs) begin with مو,⁴ eleven proverbs begin with مَكَفِّ⁵ and six with مَكَفِّ.⁶ The long vowel of ما is shortened in some Baghdad proverbs in accordance with the Iraqi dialect.⁷

One hundred and ten proverbs (c. 3.6%) in Feghali's collection of Syro-Lebanese proverbs begin with ₄.⁸ The other

¹ Jayak., nos. 238, 240, 244-256, 258, 264-266.
³ Hanafi, مَكَفِّ from 1830-1842, مو from 2233-2243.
⁵ Tik., nos. 2290-2300.
⁷ The shorting of the ₄ vowel occurs in the Najd dialect only when ₄ is directly followed by a personal pronoun, as in مَكَفِّ (I am not... (originally... - للع)), مَكُوب (he is not... ))(see proverb no. 1099).
negative particle عرف (موظ) precedes five proverbs.¹

In Frayha's collection there are more proverbs beginning with ل than in Feghali's (c. 4.5%, 184 proverbs),² and ل comes at the beginning of twenty proverbs.³

Although Ašqar's collection contains the largest number of Syrian proverbs, only 86 (c. 1.5%) begin with ل⁴ and seventeen with موعش.⁵

This type is as frequent in Egypt as in Syria. Three per cent (89 proverbs) in Taimūr begin with the negative ل,⁶ and five other proverbs begin with its equivalent موعش.⁷

To sum up, proverbs beginning with the negative particle ل are most common in Najd; then in Oman, followed by Yemen and Mecca.

While ل is used everywhere, other negative particles used in some modern Arabic dialects also occur at the beginning of some proverbs: موعش in Mecca and Baghdad, موعش in Syria and Egypt, and موعش in Baghdad.

4. General Conclusion

The comparative analysis above of fourteen formal types indicates that these types are on the whole used everywhere. No strong link could be proved between Najd and any other region or regions. Yet the connexion between Najd and some particular regions can be noticed in the following types:

¹ Frayha, nos. 229, 1117, 1118, 2024, 2847.
² Frayha, nos. 3245-3247, 3249-3352, 3358-3417, 3445-3451.
³ Frayha, nos. 3675-3694.
⁴ Ašqar, nos. 3860, 3861, 3865, 3867, 3868, 3870-3990, 3998-4058.
⁵ Ašqar, nos. 4324-4340.
⁶ Taimūr, nos. 2578-2591, 2593-2602, 2605-2618, 2621-2628, 2630-2640, 2651-2653, 2663-2679, 2682-2685, 2688-2704.
⁷ Taimūr, nos. 2896-2900.
(1) Dialogue proverbs. These are apparently more popular in Najd and Egypt, followed by G. Syria, than elsewhere.

(2) Proverbs which begin with the conditional particle \( \text{i} \) or one of its equivalents. This type of proverb seems to be more commonly used in Najd, Mecca, Yemen, and the post-classical proverbs.

(3) Proverbs which begin with the conjunctive \( \text{ذ} \). This type is also more frequently used in the Arabian regions (Najd, Mecca, Yemen, and Oman) and the post-classical proverbs.

It might also be worth noting that the type "neither . . . nor . . ." is less frequently used in Najd, Yemen, Mecca, Oman, and classical and post-classical proverbs, than elsewhere.

These few indications show that Najd is more closely linked, as might be expected, with its nearest neighbours in the Arabian Peninsula and also with older proverbs (particularly post-classical). However, they are too few to make us certain about this, or to change our earlier conclusions.\(^1\)

C. SOME STYLISTIC ASPECTS

(1) Simile: simile is used rather frequently in the present collection (about 15%). It is conveyed either by the use of \( \text{ذ} \) which expresses exaggerating comparison, or the use of a comparative particle. However, the \( \text{ذ} \) (eloquent or effectual simile), that is a simile without a particle, also occurs. There are about 110 proverbs in which this last type of simile is used; in some of these the particle is implied at the beginning of the sentence, as in \( \text{ذ} \), while in some it is implied in the middle of the sentence, as in

\(^1\) See above, pp. 354-357.
\(^2\) No. 203.
\(^3\) No. 331.
(2) **Rhyme:** rhyme is very frequently used in modern Najdi proverbs. About fifteen per cent of the proverbs (160) in our collection are rhymed.¹

Rhyme seems to be as common in classical Arabic proverbs as in contemporary Najdi proverbs, as the percentage of rhymed proverbs in Maidāni is similar to the percentage in our corpus.²

(3) **The tibāq:** the tibāq (elegant contrast) is relatively common in our collection. It occurs in about ninety proverbs (c. 8%). These contain two kinds of tibāq:

(a) a sentence containing two words contrasting each other in meaning, for example جرد البرهم ولا جريد القطان the words جرد (old) and جريد (new) obviously contrast with one another. This is the most common type.

(b) A sentence containing a double tibāq, that is, four words, the first of which contrasts with the third, and the second of which contrasts with the fourth, as in شوى هنا؟ ولا كثير عناك.³ This kind of tibāq is rare and is used in no more than six proverbs.⁴

(4) **The jinās:** the word jinās is used by Arab rhetoricians to signify the conformity of two or more words in form whether completely or partially but with different meaning.

There are, therefore, two kinds of jinās:

(a) one in which two or more words are completely the same in form and sound but are different in meaning, i.e., the homophone or homonym. This kind of jinās is not very frequently

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¹ See, for example, nos. 14, 16, 87, 88, 125, 129, 150, 202, 348, 508, 547, 647, 703, 759, 760, 797, 900, 1013, 1123, 1164.
² See A. Dhubaib, op. cit., p. 68.
³ No. 224.
⁴ No. 426.
⁵ Nos. 236, 371, 426, 431, 1024, 1179.
used in modern Najdi neither is it in classical Arabic proverbs. It occurs in only one example in our collection\(^1\) and in none of Maidâni's proverbs.

(b) The other kind is one where two words in a sentence are nearly the same in form or sound but are completely different in meaning. This type is called in Arabic rhetoric جناس ناصح (incomplete jinās) as distinct from the جناس عام (complete jinās) of (a) above.

This type is very frequent in the present-day Najdi proverbs. It occurs in some 110 proverbs (c. 9\%), for example: الحقيقة تبنى حوار.\(^2\) The incomplete jinās is less common in classical proverbs and occurs in about four per cent (180 proverbs) in Maidâni.\(^3\)

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1 No. 388.
2 No. 265.
3 See M., e.g., nos. 32, 36, 180, 220, 332, 481, 506, 930, 955, 2396, 2743, 3264, 3631, 4154, 4586.
Chapter Three

CONTENTS OF PROVERBS

In this chapter an attempt is made to discuss some of the leading themes connected with the natural world (e.g., plant and animal kingdom, the stars and weather), family life, social affairs, etc. which are referred to directly or by allusion, in the present collection of Najdi proverbs.

A. THE NATURAL WORLD

1. Animal Kingdom

1.1 Herbivorous Animals

1.1.1 Domesticated Herbivorous Animals

(a) The Camel

As might be expected, the camel is the most prominently featured creature in our collection. It is referred to in about fifty proverbs (c. 19% of all the animal proverbs, which is very close to the percentage of proverbs referring to the camel in the classical Arabic proverbs of Maidānī—264 proverbs, i.e., 23% of animal proverbs in his collection).¹

The word jemal occurs in thirteen proverbs,² and its plural, jmāl, in one proverb.³ The word be’ir which is the common name for a camel regardless of sex occurs in three

¹ See Dhubaib, op. cit., p. 95.
² Nos. 130, 186, 229, 538, 539, 550, 611, 709, 754, 900, 906, 1133, 1148.
³ No. 704
proverbs, and each of its two plural forms, 'ebā'er and ba'ārin, occurs in one proverb. The word al-fafral which is applied to any large quadruped and therefore could mean a camel, occurs once. The word al-bell (class. al-'ibil) occurs in four proverbs, and al-hejen (like al-bell having no singular) is mentioned once.

The word ḫwār (a young camel when just born or until weaned, that is, from the time of its birth until big and weaned, i.e., until it is one year old) is mentioned in two proverbs.

Ḥāṣi (a young camel older than ḫwār) and its diminutive form, ḫweesi, occur in two examples, and ge'ūd (a young male camel for the first six years until its eye-teeth nīban become fully developed) is mentioned in two proverbs. But bakreh (a young she-camel) does not occur in this collection although the word is very common.

Herṣ (a male camel over 20 years of age) occurs once and both faṭer (a female camel over 20 years of age) and its plural fettr are mentioned in one proverb each.

Nāgeh (a female camel that has had a calf; an eight

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1 Nos. 164, 165, 805.
2 Nos. 841 and 1185 respectively.
3 No. 130.
4 Nos. 77, 168, 170, 726.
5 No. 308.
6 Lane, p. 666.
7 Nos. 275, 710.
8 Nos. 906, 726 respectively.
9 Musil, op. cit., p. 334.
10 Nos. 26, 968.
11 No. 1164.
12 See also Dickson, op. cit., p. 629.
13 Nos. 710, 1140 respectively.
years old camel when she is allowed to breed)\(^1\) is referred to in four proverbs,\(^2\) and its diminutive form จำนวนมาก (nweedzeh) in two proverbs.\(^3\)

The word جده (jdee'eh) (young she-camel in its fifth year)\(^4\) and لدزي (leziyyih) (a she-camel in its third year)\(^5\) are both mentioned in one proverb.\(^6\)

Camels in general are implicitly referred to in one proverb.\(^7\)

The Salient Qualities of the Camel

The proverbs which mention camels contain many references to their qualities, habits and modes of life. The most important are as follows.

They are beasts of burden.\(^8\) They resent their burdens.\(^9\) They may be restive\(^10\) and unpredictable.\(^11\) They are valuable property.\(^12\) They are valued for their meat.\(^13\) They are physically powerful.\(^14\) They are good for racing\(^15\) and drawing water from wells.\(^16\) Really strong camels are rare.\(^17\)

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1 Dickson, op. cit., p. 644.
2 Nos. 227, 300, 797, 1058.
3 Nos. 1021, 1130.
4 Lane, p. 396.
5 See Musil, op. cit., p. 333 (ležijje).
6 No. 131.
7 No. 991.
8 Nos. 103, 611, 709.
9 No. 611.
10 No. 1058.
11 No. 75.
12 No. 797.
13 No. 754.
14 No. 539.
15 No. 129.
16 No. 170.
17 No. 164.
They have capacious bellies\(^1\) and can therefore drink large quantities of water and store it,\(^2\) thus they can travel long distances,\(^3\) helped also by their tough feet which can resist rough ground.\(^4\) Camels have feeling\(^5\) and are able to recognize each other.\(^6\) They congregate in herds; if you see one you can be sure of finding another.\(^7\) They indulge in play.\(^8\) Some breeds are quick-tempered and erratic.\(^9\) Their hides are used for making buckets,\(^10\) and their hair for making cords.\(^11\) Fully grown camels are stronger than young camels.\(^12\) They may get lost in the desert\(^13\) or rustled by nomads.\(^14\) For this latter reason, they are branded\(^15\) (every tribe has its own distinctive brand) to make it easier for their owners to identify them. They are vulnerable to beasts of prey;\(^16\) they therefore have to be looked after and not left unguarded in the desert.\(^17\) Young camels when born in the spring lead easy lives.\(^18\)

(b) The Horse and the Mare

Horses are represented in nineteen proverbs which is

\(^1\) No. 77.
\(^2\) Nos. 197, 991.
\(^3\) No. 991.
\(^4\) No. 991.
\(^5\) Nos. 34, 828.
\(^6\) No. 828.
\(^7\) No. 222.
\(^8\) No. 1140.
\(^9\) No. 165.
\(^10\) No. 710.
\(^11\) No. 138.
\(^12\) No. 726.
\(^13\) No. 1133.
\(^14\) No. 709.
\(^15\) No. 1113.
\(^16\) No. 900.
\(^17\) No. 900.
\(^18\) No. 275.
about seven per cent of the animal proverbs.¹

**The salient qualities of the horse**

Proverbs with references and allusions to horses do not impart much information about them. Most of the themes found in these proverbs concern self-evident facts and are of a trivial kind (they, and most animal proverbs in this collection, derive from observations from purely superficial contact with these animals).

The following are the most important themes: horses run fast and straight.² Some horses are unruly.³ They are good for racing.⁴ They are a valuable property.⁵ A light coloured horse is inauspicious.⁶

(c) **The Ox and Cow**

(i) **The Ox**

The ox is represented in six proverbs (about 2 per cent of the animal proverbs).⁷ It symbolizes imprudence,⁸ laziness,⁹ and stupidity.¹⁰

(ii) **The Cow**

The cow is referred to in thirteen proverbs.¹¹

**The Qualities of Cows**

The following references to the qualities of cows are

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¹ Nos. 255, 256, 258, 284, 302, 364, 365, 480, 543, 566, 588, 593, 764, 808, 910, 924, 987, 993, 1128.
² Nos. 543 and 364.
³ Nos. 593, 764.
⁴ No. 284.
⁵ No. 993.
⁶ No. 225.
⁷ Nos. 61, 210, 211, 220, 908, 1120.
⁹ No. 211.
¹⁰ Nos. 61, 908.
They are clumsy. They are incapable of running fast for long distances, for they grow weary easily and hence are no good for racing. Cows cannot be saddled. They are used for drawing water and, like donkeys, for threshing.

Eating their meat (i.e., beef) does not, unlike camels', make it necessary for the eater to perform a new ablution before prayers or reading the Qur'ān.

(d) The Donkey

The donkey occurs in nineteen proverbs, which amounts to about 6.5 per cent of all the animal proverbs, but in spite of this comparatively large number, very little interesting information about this animal's characteristics are found in them. Only seven yield some information other than that of a trivial nature about them.

A donkey lacks a sense of honour and is not jealous of its rights. It is an awkward and difficult beast. Losing donkeys is not a great loss, as a donkey can always be easily replaced by another.

(e) The Sheep

Sheep are mentioned in fourteen proverbs, that is, about five per cent of the animal proverbs in this collection.

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1 No. 1117.
2 No. 423.
3 No. 1105.
4 No. 79.
5 No. 167.
6 No. 958.
8 No. 93.
9 No. 195.
10 No. 123.
11 Nos. 95, 226, 372, 402, 403, 430, 455, 510, 562, 628, 934, 918, 1173.
The Qualities of Sheep

Sheep are stupid. They are a valuable property but cannot be relied on as capital as they can easily be lost either by perishing from drought, as often happens in Najd, or by being stolen by thieves, for they can be seized without difficulty. Lambs are submissive.

(f) The Goat

Goats are represented in fourteen proverbs. The following statements are derived from proverbs in which the nanny-goat figures (the billy-goat is not paid much attention in our proverbs). They have feelings. They are greedy. They are used for milking. They are physically weak especially compared with camels.

1.1.2 Wild Herbivorous Animals

(a) The Gazelle

The gazelle is mentioned in two proverbs. It appears as the symbol of beauty in one of them, and in the other its head is described as useless for food because there is little or no meat on it.

(b) The Rabbit

The rabbit is represented in three proverbs.

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1 Nos. 402, 562.
2 No. 561.
3 No. 918.
4 Nos. 209, 417, 443, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 880, 946, 1047, 1081.
5 No. 443.
6 No. 535.
7 No. 417.
8 No. 539.
9 Nos. 342, 979.
10 No. 979.
11 No. 342.
12 Nos. 935, 938, 1114.
The Qualities of the Rabbit

It is stupid. Its ears are a large part of it.

Its body is small.

(c) The Jerboa

The jerboa is mentioned in four proverbs, and a further proverb alludes to it by implication.

The Qualities of the Jerboa

It is described as edible, unclean, worthless, and it is implied that it is intelligent (it makes several escape holes to its burrow and it thins the soil near these holes so that it collapses easily when the jerboa pushes it from below when trying to escape).

1.2 Carnivorous Animals

(a) The Lion

While about thirty classical Arabic proverbs in Maidāni's collection deal with the lion, it is not so interesting to the people living in Najd at present. It is referred to in two proverbs in our collection. This is only to be expected, for lions were common in Arabia in pre-Islamic times but are now extinct.

The word which may mean "lion" or any beast of

1 No. 938.
2 No. 1114.
3 No. 1114.
4 Nos. 176, 223, 585, 904.
5 No. 976.
6 No. 223.
7 No. 585.
8 No. 904.
9 No. 176.
10 No. 976.
11 See also A. Dhubaib, op. cit., p. 127.
12 Nos. 175, 188.
prey is used in one of them.

Lions are described as fond of meat\(^1\) and dangerous.\(^2\)

(b) **The Leopard**

Leopards, like lions, are only mentioned in two proverbs.\(^3\) They are described as brave and powerful.\(^4\)

(c) **The Wolf**

The wolf is represented in eighteen proverbs (about 6.5 per cent of animal proverbs).\(^5\)

The **Qualities of the Wolf**

The following are the salient qualities of the wolf derived from proverbs referring to it in our collection.

It is dangerous and a terrifying animal.\(^6\) It is cowardly.\(^7\) It is ungrateful.\(^8\) It is selfish.\(^9\) Although cautious and clever, it can be tricked.\(^10\) It is inclined to roam.\(^11\) It is more often than not hungry.\(^12\) It looks strong even though hungry.\(^13\) It is unapproachable.\(^14\) It is given to light sleep.\(^15\) It is difficult to discern (because it is adapted in colour to its environment).\(^16\)

\(^1\) No. 175.
\(^2\) No. 188.
\(^3\) Nos. 63, 453.
\(^4\) No. 63.
\(^6\) Nos. 213, 335, 336, 357.
\(^7\) No. 337.
\(^8\) No. 554.
\(^9\) No. 854.
\(^10\) No. 340.
\(^11\) No. 338.
\(^12\) No. 913.
\(^13\) No. 943.
\(^14\) No. 1049.
\(^15\) No. 1080.
\(^16\) No. 336.
(d) **The Dog**

The dog is represented in twenty seven proverbs, that is, about ten per cent of the total number of animal proverbs.\(^1\)

**The Qualities of the Dog**

Dogs in general are described as unclean,\(^2\) sometimes cowardly,\(^3\) sometimes aggressive,\(^4\) and can be a nuisance; they therefore have to be held off with a stick.\(^5\) They are of no value; thus losing them is no real loss,\(^6\) for a dog can easily be replaced.\(^7\) Dogs' barking is ineffective.\(^8\) They are given to dozing.\(^9\) They can be trained to receive orders.\(^10\) Some of them are greedy.\(^11\) They become excited by seeing blood.\(^12\)

**Greyhounds:** greyhounds are referred to in five proverbs.\(^13\) A greyhound is depicted as a sharp-sighted indispensable animal.\(^14\)

(e) **The Fox**

The fox is mentioned in seven proverbs (i.e., about 2.6 per cent of the animal proverbs).\(^15\)

The word **beşni** ( حصني) is used in one proverb,\(^16\) and

\(^1\) Nos. 78, 147, 249, 258, 424, 532, 615, 620, 625, 668, 671, 672, 674-677, 773, 805, 936, 971, 957, 998, 1021, 1039, 1080, 1121, 1131.
\(^2\) No. 78.
\(^3\) No. 258.
\(^4\) No. 674.
\(^5\) No. 615.
\(^6\) No. 620.
\(^7\) No. 147.
\(^8\) No. 1121.
\(^9\) No. 1080.
\(^10\) No. 532.
\(^11\) No. 625.
\(^12\) No. 672.
\(^13\) Nos. 424, 675, 806, 1021, 1039.
\(^14\) Nos. 424, 1131.
\(^15\) Nos. 188, 257, 507, 509, 682, 791, 934.
\(^16\) No. 188.
its diminutive hqeeni (حِمْيِنِي) in two.\(^1\) the كية (epithet) of the fox, يَا الخَصِيم, occurs three times\(^2\) and يَا الخَصِيم occurs once.\(^3\)

The Qualities of the Fox

The fox can be dangerous.\(^4\) It is inauspicious (coming across it can bring bad luck).\(^5\) It is unambitious.\(^6\) It is doubtful from a religious point of view whether its meat is lawful or not.\(^7\) It is very cunning.\(^8\)

(f) The Hyrax

The hyrax is mentioned in one proverb.\(^9\) The fact that it does not bark much is referred to (it barks only once in its lifetime).

(g) The Hyena

The hyena is also mentioned in only one proverb.\(^10\) The epithet or kunyah of the hyena in Arabic, 'umm 'Amer, is used. It is depicted as mean (the last place to think of going to for food is its den).

(h) The Cat

The cat is mentioned in six proverbs (about two percent of the animal proverbs).\(^11\)

The Qualities of the Cat

It is cowardly.\(^12\) It is hypocritical (if it praises

\(^1\) No. 257.
\(^2\) Nos. 507, 509, 934.
\(^3\) No. 791.
\(^4\) No. 188.
\(^5\) No. 507.
\(^6\) Nos. 257, 934.
\(^7\) No. 791.
\(^8\) No. 509.
\(^9\) No. 979.
\(^10\) No. 9.
\(^11\) Nos. 28, 63, 157, 201, 765, 782.
\(^12\) No. 63.
God, it has its mind on theft). It fights hard when there is no escape. It has a raucous voice.

1.3 Rodents

Besides rabbits and jerboas dealt with above, mice and rats are referred to in five proverbs.

The Qualities of Mice and Rats

The mouse is described as unclean. The mouse that dwells in a mosque is very poor, and the big rat does not go far from its burrow for fear of losing its way.

1.4 Birds

1.4.1 Carnivorous Birds

(a) Falcons

Falcons are mentioned in seven proverbs. The word (faer) (fus. tayr) which in the dialect means "falcon" as well as "bird" is used in five of them, while the adjective-noun (herr) (free, falcon) which is applied to a thoroughbred falcon is used in the fourth. Even though the word صر is more commonly used than these two words, it does not occur in any proverb in our collection.

