

A CRITICAL AND COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
MODERN NAJDI ARABIC PROVERBS

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by

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This dissertation has never been submitted to this or any
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Reading Transcription

Consonants

'		° (شعزّه)
b		ب
t		ت
<u>t</u>		ث
j		ج
ɸ		ح
<u>k</u>		خ
d		د
<u>d</u>		ذ
r		ر
z		ز
s		س
š		ش
š		ص
z	If a word with a ض is classical or literary, the ض is transcribed	ض ، ظ
ɸ		ط
'		ع
g		غ
f		ف
q	(only in words of classical or literary origin)	ق
g	(an affricated ق , that is, a ق similar to the English hard g)	ق
<u>dz</u>	(a ق affricated as <u>dz</u>)	ق
k		ك
<u>ts</u>	(an affricated ك)	ك
l		ل
m		م
n		ن
h		هـ

Semi Vowels

w		و
y		ي

Vowels

A description of the vowels is given on pp. 485 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):

- Abšīhi: M.A. al-'Abšīhi, al-Mustaṭraf
- Akwa': I. al-'Akwa', al-'Amtal al-Yamāniyyah
- Amīn: A. Amīn, Qāmūs al-'Ādāt wat-Taqālīd . . .
- 'Arīf: S. 'Arīf, Silat al-'Adab bayn al-Fransīs wal-'Arab
- ^{Ask.or} Askari: H. al-'Askari, Jamharat al-'Amtāl
- Ašqar: S. 'A. Ašqar, aṭ-Ṭurfah al-Bāhijah . . .
- Bājūri: M. al-Bājūri, Kitāb 'Amtāl al-Mutakallimīn . . .
- Bakri: Abū 'Ubayd al-Bakri, Fasl al-Maqāl
- Baq. (or Baqli): M. Q. al-Baqli, Wihdat al-'Amtāl al-'Ammiyyah . . .
- 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 'Amtāl al-Mawṣil . . .
- Ḍabbi: M.S. aḍ-Ḍabbi, 'Amtāl al-'Arab
- ^{Dal.or} Dalīši: 'A. ad-Dalīši, al-'Amtāl aš-Ša'biyyah fī al-Bašrah
- Fā'iqa: F.H. Rāḡib, Ḥadā'iq al-'Amtāl al-'Ammiyyah
- Faraj: M.Y. Faraj, Hikmat aš-Šu'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} Ḡulāmi: 'A. al-Ḡulāmi, al-Muraddad min 'Amtāl al-Mawṣil . . .
- Hanafi: J. al-Ḥanafi, al-'Amtāl 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 'Abd Rabbihi: A.M. Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, al-'Iqd al-Farīd
- Ibn 'Ašim: M.S. Ibn 'Ašim, al-Fākir
- Jayak.: A.S.G. Jayakār, "Omanee Proverbs"
- Juh.: 'A. al-Juhaimān, al-'Amtāl 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-Maidāni, 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. āl-Nūri, al-'Amtāl ad-Dārijah fi al-Kuwait
- ODEP: W. Smith, The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs
- Reinhardt: C. Reinhardt and K. Dragoman, Ein arabischer Dialekt . . .
- Sāsi: O. 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'ālibi, Tamtīl: 'A. at-Ta'ālibi, at-Tamtīl wal-Muḥāḍarah
- Ta'ālibi, Kaṣṣ (or Kaṣṣ ul-kaṣṣ): 'A. at-Ta'ālibi, Kaṣṣ ul-Kaṣṣ
- Ta'ālibi, Timār (or Timār al-Qulūb): 'A. at-Ta'ālibi, Timār al-Qulūb fi al-Mudāf wal-Mansūb
- Ta'ālibi, Bardul-'Akbād: A. at-Ta'ālibi, Bardul-'Akbād fil-'A'dād
- Taim.: A. Taimūr Pasha, al-'Amtāl al-'Āmīyyah
- Taim., Kināyāt: A. Taimūr Pasha, al-Kināyāt al-'Āmīyyah
- Ṭāliq.: 'A. aṭ-Ṭāliqāni, Risālat al-'Amtāl al-Baḡdādiyyah
- Tallq.: K.L. Tallqvist, "Arabische Sprichwörter und Spiele "
- Tarjamān: S. Tarjamān, Yā Māl aṣ-Ṣām
- Tik. (or Tikrīti): 'A. at-Tikrīti, al-'Amtāl al-Baḡdādiyyah al-Muqāranah
- Tik., Janharah: 'A. at-Tikrīti, Jamharat al-'Amtāl al-Baḡdādiyyah
- Ūbūdi: M. al-'Ūbūdi, al-'Amtāl al-'Āmīyyah fī 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"
- Ẓafīri: A.M. aṣ-Ẓafīri, "'Amtāl wa Kalimāt Badawīyyah"
- Zamak.: M. az-Zamakšari, al-Mustaḡṣa fil-'Amtāl

B. Titles of Periodicals

- AIEO: 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-ḥa (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 Qaşim 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 Qaṣīmi 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-Qaṣīm may be used with some differences of phraseology elsewhere in Najd (especially where the use of personal suffixes is involved--in proverb no. 1076, nafsuḥ nafṣ ṭeer, for instance, the word nafsuḥ 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. 28, 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,¹ although even these are only actively present in the minds of a small minority of their present-day users.²

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

¹ For example the stories of the proverbs: 17, 33, 111, 116, 158, 166, 271, 291, 341, 365, 369, 389, 413, 509, 526, 536, 683, 798, 804, 833, 850, 935, 985, 988, 999, 1005, 1058, 1091, 1095, 1120, 1147, 1190, 1197, 1199.

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-'Āmmiyyah fī Najd, vol. 1, by Muḥammad 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-Ša'biyyah 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-'Āmmiyyah fī Najd".¹ In these

¹ See Bibliography.

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

page is given.

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 "NS" (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 ^{studies} 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.

Chapter One

1. TRANSLATION, TRANSCRIPTION, COMPARISON AND COMMENTS

1 أبعد اختي عن (عني) وخذ ثمرته من (مني)

'ab'ed ekti 'ann ('anni) 'uked tmertah menn (menni)¹

"[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: تقول النخلة لأختها: أبعدى
عني ذلك أحمل حملي وحملك²

NS: Baghdad: Tik., no. 23; Hanafi, no. 357; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1898; Fegh., no. 2080; Frayha, no. 2105.

2 أبعد اللحم عن اللحم لا ينشم (يخيم)

'ab'ed al-laḥam 'an al-laḥam lā yenšem (ykīs)³

¹ Also Juh., no. 14.

² See Ta'ālibi, at-Tamtīl wal-muḥāḥarah (Cairo, 1961), p. 195.

³ Also 'Ubūdi, "al-'Amtālul-'Āmmiyah fī Najd", al-'Arab, 3 (1968), p. 109.

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

This proverb emphasizes the inadvisability of marriage between relatives. The word al-laḥam and its singular al-lḥameh 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.

3 أبعد عليك من لِحْسِ اذْنِكَ
(أَكْوَاد)

'ab'ad ('akwad) 'aleek men laḥs 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: 'Arīf, p. 84, لَمَّا تَشُوفِ وَدْنِكَ

4 أبعد عن الدَّابِّ وشجرتَه

'ab'ed 'an ad-dābb we šjertah²

"Keep away from the snake and its bush."

5 أبعد عن العيب ذراع وضم

'ab'ed 'an al-'eeb drā' 'u nem³

"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

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 'Abdullaṭīf ad-Dalishi and Fu'ād Jamīl think.¹ 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 ident: in Basrah and among the bedouins of Iraq.²

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'iqā, no. 26

6 أبغض عليه من دمّ سنونه

'abgaḡ 'aleeh men damm esnūnuh³

"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"⁴ and "To hate one like a toad".⁵

7 إبليس يعرف ربه

'Eblīs y'aref rabbuh⁶

"The Devil [lit. Eblīs: 'Iblīs] 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.

Sim. WM: a post-classical (muwallad) proverb: Ṭāliqāni, no. 60.

NS: Baghdad: Tik, no. 28; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 15; Egypt:

¹ See Dal., 1, proverb no. 13; F. Jamīl, "aš-Šamā'il al-badawiyah," al-Turath al-Sha'bi, vol. 3, pt. 3 (Nov. 1971), p. 14.

² Ibid.

³ Also 'Ubūdi, op. cit., p. 112, no. 71.

⁴ D.C. Browning, Everyman's Dictionary of Quotations and Proverbs (London/New York, 1960), no. 7437.