The Qualities of Falcons

Falcons are depicted as courageous (a courageous man is likened to a certain falcon, "the falcon of ١٣١٥). Ambitious (a falcon that catches bustards does not (care to) catch

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1 No. 28.
2 No. 157.
3 No. 201.
4 Nos. 55, 386, 765, 821, 1040.
5 No. 821.
6 No. 55.
7 No. 386.
8 Nos. 175, 424, 483, 484, 681, 1076, 1142.
9 No. 484.
They are ungrateful (a certain Eben Bermän had a falcon which he looked after very well, but one day the ungrateful bird picked up a snake and landed it on its owner's head). They are hasty. They are sharp-sighted. They are carnivorous.

(b) **Eagles**
Eagles are mentioned once. Longevity is ascribed to them.

(c) **Crows**
Crows are mentioned once. They are depicted as cunning.

(d) **Owls**
Owls are mentioned in one proverb. They are bad models to take as a guide to right conduct.

### 1.4.2 Non-Carnivorous Birds

(a) **Cocks and Hens**

(i) **Cocks**: Cocks are referred to in three proverbs.

(ii) **Hens**: Hens are referred to in four proverbs. They are depicted as weak, stupid, clumsy, and restless (before laying eggs).
(b) **Sparrows**

Sparrows are mentioned in five proverbs. They are described as weak, noisy, light in weight, and having diminutive bodies.

(c) **Lesser Bustards**

Lesser bustards are mentioned in one proverb. They are described as good game birds.

(d) **Larks**

The crested lark, al-göbe'eh (القويعه), which is probably to be identified with the qunburah (قبره), is mentioned in one proverb. It is described as a timid bird. (However, the description is applied to one lark which was once shot at while it was perching in the shade, and so it avoided the shade. It is not a general description). Another species of lark is 'umm Sälem (mother of Sälem). It is mentioned in one proverb and depicted as feckless.

(e) **Swallows**

The swallow, ar-rqee'i (الرئيى), is mentioned in one proverb. It is described as skinny.

(f) **The Night-piper**

A bird called صراة الليل (lit. the night-piper) is mentioned in one proverb. It is made a symbol of extreme poverty. (It is commonly held that it pipes all night because

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1 Nos. 273, 433, 513, 514, 1115.
2 No. 273.
3 No. 513.
4 No. 514.
5 No. 1115.
6 No. 483.
7 No. 639.
8 No. 1197.
9 No. 886.
10 No. 54.
it has nothing to eat).

1.4.3 Birds (in general)

Birds in general are referred to in nine proverbs. 1 The following statements regarding birds are derived from them:

they peck dates; 2 they are clever; 3 they chirp; 4 they congregate. 5

1.4.4 Eggs

Eggs are mentioned in six proverbs. 6 An egg is described as fragile. 7 Eggs quickly become rotten in the hot summer. 8

1.5 Reptiles

(a) Lizards

Three types belonging to the lizard species are mentioned:

(i) The gabb (ض) lizard (utromastyx): this lizard is mentioned in two proverbs. 9 It is depicted as incorrigible 10 and loving its habitation. 11

(ii) The monitor lizard (imurta; fs. لر): this lizard is mentioned in one proverb, and is said to be often near the rumrām bushes. 12

(iii) The gecko (house lizard): this is mentioned in one
proverb, and is described as mischievous (it enjoys stirring up trouble). 1

(b) Snakes

Snakes are represented in fourteen proverbs in our collection, i.e., about five per cent of all the animal proverbs.2

The Qualities of Snakes

They are dangerous.3 They frequent bushes.4 They live in holes.5 They may be confused (when a snake is in the middle of a swarm of locusts it does not know which to eat and which to leave).6 They are ungrateful.7

1.6 Insects

(a) Ants

Ants are mentioned in six proverbs.8 There are three types of ant in Najd: (i) soldier ants: they are mentioned in one proverb and are described as persistent.9 (ii) ants of normal size (J~): they are mentioned in four proverbs where they are described as acquisitive,10 liking fat,11 and that they may grow wings:12 (iii) small ants called ,J: they are mentioned in one proverb and described as acquisitive.13

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1 No. 163.
2 Nos. 4, 19, 52, 279, 303-305, 694, 724, 980, 1041, 1142, 1147, 1163.
3 Nos. 4, 19, 52, 279, 724.
4 No. 4.
5 No. 1163.
6 No. 303.
7 No. 1147.
8 Nos. 51, 186, 459, 799, 1056, 1079.
9 No. 51.
10 No. 186.
11 No. 1056.
12 No. 1079.
13 No. 799.
(b) **Locusts**

Locusts are mentioned in four proverbs. They are typified as numerous, edible, and coming in swarms.

(c) **Grasshoppers**

A type of grasshopper species called qubas is referred to in one proverb. They are described as worthless compared with bustards (a falcon that can catch bustards will not (care to) catch grasshoppers).

(d) **Dragonflies**

The dragonfly is mentioned once and depicted as restless (when a piece of palm-leaf is attached to its tail).

(e) **Mosquitoes**

Mosquitoes are mentioned in three proverbs. They are described as worthless and of no account.

(f) **Flies**

Flies are mentioned in four proverbs.

**The Qualities of Flies**

They are persistent. They are of no account. They are repellent. To see them is nonetheless preferable to seeing ticks, as it is held that their numbers multiply in a good season while ticks multiply in a year of drought and scarcity.

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1 Nos. 60, 221, 222, 303.
2 No. 60.
3 No. 221.
4 No. 221.
5 No. 483.
6 No. 941.
7 Nos. 713, 838, 944.
8 Nos. 50, 558, 646, 1129.
9 No. 50.
10 No. 646
11 No. 558.
12 No. 1129.
(g) **Beetles**

Beetles are mentioned in two proverbs. They are described as of no account.

(h) **Camel Ticks**

Camel ticks are mentioned in two proverbs; one of these is merely a metaphorical idiom: "[Like] a tick in the burning sand" which is applied to a person who is in a state of anxious suspense. The existence of ticks is resented, for their number multiplies at the time of drought, and they tend to bite emaciated camels.

(i) **Hornets**

Hornets are mentioned once, and described as causing disturbance with their noise.

(j) **Lice**

The louse is mentioned once, and described as lazy.

(k) **Scorpions**

The scorpion is mentioned once, and described by implication as dangerous.

(l) **Moths**

The moth is mentioned once. It is described as reckless (it throws itself into a flame).

1.7 **Aquatic and Amphibian Animals**

(a) **Fish**

The only fish that finds a place in our texts is the
large and dangerous shark. It is mentioned in two proverbs, in each of which the sing. شوارب is used. It is described as dangerous (for nobody can approach a pearl near which a shark is swimming).

(b) Frogs

Frogs are mentioned in one proverb. They are described as emaciated.

N.B. Now that we have indicated the most salient characteristics applied to animals in this present collection, it should be remembered that in most proverbs generally and in proverbs used in Najd in the present-day in particular, animals figure not as the subject of the proverbs, but as a metaphorical complement to the predicate.

1.8 The Characteristics of Animals

1.8.1 Classification of the Characteristics of Animals

About fifty animals are mentioned or alluded to by implication in our collection. More than a hundred animal traits are found, the significant ones of which are listed in the classification below.

Animal proverbs in this collection refer either to a trait of an animal relating to its body, health, etc., or to its temperament, habits, and ways of life.

(a) Physical Traits Related to the Animal's Body

Proverbs seem to have little interest in this matter.

Only eight physical characteristics of animals are found, derived from 13 proverbs, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Number of proverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>small size (of body)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sharp-sightedness</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical weakness</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Nos. 108, 685.
2 No. 881
emaciation
physical strength
ability to carry burdens
having capacious bellies
ability to drink large quantities of water

(b) Traits Relating to the Animal's Habits and Temperament

This group consists of some fifty characteristics derived from about eighty proverbs.

courage
cowardice and timidity
cautions
intelligence
parsimony
ambition
persistence
uncleanness
cunning
restiveness
acquisitiveness
numerousness
worthlessness
clumsiness
restlessness
unpredictability
quick temper
laziness and fecklessness
submissiveness
imprudence
greed
aggressiveness
stupidity
ungratitude
incurrigibility
selfishness
cleverness
hypocrisy
unruliness
being perplexed
being mischievous
being unambitious
being of no account
aversion to carrying
ability to race and to run fast
being possessed of affection
ability to recognize one another
inauspiciousness
somnolence
lack of sense of honour
being noisy and disturbing
danger and frightfulness
being a nuisance
repulsiveness
unapproachability
being hasty
poverty
being carnivorous 1
being given to light sleep 1
ability to travel long distances 82

It will be noted that some of these traits (e.g., hypocrisy) are false ascriptions in the sense that no one believes an animal to be capable of hypocrisy, ambition, etc. In instances like these, the proverbs concerned treat the animals anthropomorphically, in allusion to some well-known characteristic of the animal which can be interpreted as though it had a human motive behind it, for example, the cat is credited with hypocrisy (see proverb no. 28) and given an anthropomorphic interpretation of its well-known stealth and cunning.

1.8.2 Distribution of the Salient Characteristics

Below are the salient animal characteristics ascribed to various creatures.

**Courage:** courage is shared by falcons and leopards.

**Cowardice:** cowardice is shared by the wolf, the cat, and the dog.

**Intelligence:** this quality is ascribed to jerboas.

**Stupidity:** stupidity is shared by sheep, oxen, rabbits, hens, and moths.

**Laziness:** laziness is shared by oxen and lice.

**Fecklessness:** fecklessness is ascribed to the lark (‘umm Sālem)

**Ambition:** falcons are described as ambitious.

**Being unambitious:** the fox is depicted as unambitious.

**Being inauspicious:** both the fox and the light-coloured horse (أشقر) are regarded as inauspicious.

**Persistence:** persistence is ascribed to flies and soldier-ants.

**Hypocrisy:** the cat is depicted as being hypocritical.

**Submissiveness:** submissiveness is ascribed to lambs.

**Cleverness:** cleverness is shared by birds and wolves.
Greed: greed is shared by sheep and dogs.

Cunning: cunning is ascribed to the fox and the crow.

Acquisitiveness: this quality is ascribed to ants

Being perplexed: the snake when it is in the midst of many locusts is described as perplexed, as it hesitates in deciding which one to swallow.

Caution: the wolf is depicted as cautious.

Clumsiness: this quality is ascribed to some hens.

Poverty: the mouse (that lives in a mosque) and the night-piper share the description of great poverty.

Being dangerous and fearsome: this quality is shared by lions, wolves, foxes, snakes, scorpions, and sharks.

Meanness: the hyena is depicted as mean.

Being a nuisance and disturbing: this quality is shared by wolves, sparrows, flies, and hornets.

Selfishness: wolves are depicted as selfish.

Numerousness: this quality is ascribed to locusts.

Unpredictability: unpredictability is ascribed to camels and donkeys.

Hostility: wolves are described as hostile.

Ungratefulness: ungratefulness is shared by wolves, snakes, and falcons.

Being of a quick nature: this quality is ascribed to camels which are bred in northern Arabia.

Incorrigibility: incorrigibility is ascribed to the lizard.

Being carnivorous: the lion (in another version the falcon) is depicted as a carnivorous animal.

Having feelings: this characteristic is shared by camels and goats.

Sharp-sightedness: sharp-sightedness is ascribed to the greyhound (in another version, the falcon).
Being hasty and hot-tempered: this quality is ascribed to falcons.

Smallness (in body): smallness in body is shared by rabbits and sparrows.

Uncleanness: dogs, mice, and jerboas, share this quality.

Imprudence: imprudence is ascribed to the ox.

Lack of feeling of honour: this quality is ascribed to donkeys.

2. Inanimate Nature

2.1 Trees and Plants

2.1.1 Agricultural Trees and Plants

Six species of agricultural trees and plants are represented in this collection: palm-trees, grape-vines, corn, barley, maize, and Eroca sativa (جرجیر).

(a) Palm-trees

Palm-trees are mentioned in ten proverbs. One of them is merely a saying attributed to the palm-tree in a fable. The value of palm-trees as property is emphasized in some of these proverbs. Dates are referred to in twelve proverbs. They are depicted as the staple diet of the people. Date stones are mentioned in two proverbs and described as useful fodder for cows.

(b) Grape-vines

Grape-vines are mentioned in one example. Fruit trees and grape-vines were seldom grown in Najd (the sole proverb found contains a reference to the fact that a grape-vine

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1 Nos. 1, 111, 159, 408, 513, 618, 949, 993, 1060, 1065.
2 No. 1.
3 Nos. 177, 202-204, 678, 748, 758-761, 801, 960.
4 No. 177.
5 Nos. 494, 535.
6 No. 601.
might need to be guarded (as children used to find such a rare fruit very tempting).

(c) **Corn**

Corn or wheat occurs in one proverb. Cornfields are referred to in another proverb.\(^1\)

(d) **Barley**

Barley occurs in a metaphorical expression.\(^3\) A good-for-nothing is sometimes described thus: "not worth [his] earful of barley."

(e) **Maize**

Maize is referred to in one proverb.\(^4\) The maize field is described as very thick (if one enters it, he disappears).

(f) **Eroca sativa** (جرجير)

Eroca sativa is mentioned in one proverb.\(^5\) It is described as a very useful vegetable.

2.1.2 Desert Trees, Plants, and Herbs

(i) **Perennials**

(a) **Helianthemum lippi**

Helianthemum lippi (ar-rdzeh) occurs in one proverb.\(^6\)

(b) **Saltwort** (Salsola kali)

Two kinds of saltwort are mentioned: al-hamz and al-harm, each in one proverb.\(^7\)

(c) **The rumrām**

The rumrām bush (Heliotropium ramosissimum luten) is

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1 No. 732.
2 No. 500.
3 No. 905.
4 No. 337.
5 No. 805.
6 No. 805.
7 Nos. 466, 820.
mentioned in one proverb.¹ This bush is said to be of some use as an antidote against poison. For this reason the monitor lizard, it is alleged, rubs itself against it when it is bitten by a snake.

(d) **Boxthorn**

Boxthorn bushes (*Lycium arabicum, عقش عوشر, عقش عوشر*) are mentioned in one proverb. They are alluded to by implication as thorny.²

(e) **Lote Trees**

The species of lote tree, called in Arabic سدر, are mentioned in one proverb. They are described as giving a good shade.³

(ii) **Non-perennials**

(a) **An-Neşiy**

An-Neşiy (*Aristida plumosa*): smooth grass of great use as fodder, believed to have very good nourishing value, is mentioned in one proverb.⁴

(b) **Al-Besbas**

Al-Besbas (*Pimpinella cretica*): edible annual of the parsley family, growing usually where there is a mixture of sand, clay, and sandstone. It has strong roots which penetrate sandstone. It is mentioned in one proverb.⁵

(c) **Al-Huwwa**

Al-Huwwa (*Launaea capitata nauclicaulis*): a small edible herb of tender leaves, is mentioned in the same proverb as al-besbäs.

¹ No. 326.
² No. 457.
³ No. 273.
⁴ No. 302.
⁵ No. 1160.
Truffles are represented in two proverbs. They are described as lawful to eat and as growing near ar-rdzeh (see p. 430 above).

2.1.3 Trees and Bushes (in general)

Trees and bushes, in general, are mentioned in six proverbs, two of them being metaphorical expressions: "There is no tree on his head," i.e., he is not easily recognized, and "his tree revived," i.e., he felt fresher and happier.

2.2 The Sky, Stars and Planets

2.2.1 The Sky

The sky is mentioned in four proverbs. The sky in these proverbs signifies heaviness, remoteness, and unapproachability.

2.2.2 Stars

The word نجم occurs four times in two proverbs, but in three of them it means "period" rather than "star". The plural نجوم is mentioned twice, in one case the proverb is a metaphor: "he saw the stars at noon," i.e., he became extremely hungry or exhausted.

The two stars of Canis الكلابين (lit. the two little dogs) are mentioned in one proverb, and alluded to by implication in another.

Gemini, the Hyades, and the Milky Way are each

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1 Nos. 21, 569.
2 Nos. 4, 278, 606, 689, 852, 1109.
3 Nos. 278, 852.
4 Nos. 104, 392, 715, 1121.
5 Nos. 140, 680.
6 Nos. 400, 104.
7 No. 761.
8 No. 827.
mentioned in one proverb.¹

Both Canis Major and Canopus are represented in two proverbs each.²

Almost all these proverbs which refer to particular stars are only interested in them as signs of one stage or another through which dates pass before they become completely ripened. This indicates that these proverbs were coined by the palm-tree farming peasants in Najd.

2.2.3 Planets

(a) The Sun

The sun is mentioned twice.³ It symbolizes truth.

(b) The Moon

The moon is mentioned once.⁴ Reference is made to the lunar eclipse.

(c) The Earth

The earth is mentioned twice.⁵

2.3 Water

Water is mentioned in twenty four proverbs, that is, two per cent of the proverbs in our collection.⁶ Three of them are merely metaphorical sayings in which the word "water" is figuratively used,⁷ for example, "He threw sand on the water" (no. 660), which means, "he offended someone". The word حديد (brackish water) is used in two proverbs. Water symbolizes "truth" in the proverb, "Water cannot be concealed by

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¹ Nos. 748, 759, 843.
² Nos. 758, 760, 827.
³ Nos. 420, 421.
⁴ No. 638.
⁵ Nos. 402, 544.
⁷ Nos. 354, 660, 890.
[a little] sand."¹

The most important data concerning water in these proverbs are: water is very cheap;² water cannot be a substitute for food;³ water is most useful for cleaning things (it rinses away even poison).⁴

2.4 Rivers

One does not, naturally, expect to come across many references to rivers in a collection of proverbs from Arabia which possesses no rivers at all. This expectation holds for this collection, for only one reference to a river (the river Euphrates) is made in a rarely used proverb.⁵

2.5 The Sea

Like rivers, the sea is mentioned only once,⁶ and the proverb in which it is mentioned does not even show an interest in the sea itself, but merely uses it figuratively in comparison with knowledge, "knowledge is a coastless sea." This is owing to a natural environmental factor, as Najd is distant from the sea and has no outlets to it. Many Najdi live and die without even seeing the sea.

2.6 Land, Sand, Stones, and Clay

In spite of the foregoing, the natural environment may not necessarily be reflected in the making of proverbs. In contrast to the scarcity of Najdi proverbs referring to rivers and the sea, one also finds little mention of the things which have been most abundant and familiar in Najd throughout the ages as elsewhere, i.e., sand, land, stones, and clay.

¹ No. 883.
² No. 776.
³ No. 881.
⁴ No. 914.
⁵ No. 197.
⁶ No. 525.
These four things together are mentioned in no more than ten proverbs.¹

The fact that fire can be struck from granite stones is referred to in one of them.² A type of clay is alluded to by implication as harmful to plants.³

2.7 Mountains, Deserts, and Open Country

Mountains and deserts, also contrary to what one might have expected, are rarely mentioned in Najdi proverbs. The only reference to mountains in this present collection is to the well-known Tweedz (Tuwaiq) escarpment,⁴ and to the mountain Temiyyeh (Tamiyyah).⁵ The former is depicted as impregnable and the latter as huge.

Deserts are mentioned in four proverbs.⁶ Deserts and open country are praised for their vastness and good atmosphere.⁷ They are often empty (one who shouts in the wilderness is unlikely to receive a response).⁸

2.8 Valleys and Ravines

Like most inanimate creations of nature, valleys and ravines draw only slight attention in proverbs in our collection. They are mentioned in no more than four proverbs.⁹

2.9 Temporal Proverbs

(a) Parts of the day

Only az-zaha (the fore-noon, or the few hours late in the morning) is mentioned (in the figurative expression,

¹ Nos. 289, 318, 321, 433, 448, 519, 571, 588, 900, 1001.
² No. 448.
³ No. 289.
⁴ No. 1070.
⁵ No. 649.
⁶ Nos. 235, 336, 452, 872.
⁷ No. 872.
⁸ See no. 452.
⁹ Nos. 137, 434, 843, 957.
"he saw the stars at fore-noon" and in one other proverb).

(b) **Day**

Day occurs in three proverbs, one of them being a metaphor: "His day is a year" i.e., he is very slow. The plural 'ayyām occurs in another proverb. Daytime, an-nahār, does not occur.

(c) **Night**

Night is mentioned in seven proverbs.

(d) **The Months**

The month of Ramadān is referred to in one proverb. Months in general occur in another proverb: "'The new month has begun,' he said. 'It is as good as gone' came the reply."

(e) **The Seasons**

**Summer:** summer occurs in two proverbs. It is described as very hot (one, therefore, has to carry a lot of water when travelling).

**Winter:** winter is mentioned once, and the reference is twice made to a particularly cold period of winter, called شباط in Najd. The fact that this period is accompanied by violent winds and gales is emphasized in both proverbs.

**Spring:** spring is mentioned in three proverbs. In one of them the common word for spring, الوضع, is used. The proverb

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1 See nos. 400, 279.
2 No. 1200.
3 No. 441.
4 Nos. 254, 760, 812, 813.
5 No. 504.
6 No. 609.
7 Nos. 410, 440.
8 No. 410.
9 No. 410.
10 Nos. 407, 408.
11 Nos. 150, 275, 733.
states that the spring cold is not so harmful if not useful, as opposed to the autumn cold which is very harmful (as in spring one has become accustomed to the severe cold of winter, but in autumn any cold has a strong effect after the severe heat of the summer). The other two proverbs depict spring as a time of plenty and abundance. In fact, in each of them the word refers to the plentiful rain, grass, and the consequent wealth which sometimes happens in spring.

Autumn: autumn is mentioned once. One is advised to avoid exposure to the cold in autumn since, unlike the cold in spring, it is very harmful.

(f) The Year

The year is represented in two proverbs; one of them is the metaphorical idiom, "His day is a year" already referred to (see (b) Day, above).

(g) Time

Time in general is mentioned in five proverbs, in four of them the word being used.

2.10 Weather Proverbs

The phrase "weather proverbs" is used for those weather prognostications which are often rhymed, and concerned with natural changes which coincide with the various changing periods of time. There are nine proverbs of this type in our collection. The following are the pieces of weather lore which they contain.

When the two stars of Canis begin to rise in the sky,

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1 No. 150.
2 No. 150.
3 Nos. 981, 1200.
4 Nos. 375, 602, 690, 698, 930.
5 Nos. 748, 758-761, 827, 843, 981, 1200.
dates begin to ripen, and water in wells and springs seeps away owing to the severe heat.

When Gemini is seen in the sky, larger quantities of ripened dates can be found in clusters, and when Canis Major is seen, ripened dates become even more abundant.

The beginning of the period in which Canopus appears coincides with the time at which ripened dates become so abundant that even at night they can be distinguished from the unripe ones within the bunches.

The time at which the Milky Way reaches the middle of the sky coincides with the end of the date harvest.

Although clouds accompanied by lightning become very frequent during the time at which the Hyades appear (at the end of spring or the beginning of summer), in general only a little rain falls in Najd during this period.

During the period of Šbāt (in the middle of winter), winds and gales become common in Najd.

B. SOCIAL LIFE

Before proceeding to discuss various aspects of Najdi social life as reflected in proverbs, it is necessary to enter a caveat against taking proverbs by themselves as sufficient indication of Najdi social behaviour and prevailing attitudes.

1 No. 761.
2 No. 827.
3 No. 759.
4 No. 758.
5 No. 760.
6 No. 748.
7 No. 843.
8 Nos. 407, 408.
Proverbs can be misleading to one who is not acquainted with other sources of information about their background. As Edward Westermarck put it, "proverbs can only throw rays of light, never full light, upon national characteristics. . . . In order to gain reliable information about a people from its proverbs it is necessary to possess intimate knowledge of it derived from other sources, foremost of which is personal experience."¹

Many proverbs can only be meaningful in the situations which prompt their usage, and they do not always express attitudes and views which are actually entertained by people. For instance, the proverb "Keep the road though it be long, and marry thy cousin though she be a wallflower,"² does not necessarily imply an overwhelmingly common attitude in favour of marrying the bint al-'amm, but rather is used when one, for example, finds it relevant to speak favourably of such a marriage. Similarly another proverb, "Keep flesh away from flesh lest it become rotten,"³ does not in fact express a deep-rooted disapproval of intermarriage between close relatives. It is used only in certain situations outside of which it loses much of its significance.

Some proverbs are also used in a jocular or cynical way and are therefore often not meant to be taken literally.

Another fact which lessens the value of proverbs as correct indications of the character of the people among whom they are used, is that they hardly ever give a comprehensive picture of a subject. Again, some aspects of society are

² No. 527.
³ No. 2.
ignored by proverbs; most proverbs which refer to women speak unfavourably of them, while love and tender feelings, which may naturally exist between a husband and a wife are generally ignored. In this respect proverbs are misleading.

1. Marriage

Marriage is dealt with in twelve proverbs; The following are the main themes covered in them.

Nothing is so worrying as the time just before mar­riage (one worries about the outcome of one of the most important decisions of one's life).²

Parents should offer assistance to their sons-in-law so that their daughters may be better cared for.³

The desirability of cousin marriage: in the question of endogamy, the Najdi family is no exception to the other western Asian and north African societies among which—as R. Patai observes—endogamy and especially one form of it, marriage between a man and his father's brother's daughter (bint 'amm), is a common practice.⁴ In proverbs, this form of endogamy is even considered preferential to other forms of marriage, "Keep the road though it be long, and marry thy cousin (bint 'amm) though she be a wallflower."⁵

Endogamy is, however, disapproved of in another pro­verb, "Keep flesh away from flesh lest it becomes rotten."⁶

This draws attention to the often negative effect of such

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1 Nos. 2, 17, 114, 232, 308, 527, 577, 592, 600, 712, 735, 950.
2 No. 600.
3 No. 232.
5 No. 527. For an elaborate discussion of cousin marriage in the Middle East, see ibid., pp. 135-176.
6 No. 2.
marriages on the relationships between the two families concerned.

Men are advised against marrying women with children by former marriages, women who come from families with weak ties between their members, and women with eye diseases, in order to avoid congenital defects of this nature in their children.¹

Polygamy is endorsed and prescribed as effective remedy for a wife who does not meet the standards required by her husband.²

A dowry must be paid for the wife to her parents³ and marriage is therefore not lightly undertaken; many people dream of it although they are unlikely to achieve it in the near future.⁴

According to some, money is the most important factor, hence the proverb, "With money one may obtain even the Sultan's daughter;"⁵ that is, a rich man can marry a woman as high in social position as the daughter of a sultan, because he can afford to pay a large amount of money.

One needs a reasonable period of married life to be able to know whether one's marriage is successful. Thus, "Do not ask a bridegroom (sc. about his marriage) on his wedding night."⁶

To marry into a family inferior in descent is dis-approved of in one proverb.⁷

¹ No. 17.
² No. 308.
³ No. 592.
⁴ No. 114.
⁵ No. 577.
⁶ No. 735.
⁷ No. 1193.
A son-in-law may be liked by his parents-in-law more than a first cousin, hence "Be a son-in-law and do not be a cousin."¹

2. Blood Relationship

2.1 The Tribe

Proverbs alluding to tribes are relatively few (three in number).²

One proverb compares the tribe, or extended family, to a tree and its trunk. It is the tribe's duty to protect its members in the same way as the tree protects its trunk (from the sun, wind, etc.).³

The similarity between individuals belonging to the same tribe, clan, or family, in their nature and temperaments is emphasized in another proverb.⁴ On the other hand, members of the same unit do not always resemble each other in their characteristics. There are often great differences between brothers and sisters, a fact which is alluded to in the proverb, "Your fingers are not the same."⁵

An individual expects every help from his tribe, and a tribe which fails to come to the assistance of its members is considered useless (a proverb refers to the clan of a certain Rmeezán which is stigmatized for its ineffectiveness).⁶

2.2 Family and Relatives

Before anyone else, a member of the same family, clan, or tribe, is expected to come to the help of other

¹ No. 712.
² Nos. 510, 606, 689.
³ No. 689.
⁴ No. 606.
⁵ No. 41.
⁶ No. 510.
members. It is considered not acceptable that one should offer help and support to strangers when one's own group is in need.

Owing to the strong feeling of kinship among people, the victim of an offence committed by a kinsman is often placed in a dilemma: if he repays like with like, he will then only harm a relative of his and by so doing he will indirectly harm himself, but if he forgives, he will suffer humiliation.

A man is always assumed to be prepared to help his kinsmen wherever he may be. One is therefore happier when one finds one of one's relatives in a distant land, and may then quote the proverb, "May God provide us with a relative wherever we may be."

If a man intentionally causes injury or death to another, the male relatives ( Abilities) of the perpetrator pay compensation (Jir-) to the injured person or the family of the deceased (this of course only occurs when the family of the deceased decides to accept bloodwite in lieu of revenge).

A person is expected to be in agreement with his father, mother, and other members of his family. One who disagrees with them is likened to "a short lance which is always close to its bearer's throat.

A person is assumed always to be sympathetic towards a relative who is in trouble.

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1 No. 873.
2 No. 949.
3 C. Doughty refers to this in noting that "a great sheykh striking a tribesman, he should bruise his own honour." See C.M. Doughty, op. cit., p. 251.
4 No. 128.
5 No. 80.
6 No. 23.
7 No. 945.
8 No. 790.
A relative's shortcomings should be endured by his kith and kin. "Your nose is a part of you even though it is cut off."¹

These are the chief ideas derived from proverbs which refer to relatives in general. The main ideas which this collection contains concerning relatives individually are now considered.

(a) **Father**

Although the parents of a child usually consult one another about choosing a name for him, the father often has the last word; this is implied in one proverb.² Friends of one's father are one's own friends.³ People boast of the merits of their fathers.⁴ The false assumption that craftsmanship is hereditary, and that a man can only master his father's trade, is entertained (in one proverb).⁵

(b) **Mother**

The mother is assumed to be unparalleled in kindness and solicitude: maternal aunts and wet nurses cannot be as kind as mothers.⁶ Mothers feel concern about questions in which their children are involved.⁷ Owing to the love and strong affection of mothers for their children, they tend to overlook their imperfections and exaggerate their merits.⁸

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¹ No. 294.
² No. 121. This however does not seem to be the case among the Rwala tribe, most of whom live in northern Arabia where, as Musil notes, "its name the child receives from its mother alone, this being one of her privileges." See Musil, Rwala, p. 243.
³ Nos. 501, 581.
⁴ No. 590.
⁵ No. 580.
⁶ Nos. 594, 973.
⁷ No. 950.
⁸ No. 979.
(c) Brothers and Sisters

One of our proverbs tells us that a bedouin was once asked to define who was his brother. His reply was, "He who is useful to me and to whom I am useful." This logic, which is more prevalent in desert life where co-operation is essential for survival, reflects nonetheless an uncharacteristic coolness towards natural brotherhood. Surprisingly, this is the only reference to brothers in our collection. Najdi proverbs pay even less attention to sisters, which are not mentioned at all in our collection.

The half-brother (from the mother) is the subject of two proverbs. He is depicted by implication as a good-for-nothing. He is assumed to get the best of both worlds: he shares with his brothers in their inheritance, booty, etc., but does not have to participate with them in paying for an injury or bloodwite if need for it arises.

(d) Sons and Daughters

Nothing substantial is mentioned in this collection regarding sons and daughters.

Grandsons and granddaughters occur together in one proverb. This proverb makes clear the patriarchal bias of Arab society: the children of one's son are one's own children, but the children of one's daughter are not (they are merely the children of other people).

All offspring resemble their parents in nature.

1 No. 604.
2 Nos. 23, 283.
3 No. 283.
4 No. 23.
5 No. 1127.
6 No. 695.
Uncles and Aunts

Some small indication is given of the popular idea of the rôle and importance of uncles and aunts in the present collection. The maternal uncle is a slightly more important figure than the paternal uncle. The maternal uncle of one's father, mother, grandfather, or grandmother, is also to be accounted one's own uncle. Although the kindness of maternal aunts towards their nephews and nieces is almost as strong as that of their mother, there can be no substitute for the kindness of a mother. Some uncles may be better than others, but one will probably find that when in need, they are not as helpful as they ought to be. Then one realizes that "one's real uncle is one's property."

Cousins

One can rely on one's cousins for support and help in times of need. A man with no cousins is often wronged. In spite of this acknowledgement of the importance of the rôle which cousins play in tribal society, cousins are scarcely mentioned in Najdi proverbs.

A son-in-law is often treated as a more intimate member of the family circle than even a cousin.

A boy is urged to marry his first cousin (the daughter of his father's brother), even if she lacks attractive qualities.
3. Women

Most proverbs referring to women in our collection are derogatory to the female sex, and regard women with injustice. This leads one to believe that they are the product of male prejudice.

According to one of these proverbs, being acquainted with women is a bad thing.¹ A man is advised in another proverb against competing either with women or slaves, for he cannot expect to gain in the end in such a competition: if he wins, he cannot boast of being victorious over inferior opponents and if he loses, his humiliation will be doubled.²

If a woman does not behave well in the matrimonial home, her husband is advised to correct her by marrying another woman. This is prescribed as the best way to win her back. The proverb which expresses this idea draws the analogy of keeping difficult camels on the right course by means of a stick, but implicitly disapproves of the corporal punishment of women.³

Women, even when of tender years, can cause a lot of evil.⁴

Women themselves are so influenced by the low regard their sex enjoys, that a woman is often disappointed by the fact that she has given birth to a girl, rather than a boy.⁵

Women are mentioned together with dogs in two proverbs, and described as deserving little attention and care, and also as being lazy.⁶

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¹ No. 205.
² No. 728, this proverb, however, is rarely used.
³ No. 308.
⁴ No. 725.
⁵ No. 564.
⁶ Nos. 620, 1080.
Only one proverb speaks favourably of women. Another emphasizes the influential power of women over men. It should, however, be noted that the merits of women as mothers are emphasized (see Mother, above, p. 444).

The unfair attitude towards women reflected in these proverbs is by no means confined to Najd; Doughty concludes that not only the bedouins of Najd, but all Semitic people cast all their blame upon women. He refers to "the old nomad and divine laws of Moses in which the days of women's purification after a female birth are doubled." Doughty's conclusion nevertheless needs to be more specific. It should not be forgotten that Semitic religions urge men to take care of them. Although a woman's status in Najd may not be tolerable by western standards, it is not as low as some of these proverbs might suggest.

4. Slavery

Slaves are mentioned in a few proverbs in our collection; the following are their main themes.

A slave is inferior to his master. A slave who carries out his master's foolish orders cannot be held responsible for their consequences. A slave is unambitious and cannot achieve significant goals. A certain "slave of the people of al-Beşur" is described as stupid, a description often

1 No. 232.
2 No. 253.
3 See Doughty, op. cit., 1, p. 238.
4 Ibid., p. 239.
5 Nos. 551, 728.
6 No. 493.
7 No. 43.
8 No. 492. al-Beşur is the name of a set of villages in about 7 miles west of Buraidah in al-Qaṣīm. See also J.G. Lorimer, op. cit., p. 1491.
ascribed to slaves. ¹

These themes indicate the low status of slaves when slavery was practised in central Arabia. If, however, we consult sources other than proverbs we find that the picture was not as grim as they lead us to believe. In practice, loyal slaves were often treated almost as members of their owner's families. It was not infrequent in Najd to hear of slaves who were entrusted by their masters, not only with conducting the family business, but also with acting as guardians or trustees. There are also many instances of slaves, especially those who were owned by rulers or princelings, who repaid trust and good treatment with loyalty and even self-sacrifice.²

5. Structure of Society: Settled People and Nomads

Sedentary people in Najd are either peasants or townspeople who inhabit the few towns such as Riyadh, al-Karj, Hayel, Buraidah, and 'Unaizah: there are also some villagers who lead semi-nomadic lives. The bedouins, like other nomads, do not settle in one locality, but wander in the vast desert in search of rain and adequate pasture for their livestock. The following statements concerning settled people (حضر) and nomads are contained in a number of proverbs in our collection.

Bedouins do not think highly of townspeople, but consider them pusillanimous.³ Some bedouins, lacking sufficient knowledge of the Qur'ān and the teachings of Islam, think that townsmen spend too much time in mosques saying their prayers.⁴

Among settled people, nomads have the unfavourable

¹ See no. 935.
² See A. Musil, Rwala, p. 277.
³ No. 49.
⁴ No. 169.
reputation of being tardy in repaying their debts.\(^1\) Settled people find a nomad who has recently settled down and become a townsman unbearable, as he overdoes things in showing his adaptation to the new style of life and applying rules and manners of civilized living.\(^2\)

Nomads are usually conspicuous, as they are badly dressed (many of them wear patched clothing).\(^3\)

6. Najdi Customs, Practices and Superstitions
   as Reflected in This Collection

6.1 Common Rules and Views about Hospitality, Guests, and Visitors

A person who comes for a visit has the right to be entertained.\(^4\) A guest should leave matters of his entertainment, lodging, etc. to his host.\(^5\) A guest should be considerate to his host: he should make no stipulations in regard to his entertainment, whatever the host offers must be accepted gracefully.\(^6\)

A casual visitor who arrives while people are eating should be invited to partake of the meal, for "What is enough for two people will be enough for three."\(^7\) When he is invited he should accept the invitation and eat with them, or at least sample the food to show his goodwill: "He who will not taste [your] food is an enemy."\(^8\)

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1 No. 329.
2 No. 169.
3 No. 148.
4 No. 1036.
5 No. 467.
6 No. 853.
7 No. 843.
8 No. 97.
A guest who leaves his arrival till after nightfall is himself to blame if the reception he meets with is not as warm and hospitable as it should be (since night is an inconvenient time for preparing proper entertainment for guests and at such a time a host can only offer what is immediately at hand).

A guest should not linger at his host's home longer than necessary after spending the night. By doing so, a guest is making himself a heavy burden. "Better a speckled viper than a guest who stays until late in the morning." This is because the host has to prepare a meal for him.

A host should not be treated too reverentially by his guest, but on the other hand the latter should avoid insulting him in his home.

It is a part of the guest's entertainment that his mount is also entertained, that is, offered sufficient fodder and looked after.

6.2 Various Customs and Practices

(a) Serving Coffee or Tea

It is an ancient Arab rule that drink should be served first to the person sitting on the right of the person who is acting as a waiter. He then continues serving the rest of the party in an anti-clockwise direction. The pre-Islamic Arab poet 'Amr b. Kultūm referred to this manner of serving drink in his Mu'allaqah. He blamed the "waitress" 'Umm 'Amr for avoiding serving him first by starting from the wrong side:

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1 No. 281. This proverb, however, is used facetiously.
2 No. 279. This proverb is used facetiously.
3 No. 970.
4 No. 800.
"You turned aside the cup from us, oh Umm 'Amru, while the circulation of the cup was from the right hand."¹

Islam not only acknowledged this rule but positively encouraged adherence to it. As examples, below are two Traditions which refer to this:

> "... عِنْ أَنَـسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَنِى بِشَرَابٍ فَشَرَبَهُ، وَعَنْ يَمِينِهِ أَعْرَابٌ، وَعَنْ يَسَارِهِ أَبُو بَكْرٍ فَشَرَبَ، فَنَـقَالَ: "أَلَيْنَ فَإِلَيْنَ. "²

> "... Anas b. Malik said that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him salvation, was brought some milk which was mixed with water. An Arab from the desert was on his right and Abū Bakr on his left. He drank and then gave [it to] the desert Arab and said, 'The one on the right, then the one on the right'."

> "... سَاحِلُ بْنِ سَعْدٍ السَّاعِدِيَّ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَنَى بِشَرَابٍ فَشَرَبَهُ، وَعَنْ يَمِينِهِ غَلَامٌ، وَعَنْ يَسَارِهِ أَشْيَاءٌ، فَنَـقَالَ لِلنَّفَرِ: "أَتَنَّى لِي أَنْ أَعْطِهِ؟"، فَنَـقَالَ النَّفَرُ: "لاَ رَبَّ اللَّهِ! لاَ أُؤْمِنُ بِنَصِيبِكَ مَنْ أَحَدًا. "³

> "... Sahl b. Sa‘d as-Sā‘idiyy said that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him salvation, was brought a drink. He then drank from it. On his right there was a boy, and on his left some older men. He then said to the boy 'Will you allow me to give [it to] these [men to drink before you]? The boy then said, 'No, by God! I will not give up my share from you to anyone.' [i.e., I will not give up to any what you have given me]."

¹ F.E. Johnson, The Seven Poems Suspended in the Temple at Mecca (Bombay, 1893), p. 131.
³ Ibid., p. 1604, no. 2030.
It is, therefore, not surprising that this custom is adhered to in Najd. However, if a distinguished or elderly visitor, a guest who comes from a distant land, or the father of the person who serves the coffee or tea is present, then he should be given the first cup. In one proverb, however, the importance of the place actually occupied by a visitor, rather than his status, is stressed. It emphasizes that serving coffee should begin on the right regardless of the individual importance or otherwise of visitors.

It is considered a grave insult to pass over a person when circulating drink, but if a guest, out of courtesy requests the cup to first go to another man, the host should obey.

(b) **Table Manners**

When eating cooked food, the diner must eat from the nearest spot to himself. It is bad manners to eat from other parts or to let one's hand wander freely over the plate. As the Tradition below shows, this rule is made by the Prophet:

> "... من وُضِبَ بنُ كِيْسَانٍ سَمِّهَ مِنَ عَمَّرِ بْنِ سَلْطَةٍ. قَالَ: "كَتَبَنَا حَجِرٍ رَسُولٍ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وَسَلَّمَ. كَانَتُ يَدُ يُطِيِّشُ فِي الصَّفْحَةَ. قَالَ: لَيْ: "يَا غَلَامُ سَمِّ الَّذِي وَلَدَتُكَ وَكَلَّمَتَهُ وَكَلَّمَتَهُ"."

"... Wahb b. Kaysan, heard 'Umar b. Salamah, saying, 'I was in the lap of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him salvation; my hand was wandering in the dish. He said to me: "O boy, invoke the name of Allah, and eat with

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1 No. 438.
2 See also C. Doughty, *op. cit.*, p. 245.
3 No. 438.
4 See nos. 573, 576.
your right hand, and eat from what is nearest to you"."
The case is different, however, when eating dates. There is
nothing wrong in selecting any date in the bowl. 
(c) Eating Habits

In Najd, dates formed the staple diet. Besides other provisions, camel meat, locust, and jerboas were eaten.

(d) Cosmetic Habits of Women

(i) The use of henna: henna (lawsonia inermis) is frequently used by women to dye their palms, nails, and fingers. It is particularly necessary at the time of feasts. However, excluding bedouin and village women, this custom has fallen into disuse.

(ii) The use of antimony: women—and some men—dye their eyes with antimony. This custom, too, is only observed by a few people at the present time.

(e) At a Child's Birth

The first person who breaks the good news of a boy's birth to the father of the baby is usually given a reward called bşáreh by the father.

(f) Treatment of the Envoy

An emissary is not to be harmed. He is not to be held responsible for the actions of the one who sent him. This is an unwritten law.

(g) Customs and Practices common among Farmers

(i) It is advisable and customary that fruit trees

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1 See no. 202.
2 See no. 177.
3 See nos. 221, 223, 585, 754.
4 See no. 1158.
5 See no. 657.
6 See no. 1126.
7 See no. 972.
(particularly date-palms) should be planted at a certain distance from one another, so as to make a space which allows the air to circulate and the sun's rays to reach most parts of the tree.¹

(ii) Farmers hold a traditional feast called ktameh after finishing the ploughing of their lands.²

6.3 Superstitions

A light-coloured horse is regarded as an evil portent (it causes bad luck to whomever leads it).³ This superstition is of ancient origin. There are two classical Arabic proverbs referring to it:

"Like the light-coloured horse: if it advances it is slaughtered, and if it falls behind it is hamstrung;"

"He causes himself more misfortune than the light-coloured mare."