⁵ William George Smith, The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs, 3rd. ed. (Oxford, 1970), p. 827 (hereafter referred to as ODEP)

⁶ Also 'Ubūdi, op. cit., p. 112, no. 73.

Fā'iqa, no. 130.

8 أبو شوى أكله وأبو كثير مات وخلاؤه
'ebu šwayy 'akaluh we bu tsetīr māt 'ukallāwh

"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.

9 - أتلى منب الرزق بيت أم عامر
'atla manabb ar-rezg beet 'umm 'āmer

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

10 أثر العصا ولا أثر العصيد
'etar al-'aṣa wala 'etar al-'aṣīd

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

11 أثقل من مثقال أبا زيد
'atgal men metgāl 'Ebā Zeed

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

metgāl: mitqāl, a weight used for weighing pearls.¹

'Ebā Zeed: supposedly 'Abū Zaid al-Hilāli, the popular hero of the folk-tales of B. Hilāl.²

The writer was not able to discover anything about 'Ebā Zaid's metgāl.

12 اجتمع عوا وصفير
'ejtema' 'wa 'u ṣefīr

"There was [both] howling and whistling." Said in describing a cacophony.

13 أجرب بطن
'ajrab baṭen

¹ See H. Dickson, The Arab of the Desert (London, 1949), p. 641.

² See Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., vol.1, s.v. "Abū Zaid".

"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 تشييم واحد تشييم عنه

'aḥaden tšayymuh wa ḥaden 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: Nūri, 2, p. 38: لحية احشمها ولحية احشم نفسك عنها

15 أحد يبقل واحد يتمنى الشنيه

'aḥaden yabgel wa ḥaden ytemanna aš-šenīneh

"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 (fuṣ., 'aqit or madīr), cakes made substantially of milk.

16 أحد يحشى واحد ما يلقي لسياله عشا

'aḥaden yḥaša wa ḥaden mā yalga le 'ayāluh '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: ¹جمل يبصر وجمل ياكل ربح; Oman: Reinhardt, no. 23;

Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., nos. 2157, 2397; Hanafi,

nos. 2310, 2314, 2317; Ḡul., p. 9, اكو من ينحفم او من ينتخم
and p. 147 نيس تاكل دجاج ونيس; Dabb., p. 454, ناس تاكل البلح
ناس تاكل العجو تاكل عجاج

G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4583; Fegh., no. 2933; Stephan, no.

767; Egypt: Taim., no. 2929; Littm., no. 69.

¹ Qurais, 36 (1960), p. 16.

17 أحذرك عن الحمص والرَّمص وعشبة الدَّار وبيت القطيعه، وانحش عن درب الفرس
 'aḥderk 'an al-ḥamaṣ war-rumaṣ 'u 'ešbet ad-dār 'u beet
 al-geṭī'eh wenḥaš 'an darb al-faras

"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 (Muhalhīl) 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.¹

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

"كانت العرب تقول: لا تتكلم حنانه، ولا أنانة، ولا عشبة الدار، ولا كبة القفا"
 However, he gives a different explanation for "عشبة الدار".²

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 197, إلخ. . . . حيدور الحمص

18 احزم ايديك واعرض عن الطيبا (وعرضها الطيبا)
 'eḥzem 'īdek wa'reṣ 'an ('arreḥha) aṭ-ṭbuba

"Bandage your hand and avoid physicians," i.e., even though bandaging an ailing hand may not heal it, it at least saves

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

² Bakri, Faṣlul-maqāl, ed. by 'Abd al-Majīd 'Abdīn and Iḥsān 'Abbās (Khartoum, 1958), p. 13.

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.

/19

احك بالذآب وولم المقلب

'eħts bad-dābb 'u wallm al-medzlab

"[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: إذا ذكرت الذئب فأعد له العصا

M., 1, p. 88; Ta'ālibi, Tamtīl, 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'iqā, no. 895; Taim., no. 176; Littm., no. 414.

/20

أحلى من اللى ينقد الطير راسه ينوشه من بين الجريد نواش

'aħla mn alli yangd aṭ-ṭeer rāsah

yenūšah men been al-jerīd nawāš²

"[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

¹ ODEP, p. 804.

² Cf. Juh., no. 27. This is a verse composed in a poem by Rāšid al-Kalāwi. He is referring to his sweetheart's kiss. See A.B. Kamīs, Rāšid al-Kalāwi (Riyad, 1972), p. 308.

in an Egyptian and an Iraqi (Baghdad) proverb (see Fā'iqa, no. 510; Tik., Jamharah, nos. 154, 156, 158).

21 أحلّ من الفقع

'aḥall 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

22 أخزى من إبليس يوم عرفه

'akza men blīs yōm 'arafeh

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

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

23 اخو سرّة (السّرّه): قريب من الخير بعيد عن الضرّه (الشّرّ)

'eku serreh (as-serreh) dzerīben mn al-keer be'iden 'an al-meẓarreh (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'iqa, 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: "aḥu sirre ba'fid 'an al-ḥejr žerīb '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."¹ 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.

24 آدب وليدك بالفاس ولا تحتاز (تحتاج) للناس

'addeb wleedek ba-l-fās 'u lā te'tāz (teḥtāj) 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: Ašqar, no. 1833; Fegh., no. 390;

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

SMDW: Iraq: Weissbach, no. 11; G. Syria: Landb., no. 39.

25 ادفنوا أحببكم وسجوا بدنياكم

'edefnu 'aḥebbākum '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.

¹ A. Musil, The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins (New York, 1928), p. 494.

26

أدناة ما جزا قعود المسافر

'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

ادهن السير يسير

'ed-hen as-seer yesīr¹

"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

إذا سبح القيطون فقد هم بالسرقه

'idā sabbaḥ al-qayṭūn faqad hamma 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"² and "When the devil prays, he has a booty in his eye."³

SMDW: three old proverbs: M., nos. 1807, 2998, 4504;

Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 166, صلاح قطوه; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul):

Tik., nos. 560, 2543; Dabb., 1, p. 14, ثم يسبح وايد تدبج;

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.

29 اذبح عمك بالودك

'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".

30 أذمن من الحايمة

'ad-han mn al-ḥāymeh¹

"Cleverer than birds." Some birds (such as predatory birds) are intelligent. They stay flying and keep far from the ground as a precaution.

31 أرخص من تبن المذنب

'arkaṣ 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

32 أردا المعاش عيشة الحبال

'arda al-ma'āyeš 'išt al-ḥabbāl⁴

"The worst living is that of the trapper," i.e., this way of life involves a lot of trouble for little gain.

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, "Amtāl", al-'Arab, 3 (1969), p. 418, no. 113.

² See Zamak., 1, nos. 450, 939; M., no. 1714 and Ta'ālibi, Tamtil, p. 268.

³ See Fā'iqa, no. 924; Tik., no. 171; Akwa', 1, no. 419; Aṣqar, no. 213; Manch. MS, fol. 22 and Dabb., 1, p. 141.

⁴ Also 'Ubūdi, op. cit., p. 422, no. 121; Juh., no. 1697

33

أردنا شقرا وأراد الله ضرما

'aradnā Šaqra wa 'arād 'Allah Ḥruma

"We intended [to take] Šaqra, but God intended [us to take] Ḥruma."

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.

Šaqra: is the main town in the Wašm region.

Ḥruma: a village (now town) in the 'Āriḍ region.

34

أرقابها عنج (أرقابهن لاهلهن عنج)

'argābaha '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.

35

اسكر (خَلِّ، الزم) ماك بلزاک

'esker (kall, 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.

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

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 20.

36

اسلمى على قطيبك

'eslemi 'ala gṭeebats-ts

¹ See Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., vol. 1, "Djazirat al-'Arab", p. 533.

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.

gteebeh: dimin. of gaṭbeh, "a man's load of fodder".

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

37

اسم بلا جسم

'esmen bala jesem

"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: Gul., p. 17; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 25; Egypt:

Burck., no. 107; Littm., no. 319; Fā'iqa, no. 1033.

38

الاسم شريك العقل

al-esem šerīts al-'agel

"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

39

اسمك يا عمير مشكئ

'esmek ya 'Meer maštsiyy

"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 jāyy" "you are coming anyway!", "esmi mwāfedzk" "I will meet you anyway!", "since I will meet you."

40 اشر الطيب تسمى راجع

'ešr aṭ-ṭayyeb tsamma rābeh¹

"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, اشر الطيب ورد بفلوسك

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

41 اصابتك ما تنب سوا

'eṣābe'k ma henb sawa²

"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;

Ḡul., 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.