Coming across a fox is also regarded as an evil omen.⁶

The belief in evil spirits and the evil eye is common.⁷

6.4 Misdemeanours

"If your beard is going to be plucked, be with the first people [whose beards will be plucked]" i.e., if something unpleasant is going to happen to you, the sooner it happens the better so that you do not have to worry for a long time. This proverb (no. 749) refers to a punishment which was

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¹ See no. 1.
² See no. 545.
³ No. 255. A. Āl-Nūri also mentions that bedouins regard the light-coloured or yellowish horse (āṣgar) as an evil portent. See A. Āl-Nūri, al-'Amtāl ad-Dārijah fi-l-Kuwait (Beirut, 1965), p. 38.
⁴ M., no. 3027.
⁵ Zamak., 2, no. 727.
⁶ See no. 507.
⁷ See nos. 745, 1159.
considered very humiliating as people attach great importance to the hair of the beard and moustache. It is considered bad manners to touch the beard or moustache of someone else, except in a friendly manner. Among bedouins particularly, this is even considered a misdemeanour \(^1\) (in the legal sense).

7. Trade and Commerce

Najdis in general are inclined to commerce, but the harsh environment and meagre profits did not allow trade to flourish within Najd in the past. So people searched for more opportunities in neighbouring Kuwait, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, or in distant India.\(^2\) Some people used to travel regularly to those countries, earn some money and return home to spend it with their families. Most of these people belonged to the famous \(\text{'geel ("Agayl) traders.}\(^3\)

Although generosity is exalted, "the glory of this world is achieved by riches, but the glory of the Hereafter is achieved through [good] deeds,"\(^4\) money is also valued; thus "Possessions are the hair of the heart," i.e., one feels strong attachment to one's possessions.\(^5\)

\(^1\) 'Abd al-Jabbār ar-Rawi when writing about misdemeanours (\(\text{المنكر\(\text{)}\)) among the bedouins, cited the plucking of the hair of the beard or moustache as one of them: "as for the plucking of the hair of the beard or moustache, it is a serious thing among bedouins, since a man swears an oath by them. When they are quarrelling, everyone avoids stretching his hand to his opponent's face. If one dares to pluck a few hairs from his opponent's beard or moustache the latter may sue him. Then the judge may levy a fine on every hair pulled out; a hundred Ottoman piastres on that from the beard, a thousand on that from the moustache." See 'Abd al-Jabbār ar-Rawi, \(\text{al-Bādiyyah,}\) 3rd ed. (Baghdad, 1972), pp. 355-356.

\(^2\) See proverb no. 401.

\(^3\) See nos. 172, 292, 518.

\(^4\) No. 508.

\(^5\) No. 869.
The following statements referring to trade are found in our collection:

1. Only rich people know the value of money.
2. Only tight-fisted men acquire money.
3. One should buy good commodities even if they are expensive.
4. A thing given free is worth nothing. This last statement, however, is contradicted by another proverb which says, "The profit on a thing obtained free is already known."

8. Political Life

The following sayings recall the state of insecurity and chaos which often prevailed in Najd prior to its integration with al-Ḥijaz, 'Asīr, and al-'Aḥṣā' into one country in the second quarter of the present century.

(a) "[If you] attack a town dweller you will return safely." This proverb gives the impression that the nomads do not think highly of sedentary people and believe that townsmen are too cowardly to resist.

(b) "Either we defend the town or we leave it."

(c) "Pound your grain and let the sultans fight each other."

(d) "Share your property with the robbers."

These proverbs bring to mind the fact that fighting, raids, and counter raids, were the order of the day at one
time or the other, not only in Najd, but in most parts of Arabia.

Tyrannical rule is alluded to in the proverb, "Who can say to an ogre 'your eye is red'?" which clearly implies that nobody can speak truthfully to a tyrant about his demerits, and the proverbial phrase, "The judgement of Grâgûš" is related to this topic.

The prevalence of corruption among officials is referred to in the proverb, "Grease the thong and it will move." 

9. Sport

Proverbs in our collection refer to the following sports and hobbies:
(a) Foot racing.
(b) Horse racing.
(c) The trāh or mtārah: a simple sport in which a participant merely tries to throw his opponent down.
(d) Shooting.
(e) Hunting.

C. WISDOM PROVERBS

There is a relatively large number of pithy proverbs and sayings which can be classed as wisdom (hikmah) proverbs in our collection (approximately 330 examples, i.e., about 25
per cent of the total). Their concepts are expressed in a variety of ways, most of which bear a didactic tendency. They may consist of direct advice, for example, "Do not stir a sleeping serpent," and "Keep away from danger and sleep," or expressed in a dialogue proverb (see above, pp. 389 ff.), for example, "'Who is your brother O Bedouin?' he asked. 'He who is useful to me and to whom I am useful,' came the reply," or offer a truism, for example, "The eye sees but the hand cannot grasp," i.e., one cannot correct all the wrongs one may observe.

D. MEDICAL PROVERBS

Proverbs referring to disease, deformities and treatment are infrequent (ten examples only).

(i) Illnesses and diseases: only scabies, fever, and some eye diseases are mentioned.

(ii) Deformities: there are references to blindness, baldness, and lameness.

(iii) Treatment: cauterization, cupping, and phlebotomy are mentioned. The aloe and the asafoetida which are used as medicines are mentioned.
Chapter Four

COMPARISON OF CONTENTS OF ARABIC PROVERBS

Having dealt in the last chapter with the natural world and social life in Najd as illustrated in the present collection of proverbs, we will in this chapter discuss how most of these aspects are treated in other Arabic proverbs, and how strong or weak the link between Najdi and other Arabic proverbs is.

A. ANIMAL PROVERBS

The tables below indicate the frequency of Arabic proverbs referring to animals. The most frequently mentioned animals are chosen here to show how often each of them is mentioned in each of the following: Maidāni's collection of classical proverbs, Ahmad Taimur Pasha's Egyptian proverbs, M. Feghāli's Syro-Lebanese proverbs, 'A. Tikriti's Baghdaḍ proverbs, Sāsi's Meccan proverbs, and our collection of Najdi proverbs.

1. Wild Animals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lions</td>
<td>30 c.0.60%</td>
<td>3 c.0.10%</td>
<td>11 c.0.35%</td>
<td>13 c.0.50%</td>
<td>1 c.0.15%</td>
<td>2 c.0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolves</td>
<td>46 c.1.00%</td>
<td>5 c.0.15%</td>
<td>14 c.0.45%</td>
<td>13 c.0.50%</td>
<td>1 c.0.15%</td>
<td>18 c.1.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyenas</td>
<td>26 c.0.50%</td>
<td>1 0.30%</td>
<td>2 0.06%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 c.0.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxes</td>
<td>16 c.0.30%</td>
<td>2 0.06%</td>
<td>4 0.13%</td>
<td>5 c.0.20%</td>
<td>1 c.0.15%</td>
<td>7 0.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gazelles</td>
<td>18 c.0.40%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5 c.0.15%</td>
<td>3 c.0.10%</td>
<td>2 c.0.30%</td>
<td>2 c.0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs</td>
<td>63 c.1.30%</td>
<td>37 c.1.15%</td>
<td>48 c.1.50%</td>
<td>42 c.1.50%</td>
<td>5 c.0.80%</td>
<td>28 c.2.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Domesticated Animals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M.</th>
<th>Taim.</th>
<th>Fegh.</th>
<th>Tik.</th>
<th>Sāsi</th>
<th>Our collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camels</td>
<td>264 c.5.50%</td>
<td>30 c.1.00%</td>
<td>38 c.1.25%</td>
<td>30 c.1.10%</td>
<td>4 c.0.65%</td>
<td>51 c. 4.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cows</td>
<td>8 c.0.15%</td>
<td>18 c.0.55%</td>
<td>19 c.0.60%</td>
<td>10 c.0.36%</td>
<td>4 c.0.65%</td>
<td>18 c. 1.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>35 c.0.75%</td>
<td>14 c.0.50%</td>
<td>8 c.0.25%</td>
<td>14 c.0.50%</td>
<td>1 c.0.16%</td>
<td>14 c. 1.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goats</td>
<td>26 c.0.50%</td>
<td>11 c.0.35%</td>
<td>33 c.1.00%</td>
<td>10 c.0.36%</td>
<td>1 c.0.16%</td>
<td>15 c. 1.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horses</td>
<td>56 c.1.20%</td>
<td>9 c.0.30%</td>
<td>26 c.0.85%</td>
<td>21 c.0.75%</td>
<td>2 c.0.30%</td>
<td>19 c. 1.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donkeys</td>
<td>63 c.1.30%</td>
<td>37 c.1.15%</td>
<td>48 c.1.50%</td>
<td>42 c.1.50%</td>
<td>5 c.0.80%</td>
<td>28 c. 2.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cats</td>
<td>12 c.0.25%</td>
<td>25 c.0.80%</td>
<td>29 c.1.00%</td>
<td>16 c.0.60%</td>
<td>16 c.1.00%</td>
<td>16 c. 0.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On examining the above tables, one cannot fail to notice that, on the whole, animals are more frequently mentioned in Maidānī's collection of classical Arabic proverbs than in any of the five collections of contemporary Arabic proverbs. This is probably due to the fact that the influence of animals on the life of the pre-Islamic Arab was much greater than their influence on the life of the Arab of the present time.

The Arab of old used the camel as his means of transport, the horse for fighting or racing, the greyhound and the falcon for catching game. He lived on the milk of the she-camel, the sheep and the goat. Most of these functions are not pursued in the same way by the Arab of today.

The Arab of old was familiar with desert animals which many contemporary Arabs have never had a chance to see, except perhaps within the walls of a zoo. Thus, as the influence of animals on the life of the Arab has diminished, he has thought and talked about them less than his ancestors did. This applies particularly to wild animals. As the table shows, while the lion is mentioned twice in our collection, once in Sāsi, eleven times in Feghālī, and thirteen times in Tikrītī, it is mentioned thirty times in Maidānī; and while the highest figure of modern proverbs which refer to the wolf in any of the above-mentioned five collections is eighteen, it is forty-
The hyena is mentioned once in the present collection and that of Taimūr, twice in Feghālī, and is not mentioned in Tīkrītī or Sāsī; but it occurs in twenty-six examples in Maidānī.

Foxes, gazelles, and dogs, are also much more frequently mentioned in Maidānī than in any of the modern proverb collections.

Except for cows and cats, domesticated animals generally are also much more frequently mentioned in Maidānī than in any of the collections of modern proverbs.

The two tables also show how infrequently animal proverbs appear in Sāsī's collection. This is due to the fact that these proverbs were mainly collected in the city of Mecca itself and were known only to its urban inhabitants who are generally much less familiar with animals than the inhabitants of rural Najd, Iraq, Syria, or Egypt.

The camel, not surprisingly, is mentioned in classical Arabic proverbs more than any other animal. Among modern proverb collections, the highest figure of proverbs referring to the camel is fifty-one (in the present collection). This underlines the fact that the rôle played by the camel in pre-Islamic Arabia was much more important than it is today.

It must be emphasized, however, that none of these five collections of contemporary Arabic proverbs (not excluding the present collection), was collected in a nomadic environment. Had they been so collected, they would no doubt have contained more proverbs dealing with desert fauna, and in particular with that most indispensable creature to the bedouin, the camel.
B. INANIMATE NATURE

1. The Palm-Tree

The palm-tree is mentioned in Maidāni, Taimūr, Tikritī, and our collection, but is not mentioned in any of Feghāli's 3,040 Syro-Lebanese proverbs and dictums, nor in Sāsi's 618 Meccan proverbs.

The absence of any mention of the palm-tree in these two collections is probably due to the fact that, though of course known in Mecca and Syria, it is not as abundant as in Najd, Iraq, or Egypt.

As most proverbs of our collection are current among an agricultural society to a very large extent, and the palm-tree is the most common tree there, it is scarcely surprising that it is somewhat more frequently mentioned in proverbs of the present collection than in any other. It occurs in 10 proverbs (c. 0.8%) in the present collection and in 8 proverbs in Maidāni (c. 0.2%), 17 in Taimūr (c. 0.2%), 2 and 4 in Tikritī (c. 0.15%)

2. Other Fruit Trees

Fruit and fruit trees are infrequently mentioned in Arabic proverb collections. They are rare in Maidāni, Sāsi, and the present collection in particular. As the table below indicates, they are more frequently mentioned in Syrian, Egyptian, and Baghdad proverbs.

Oranges are not mentioned in any of the six collections.

2 Taim., nos. 24, 167, 951, 1496, 1544, 1811, 2165.
3 Nos. 23, 1356, 2008, 2476.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruit</th>
<th>Taim.</th>
<th>Fegh.</th>
<th>Tik.</th>
<th>Our Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grapes</td>
<td>4 c. 0.15%</td>
<td>21 c. 0.70%</td>
<td>6 c. 0.25%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apples</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemons</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 c. 0.07%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6 c. 0.20%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomegranates</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 c. 0.10%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Melons</td>
<td>3 c. 0.10%</td>
<td>4 c. 0.15%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apricots</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaches</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 c. 0.10%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bananas</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although apples and peaches like many other fruits are common in Syria and Lebanon, they do not occur in any of Feghāli's proverbs. Bananas are referred to in only one proverb in his collection.

The occurrence of fruit and fruit trees in Najdi proverbs seems to have been governed by the conditions prevailing in Najd up to about twenty years ago, as the only references --apart from those to the palm-tree and dates--are to grapes, watermelons, and lemons, which are the only fruits which can be described as traditionally common in Najd.

3. Vegetables

Only three vegetables are referred to in our collection: jarjir (eruca sativa), pumpkins, and onions. Onions and leeks (kurrāt) are the only vegetables mentioned in Sāsi's collection of Meccan proverbs. In Maidānī's classical proverbs only pumpkins and turnips are mentioned.

On the other hand, many vegetables are mentioned in collections of contemporary proverbs current in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. Thirteen vegetables are mentioned in Tāmirūr's collection of Egyptian proverbs: onions (13 examples, c. 0.4%),
garlic and radish (each in three proverbs), aubergines (in 4 proverbs), cumin, qulgās, pumpkins, and mallows (kubbaiz) (each in two proverbs), okra, cabbage, carob, the mlukiyya mallow, and coriander (each in one proverb).

In the Syro-Lebanese collection of Feghāli, the following eleven vegetables are mentioned: onions (13 examples), garlic, carob (each in 4 proverbs), pumpkins, aubergines, cabbages, turnips, quinces, cumin, taro, qulgās and the kubbaiz mallows (each occurs in one proverb).

The vegetables mentioned in Tikrīti's Iraqi collection are: onions (11 examples, c. 0.4%), garlic, leeks, pumpkins, radishes, mint (each in two examples), okra, aubergines, cumin, and the kubbaiz mallow (each in one example).

Vegetables are therefore more frequently mentioned in Egyptian proverbs, followed by the Syro-Lebanese and Baghdad proverbs. They are mentioned infrequently in Najdi, Meccan, and classical Arabic proverbs.

Although, as just stated, a small number of vegetables are mentioned in the collections of Taimūr, Feghāli, and Tikrīti, most vegetables are infrequently mentioned (often not more than once).

4. Cereals

The table below exhibits the figures and percentages of references to cereals in the six collections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Taim.</th>
<th>Fegh.</th>
<th>Tik.</th>
<th>Sāsi</th>
<th>Our Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13 c.0.60%</td>
<td>2 c.0.06%</td>
<td>5 c.0.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 c.0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 c.0.15%</td>
<td>5 c.0.20%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millet</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lentils</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 c.0.10%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>(fül)</td>
<td>7 c.0.20%</td>
<td>4 c.0.10%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above shows that:

(a) Cereals (in general) are rarely mentioned among classical proverbs and contemporary Meccan proverbs.

(b) Barley is the only cereal mentioned in classical proverbs.

(c) Maize, millet, and lentils are infrequently mentioned in all collections.

The preceding investigation shows how infrequently agriculture and agricultural plants are mentioned in Arabic proverbs. The reason for this is not easily found. One may agree with R. Blachère in attributing the scarcity of such topics in classical Arabic proverbs to the desert Arab's contempt for agriculture and husbandry. This explanation, however, cannot apply to at least some of contemporary Arabic proverb collections, as these (e.g., our own collection) proverbs are in common use mainly among farming communities which naturally do not exhibit contempt for agriculture.

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2 While, for example, only a few proverbs in our collection mention agricultural flora, there are at least 55 proverbs (c. 5 per cent) which refer to some other aspects relating to agriculture as conventionally practised in Najd, which clearly betrays the environment in which they are current. Below we list these proverbs, together with the aspects they refer to:

No. 35 refers to al-lza the basin into which water is poured immediately after it is brought up the well, and from which it flows to the pool where it gathers before it is let to flow to the irrigation channel (see proverb no. 816).

Nos. 81, 322, 335, 469, 491, 730, 755, 819, 827, 851, 883, 890, and 1088, refer to water wells.

Nos. 79, 169, 705, 911, and 1169 refer to animals which were traditionally used to draw water out of wells (as-sawāni).

No. 106 refers to the pulley which was used in as-sawāni.

Nos. 514, 1141, and 1150 refer to ar-rša and as-serih, two ropes used in as-sawāni, and no. 778 refers to the twisting of such ropes.

No. 893 refers to sowing.

No. 736 refers to cornfields.

The story of no. 491 is about farming in general.

No. 1197 refers to harvest.

Nos. 822, 870 refer to gleaning.

No. 167 refers to threshing.

No. 879 refers to winnowing.
The scarcity of these aspects in some present-day Arabic proverb collections is due to the fact that these collections were recorded among town dwellers who have no direct contact with land and farming, and are unfamiliar with many plants, fruits, and crops. It is, therefore, not to be expected that they should refer to them in their proverb lore.

5. Desert Trees, Plants, and Bushes

As might be expected, all trees and plants mentioned in Egyptian, Syrian, Meccan, and Iraqi proverbs in the collections consulted are agricultural. Desert trees do not occur in them (with the exception of the sycamore which occurs in three instances in Taimūr, and alfa which occurs in Tikriti). This shows that environment rather than tradition controls selection of trees in these proverbs.

But while desert plants are virtually non-existent in these contemporary proverbs current among the urban populations of Mecca, Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus, and Beirut, where one does not expect people to be familiar with many of such plants, we find references to some of them in a number of proverbs in our collection (10 plants and bushes) and in Maindānī (32 plants and bushes).

This suggests that, to some extent, proverbs are reflections of the environment in which they came into existence rather than literary tradition. The Arab of old depended

Nos. 64, 168, 634, 856, 862, and 955 refer to straw and ears of corn.
No. 1001 speaks of looking after land.
No. 1075 refers to al-hyāleh, the land where crops are grown, as distinct from the land where date-palms and other trees are planted.
Nos. 421, 584, 956, 990, and 1196 refer to palm branches and leaves.
Nos. 748, 758, 759, 760, and 761 refer to the stages of the ripening of dates.
No. 462 refers to the spade.
a great deal more on the desert and its flora than the Arab living in Najd at the present time. He therefore spoke more of desert trees and plants. Similarly, though to a lesser extent, the Najdi Arab of the present is more dependent on the desert and its flora than his urban counterpart; he is, therefore, more influenced by it.

6. Weather Proverbs

An investigation of weather proverbs (see above, p. 437) in Maidānī's collection of classical Arabic proverbs and in four contemporary Arabic proverb collections, as well as in the present collection, reveals the following:

(a) Weather proverbs are rather more common in Syria than elsewhere (about 1.5 per cent of M. Feghali's collection).
(b) There are nine weather proverbs in our collection (c. 0.8 per cent).
(c) There are eleven weather proverbs in Tikrītī's collection (Baghdad).
(d) Weather proverbs are almost non-existent in the collections of Maidānī, Tairūr (Egypt) and Sāsi (Mecca). In the former, only one such proverb is found, while no weather proverb occurs in either of the last two collections.

However, it is likely that the scarcity of this type of proverb in Maidānī indicates that he purposely excluded it. He probably realized that these sayings can hardly come under the category of proverbs, for whereas proverbs are statements which "contain some element of wisdom or commonly accepted belief," and which often possess some figurative, hyperbolic,

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1 M., no. 1269.
2 See also R. Blachère, op. cit., pp. 69-70.
or other rhetorical or witty quality, weather proverbs lack most if not all of these qualities. This fact makes some proverb collectors (including this writer) hesitate about including them. Those who do include them are probably swayed by their formal characteristics, such as rhyme and jinās, which are common and popular in all types of proverbs.

C. SOCIAL LIFE

1. Marriage

Although many facets of marriage have been noticed in proverbs, only a limited number of topics concerning marriage are useful for comparative study. One of these topics is the choice of a wife.

As previously stated, inter-marriage between relatives is disapproved of in a Najdi proverb in our collection. It is also disapproved of in Iraqi and Egyptian proverbs, on the ground that it can cause undesirable consequences to family relationships. However, another Najdi proverb as well as proverbs from Iraq and Egypt, and two Palestinian proverbs, strongly urge men to marry their first cousins. Thus we see that in this question Najd has no clear agreement with one region or another, but shares in both these conflicting ideas.

Several proverbs from Yemen, Lebanon, and Egypt are in favour of choosing a girl of noble origin, and a Najdi proverb advises against marrying from a family of lowly status.

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1 See no. 2, and Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 5; Dal., 1, no. 14; Taim., nos. 647, 1139.
2 See no. 527 and Hanafi, no. 2647; Baum., nos. 312, 408; Baq., p. 319.
3 See Frayha, no. 1673.
4 No. 1193.
As for the desirable or undesirable qualities in a girl, we find that two proverbs similar in both wording and meaning (one in the present collection and another current in Kuwait) state that a woman with eye disease or a woman from a family whose members are known to be unkind to each other should be avoided when one is looking for a wife.¹

Love and affection in connection with marriage is mentioned in only one Syrian proverb.²

Najdi as well as most other present-day Arabic proverbs emphasize the importance of money and riches to a marriage. A rich man can marry a girl far above him on the social scale (see our proverb no. 577 where reference is also made to other proverbs dealing with this point).

Najdi and Palestinian proverbs suggest that a man should marry more than one wife, especially when one's first wife is not behaving properly.³

"A relative through marriage nesib or rehīn is often liked more than a natural cousin." This is the theme of Najdi, Kuwaiti, Omani, and Iraqi proverbs (see our proverb no. 712 where reference is made to other parallels).

In general, we find no evidence, either of a markedly singular Najdi way of treating the topic, nor of an overwhelmingly strong link with any particular region outside Najd, although comparison shows that the links between Najdi proverbs, other regions in Arabia (e.g., Kuwait and Oman), and Iraq are stronger than the link between them and Egypt and G. Syria.

¹ See no. 17, and Nūri, 2 p. 197: حديث بالحس والرُّضم وبيت القطيعة
² Fegh., no. 1405. However, an Egyptian proverb (Taim., no. 624) suggests that parents should give their daughter in marriage to the man she desires to marry.
³ See no. 308 and H. Granqvist, op. cit., p. 209.
2. Blood Relationship

Contrary to what one might have expected, tribes and clans are rarely mentioned in classical and modern Arabic proverbs, although the reference to certain clans or tribes is rather more frequent in Yemeni and Najdi proverbs.

Coming now to the detailed comparison of various traits shown in proverbs from Najd and elsewhere, we find that the "charity begins at home" attitude, which is the subject of our proverb no. 949, is also common in Iraqi, Syrian, Kuwaiti, Yemeni, and Egyptian proverbs.¹

One should be patient with one's relatives, tolerate their flaws and try to live with their shortcomings, as with all their demerits they are still one's kith and kin. This is the theme expressed in a number of proverbs current among ancient as well as contemporary Arabs.² Other classical and modern proverbs from Najd, Kuwait, Iraq, and Syria, speak of the anguish suffered by one who is wronged by one of his kindred (see no. 128).

Coming to details within the framework of kinship, we may distinguish:

(a) Parents

It is universally asserted in Arabic proverbs that "children resemble their parents".³

"Aunts and wet-nurses cannot be as kind to a child as his mother." This statement is expressed in our proverbs

¹ See for example, Taim., no. 1400; Fā'iqah, no. 1720; Socin, nos. 31, 88; Fegh., no. 757; Frayha, no. 3668; Landb., no. 82; Nūri, 1, p. 232, no. 63; Goit., nos. 662, 799.
² See no. 394 where reference is made to other Arabic proverbs expressing this idea.
³ See no. 606 where reference is made to other Arabic proverbs expressing this theme.
594 and 973 as well as in a Meccan and an Iraqi proverb.\(^1\)

Similarly, two proverbs current in the Yemen stress that no woman can be kinder than a mother, not even a grandmother.\(^2\)

(b) Uncles

In Najd the maternal uncle is considered to be a closer relation than the paternal. The maternal uncle of one's father, grandfather, etc. or mother, grandmother, etc., is regarded as equally one's own uncle. "The maternal uncle remains an uncle until the day of judgement." (Proverb no. 282) As far as I know, this attitude is not evinced in other Arabic proverbs, apart from a Syrian proverb which makes the status of maternal uncle important to the extent that he has two-thirds share in his nephew.\(^3\)

(c) Sons and Daughters

The theme, the children of one's sons are one's children, but the children of one's daughters are not, is common in proverb lore in Najd, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt.\(^4\) Since, generally speaking, parents look for suitable wives for their sons when they are of marriageable age, but do not look for husbands for their daughter (the boy's family initiate proceedings), an Egyptian proverb emphasizes that one should look for a good husband for one's daughter even before one looks for a wife for one's son, as a girl needs care more than a boy, who unlike the girl can always find a solution in divorce.\(^5\)

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1 Sāsi, no. 396 and Dal., 1, no. 661.
2 Akwa', nos. 330, 471.
3 See Fegh., no. 978.
4 See no. 1127; Goit., no. 229; Tik., no. 30; Dal., no. 3; Dabb., 1, p. 18; Fegh., no. 961; Frayha, nos. 34, 35; Bājūrī, p. 169.
5 Taim., no. 83.
(d) Cousins

The role of cousins as supporters of each other is evident in a Najdi verse which is used proverbsly.\(^1\) Apparently no other modern proverb in any neighbouring region refers to this.

This is natural, as the Najdi proverb portrays (probably more than most other contemporary proverbs) tribal and nomadic attitudes and social codes which were until recently—and in some cases still are—very common there. One of the features of these codes is that an individual is expected to come to his kinsman’s help—still more his cousin’s— whenever the need arises.

Although a man is advised in a Najdi, an Iraqi, and two Egyptian proverbs, not to have a marital relationship with his relatives,\(^2\) as mentioned above, other proverbs from Najd, Baghdad, Palestine, and Egypt contradict this advice and advocate that a man should marry his cousin, regardless of whether she is beautiful or not.

Again, a good many themes are widely paralleled in the neighbouring countries. But this time we find a special feature which seems to be purely Najdi, linked with tribalism: the duty of a man towards his cousins.

3. Women

Like most Najdi proverbs (see above, pp. 447 f.) most contemporary Arabic proverbs speak unfavourably of women. They are considered inferior to men in two proverbs, one from Najd and the other from Yemen. The former tells a man not to

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\(^1\) No. 69.

\(^2\) See no. 2 and Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 5; Dal., 1, no. 14; Taim., nos. 647, 1139.
compete with a woman, for he will be the loser whatever the outcome (if he wins he cannot boast of winning over a woman), and the latter expresses a similar meaning.\(^1\)

Our Najdi proverb no. 308 and the Palestinian proverb, انبه النسا بالنسا ولا تخضهن بالعضا, suggest that a man should avoid resorting to punishing his wife physically, but instead should marry another one. This, according to these proverbs, is a more effective way of correcting her.

In two little-used Najdi proverbs (see above, pp. 447 f.) women are mentioned together with dogs\(^3\) and in one of them women are described as deserving little care; in the other they are described as lazy (they are given to sleeping too long). This extreme view seems without obvious parallel in the external material known to me.

The birth of a female is referred to in proverbs current in Najd, Kuwait, and Yemen, as a cause for disappointment.\(^4\)

A Najdi proverb emphasizes the influential power that women enjoy over men, "Women are the keys to men."

Women as daughters are favourably treated in a Najdi proverb which advises parents to look after their daughters even after their marriage.\(^5\)

Another Najdi proverb (not in our collection) implies that a woman should be treated gently, for if she is harmed the only thing she can do is to weep: "šatsyetah batsyetah" (her complaint is her weeping).

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1 See no. 728 and Goit., no. 988.
2 H. Granqvist, op. cit., p. 209.
3 Nos. 620, 1080.
4 See no. 564, Nüri, p. 223: نزهة أم بنت and Akwa', 1, no. 1236.
5 No. 232.
It appears difficult to find parallels to these Najdi proverbs which show a positive attitude to women.

The above comparison indicates that Najdi proverbs dealing with women may have stronger links with other regions of Arabia (Yemen and Kuwait) than with elsewhere.

4. Slavery

This subject is touched upon occasionally in most Arabic proverb collections. It seems that there are more references to slavery in classical, and modern Najdi, proverbs than in other proverbs (11 proverbs in Maidāni and six in our collection refer to slaves).

Slaves are branded as "stupid" in Najd (see proverbs 492, 935) and Baghdad (see Hanafi, no. 1902).

One Najdi and one classical proverb state that slaves are unambitious and rarely achieve any significant end (see M., no. 4215 and our proverb no. 43).

In classical, Najdi, and Egyptian proverbs, slaves are considered inferior to free men (see M., nos. 3473, 3812; Taim., no. 706 and our proverbs 551 and 728).

While this subject does not seem to lend itself to comparison in view of the small number of proverbs concerned, in the few examples referred to above, Najd seems to be linked more closely with classical proverbs, as well as with Baghdad and Egypt.

5. Structure of Society

While one often comes across references to Christians, Muslims, Jews, Turks, Kurds, gypsies, etc. in contemporary Arabic proverbs, one can hardly find similar references in Najd proverbs. The proverb "مهب جبزة نصارى" (it is not a
Christian marriage, i.e., one can always change one's mind),¹ is most probably the only proverb of this type. The reason of course is not difficult to find, for Najd on the whole is inhabited by a single Muslim Arab ethnic linguistic and religious group (although there also exists there a sizeable minority of people of African descent, some of whom were slaves and are referred to as such).

But as Najd is inhabited by settled people and nomads, one finds that Najdi proverbs speak of these two sections of society.

There are references in Najdi proverbs to the donkey-owning tinkers (aṣ-Ṣlubbeh) who are distinct in their social class (see proverbs 270 and 921).

The reference to bedouins is common in all contemporary Arabic proverbs. However, Najd and Yemen seem to refer to them more frequently than others.

6. Hospitality, Guests, and Visitors

Below are some of the rules mentioned in Arabic proverbs dealing with guests and hospitality:
1. The theme of our proverb no. 1036, "Whoever sets out with the purpose of visiting us deserves our hospitality" (lit. his right of entertainment becomes an obligation on us) is also expressed in a proverb common in Baghdad.²
2. Our proverb no. 467, "The guest is at the whim [lit. order] of the host" (i.e., he should leave matters of entertainment lodging etc. to his host to arrange), is similar in meaning to a Palestinian proverb.³

¹ This proverb is neither in our collection nor in other collections published so far. It is, however, current.
² Hanafi, no. 534.
³ Baum., no. 97.
3. "What is enough for two is enough for three," is a very common theme in Najd, Baghdad, Syria, Yemen, and Egypt. (See no. 845 where reference is made to other parallels).

4. "A guest [who comes] at night is not well-received." This is the meaning of Najdi, Syrian, and Baghdad proverbs (see no. 281 where reference is made to other parallels).

These are the references to guests and hospitality which are mentioned in Najdi proverbs in our collection as well as other Arabic proverbs. Other references to this subject seem to be peculiarly Najdi (see proverbs 97, 279, 800 and 970).

The above comparison shows that, in this topic as treated in proverbs, Najd tends to be linked with Iraq and Syria rather than with other regions.

Najd has particular rules in regard to guests not mentioned in other proverbs (at least in the collections consulted) such as that a man who arrives while people are eating should at least taste the food even if he is not hungry. His failure to do so could offend others (particularly bedouins) and may lead them to suspect his friendly intentions (see no. 97). Another rule is that the guest's mount should be given enough fodder as part of the entertainment of the guest (see no. 800). This indicates that Najd has some local customs concerning hospitality linked with nomadic social life.

7. Superstition

Although superstition is a recurring subject in Arabic folklore generally, it does not seem to be favoured in Arabic proverbs. Only a few superstitions are mentioned in our collection (see above, p. 455).

Many people in Najd believe in the evil eye, yet it
is only referred to in one proverb in our collection (no. 745). The evil eye is not mentioned in extant classical Arabic proverbs. It is, however, referred to in proverbs current in Baghdad, Lebanon, and Egypt. 1

Only one proverb in our collection alludes to evil spirits, by implication. 2

A light-coloured horse is regarded as an evil portent in a Najdi and a Kuwaiti proverb, 3 as well as in two classical proverbs, which suggest that this is a pre-Islamic superstition. 4

Coming across a fox is considered in Najd a bad omen. 5

No other Arabic proverb refers to such superstition.

D. CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of various topics above indicates that on the whole Najd has a greater conformity of ideas with Syria and Iraq than with the rest of the regions included in the comparison.

This in fact agrees with our earlier conclusion (pp. 354 ff.) that Najd seems to have firmer links in proverb lore with these two countries.

It is possible that when the great majority of proverbs current in various regions of Arabia and neighbouring countries have been recorded and studied, this conclusion might have to be somewhat modified.

1 See Tik., nos. 827, 828, 829; Frayha, nos. 1403, 1404; Taim., nos. 1056, 1057.
2 No. 1159.
3 See no. 255 and Nūri, 1, p. 11, no. 45.
4 See M., no. 3027; Zamak., 2, nos. 693, 727.
5 See no. 507.
Chapter Five

THE LANGUAGE

This chapter aims at giving the reader some idea of the "regional" Arabic dialect as spoken at present in Najd (central Arabia) and in which the proverbs in this collection are current, the essential bulk of its phonology, morphology, syntax, and the salient traits which distinguish it from the 

fuṣ-ha or classical Arabic on the one hand and from the other regional dialects in this part of the Arabic speaking world on the other.

Attention is particularly paid to linguistic peculiarities which occur in our texts. No attempt, however, will be made to offer a thorough study of the dialect as this is neither the aim of this thesis nor is it within its scope.

A - Phonology

1. The Consonant System

The consonant system of the Najdi dialect is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Plosive</th>
<th>Fricative</th>
<th>Affricate</th>
<th>Lateral</th>
<th>Rolled</th>
<th>Nasal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labio-dental</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>☣</td>
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<td>n</td>
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<td>Dental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emphatic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glottal</td>
<td>☣</td>
<td>☣</td>
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<td>☣</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Manner of articulation

The manner of articulation of consonants, when different either from classical Arabic or from the main contemporary Middle-Eastern Arabic dialects, is explained in the following pages. Consonants about whose articulation there is nothing peculiarly Najdi like $, h, z, h$, are not dealt with.

1.1 Plosives

The speech sound represented in classical Arabic by $\varepsilon$ is no longer articulated. No distinction whatsoever is made between the apico-labial $\ddot{d}âd$ and the emphatic $\varepsilon\varepsilon$. This is also so in the dialects of Eastern Arabia.

The voiceless uvular plosive sound represented in Arabic orthography by $\ddot{j}$ is also no longer articulated except when it occurs in fixed sayings borrowed recently from the fus-ha (e.g., prov. no. 622). It is replaced mostly by the voiced velar plosive sound represented in English by the hard $g$ and--though less often--by the affricate $\ddot{d}z$.

The occurrence of the palatal stop $j$ as a replacement for $\ddot{j}$ is very rare. In fact it is hard to think of other than the word jesan and its various forms. It stands for qasam (to divide something). In contrast to this, the $j$ is a common variant of $\ddot{i}$ in Qatar, Abu Dabi, Bahrain, and Dubai.

The glottal stop, hamza, is preserved when it is in initial position (e.g., the first word in each of proverbs 1-140), but medial hamza is dropped and replaced by a lengthening, e.g., fâr (mice) proverb no. 773 for fa'îr; bi'îr, prov. no. 322 for bi'îr (water-well); yûkal, prov. no. 393, for yu'kal, passive imperf. of 'akal (to eat). This phenomenon

2. Ibid., pp. 36, 38.
is also common in the dialects of the eastern coast of Arabia.¹

In some cases medial hamza is elided as in rūṣ (heads), prov. no. 371, for ru'ūṣ; al-ard (earth, the ground), prov. no. 544, for al-’ard; and mereh for mar’ah or imr’ah, prov. no. 291.

Final hamza is either elided as in šayy (thing), proverbs 428 and 429, for šay'; bala (trouble, problem), prov. no. 1091, for balā'; ‘wa (howling), prov. no. 12, for ‘uwā', or replaced by a simple vowel as in ‘arda (worse), prov. no. 32, for ‘arda'. However, in some monosyllabic sounds it is preserved as in ma', or added as in la' (e.g., in prov. no. 1127).

Generally speaking, Najdi "speech community"² unlike that of eastern Arabia³ does not substitute the palatal fricative y for the palatal stop j, except in two words: masyad (mosque), proverb no. 47, for masjīd, and 'eea (to be enough) and its imperf. and act. participle forms (see prov. no. 65). This verb is thought to be originally ajza.⁴

1.2 Fricatives

This corresponds to both b and j in Arabic orthography, for as mentioned above, the latter is no longer distinct from the former in the dialect. j is articulated as in classical Arabic. It does not change to the voiced dental pharyngalized fricative z as happens in some other modern Arabic dialects.⁵

A voiceless interdental fricative as in classical

¹ Op. cit. The initial and medial hamza is, in a few cases, replaced by the pharyngeal h as in ytahassaf (prov. no. 897) or ‘ as in hee’eh for hay’ah (committee).
² The inhabitants of Haw‘at Bani Tamīm and its area in southern Najd are exceptional to this case.
³ See Johnstone, op. cit.
⁴ See M. al-‘Ubūdī, 1, p. 12.
⁵ In Lebanon for example, this occurs to the b, as in maħer (to go out). See H. el-Hajje, Le Parler Arabe du Tripoli (Liban) (Paris, 1954), p. 56.
Arabic. It does not change to s or t as in some other Arabic dialects.¹

A voiced interdental fricative, as used in classical Arabic. Whereas this sound disappears from some other modern Arabic dialects and is replaced by one or another of the dental sounds d or z,² it is retained in the dialect.

The voiceless dental fricative s (س) becomes emphatic (that is, changes to ːس) in contiguity with an emphatic or a guttural, as happened in the following examples from our material: salātīn for class. salātīn (sultans)(134); ːṣlāṭīn for class. sūltān (sultan)(207); ɣsālāt for class. ṣūsālāt, passive imperf. of sālāṭ (to set someone on someone else or something)(1173); ːςǣkīl for sākīl (young nanny-goat)(443); ːsāt for sāwṭ (whip)(451); ːsālk for sālk (skinning)(403); ṣābūt for ːsābūt (happy, joyful)(930); ṣeṭgafer for ːṣeṭgafer in "he says: 'ṣṭagfir Allah (I beg God to pardon me)" (1093).

1.3 Affricates

The dorso-velar stop k is sometimes changed to the alveolar affricate ts or, in other words, affricated particularly in contiguity with front vowels. However, it is less often affricated. In our corpus it is affricated in about 50 examples compared with some 75 examples in which it is not affricated even though, in most of them, the k is in contiguity with a front vowel.³ This, together with the fact that

¹ In Damascus for example, it is replaced by dental t as in matīl; cf. A. Bloch and H. Grotzfeld, Damaschen-Arabische Texte (Wiesbaden, 1946), p. 2. In Mecca the t is articulated either as s or t as in salāsah or talātah for talātah.

² In Damascus for instance, d is replaced by z as in yā 'ustāz or by a d as in 'akod (I take). See A. Bloch and H. Grotzfeld, op. cit. This is also the case in the speech of the majority of the urban population of Mecca. Examples: ḍāhīn for ḍalī-hīn (now) and ḍāza (this).

³ Repeated words with a k or ts and the 2nd s. suffixes k and ts are considered one only.
the k of the 2nd pers. m.s. is never affricated and the k suffix of the 2nd pers. f.s. is always affricated as ts whether it is in contiguity with a front vowel as in me'ets (with you), or a back vowel as in 'ekûts (your brother), lead us to believe that the affrication of k is not always a result of its contiguity with front vowels.¹

Some of the words in our material whose k is affricated are set down below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Affrication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'ebts</td>
<td>talk: 19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dîts</td>
<td>cock: 178</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsabî</td>
<td>stomach: 298</td>
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<tr>
<td>tselmeh</td>
<td>word: 515</td>
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<tr>
<td>tsân</td>
<td>if: 644</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsanm</td>
<td>how many: 708</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The affricate dz is a variant of j in contiguity with front vowels. It is therefore not always substituted for it. The plosive g which is similar to the English g in "good" is indeed more often used instead of j(g). While g occurs in numerous words in our corpus, dz occurs in a limited number of them (no more than about 65).

Below are some examples in which g is affricated as dz:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Affrication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dzereb</td>
<td>near: 23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'anfedz</td>
<td>spend: 129</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lâdz</td>
<td>meet: 771</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nweedzeh</td>
<td>a little she camel: 1021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'erdz</td>
<td>vein: 824</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike k, j(g) is always either changed to g or affricated as dz. Only in nine words in eight proverbs, some

¹ The following five examples occurring in our texts contain an affricated 2nd f.s. suffix: gteebate-ts (prov. no. 36), weda'ats-ts (prov. no. 1109), jeddats-ts (your grandmother) (prov. no. 1133), melhysat-ts (prov. no. 1197), yoswats (prov. no. 1199).
of which are borrowed from classical Arabic (nos. 486, 622, and 991 for example), does it occur in its original sound:
gaytun (cat) (28); sariqah (theft)(28); sāriq (thief)(380);
sīgā (water skin)(991), qāhirat (overpowering)(486); gad
(has)(622); ġāl (said)(727), y called (he imitates)(919),
yaqatiūn (they kill)(944).

These two affricates, ts and dz, are common in the
speech of the inhabitants of Najd irrespective of whether they
are settlers or nomads or to which clan, tribe, or region they
belong. However, some Najdis who inhabit the northernmost
fringes of Najd like 'Anezeh, Šammar, and others, may use
ch as well as ts as variants of k.¹

1.4 Laterals and Nasals

1 As in Kuwait and Abu Dabi ² mufakkam "l" occurs in some
words such as:

Allah (All:lah), proverb no. 76
žalma (zal:ma), dark, darkness, prov. 109.
kalla (kal:la), to leave, to let, prov. no. 296.

² Occurs as mufakkam as in 'ummahātekum (your mothers')
proverb no. 594.

² The n when followed by k or g is an alveolar nasal allo-
phone as in yanged (he pecks), prov. no. 20; tanks (she
returns), prov. no. 207.

1.5 Rolled r

The letter r is much more often mufakkam than not in
Najdi speech. In the first 200 proverbs in our collection
there are 165 words with ?, only 50 of which are not mufakkam.

¹ See J. Cantineau, "Etudes sur quelques parles des nomades
arabe d'Orient," AIEO, 3 (1937), pp. 141, 143. However, the
Slubbeh, even those who live in the north, follow the general
pattern of affrication of k and j in Najd, i.e., as ts and dz.
See ibid, p. 141.