42 أصبر من أيوب

'aṣbar 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

43

الأصيل ياصل والعبد ما يروح نيه

al-eṣīl yāṣal wal-'abd 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 نيه has a different meaning in this idiom.

44

الأطراف أتلاف

al-aṭrāf 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.

45

اطرد الهم بالفرح (بالرجاء)

'eṭred al-hamm bal-faraḥ (bar-reja)

"Drive away worry with joy (var. with hope)."

46

اطعن يا ابا زيد والناس يدون الخبر (يدرون)

'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, : قالت تميم لسلامة بن جندل :
 " [The tribe of] Tamīm said to Salāmah 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 اطلع بالمسيد يشيع ذكرك

'eṭga' 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 أعجز من قملة الترقاة

'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 اعد على حضيري ومرتك للسلامة

'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 أعند 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'ālibī, Tamtīl, p. 185.

51 أعند من القعره

'a'nad mn al-g'areh

"[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

SMDW: G. Syria: Burton, no. 157.

52 أعوذ بالله من الحية والعقرب والبدوى إلى استدراب

'a'ūdu billāh mn al-ḥayyeh 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.

53 اغرف من ادنى

'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.

54 أفقر من صواية الليل

'afgar men ṣawwāyt al-leel

"Poorer than the night-piper." (The night-piper is a bird that pipes intermittently at night and it is supposed that it

¹ ODEP, p. 550.

² See Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 465.

does so because it cannot find anything to eat.)

55

أفقر من فارة المسجد

'afgar men fart al-masjed¹

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

Sim. WM: Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 974.

56

أقبح (أكسف، أشين) من قولة جوك (جوكم)

'agbaḥ ('aksaf, 'ašyan) men gōlat jōk (jōkum)²

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

Said of anything dreadful or unpleasant.

57

إقدح بزندق ولا مت

'edzdaḥ bzandek wella mett³

"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."⁴

SMDW: four class. proverbs: M., nos. 3786, 3951, 4154;

Tāliq, no. 565; Zamak., 2, no. 1158; Macca: Sāsi, 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:

Ašqar, nos. 378, 754; Singer, no. 94; Burton, no. 139;

Fegh., nos. 1219, 1265; Talq. nos. 23, 160.

Cf. nos. 69, 91.

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, op. cit., p. 850, no. 168.

² Cf. Juh., no. 113.

³ Cf. Juh., no. 2342.

⁴ ODEP, p. 606.

58 اقرب من الخوف تامن

'egrab mn al-kōf tāman

"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.

59 أَكَّال النَّيِّ يُوْجِعُهُ بَطْنُهُ

'akkāl an-niyy yūj'eh baṭnuh

"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: Zainak., 1, no. 633;

Ṭāliq., no. 20; 'Abšīhi, 1, p. 30, كَادَ الْمَرِيْبُ يَقُوْلُ خَذُوْنِي

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;

Ḡul., p. 42, اللِّي يَخْلِي تَحْتِ 84 دَابُّو. ; البينو سلايى تملو

ابطوعترى اتبعبع Socin, no. 81; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 522;

Singer, no. 74; Fegh., nos. 43, 2941; Egypt: Taim., nos.

309, 1043, 407; Fā'iqā, nos. 1775, 1904, 2305; Littm.,

nos. 372, 373.

60 أَكْثَرُ مِنَ الدَّبَابِ وَأُمَّهَاتِهِ

'aktar mn ad-deba wammahātuh²

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

¹ ODEP, p. 340.

² Cf. 'Ubādi, 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: Zafīrī, no. 197.

61 اكدح (اكدح) يا شور على قرنك

'etsdaḥ ('etstaḥ) yā tōr 'u 'ala dzarneḥ²

"[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,³ Mosul: Dabb, p. 408: مثل الثور ينكث على غاسو:

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.

62 اكر ب وجهك واخ ايديك

'ekrub wajhek wark_ ideek⁴

"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: Nūri, 1, p. 115, حمر عينك... الخ; Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., no. 867; Dal., 1, no. 631.

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

¹ ODEP, p. 545.

² Cf. Juh., no. 1386.