2. The Vowel System

The Najdi dialect vowel system is very similar to the system given by Professor Johnstone for the dialects of Eastern Arabia.¹

Before entering into details, it should be mentioned that vowels when in contiguity with a mufakkam sound are backed and lowered, for example, tāb, prov. no. 470 and gāl, proverbs 600 ff.

2.1. Short Vowels

a A half open to open spread front vowel:

ahad (someone), prov. no. 14; halab (to milk), prov. no. 67; dakal (to enter), prov. no. 337; 'awaz (compensation), prov. no. 541.

e A half-close front vowel slightly raised and retracted from cardinal 2 position:

'esem (name), prov. no. 37; jeher (burrow), prov. no. 178.

i A nearly half-close front vowel, occurs in medial position and is often preceded or followed by a y:

niyy (raw food), prov. no. 59; sgayyir (little), prov. no. 694.

u A close to half-close rounded back vowel²:

luh (for him), prov. no. 90; rāsuh (his head), prov. no. 706.

2.2 Long Vowels

ā A nearly half-open spread front vowel, asin gāl (to say), prov. nos. 580 ff.; tāh (to fall), prov. no. 470; jāb (to bring), prov. no. 1032.

ee A half-close to half-open unrounded front vowel. It

¹ Cf. op. cit.
² This vowel is common in northern Najdi speech but does not occur in the speech of southern Najdis (from Sudair southwards).
corresponds ordinarily to the diphthong ay in classical Arabic: 

teer (class. ̲tayr), prov. no. 20; deen (class. dayn), prov. no. 329; been (class. bayn), prov. no. 151.

i An almost close unrounded front vowel: dib (wolf), prov. no. 336; dits (cock), prov. no. 178; negib (chance), prov. no. 85.

ɔ A half-close to half-open rounded back vowel. It replaces the diphthong aw in classical Arabic, as in: nûm (sleep) (class. nawm), prov. no. 1080; shôf (eyesight) (class. sawf), prov. no. 424.

ʊ A long nearly close rounded back vowel, as in: ebûy (my father), prov. no. 581; ḥûd, prov. no. 272; yôṣâf (he sees), prov. no. 1170.

2.3 Diphthongs

The diphthong ay in classical Arabic is generally replaced by the long vowel ee, beet instead of bayt (home), prov. no. 170 and deen instead of dayn (debt), prov. no. 329 are convenient examples; or by the long vowel â in Najdi bedouin speech, e.g., båt and kår instead of bayt or beet, kayr or keer.

However, when the diphthong ay is followed by a y, it is always retained, e.g., šayy (thing), prov. no. 428; 'ayya (to refuse), prov. no. 102.1

The diphthong aw in classical Arabic is sometimes replaced by the monophthong ɔ as in şôt for sawt (voice), prov. no. 450 and tûr for tawr (bull), prov. no. 210.

Aw in the dialect replaces the monophthong ū in classical Arabic as in salmaw, prov. no. 439, for salimu (they reached safety); gâlaw, prov. no. 615, for gâlu (they said).

1 Some Syrian bedouins (e.g., the al-Ḥesseneh, a branch of the 'Anezeh clan) in contrast to Najdi speech, retain this diphthong in all cases. See J. Cantineau, op. cit., p. 148.
2.4 Vowel Glides

Medial glottal stop is replaced in the dialect by a lengthening, a ɔ, or a õ, as

yâkel (he eats), prov. no. 554; yâmer (he orders), prov. no. 532.
šâyeb (old man), prov. no. 396; gâyeb (absent), prov. no. 553.
tâtâwab (to yawn), prov. no. 936.

2.5 Vowel Harmony

The anaptyctic helping vowels ə, ù, and ɔ, occur frequently, as

jesèm (body), prov. no. 37; rejel (foot), prov. no. 248;
ratub (wet), prov. no. 115; namel (ants), prov. no. 154;
laħam (meat), prov. no. 2; baḥar (sea), prov. no. 525.

An anaptyctic vowel is often elided when it occurs in a noun in a mujâf construction as, for example, in the word baten where it occurs as batn in prov. no. 161, and the same thing happened to the word rakez in prov. no. 364.

The unstressed short initial vowels, ə, û, and ɔ, in some singular nouns, broken plurals, collective nouns, and relative adjectives are dropped, as in:

'ınab (class. 'inab), prov. no. 140 (grapes)
nusur (class. nusur), prov. no. 540 (eagles)
tiwal (class. tiwāl), prov. no. 480 (pl. tall)
fuqara (class. fuqara'), prov. no. 1101 (poor people)
badiwi (class. badawi), prov. no. 556 (bedouin)

But sometimes they are not dropped but reduced to the ultra short vowel ə, as in:

rasâṣ (class. rasâṣ), prov. no. 392 (lead)

An initial vowel is often elided when, in a singular noun, it is in contiguity with one of the long vowels, ə, û, or ɔ, as in ktaḥ, prov. no. 1188; Ḥanūd, prov. no. 272; and Sbeet, prov. no. 363. But sometimes it is elided for other reasons as in sgâyvir, prov. no. 694.
remâd (class. ramâd), proverbs 1064, 1192 (ashes).
'esfur (class. 'usfur), prov. no. 513 (sparrow)
sekâtsin (class. sakâkin), prov. no. 754 (knives)
sekâra (class. sakâra), prov. no. 387 (drunkards)
šerb (class. šurb), prov. no. 412 (drinking)

3. Consonant Clusters

The occurrence of two-consonant clusters in the initial position is as common in this dialect as in the dialects of eastern Arabia. Examples:
šjereh (tree), prov. no. 4; lsân (tongue), prov. no. 90;
Šbeeh (name of a village), prov. no. 120; drejeh (stairs), prov. no. 190. Hmûd (a man's name), prov. no. 272, Žruma (name of a town), prov. no. 33.

Three-consonant clusters do not occur on the whole in northern Najdi speech. They are avoided by the introduction of an anaptyctic vowel. In southern Najdi and in the speech of most bedouins, the vowel is not introduced, e.g.,
S. Najd and bedouins: 'allamthum (I told them)
N. Najd: 'allamtehum.

However, the consonant cluster occurs everywhere where the first consonant is й of the particle al, as in:
al-fhûd (leopards), prov. 63; al-'qûl (minds), prov. no. 135;
al-bgereh (the cow), prov. no. 76; ar-rjâl (men), proverb no. 334.

4. Gemination

A geminate consonant cannot occur at the beginning of a word, contrary to what happens in the dialects of eastern Arabia.

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1 See Johnstone, op. cit., p. 25.
2 In the dialects of eastern Arabia, three-constant cluster also occurs where the final element is й plus vowel, as in darabtha. See ibid., p. 26.
As in classical Arabic and contemporary Arabic dialects, a geminate is strongly stressed:

'allam (to teach), prov. no. 1117; damm (blood), prov. no. 6; kassar (to shatter), prov. no. 665; ḫets-ṭseh (itching), prov. no. 234.

Discussing some aspects of gemination in the dialects of eastern Arabia, Professor Johnstone notes that "by elision of a short vowel a consonant cluster arises, one element of which is a geminate consonant, the geminate usually becomes a [stressed] single consonant." This does not apply to our dialect, thus:

yu'allimun > y'allmun (and not y'almun as in the eastern Arabian dialects)
yusallihun > ysallhun (and not ysalhun)
ysallimna > ysallmenn (and not ysalmen)

5. Stress

As in the dialects of eastern Arabia, long syllables are stressed when they are final, thus:

tyūr (birds), prov. no. 471; njūm (stars), prov. no. 400;
banāt (girls), prov. no. 171; njāl (men), prov. no. 68.
harīm (women), prov. no. 79; ḫsān (horse), prov. no. 255;
velin (he relents), prov. no. 96; ygil (he dives), prov. no.94.
ytahāwesūn (they quarrel), prov. no. 1157.

The penultimate syllable is stressed in types of forms to which the following examples belong:

'āgel (mind), prov. no. 38; džerbeh (water-skin), prov. no. 68;
be'dūzeh (mosquito), prov. no. 838; mtegatt'eh (it is cut),
prov. no. 374;
leban (milk), prov. no. 417; ketbeh (engagement), prov. no. 506;

See ibid.

Ibid., p. 27.

See ibid.
termeref (knowing, getting to know), prov. no. 205.

The antepenultimate syllable is stressed in types of forms to which the examples below belong:
ejtema (to come together), prov. no. 12; megbererh (cemetery), prov. no. 237; mehteri (waiting), prov. no. 962; ma'egyeh (sin), prov. no. 158; gobe'eh (lark), prov. no. 639; mejzreh (harm), prov. no. 23; bu'ersi (gecko), prov. no. 163.

B - Morphology

1. The Verb

1.1.1 The Simple Verb

The Perfect Tense

Fa'al, fe'al, and fe'el types are the base forms of the perfect tense of the simple verb, as zahak (to laugh), kesar (to break something), and ze'el (to be angry).

Some forms of type fa'al in classical Arabic change to fe'el in this dialect as nefa', prov. no. 1000. Other forms remain as they are, as halab, prov. no. 67.

Verbs of the type fa'ul and fa'il in classical Arabic change to fe'el in this dialect.

The table below shows the conjugation of the two types fe'el and fe'el:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>c.s.</th>
<th>m.s.</th>
<th>f.s.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>nefâ't</td>
<td>nefâ't</td>
<td>nefâ't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>nefâ't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>nefâ' (605, 1000)</td>
<td>nefâ'at (889)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>šebe't</td>
<td>šebe't (125)</td>
<td>šebe't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>šebe'ti</td>
<td>šab'at</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(In Shammari speech, the t of the 3 f.s. is replaced by an ay sound in pause, for example šerbay for šerbat (she drank) and

1 Most of the examples mentioned in the tables in this chapter are not from proverb texts in this collection. They are given by the writer according to his knowledge of the dialect to provide a clearer picture of the conjugation of verbs. The number beside an example refers to the proverb in which it occurs.
šālay for šālat (she carried (something)) and nesyay for nesyat (she forgot). 1

1 c.pl. nefa’na šebe’na
2 m.pl. nefa’tu (tom, tum) šebe’tu (tom, tum)
2 f.pl. nfa’ten(n) šebe’ten(n)
3 m.pl. nfa’aw šab’aw
3 f.pl. nfa’an(n) šab’an(n)

(b) The Imperfect Tense

The patterns yaf’al, yaf’el, yfa’el and yfa’ul are the imperfect forms of the perfect fa’al as yazfrak (587), yadkel (1162), y’ater (1180), and yhakum.

The verbs whose perfect tense form is fe’el have the characteristic prefixed vowel a in the imperfect, as in the dialects of eastern Arabia, thus šebe’ - vašba’.

The paradigms below give the conjugation in the imperfect tense of the verbs nefa’, šebe’, and ketab.

1 c.s. anfa’ ašba’ akteb
2 m.s. tanfa’ tašba’ takteb
2 f.s. tanfe’în tašbe’în taketbîn
3 m.s. yanfa’ (925) yašba’ yakteb (95)
1 c.pl. nanfa’ našba’ nakteb
2 m.pl. tanfe’ûn tašbe’ûn taketbûn
2 f.pl. tanfe’en(n) tašbe’en(n) taketben(n)3
3 m.pl. yanfe’ên(n) yašbe’ên(n) yaketbûn
3 f.pl. yanfe’ên(n) yašbe’ên(n) yaketben(n)

It is worth noting that the preformative vowel is always a in this dialect as well as in that of Qatar. 4 It is i with most of the dialects of eastern Arabia with the exception of 1st. c.s. where it is a. 5

An initial guttural radical affects the syllable structure of the perfect as is the case in the eastern Arabian

---

1 See Cantineau, op. cit., pp. 185-186.
2 See Johnstone, op. cit., p. 43.
3 The original inhabitants of Riyad and neighbouring area do not use the f.pl. suffixes en(n) and an(n). They use ūn and aw for both masculine and feminine plurals.
4 Johnstone, op. cit., p. 41.
5 Ibid., p. 43.
There is a tendency to the imālah of the final vowel of the imperative of the simple strong verb before suffixes. Thus ָa tends to become ָe.

The imperatives of nefa' and šereb, whose imperfects as we saw above were yaf'āl, are:

- ** masc. single:** enfa'  ešrab
- ** masc. plural:** enfe'u  ešrebu
- ** fem. single:** enfe'i  ešrebi
- ** fem. plural:** enfe'en(n)  ešreben(n)

(Riyad: enfe'u  ešrebu)

But the imperatives of zahak and le'eb keep $a$ throughout, being as follows:

- ** masc. single:** ežhak (587)  el'ab (74)
- ** masc. plural:** ežhaku  el'abu
- ** fem. single:** ežhari  el'abi
- ** fem. plural:** ežhaken(n)  el'aben(n)

The word dūk (see prov. no. 595) which is used as an imperative, meaning "take", is a modified form of the classical اسم امر dūnak. This is supported by the fact that dūnak is commonly used in the bedouin dialects in eastern Libya for "take".

(d) The Passive

(i) The Passive perfect

The forms fa'āl, fe'al and fe'el have the passive

---

1 Ibid.
2 The writer was told of this by Mr. Naṣr 'Awn aṣ-Ṣarraj who comes from eastern Libya.
perfect form f'el except with the 3rd m. pl. and the 3rd f.s. or pl. where the form f'el is used. The paradigms below give the conjugation of the verbs zarab, ketab, and 'eref, which represent these three forms.

1 c.s. zreb ktebt 'reft
2 m.s. zreb ktebt 'reft
2 f.s. zrebiti ktebiti 'refti
3 m.s. zreb kteb 'ref
3 f.s. zerbat ketbat 'erfat
1 c.pl. zrebna ktebna 'refta
2 m.pl. zrebta ktebta 'refta
2 f.pl. zrebten(n) ktebten(n) 'reften(n)
3 m.pl. zerbat ketbas 'erfat
3 f.pl. zerban(n) ketban(n) 'erfat(n)

(ii) The Passive imperfect

Below is the passive imperfect conjugation of the verbs yazreb and y'aref

1 c.s. azrəb 'a'raf
2 m.s. tezrab te'raf
2 f.s. tezrebën te'refen
3 m.s. yezrab ye'raf
3 f.s. tezrab te'raf
1 c.pl. nezrab ne'raf
2 m.pl. tezrebun te'refun
2 f.pl. tezreben(n) te'refen(n)
3 m.pl. yezrebun ye'refun
3 f.pl. yezreben(n) ye'refen(n)

(e) The Active and Passive Participles

The declension of the active and passive participles of fetab (to open) is as follows:

m.s. fāteḥ maftūḥ (143)
f.s. fāt-ḥeh, fāt-ḥah maftūḥeh, maftūḥah
m.pl. fāt-ḥin maftūḥin
f.pl. fāt-ḥāt maftūḥāt

When a guttural is the first radical of a verb, the pattern of that verb's passive participle is ma夫lע as maדע (counted), prov. no. 179, Mḥanūd (name of a man). But there are exceptions to this rule, for example mḥrūm (miser, stingy), prov. 866, is more common than mḥarūm.

(f) Verbal Nouns

Feminine verbal nouns can occur in this dialect, a
feature not very common in classical Arabic, such as gōlat, prov. no. 640 and gāzbat (holding), prov. no. 628. Here are some examples of verbal noun formations:

šerb (drinking), 70; 'atsel (eating), 63; ṭūūd (sleeping), 349; šōf (seeing), 424; ḥazz (shaking), 524; lahs (licking), 3; qāl (saying), 1111; hadm (demolishing), 1089.

Of the derived themes the following are convenient examples:
tedeyvin (incurring debt), 79; taslim (finishing prayers), 169; t-hawll (descending), 190; tene'ref (getting acquainted with), 205.

1.1.2 Derived Themes

Derived themes of this dialect are the same as those of classical Arabic. Slight vowel modifications, however, affect some of them. The theme sūla is infrequently used.¹

The vowel i of the imperfect, imperative, and active participle base forms of theme II is elided when the verb is suffixed:

yuqatti’un > ygaṭṭ’un
qaṭṭi’n > gaṭṭi
muqattī’n > mgatt‘in

1.1.3 Geminate Verbs

(a) The Simple Verb

The table below shows the conjugation of the verb hajj (to flee):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>perfect</th>
<th>imperfect</th>
<th>imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c.s.</td>
<td>hajjeet</td>
<td>ahejj</td>
<td>hejji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.s.</td>
<td>hajjeeti</td>
<td>tehejjīn</td>
<td>hejj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.s.</td>
<td>hajjeet</td>
<td>tehejj</td>
<td>hejj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.s.</td>
<td>hajj (1086,1087)</td>
<td>yehejj</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.s.</td>
<td>hajjat</td>
<td>tehejj</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.pl.</td>
<td>hajjeema</td>
<td>nehejj</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.pl.</td>
<td>hajjeetu</td>
<td>tehejjūn</td>
<td>hejj (hejjum)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The table of derived themes appears on the next page.
² the um ending is used by Shammari and 'Anezi Arabs. Cf. P. Landberg, Langue des bedouins 'anazeh, Texte arabe (Leiden, 1919), p. 37.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II kassar (665)</td>
<td>ykasser</td>
<td>kassir</td>
<td>kesser</td>
<td>ykassar</td>
<td>mkasser</td>
<td>mkassar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III gābal (782)</td>
<td>ydzābel</td>
<td>dzābel</td>
<td>dzībel</td>
<td>ygābal</td>
<td>mdzābel</td>
<td>ngābal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIIa sōlaf</td>
<td>ysōlef</td>
<td>sōlef</td>
<td>sūlef</td>
<td>ysōlaf</td>
<td>msōlef</td>
<td>msōlaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV asraf (133)</td>
<td>yesref</td>
<td>asref</td>
<td>esref</td>
<td>yesraf</td>
<td>mesref</td>
<td>mesraf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V ta'allam</td>
<td>yta'allam</td>
<td>ta'allam</td>
<td>te'ellem</td>
<td>yta'allam</td>
<td>mta'alem</td>
<td>mta'allam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI tahāwaš</td>
<td>ytaḥāwaš</td>
<td>tahāwaš</td>
<td>teḥīweš</td>
<td>mtahāweš</td>
<td>mtahāwaš</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII engeta' (778)</td>
<td>yengeṭe'</td>
<td>engeṭe'</td>
<td>engeṭe'</td>
<td>mengeṭe'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII ejtema' (12)</td>
<td>yejteme'</td>
<td>ejteme'</td>
<td>ejteme'</td>
<td>mejteme'</td>
<td>mejtema'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX eḥmarr</td>
<td>yeḥmarr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X esta'mal</td>
<td>yesta'nel</td>
<td>'esta'mel</td>
<td>'este'mel</td>
<td>yesta'mal</td>
<td>mesta'mel</td>
<td>mesta'mal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or est'amel</td>
<td>yest'amel</td>
<td>est'amel</td>
<td>yest'amal</td>
<td>mesta'amel</td>
<td>mesta'amal</td>
<td>mesta'amal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The characteristic stem vowel of the imperfect of the geminate simple verb is e. However, when the final geminate consonant is one of the two bilabials b and m, both e and u occur. The former is mostly common in Bedouin speech and the latter among the hajj as well as some 'Anazi and Šammari people, as dumm (prov. no. 322) and demm, yešebb and yešubb (prov. no, 706), and yešebb or yešubb (to light the fire).

Most, if not all, Arabic modern dialects follow the same rule which is followed by our dialect in keeping the simple perfect geminate verb (like hajj and madd) when suffixed, as it is before the suffixation, while introducing the long vowel ee between it and the suffix, e.g., maddeet Iddi (I stretched my hand) and not madadt as in classical Arabic.\(^1\)

The active and passive participles of lamm (to collect something) are lämm (prov. no. 119) and malmüm.

(b) Derived Themes

Theme II of normal verbs occurs quite often in our texts (see e.g., 'allam, 1117; sallam, 124; kassar, 665).

Themes V and IX are quite common in the dialect but do not occur in our texts. Theme IX is used to describe a change in colour as in classical Arabic, e.g., ehmarr (to become red), and esfarr (to become yellow). The survival of this theme in the Najd dialect is particularly interesting as it survives in only a few of modern Arabic dialects.

\(^{1}\) For Egypt, see e.g., H.H. Fahmi, al-Marji' fi ta'rib al-Mustalahat al-'Ilmiyyah etc. (Cairo, 1962), p. 260.
1.2 The Weak Verb

1.2.1 The Hamzated Verbs

(a) Initial Hamza

The Najdi speech community, on the whole, retains the initial hamza in the simple verb. The tendency in the dialects of eastern Arabia to assimilate such verbs to the verbs’ final y in the perfect, thus 'akal > kalā, 'akad > kada, is the exception rather than the rule. The verb kaleet (I ate) which occurs in proverb no. 835 and which fits in with eastern Arabian usage is not used in the normal speech of the majority of the people. This tendency, however, is strong among some bedouin dialects, particularly in northern Arabia, such as Šammar, 'Anezeh, B. Šakar, Sardiye and the inhabitants of al-Ǧof (al-Jawf). Besides, even in the south, some older speakers may drop the initial hamza when the verb is suffixed, as in kaluh (he ate it) and kaduh (he took it).

The verb 'ata (to give) for 'a'tā, prov. no. 515, is an exception.

The initial hamza of a weak verb in the passive voice is dropped and replaced by a wāw when the verb is suffixed with the 3 f.s. or the 3 f. or m. plural, as in wemrat (she was ordered), wemran (they (f.pl.) were ordered) and wekdaw (they (m.pl.) were taken), prov. 439.

In some southern Najdi regions (e.g., al-Wašm), the initial hamza is often dropped and replaced by the labio-nasal m in words in the act. participle forms, as in mātsel and

\[1\] See Johnstone, *op. cit.*, p. 47.


\[3\] Nevertheless, most of the nomadic Arabs who inhabit northern Najd (e.g., 'Anezeh and Šammar) use 'anta instead of 'ata retaining the hamza. Cf. Landberg, *op. cit.*, p. 41, and see proverb no. 1043.
The initial \textit{hanza} in verbs in the imperfect is dropped, as the table above shows, and replaced by a lengthening. Such a \textit{hanza} is also sometimes dropped completely (i.e., without being replaced by another sound) as in \textit{yedden} for \textit{yu'addin}, prov. no. 942, and \textit{yerret} for \textit{yu'arrit}, prov. no. 389, \textit{yetter} for \textit{yu'atter}, \textit{yesser} for \textit{yu'aššir}.

(b) Medial and Final \textit{Hamza}

These types are not very common in this dialect nor in the dialects of neighbouring eastern Arabia.\footnote{See Johnstone, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 47.}

The final \textit{hanza} is elided, as \textit{vagra} (he reads) (1187, 1188), \textit{yanla} (he fills (something)) (505).

1.2.2 Verbs with initial \textit{W} and \textit{Y}

The conjugation of the verb \textit{wegel} or \textit{wesal} (to reach) is shown in the paradigm below:

\begin{tabular}{l|lll}
 & \textbf{Perfect} & \textbf{Imperfect} & \textbf{Imperative} \\
\hline
1 c.s. & \textit{wegelt}, \textit{wesalt} & \textit{'ašal} & \textit{'ušal} \\
2 m.s. & \textit{wegelt}, \textit{wesalt} & \textit{tāšal} & \textit{tāšeli} \\
2 f.s. & \textit{wegelti}, \textit{wesalti} & \textit{tāšelin} & \textit{tāšeli} \\
\end{tabular}
3 m.s. weşel, weşal
3 f.s. waşlat, waşalat
tyşal (43)

1 c.pl. weşelna, weşalna
nâşal

2 m.pl. weşeltu, weşaltu
taşelün
taşelün, 'uşelu (weşaltom, -tum)

2 f.pl. weşelten, weşalten
taşelen(n)
taşelen(n) 'uşelen(n)

3 m.pl. waşlaw, waşalaw
yâşelün
yâşelün

3 f.pl. waşlan(n), waşalan
yâşelün
yâşelün

Verbs initial ă are very rare in classical Arabic
and modern Arabic dialects including the Najd dialect. This
is emphasized by the fact that only one such verb occurs in
our material (the verb teebas in prov. no. 932).

1.2.3 Hollow Verbs

The perfect of the verb râh (to go) is inflected as
follows:

1 c.s. 2 m.s. 2 f.s. 3 m.s. 3 f.s.
reht reht rehty râh (849) râhat

1 c.pl. 2 m.pl. 2 f.pl. 3 m.pl. 3 f.pl.
rehtu rehten(n) râhaw râhan(n)
or rehtom(-tum) râhöm(-um)

As in classical Arabic the characteristic vowel of
the hollow verb in the imperfect is either ā as in nām - vanām,
kāf - yakāf, 'āf - ya'āf, hāb - yahāb; or ī as in tāh - yeṭīb
(104), māl - vemīl, šāl - yšīl (103), bān - yebīn (185); or
ū as in gāl - vegūl, rāh - yerūh (143), šāf - yṣūf (158).

The paradigms below give the inflection of the im-
perfect and imperative of the verbs 'āf (to refuse (something)),
rāh (to go away), and šāl (to carry) as each represents a type
of hollow verb with different characteristic vowel:

Imperfect:

1 c.s.  "a'āf
'aşīl
'arūh

2 m.s. ta'āf
tšīl
terūh

2 f.s. ta'āfin
tšīlin
terūhin

Professor Johnstone notes the rarity of this type in the
dialects of eastern Arabia. See Johnstone, op. cit., p. 48.
The conjugation of the typical verb, final 

The characteristic stem vowel of the imperfect of these verbs is a or i. The paradigm below gives the inflection of the imperfect of leqa (to find) and sara (to travel at night):

1.2.4 Verbs Final Y

The imperative form of the hollow verb has a short vowel when it is suffixed with the 2nd m.s. In the dialects of eastern Arabia, it has a long vowel. Cf. ibid., pp. 41, 49.

See ibid., p. 50.
The imperative of the verbs final ٍ is almost the same as in the dialects of eastern Arabia. Thus:

2 m.s. elg  esir (but ٌمٌš (walk), prov. no. 586)
2 f.s. elgay  esray
2 m.pl. elgaw  esraw
2 f.pl. elgan(n)  esran(n)

1.3 Impersonal Verbs

The impersonal verbs (Arabic: الإعمال الجامع) are 'asa, kūd, both of which express a wish; 'une'em (class. نام) and bis (class. بِس). 'une'em is usually used to express admiration of someone. bis is rarely used, as in bis hāl-hāl (how bad; what a bad situation!). The impersonal verb ليس is not used.

1.4 Rarely-used Verbs

Some of the verbs which occur in this collection and are rarely used or are confined to some parts of Najd (e.g., north or south) or to one particular section of society (e.g., settlers or nomads) are mentioned below: yenšem--prov. no. 2, the other verb vedwed is more common; yabgel--prov. no. 15, this verb is rarely, if ever, used in southern Najd and among the nomads, but is used in al-Qaṣīm; yatsdah--prov. no. 61, the d is replaced by t in this verb in Riyadh and 'Unaizah; tefar--prov. no. 71; indedzem, prov. no. 105; azra (to be unable to), prov. no. 327, this verb is used mainly by the bedouins; saggah--prov. no. 447 is known mainly in al-Qaṣīm; kebb (leave . . . alone)--prov. no. 651 is used mainly by bedouins; bāg--prov. no. 1003, is rarely used in al-Qaṣīm; lašš--prov. no. 966, is rare everywhere; dannag--prov. no. 275, is a verb common in southern Najd as well as among most bedouins

ٌ and ٍ were considered verbs by the grammatical school of Basrah while the rival school of Kūfah regarded them as nouns. Cf. 'Abd ar-Rahman Ibn al-'Anbārī, Die Grammatischen Streitfragen der Basar und Kufer, ed. by Grotthold Weil (Leiden, 1913), p. 74, point no. 14.
everywhere in Najd but rarely used among the settled northern people, the word tanbas is more common; yizi--prov. no. 65, is less common than yakfi; taṣṣ (to throw away)--prov. no. 283 is used by bedouins, settled people use ḥagaf, ḥalat, lāf, or nēṭal instead.

2. The Noun, Adjective, and Pronoun

2.1 The Formations of Nouns and Adjectives

Most of the roots of the Najd dialect, as in classical Arabic, are triliteral. Numerous word forms (or patterns) can be made by changing the vowels or adding prefixes, infixes, or suffixes.

Below, we give the main patterns of the singular nouns, verbal nouns, and adjectives which occur in our text. 1

1. fa'āl
farah (joy), 45; faras (mare), 17; saham (share), 154. Nouns of this pattern when suffixed with i, uh, or ah, take the pattern f'a l or f'el, e.g., fresi (my mare), shamah (her share).

2. fa'āl
wajh (face), 62; labs (licking), 3.

3. fe' ēl
kerj (saddle bag), 203; jeld (skin), 228.

4. fa'el or fa'il
habel (rope), 242; namel (ants), 1056; naṣi (walking), 982. When a noun of this pattern is nunated (munawwan) or annexed (mugaf), it takes the pattern fa'āl as in baṭn as-ṣab'ān, prov. no. 161, not baṭen aṣ-ṣab'ān.

5. fe'āl
jemal (camel), 186; leban (butter milk), 417. When a word of this pattern is suffixed with the 1st c.s. suffix i or the third s. suffix uh or ah, it takes the pattern f'el (v. infir.) or f'el, as in jmeluh (his camel) and lebanah (her milk).

6. fe'el
hemel (load) 103; rejel (foot), 248. When a noun of this pattern is nunated or annexed, it takes the pattern fe'ēl.

1 Patterns of nouns and adjectives in diminutive forms are not included.
7. **f'ul**
   ṭuwd (sleep), 349; ḫmūd, 272.

8. **fe'ul**
   ṣemūb (headstrong), 593; ṭṣedūb (liar), 661.

9. **fe'al**
   temman (a kind of rice), 206.

10. **fe'ill**
    weniyy (slow), 161; ṣebiy (servant), 440.

11. **f'ull**
    ṭluww (upper part of something), 190, 572.

12. **fa'ull**
    ṣaduw (enemy), 65.

13. **fa'leh**
    Ṣakkah (Mecca), 137; namleh (ant), 186.

14. **f'aleh**
    nkakleh (palm tree), 949; ṭbameh (a piece of meat), 790.
When a noun of this pattern is nunated or annexed, it takes the pattern **f'alh**.

15. **f'eleh**
    Ṣjereh (tree, bush), 4; ḍrejeh (stairs), 190.
When a noun of this pattern is nunated or annexed, it takes the pattern **f'elh**.

16. **fe'leh**
    ṣekleh (a young nanny goat), 443; ṭeq'eh (patch), 148.

17. **'af'al**
    ṭab'ad (farther), 3; ṭafgar (poorer), 54.

18. **fa'al**
    salām (greeting, peace), 389; kalām (talking), 389.

19. **fe'al**
    semāl (north), 165; zenān (time), 375.

20. **f'āl**
    ṭhān (horse), 255; ṭdār (wall), 219.

21. **f'aleh**
    ṣābeh (bandage), 1055; al-Gwareh (name of a village), 166.

22. **fa'aleh**
    ḥarādeh (a locust), 221; ṭalāmēh (safety), 388.

23. **fe'aleh**
    ḥeja'eh (chicken), 184; ṣeja'eh (courage), 656.

---

1 Every feminine pattern ending with **eh** has another variant ending with **ah**, the former is the f. suffix in al-Qasim while the latter is the f. suffix in southern Najd and among the bedouins. Among the Sammari population of northern Najd, the f. suffix is **av(h)**.
24. fe'il
be'ir (camel), 164; delil (guide), 70.

25. fe'ilah
šeninēh (milk mixed with water), 15; tewileh (long), 626.

26. fa'el
yābēs (dry), 115; šāreb (moustache), 122.

27. fa'il
dābb (snake), 4.

28. fa'ilah
sālīfeh (story), 858; 'āfyeh (health), 183.

29. fa'al
fallān (farmer), 159; dakkān (smoke), 313.

30. fe'il
'errīs (bridegroom), 735; sets-tpín (knife), 182.

31. fa'al
Hassūn (a man's name), 254; tannūr (oven), 731.

32. fa'al
sawwāyeh (piper), 54; na'āyeh (a lamenting woman), 620.

33. fa'āl
bardān (cold a.), 151; šab'ān (replete), 161.

34. fa'āl
Sagra (name of a town), 33; zalma (darkness), 109.

35. f'ulī or f'eli
bdūwi or bdewi (bedouin), 52; Šlubi (a member of the Šlubeh clan), 270.

36. f'a'ul
šādūb (shark), 108.

37. fa'ul
'arūs (bride), 950.

38. fa'il
kasīn (opponent), 489; gadr (rain pool), 630.

39. fa'ilah
ganīfeh (booty), 561; 'aširesh (tribe), 510.

40. fa'ilal
Barjas (a man's name), 1035; 'agrāb (scorpion), 52.

41. fe'ilal
bendag (gun), 173.

1 The mamdūd or prolonged noun in classical Arabic ceases to exist in this dialect. All mamdūd nouns become maqṣūr or abbreviated as in the above two examples; other examples are: 'āmya (259) for 'āmyā', Šija (173) for 'awjā', Karbala (562) for Karbalā'.

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42. fa'īl
jarbā (jerboa), 223.
43. fe'īl
'īsfr (sparrow), 513; ḥlūk (poor man), 734.
44. tfa'il
thawīl (descending), 190.
45. ta'll
taslim (finishing prayers), 169.
46. mef'el
menkel (sieve), 420; meslem (Muslim), 1038.
47. mfa' al
mtawwa' (a religious man), 260; ḥanna (name of a man), 215.
48. mfa'.el
mjarreb (experienced), 126.
49. maf'al
masyad (mosque), 47; marqag (elbow), 261.
50. maf'al
al-Mednab (place-name), 31; mejra (latch), 961; al-meb'ad (the Devil), 947.
51. maf'el
masjed (mosque), 55.
52. mfa'il
mdāwi (healer), 966.
53. utafa'el
mtalagges (gleaner), 878.
54. mef'al
mengār (beak), 681; mesmār (nail), 140.
55. mef'eleh
mengereh (mirror), 1181; megbereh (cemetery), 237.
56. maf'eleh
marjleh (manliness), 145.
57. mape'leh
mas'eyeh (sin), 158.
58. mef'eleh
merz'eh (wet-nurse), 973.
59. utafa'eleh
mtagatt'eh (it is cut into many pieces), 374.
60. maf'ul
maftūh (opened), 143; mandūd (stretched), 969.
61. maf'ul
m'adūd (counted), 179; mkarūg (pierced), 964.
62. *ma'uleh*  
*masuabeh* (forced), 992.

63. *ma'aleh*  
*misubag* (racing), 798.

2.2 Foreign Nouns

Most of the infrequent foreign vocabulary found in this collection of proverbs is Persian or Turkish. It is to be noted that most of these nouns are old-fashioned and are dying out.

The following are the most important nouns of foreign origin:

- *tefag* (gun), 382, from Turkish *tufek*.
- *beerag* (flag), 1184, from Turkish *bayrak*.
- *'anzerut* (sarco colla, Persian gum), 568 from Persian.
- *derwis* (dervish), 316, from Persian.
- *zerbul* (boot), 359, of unknown origin.
- *brisam* (silk), 224, from Persian *abrisam*.
- *kwandat* (women), 546, sing. *kwandeh*. It is likely that this word is adopted without its original meaning from Turkish *kande* (to be called or invited).
- *anjar* (anchor), 460. According to Ibn Manzur in *Lisan al-'Arab*, it is adopted from Persian.
- *'Ab* (a word applied to a certain period of the summer), 140, from Syriac.
- *šbāt* (a word applied to a period of winter coinciding with February), 407, 408, from Syriac.

2.3 Archaic Nouns and Adjectives

There are four groups of archaic vocabulary occurring in

2. Ibid.
5. Steingass, *op. cit*.
7. *Lisan* (njr)
the proverbs of this collection.

(a) Vocabulary which occur only in proverbs, fixed idioms
phrases, and poetry as al-qaytun (the cat), 28; this
word is not used in either classical Arabic nor this dialect;
tuba (physicians), 18-- etebba is used instead; mesarr
(navel), 748--this word is constructed in this way in this
proverb to rhyme with the word mejarr. The words serr and
serreh are usually used in its place. kenfesān (black beetles),
90--this plural is constructed in this peculiar way to make
it rhyme with lsān in this proverb; helbāj (idiotic), 1080;
bajz, a meaningless word used for the sake of 'itbā'; dahh
(hitting), 1004; bā' (fathom), 298--the usual word is bō'.

(b) Vocabulary which is used in the dialect but is considered
old-fashioned and is becoming obsolete, as tefaq (gun),
362; al-kwandāt (women), 546; zerbūl (boot), 359; serīb
(a certain rope used in the process of drawing water by
animals--as-sawānī), 1141. As this process has passed into
disuse, this term is no longer used.

(c) Rarely-used vocabulary, as retsiyyeh (fuṣ., rakiyyah)
(water well), 755; dīk (dog), 1039; j'ari (dog), 773; benn
(coffee), 174; meṭṭarak (road, way), 98, the words teridz
or jāddeh are more common.

(d) Vocabulary which are used in one particular part of
Najd or a section of its inhabitants (e.g. settlers or
nomads) while not used, or used with different meaning
in other parts or sections: it is likely that a good
number of nouns and adjectives occurring in our collection
come under this category. We will, however, refer only to
some convenient examples:
n'ajeh (sheep), 430: among the settled people in al-Qaṣīm,
this word is rarely used. The word šāt is used instead. It
is common in southern Najd and among bedouins generally. še'lil (shirt), 863, 1092: this word is common in bedouin speech. Settled people generally use töb instead.

hawi (house), 629: this word is used in Riyadh and probably some other parts of Najd. It is not known in northern Najd.

feed (of, one of), 254: this word is old-fashioned in Qašīm and Ḥayel, and not known in the south.

efem (mouth), 1085: this word becomes etm and tem in Sudair. netül (thief), 230 from netal (to steal). In southern Najd netal is used for a different meaning, "to throw away". The word netül is not known there.

'abas (date-stones), 535: this word has a different meaning among bedouins and most southern Najdis, "camel urine". For date-stones, the words fe$am, 'ajam, or fe$i are more common.

jeher (fūg., juhr) (burrow), 217: this word is used by bedouins and only rarely by settled people (especially in al-Qašīm) who in this instance change the pharyngeal fricative h to the velar fricative k; jeker (see prov. no. 218).

2.4 The Gender of Nouns

2.4.1 The Feminine Gender

(a) Nouns

Most feminine nouns end in eh in al-Qašīm and northern Najd, and in ah in southern Najd as well as in bedouin speech generally, thus: bqereh or bgarah (cow), 167; beezeh or beezah (egg), 180; dejajeh or dejajah (chicken), 312.1

As is the case in classical Arabic, some nouns are feminine by usage, even though they have no feminine ending, 1

The h of the feminine ending eh or ah is assimilated in the speech of settled people in Najd when the word is suffixed with the 2'īs. suffix k or ts and then the suffix is geminated, as in sefinakk and not sefinatk (your ship), prov. no. 766; jeddats-ts and not jeddat-ts (your grandmother), prov. no. 1133.
as ṣams (sun), nafs (soul, self), 702; 'arz (ground), 571; 'arnab (hare), 938; qaww (fire), 466. Some nouns are feminine because they refer to a female, as fāṭer (old she-camel), 710; 'anz (nanny-goat), 537.

Names of towns, countries, etc. are, on the whole, feminine, as Najd (193). But Maser (Egypt) occurs both as feminine (1019) and as masculine (983, 984), and al-Hend (India) occurs as masculine (1097) but is usually considered feminine.

Single words ending with the short front vowel a are feminine, as ad-deny (the world), 323; Šagra (name of a town), 33; Zrema (name of a town), 33; Bgee'a (name of a village), 520; zalma (darkness), 109; enta (female), 1037; yemna (right hand), 829.

(b) Adjectives

Feminine adjectives have the same endings as feminine nouns. See, for example, šeeneh (ugly), 976; gesīreh (short), 547; 'ōja (crooked), 949.

As in classical Arabic and other modern Arabic dialects, the adjectives in the pattern of af'āl which denote colour and defects have the feminine adjectival pattern fa'zla, thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine (m.s.)</th>
<th>Feminine (f.s.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kazār (green)</td>
<td>kazra (307)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hamar (red)</td>
<td>hamra (643)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'abyaz (white)</td>
<td>beega (866)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'asgah (deaf)</td>
<td>sagha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5 The Number of Nouns

In the Najd dialect, dual has ceased to exist in

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1. See, e.g., for the dialects of modern eastern Arabia, Johnstone, op. cit., p. 59.
2. In our dialect, when the glottal stop in this pattern is followed by another guttural, the glottal stop is then dropped and the pattern changes to fa'āl as in kazār (green); hamar (red); 'ama (blind); 'awar (one-eyed); ṣaraj (lame); badab (hunchbacked).
adjectives. They have only singular or plural forms.  

As in classical Arabic and the dialects of eastern Arabia, substantives have singular, dual and plural.

2.5.1. The dual

In this dialect, as in the dialects of eastern Arabia, the dual is formed by the affixation -(een to the singular form, as in srajeen (two lanterns), 109; 'esfūreen (two sparrows), 433; wāldeen (two parents), 1073. The feminine ending eh or ah is converted into et as in nāgeteen (two she-camels); zelfeteen (two steps), 361.

2.5.2 The plural

(a) The Sound Plural

A masculine singular noun is made a sound plural by the affixation -īn to it, as

\[
\begin{align*}

tāyyīb (good) & > tāyyībīn (327, 482) \\
kayyīr (good) & > kayyīrīn (332) \\
mṣallī (practising prayers) & > mṣallīn (1024) \\
mṣālem (peaceful) & > mṣālīn (339)
\end{align*}
\]

A feminine singular noun is made a sound plural by replacing the f. singular endings ah or eh by -āt, as

\[
\begin{align*}
geebeh(-ah) (absence) & > geebāt (338) \\
'ādeh(-ah) (habit) & > 'ādāt (486) \\
kāleḥ (maternal aunt) & > kālāt (594)
\end{align*}
\]

Šammarīs change the suffix of the feminine sound plural -āt to -āy, as in nkalāy for nkalāt (palm-trees), tawlāy for tawlāt (tables), and mdarrsāy for mdarrsāt (teachers (f.)).

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1 This is also the case in most modern dialects. See, e.g., Johnstone, op. cit.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Cf. Musil, Northern Neğd, p. 19.
5 Cf. P.F. Abboud, The Syntax of Najdi Arabic (Texas, 1964), p. 75. Cantineau notes that the Bani Šakar change āt to āh as in bgalāḥ and ǧjarāḥ for bgalāt (onions) and ǧjarāt (trees). See Cantineau, op. cit., p. 133.
(b) The Broken Plural

The main patterns of broken plurals which occur in our texts are set out below.

1. f'āl: jmāl (camels), 704; yāl (boys), 16.
2. f'āl: njūm (stars), 104; tyūr (birds), 471.
3. fe'lān: 'erbān (bedouins), 711.
4. f'ela: šreka (partners), 621.
5. fa'āl: jawādd (footpaths), 631.
6. fa'āyel: 'amāyem (turbans), 529.
7. fe'āyel: geṣāyed (songs), 1197.
8. fe'āla: metāya (riding beasts), 867; sekāra (drunken people), 387.
9. fa'āla: 'atāya (gifts), 751; garāya (villages), 763.
10. fa'āl: layāli (nights), 1071; habāri (bustards), 483.
11. f'ala: fgara (poor people), 1101.
12. f'eleh (or f'elah): rfezeh (or rfezah) (Rafidites), 944.
13. fe'āl: rekkāb (riders), 910.
14. fawā'il: lawāṭs (noxious insects), 204.
15. fa'ālil: 'asāfīr (sparrows), 273; anādzīd (grape-bunches), 601.
16. fa'ā'il: sanānīr (cats), 63.
17. fe'ā'il: sekātsīn (knives), 754.
18. fe'ālal: zefāde' (frogs), 881.
19. 'af'āl: 'argāb (necks), 34; 'aṭrāf (edges, ends), 44.
20. 'ef'ēl: 'ebā'er (camels), 641; 'eṣābe' (fingers), 41.
21. 'ef'ēl: 'ebālīs (devils), 542.
22. mēf'ēl: meṭāmēn (low grounds), 896.
23. naf'ēl: manāzel (homes, houses), 638.
24. mēf'ēl: mēfātīh (keys), 856.
25. mfa'āl: mhabbal (fools), 652.