³ Quraiš, 3 (1959), p. 16, غبر على قرنك يا تور,

⁴ Also Juh., no. 179; 'Ubūdi, op. cit., p. 920, no. 181.

63 أكل الفهود ولا أكل السنانير

'aṭsl al-fhūd wala aṭsl as-sanānīr¹

"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: Nūri, 1, p. 73: بيطون الفهود ولا بيطون السنانيرSim. WM: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 5330; Frayha, no. 4236;Fegh., no. 2835; Stephan, no. 3; Egypt: Taim., no. 426;

Fā'iqa, no. 2339.

64 أكل تبين

'akal teben

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

65 أکود الناس يیزیه حقدّ

'akwad an-nās yīzīh ḥagguh²

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

'akwad: the 'af'al form of tsāyed, "tight-fisted; difficult"
yīzi: the imperfect of 'ayza, probably originally 'ajza:
to suffice.

66 إلى جاك واحد فانتع، وإلى جاك اثنين فحك راسك، وإلى جاك ثلاثة فهج

'ela jāk wāhed fentak, we lājāk 'aṭneen fḥekkrāsek wela jāk talāteh fhejj³

"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.

SMDW: an old proverb: 'Ask., no. 17; Oman: Jayak., no. 210.

67 إلى حلب بقده ملا (و)ه

'ela ḥalab bdzaḥen malāwh¹

"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 صار مالك بالقيظ معلق قره فشارك من ذرعان الرجال هماج

'ela ṣār mālek bal-geeḥ me'lāg dzerbeh

fšerbek men der'ān ar-rjāl 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 صار مالك بنى عم يحضرون يلاف دلوك على جال الركيه

'ela ṣār mā lek benī 'ammen yaḥaḥrūn

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.

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 42; Juh., no. 1462.

² ODEP, p. 428.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., nos. 54, 3053; 'Ask., no. 1909.

- 70 إلى صارمامك راى يدك فخذ لك من أمثال الرجال دليل
(إلى عاد (صار) ما للرجل راى يدله فياخذ من أشوار (أريا) الرجال دليل)
'elā ṣār mā me'ek rāyen ydellek fked lek mn amtāl ar-rjāl
delīl (var. 'ela 'ād (ṣār) mā lar-rajel rāyen ydelluh
fyāked mn ašwār (arya) ar-rjāl delīl)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.)

- 71 إلى صبّ فى حوض طفره

'ela ṣabb fī ḥōzen ṭfereh

"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.

- 72 ألحق القوم عباته

'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.

- 73 إلعب على وكب الجراب

'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.

SMDW: G. Syria: Fegh., nos. 317, 420; Frayha, nos. 877, 2144.

74 إلب وحدك تجي راضي

'el'ab waḥdek teji rāḏi¹

"Play alone and you will come pleased" (for there is nobody to beat you).

waḥdek: this faṣīh word is not used in normal speech, lhālek 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.

75 ألقه العنان ويلقم يدي

'aldzmuh al-'nān 'u yalgam yedi²

"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.

76 الله عالم بأكالة البقره (الصخيلات)

'Allah a'lam bakkālt al-bqureh (aṣ-ṣkeelāt)

"God is aware of those who have consumed the cow (var. the young she-goats)."³

77 الله رازق البئل على كبر بطونه

'Allah rāzdzen al-bell 'ala kubr bṭūnah

"God provides sustenance for camels notwithstanding the size of their bellies."

NS: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 199.

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 299.

² Dal., 1, no. 199.

³ The last variant is used in al-Jawf.

78

الله لا يطبب الكلب الحرم

'Allah lā yṭabbeb al-tsalb al-ḥaram

"May God not let the dog set foot in the sanctuary!"

Said of a person whose presence is not wanted.

yṭabbeb: from ṭabb, "to set foot in". mā 'umri ṭabbeetLondon: lit. I have never set foot in London: I have never been to London.

79

الله لا يعيننا لسواني البقر أو تدين من الحرم

'Allah lā y'izena lsawāni al-begār 'ō 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.

80

الله يجعل كل خرابة لنا به قرابه

'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.

81

اللى بالبئر أبخر من اللى بالعطنه (بويق)

'alli bal-bīr 'abkaṣ mn alli bal-'ṭeneh (var. mn alli 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.

82

اللى ببطن الطيحا ببطن راعيه (راعيها)

'allib-baṭn 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-mleeḥa: dimin. of al-malḥa, "the dark she-camel".

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 2836

83

اللّٰى على جرف عسا (و)ه ينهدّ

'alli 'ala jerfen 'asāwh yenhadd¹

"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.

84

اللّٰى له ايدين وراس يسوّى مثل ما سوّوا النّاس

'alli luh 'īdeen 'u rās ysawwi metel mā sawwaw an-nās²

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

NS: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 239; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1477.

G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 489; Frayha, no. 514; Egypt: Taim., no. 336; Fā'iqā, no. 1946.

85

اللّٰى له نصيب ما ياكله الدّيب

'alli luh neṣīb mā yākluh ad-dīb

"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.

Sim. WM: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 224.

86

اللّٰى ما به شرّ ما به خير

'alli mā buh šarr mā buh keer

"He who is without evil is without good." Cf. the English proverb, "He is a silly man that can neither do good nor harm."³

NS: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 776.

SMDW: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 239; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1977;

G. Syria: Fegh., no. 536; Frayha, no. 576.

87

اللّٰى ما عنده فلوس يقعد يحوس

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 229.

² Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 885; Juh., no. 2393.

³ ODEP, p. 734.

'alli 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

اللى ما عنده قروش ما يهوش

'alli mā 'enduh grūš mā yehūš

"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'iqā, no. 2102.

89

اللى ما لث ما يضيع لث (اللى ما له شين ما يضيع له شين)

'alli mā lušš mā yeḏī' lušš (allimā luh šīn mā yeḏī' luh šīn)¹

"He who owns nothing loses nothing." Used to console a person who has lost something.

lušš: lahu šay'

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 46, no. 101; Mosul: Dabb., 1, p.80.

الما عندو شى ما يروح لوشى; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 731.

90

اللى ما له لسان ياكله الخنفسان

'alli 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

اللى ما ياخذ القدح بيده ما يروى

'alli mā yākd al-dzdaḥ bīduh mā yarwa²

"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.

NS: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2365; Hanafi, no.

2245; Ğul., p. 145, *الما يكذب الجدح بيد وما يروى*

SMDW: Mecca: *اللّٰى ما ياكل بيده ما يشبع*¹; G. Syria: Fegh., nos.

337, 366, 1219; Frayha, no. 566; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 2151.

92 *اللّٰى ما يطاع ما له رأى*

'alli mā yṭā' mā luh rāy

"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, *لا رأى لمن لا يطاع* which was first coined by 'Ali b. 'Abī Ṭālib is apparently the original of this proverb.²

93 *اللّٰى ما يغار ابوه حمار*

'alli mā yaḡār 'ebūh ḥmār³

"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.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 180.

NS: Iraq: Tik., no. 2354; Ğul., p.146; Dal., 1, p. 77;

G. Syria: Fegh., no. 337; Frayha, no. 383; Egypt: Baq, 1, p. 46.

94 *اللّٰى ما يقيس قبل يغوص ما ينفعه القوس عقب الغرق*

'alli yegīs gabul yegīṣ mā yanfe'uh al-gōs 'egb al-ḡarag

"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: Nūri, 2, p. 157; Yemen: Cline, no. 30.

Sim. WM: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 179; G. Syria: Fegh, no. 1786;

Baum., no. 472; Egypt: Taim., no. 2218.

¹ Quraiš, 12 (1960), p. 16.

² See M., no. 3662.

³ Also Juh., no. 259.

95 اللّٰى مَا يَكْتَبُ رِسَالَتَهُ وَيَقْرَأُهَا عَطَىٰ غَنَمٍ أَوْ بَقَرٍ يَرْعَاهَا
'alli mā yakteb resāletuh 'u yagrāha 'aṭuh ganamen 'ō begaren
yar'āha

"Give him who cannot read or write a letter sheep or cows
to tend."

96 اللّٰى مَا يَلِينُ يَنْكَسِرُ (عُودٌ مَا يَلِينُ يَنْكَسِرُ)
'alli mā yelīn yenkeser (var. 'ūden mā yelīn yenkeser)

"He who does not soften will break (var. a rod which does
not bend, breaks)."

97 اللّٰى مَا يَمَالِحُ عَدُوًّا

'alli mā ymāleḥ '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 in-
vites people's suspicion of his intentions.