The singular adjectives of pattern 'af'āl denoting colour or defects can be made plurals in two ways: (a) by
constructing the root of the word on the patterns fi'l, fe'l, fe'el, or fu'el, as bíz (white), hemr/hemer (red), sufer/sefr (yellow); zerg (blue); (b) by constructing the roots of the word on the patterns fi'l, fe'l, or fu'l and adding the affixation -an to it, as bízan (white), südän (black), humrân/hemrân (red), 'emyân (blind), and 'urân (one-eyed).

(c) Collective Nouns

The main patterns of collective nouns which occur in our texts are set out below.

1. fa'al: laham (meat), 2; ganam (sheep), 226.
2. fe'al: sebal (corn ears), 862; begar (cows), 212.
3. f'al: 'nab (grapes), 140; igat (pickings), 850.
4. fa'ul: badu (nomads), 398; gazu (raiders), 223.
5. fu'al: gubas (grasshoppers), 483.
6. fe'el: gtan (cotton), 224; hejen (camels), 308.
7. fa'el: namel (ants), 459; hazer (settled people), 1152.
8. fa'el: jarad (locusts), 303.
9. fe'il: jerîd (palm-fronds), 20; yebis (a type of dry date), 960.
10. fa'1: barîn (women), 79.

(d) Anomalous Plurals

The following anomalous plurals occur in our material: 'ummahât (mothers), 60; ba'arîn (camels), 124; akwân (religious scholars), 770; 'ideen (hands), 84, as plural as well as dual; rejlee (feet), 378, the n is elided which occurs frequently in this word and in 'ideen when it is annexed (mudaf), e.g., 'ideek.

2.6 The Declension of Nouns

Nouns in all modern Arabic dialects are not inflected for case. This dialect is no exception.
The tanwin or nunation, however, is very common in the Najd dialect. It occurs in about 200 examples in this collection, that is, a little less than seventeen per cent of the total number of the collection. However, the ending en is invariably used except when the noun ends with the short vowel a whether it be a feminine ending or not, then the nunation ending is an, as in kazran (green), 307; beeqan (white), 866; yemanan (a right-hand), 'asan (evening meal), 975.

While in classical Arabic duals and sound masculine plurals cannot be nunated, they are nunated in this dialect, for example 'esfureenen (two sparrows), 433; Meselminen (Muslims).

There are no diptotes in this dialect, that is, all nouns can be nunated, for example 'asfiren (sparrows); asfaren (yellow). Each of these two nouns was a diptote in classical Arabic but is nunated in this dialect.

2.7. The Numerals
(a) Cardinal Numbers

The following cardinal numbers occur in our texts:

1 See, e.g., nos. 14, 15, 23, 37, 71, 76, 80, 110, 140, 146, 154, 177, 179, 183, 200, 210, 218, 228, 236, 246, 266, 273, 463, 515, 570, 572, 710, 900, 981, 989, 1012, 1054, 1106, 1111, 1128, 1161.

2 The 'Anazi and Šammari nomads who inhabit northern Arabia (from Häyel northwards) and the Syrian and Iraqi deserts, however, preserve the ending -an. See I.G. Wetzstein, "Sprachlicher aus den Zeltagern der syrischen Wust", ZDMG, 22 (1868), p. 74, rajjalan (a man) and xoran (advice); and cf. Landberg, op. cit., p. 70, jamilan (a favour), ihbalan (ropes), and p. 91, rakban (a riding party). This nunation ending occurs also in Oman, as in the words gazzan (a raw thing) and nazilan (a ripe thing) in the proverb gazzan byadak wala nazilan byad geejak (Better a raw thing with your own hands than a ripe one with the hands of another)--Jayakar, no. 187.

3 The cardinal number arbatun (forty) occurs in prov. no. 413. However, as this form is not used dialectically (the proverb is coined in the classical language), it is not included.
1 (m.) ṭawḥīd (proverbs 66, 1100); 2 (m.) ṭātneen (proverbs 66, 845); 3 (m.) ṭalāṭeh (or -ah) (proverbs 66, 845); 10 (m.) ṣerēh or ṣarāh (prov. no. 764); 10 (f.) ṣār (proverbs 221, 701), 1 70 (c.) sab‘īn (prov. 598); 90 (c.) ṭeṣ‘īn (prov. 196); 100 (c.) myāṭ (proverbs 584, 797); 1000 (c.) ṣab‘ān (prov. no. 981).

These examples show that numbers from 3 to 10 referring to masculine nouns have the ending -ah as in classical Arabic, or eh, and those which refer to feminine nouns do not have this ending.

The numerals 20, 30, 40, etc. are formed by adding the affixation -in to the numbers 2, 3, 4, etc. referring to feminine nouns. Thus kams becomes kamsīn which is used for both masculine and feminine.

(b) Ordinal Numbers

Only the following four ordinal numbers occur in our material:

1st (m.) āwwāl (prov. no. 140);
2nd (m.) tānī (prov. no. 140);
2nd (f.) tānyēh (prov. no. 144);
3rd (m.) tālēt (prov. no. 140).

2.8 The Personal Pronouns

2.8.1 The Independent Personal Pronouns

The independent or detached (munfasilah) personal pronouns are:

1 c.s. ḏānā
2 m.s. ḏānte (Hāyel: ent) 2 m.pl. antum, antom, antu
2 f.s. ḏānte (Hāyel: ent) 2 f.pl. anten (Hāyel: enten S. Najd: antum)
3 m.s. ḏuh
3 f.s. ḏīni

In other contexts it can be articulated ṣār.

1 When this word is not a muḏāf, it is pronounced myēh or myah.

2 Cf. also P. Abboud, op. cit., pp. 16, 18.
2.8.2 The Suffixed Personal Pronouns

There are three categories of suffixed personal pronouns.

(a) Pronouns used, on the whole, all over Najd by settled and unsettled population:

1 c.s.: -i suffixed, as in classical Arabic, to nouns and some adverbs and prepositions, as in ḥlu'ī (my ribs), 119; baḥni (my stomach), 192; 'endi (I have), 860; li (for me).

1 c.pl.: -na as in hameena (we protected), 107; gadāna (our dinner), 1143.

2 m.s.: -k, -ek as in jāk (he came to you), 66, wa jhekk (your face), 62.¹

2 m.pl.: -kum as in ḥādekum (he came to you again), 1033.²

2 f.s.: -ets, -ats, -ts, as in ḥōfets, 276; gṭeebats-ts, 36.

2 f.pl.: -ken(n) as in leken(n) (for you). However, in Riyadh, -kum is used.

3 m.pl.: -hum as in sab-hat-hum (their rosary), 127.³

3 f.pl.: -hen (except in Riyadh and some southern Najdi parts where -hum is used) as in jawwzūhen wa a'īnu 'eleochen, prov. no. 232.

(b) Pronouns used generally in northern Najd (from al-Qaṣīm northwards) by settled and most unsettled population:

1 c.s.: while the classical suffix -ni survives (although the vowel is shortened) in southern Najdi speech and the speech of most bedouins as in the great majority of contemporary Arabic dialects, in northern Najdi speech the vowel of this suffix is dropped and

¹ Most bedouins use -ak as in tōbak (your dress).
² kom and ku are also common as 2 m.pl. suffixes in bedouin speech in northern Najd.
³ han and hu are also common as 3 m.pl. suffixes in bedouin speech in northern Najd. Cf. P. Abboud, op. cit., p. 84.
replaced by another short vowel, ą, before n (nūn al-wiqāyah) as in menn (from me), 1; talgān (you find me), 192; tdawwran (you look for me), 192.

3 m.s.: -uh as in snūnuh (his teeth), 6; luh (for him), 239; ta'arfuḥ (you know him), 1106. If the word to which this pronoun is to be suffixed has the ending ą, then the semi-vowel, wāw, is introduced to replace the short vowel u which is then dropped and the short vowel ą is lengthened as in kallāw (he left him), 8; balāw, 611.

3 f.s.: -ah: while the 3 f.s. suffix is -hā or -ha in classical Arabic, most neighbouring Arabic dialects and --as referred to below--in southern Najdi speech and the speech of most Najdi bedouins everywhere, in northern Najd the ending ą or ā is elided. The pronoun then becomes -ah as in bah (in it), 173, for baha (class. bihā); ṭedānāh (her ears), 1114.

(c) Pronouns used in southern Najdi speech and the speech of most bedouins:

1 c.s.: -ni, suffixed, as in classical Arabic to verbs and some prepositions as in menni (from me), 1; tdawwerni (you look for me), 192.

3 m.s.: -eh as in ktābeh (his book), fōgeh (above him).

If the word to which this pronoun is to be suffixed ends with the short vowel ā as in kalla (to leave), then the short vowel e in the suffix is dropped and the short vowel ā in the word is lengthened, e.g., kallāh (he left it/him).

3 f.s.: -ha as in classical Arabic, except that the vowel is short as in most Arabic dialects of today, e.g., ktābha (her book).
2.9 **Demonstratives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Form (Middle and Southern Najd)</th>
<th>Form (Northern Najd)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m.s.</td>
<td>hada (101, 1090)</td>
<td>hadāk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>da (583, 1090)</td>
<td>dāk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.s.</td>
<td>hadī (1094)</td>
<td>hadīts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>di</td>
<td>dīts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.pl.</td>
<td>ḥadūla (bed. ḥadūla)</td>
<td>ḥadūlāk (bed. ḥadūlak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ḍūla (bed. ḍūla)</td>
<td>ḍūlak (bed. ḍūlak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.pl.</td>
<td>ḥadūli (bed. ḥadulli, ḥadūn)</td>
<td>ḥadūlits/ḥadūlīts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ḍūli (bed. ḍullīn)</td>
<td>ḍūlits/ḍūlīts (bed. ḍūlīts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If any of the demonstrative pronouns denoting nearness precedes a synarthrous noun (mu’arraf bi al) then only the first syllable ḥa remains of it. ḥa is not inflected for gender or number,\(^3\) as ḥāljamāl (this camel), 611; ḥāl-mesmār (this nail), 612; ḥāt-tweerāt (these little birds), 1118.\(^4\)

In southern Najd da is used instead of ḥa or ḥa as in ḍal-hīn (now, at present) instead of ḥāl-hīn in northern Najd.

**hak**—in Ḥayel hak\(^5\)—likewise substitutes all demonstrative pronouns denoting distance before a synarthrous noun without being affected for gender or number, as in hak al-walad (that boy), hak al-bent (that girl), hak ar-rjal (those men).\(^6\)

The demonstrative pronoun ḥāts (this/these) is used in Ḥayel and its neighbourhood.\(^7\)

---

1. hada and hadah are also used by some bedouins.
3. In Ḥayel its vowel is short. Cf. *ibid.*, p.28, halwalad (this boy) and p. 31, harrajil (this man) and not ḥalwalad and ḥarrajil as elsewhere in Najd.
6. hak al-'ajīn (that dough) occurs in prov. no. 1083.
The demonstrative pronouns ḥāda and ḥādi when suffixed with personal pronouns become ḥādā as in ḥādāy (here I am) and ḥādāk (here you are).

**Diminuted Demonstrative pronouns**

It is common in the Najd dialect to apply diminution to demonstrative pronouns. It would be well, therefore, to show how they are affected by diminution, even though there is no diminuted demonstrative pronoun in our collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m.s.</th>
<th>hadāyya</th>
<th>hadayyāk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f.s.</td>
<td>hadayyay</td>
<td>hadayyeets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.pl.</td>
<td>hadayyōla</td>
<td>hadayyōlāk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.pl.</td>
<td>hadayyōli</td>
<td>hadayyōlīts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The ħā at the beginning of each pronoun may, alternatively, be dropped).

### 2.10 Relative Pronouns

There are three relative pronouns in the Najd dialect: alli, men, and mā. They are not inflected for number or gender.¹

alli is used in place of all the classical: alladi (he who), allati (she who), alladāni, allatāni (they (dual) who), alladān (m.pl.) (they who), allāti or allā'ī (f.pl.) (they who).

### 2.11 Diminution

Diminution² is very common in the dialect. It occurs in some 54 nouns in our material.

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¹ See, e.g., nos. from 81 to 104, 997, 998, 1000, 819, 827, 833, 834.

² Burckhardt, speaking of the use of the diminutive in Egyptian speech, notes that "it is often used not only because the object in question is really smaller or inferior in quantity or quality, but to give a kind of bonhomie to the expression; and in this sense the Bedouins especially use it on many occasions. Thus 'poor little thing' might be applied in a kind and compassionate manner to a person by no means diminutive in stature or wanting in money." J.L. Burckhardt, *Arabic Proverbs*, 3rd ed. (London, 1972), p. 188. This exactly applies to the use of the diminutive in Najd.
The main diminuted noun patterns are set out below:

1. **f'eel**: dimin. of the patterns: fa'al, fa'l, fe'il, fa'el, fe'al, fe'el, fa'ul and fu'l, as wleed (a little boy), 24, 213; lbeen (little milk), 494; gseen (little branch), 606.

2. **f'eelah (or -lah)**: dim. of the patterns: f'eleh, fe'leh, fu'leh, fa'leh, as šjeereh (a little tree), 606; fledzeh (a little head scar), 1130.

3. **f'ayl**: dim. of fa'l, as šwavv (a little thing), 425-427.

4. **f'ayyil**: dim. of f'al, fe'il and fa'il, as jdayyir (a little wall); hmayyir (a little donkey), 999; ṣgayyir (very young), 464; ṣdayyir (a little rain pool).

5. **f'ayyleh (or -lah)**: dim. of f'aleh, fe'ileh, and fa'a'leh, as ḥmayyreh (a little ass), ṣgayyreh (very young (f.)), 725; ṣravyyreh (a little spark), 725.

6. **fwee'el**: dim. of fa'el as Sweelem. The fem. fa'leh(-ah) is diminuted fwee'elah as rweebzeh (194), or fwee'ileh(-ah) as sweelifeh(-ah) (a little tale).

7. **fwee'il**: dim. of fa'ul, as 'weemid (a little pillar).

8. **f'eelān**: dim. of fa'lān as breedān (feeling cold), jwee'ān (hungry), Rmeezān (510).

9. **f'ee'lā**: dim. of fa'la as bleeba (dark she-camel), 82.

10. **affe'el/efe'el**: dim. of af'al (or fa'al as hanar (red)) which denotes colours and defects as aheener (red), akeezār (green), egeeer (yellow), ezeerez (blue), a'eerej (lame), aheede (hunchbacked).

11. **f'ee'el**: dim. of fe'el, as skeeter (sugar)

12. **f'ee'il**: dim. of fa'al, fe'il, and fa'ul, as dkeekin (little smoke), skeetsin (little knife), 306, and tneeir

As followed elsewhere in this work, the number after a word is the sequence number of the proverb in which it occurs. Words with no number mentioned are not from our texts but are mentioned for the purpose of completeness.
Definition

The definite article al is used in its original form, that is, not shortened to l or changed to el as is the case in many modern Arabic dialects.¹

The solar (šamsiyyah) l and lunar (qamariyyah) l are used in the same way as in classical Arabic.

Interrogative Pronouns

The interrogative pronouns in the Najd dialect are: weš (what),² ween (where),³ 'een (where)—this pronoun is only used when preceded by the preposition mn as in mn 'een? (where from?, whence?)⁴—men (who),⁵ meta (when)(932), leeš (why), leeh (why)—used mainly by bedouins or in southern Najd—wara (why)—more common than leeš or leeh; it can be suffixed, for example warâk mā jīt? (why did you not come?),

¹ al becomes l and il in most of the dialects of eastern Arabia (see Johnstone, op. cit., p. 67), and el or il in Syria and Egypt, e.g. el-jawāb (the letter), Taim., no. 979.
² See e.g., proverbs 612, 614, 617 and 1114-1121. weš is also used but rarely so.
³ See e.g., prov. no. 616.
⁴ See e.g., prov. no. 606.
⁵ See e.g., proverbs 604, 605, 607.
warāhum rāhaw? (why did they go), etc. \(^1\) IELDS (m.) (which), `ayyat (f.) (which).

3. Particles

3.1 Prepositions

All prepositions in classical Arabic are used except \(^2\) and \(\text{k.}^{\text{fi}}\), however, is very common in southern Najd but only rarely used in the north as is \(\text{fa}\) as in \(\text{fal-beet}\) (in the house). The preposition \(\text{a}\) takes several shapes (b, be, ba, bu, bi) in this dialect, according to what follows it; for example behum (in them) (825), buh (in him, it in) (826), bal-fās (with the axe)(24), bzandek (with your flint)(57).

The classical preposition \(\text{j}\) also takes several shapes (l, le, lu, la) as in lek (for you)(871), l-Mahmūd (for Mahmūd), luh (to/for him)(90), laha (for her).

The preposition \(\text{men}\) becomes \(\text{mn}\) when it is followed by a vowel as in \(\text{mn al-berrān}\) (from the desert)(235).

The classical preposition \(\text{`ila}\) changes to \(\text{`ela}\) (see proverb no. 282). It is used less than in classical Arabic as it is often replaced by \(\text{l}\) as in rāh \(\text{l-Abha}\) (he went to Abha) and not rāh \(\text{ela}\) Abha. In bedouin speech \(\text{`ela}\) generally becomes \(\text{elya}\) or \(\text{lya}\).

The prepositions \(\text{leen}, \text{eleen}\) (from classical \(\text{`ila} \text{'an}\)), \(\text{lama}\) or \(\text{elama}\) (bed. \(\text{lyama}\)), and \(\text{lamann}\) (until) are also used.

While is southern Najd and in bedouin speech generally, the first person suffix -\(\text{ni}\) is retained in the prepositions \(\text{men}\) (\(\text{fuṣ.}, \text{min}\)) and \(\text{`an}\), in most northern parts it is dropped, thus \(\text{menn}\) (from me), \(\text{`ann}\) (off me) (see proverb no. 1). In a few northern areas such as \(\text{Yūn al-Jaw}\) in the north of al-Qaṣīm, this suffix is not dropped but the gemination of the \(\text{n}\) in both

\(^1\) See e.g., proverbs 592, 610, 611, 615.
prepositions is abandoned, thus 'ani and meni.

3.2. Adverbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>been</td>
<td>between</td>
<td>fog</td>
<td>above, over</td>
<td>höl</td>
<td>near, around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'end</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>yamm</td>
<td>towards</td>
<td>gabel</td>
<td>before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taḥat</td>
<td>below, under</td>
<td>lamm</td>
<td>towards</td>
<td>'egub</td>
<td>after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḥader</td>
<td>below, under</td>
<td>yemīn</td>
<td>right-wards</td>
<td>gebal</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dzeddam</td>
<td>in front of</td>
<td>yesār</td>
<td>leftwards</td>
<td>dāyem</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wara</td>
<td>behind</td>
<td>mendākel</td>
<td>inside²</td>
<td>hna</td>
<td>here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bass</td>
<td>only</td>
<td>menṭāle'</td>
<td>outside²</td>
<td>hnayya</td>
<td>here (dim. of hna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hnāk</td>
<td>there</td>
<td>taww³</td>
<td>just</td>
<td>wājed</td>
<td>much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hālḥīn</td>
<td>now</td>
<td>'ād</td>
<td>then</td>
<td>elāmenn</td>
<td>when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mendzelil</td>
<td>a little while ago</td>
<td>ṭawwālī</td>
<td>straight</td>
<td>yōm⁴</td>
<td>when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menšwayy</td>
<td>a little while ago</td>
<td>balḥeel</td>
<td>very much</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We may also add another adverb which is used in Riyadh, Sudair, and some other southern Najdi areas. It is meed as in 'ant meedi? (do you mean me?).

1 I noticed this in the speech of my two friends, Dr. Sāliḥ al-'Amr and Mr. Abdallāh az-Zaidān, who both come from that place.
2 The adverbs barra (outside) and juwwa (inside) are recent acquisitions in the Najd dialect borrowed from neighbouring dialects.
3 As in ja taww (he just came, he came a few moments ago).
4 The adv. yōm (when) is also used in some Yemeni dialects both ancient and modern. A Yemeni nowadays may say, for example, yōm jina ( apologize me) (when we came) exactly as a contemporary Najdi would say. See Ahmad Saraf ad-Dīn, op. cit., p. 24.
3.3 Conjunctions

The conjunctions which occur in our collection are set out below: la (if); ela (if); tsän (if); lô or law (if); 'u, wa, we (and); 'umma . . . wella (either . . . or); là . . . wala (neither . . . nor); tsenn (as if . . . ); dâm or adam (so long as; while, as in proverb no. 307); hetta (even); wala (and not; is better than (as in proverb no. 221)); meer or mår (but); ella (except), geer (except, other than); mä geer (except, only); hda (except)—this particle is often preceded by the negative mä (the equivalent of mä hda) but it is rarely used (proverb no. 1143); lôla (but for); mähna (there is not) (proverbs 891, 892).

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1 See, e.g., proverbs 743, 744, 644, 645.
2 'umma . . . wella variably occurs as yumma . . . wella.
3 Proverb no. 818. This conjunction was originally mä geer (except). This is supported by the fact that mä geer (but) and another version, mgeer) which is nearer to meer are common in bedouin speech in the eastern Libyan town of Darnah and district as we learnt from Mr. Naṣr 'Awn who is a native of that town.
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