98 اللّٰى مَا يَنْطَحُ الدُّوَجِبَاتِ لَا يَنْزِلُ الْمَطَرُ
'alli mā yanṭaḥ al-mūjbāt lā yanzl al-meṭṭarag¹

"He should not reside near the road who is unable to meet
obligations of hospitality."

yanṭaḥ: imperf. of netah, "to meet". Here "to endure, to
be able to carry something".

99 اللّٰى مَا يُوْتَىٰ قَرَصُهُ عَاقِلٌ

'alli mā yūta gerṣuh 'ādzal

"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.

100 الّٰى من الله رضا (راضين به)

'alli mn Allah r̥za (rāzīnen buh)

"What comes from God must be accepted (var. we accept it)."

SMDW: Lebanon: Frayha, no. 458.

101 الّٰى هذا أوله ينعاف تاليه

'alli hāda 'awweluh yen'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.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 180.

102 الّٰى بينا عيت النفس تبغيه والّٰى نبى عىى البخت لا يجيبه

'alli yabīna 'ayyat an-nafs tabgīh walli nabi 'ayya al-bakāt
lā yejībuh¹

"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 أن المصدرية

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 44, no. 95.

SMDW: Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 511, ذابوجه ما نلقاه وابوعبه ما نرضاه

G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 45.

103 الّٰى يشيل الحمل ما يعجز عن الوصاطه (الرويه)

'alli yšīl al-ḥemel mā y'ajaz 'an al-wṣāṭeh²

"He who can carry a full load will be able to carry

al-wṣāṭeh (ar-rewiyyeh)."

(al-wṣāṭeh: (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-Hōšān. Cf. 'Abdullah b. Raddās, Sā'irātun min al-bādiyah (Riyaḍ, n.d.), p. 29.

² Cf. Juh., no. 2373.

smaller one.

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

104 اللّٰى يَطِيحُ مِنَ النُّجُومِ خَفَّ لِلسَّمَاءِ (مَا طَاحُ . . .)

'alli yeṭīḥ mn an-njūm kuffen las-sema (mā ṭāḥ mn an-njūm kefften 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.

105 أَمَا اِنْدَقْمِ وَلَا اِنْدَرْبِ

'umma endedzem 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, يا اغلِقْ بِاَبِكَ وَاِنْسِتْخِ يَا اَفْتَحْ بِاَبِكَ وَاِنْتَخِـرْ G. Syria: Frayha, no. 266.

106 أَمَا تَمْشِي وَلَا تَمْشِي بِكَ الْمَحَالَهُ (اِدْرَجْ وَلَا تَدْرَجْ بِكَ الْمَحَالَهُ)

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

107 أَمَا حَمِينَا الدِّيرَهُ وَلَا جَلِينَا عَنْهُ (عَنْهَا)

'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.

108

أما درّه ولا شاذوب

'umma derreh wella šādūb

"Either a pearl or a shark." Said of the ups and downs of life.

109

أما سراجين ولا ظلما

'umma srājeen wella ḡalma

"Either two lanterns or complete darkness."

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, no. 115; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1699.

110

أما عجاج قيامه ولا ما تذرا الطحين

'umma 'ajājen dzyāneh wella mā tadra aṭ-ṭeḥīn

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

111

أما يموت الفرج ولا يموت ابن بّسام ولا أموت أنا

'umma yemūt al-fark wella yemūt Iben Bassām wella amūt ana

"Either the palm shoot will die, or Iben Bassām will die, or I shall die."

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

Iben Bassām, who was a rich man from the town of 'Unaizah, was the creditor of a certain farmer called Iben 'Awwād who said these words which passed into a proverb. One day Iben 'Awwād 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 Bassām's palm-grove in 'Unaizah. Iben 'Awwād 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 Bassām. 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

112

أمج من البيفر بالقيظ

'amraj mn al-beeḡ bal-geeḡ³

"More rotten than eggs in the heat of summer."

113

امسح ظهري وامسح ظهرك

'emsaḡ ḡahri wa(a)msaḡ ḡahrek

"Scratch my back and I will scratch yours [lit. stroke with your hand on my back . . . etc.]."⁴NS: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 175.SMDW: an old proverb: M., no. 2216; Zamak., 1, no. 882;Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 175, شد لى واقطع لك; Baghdad: Tik.,no. 853; Hanafi, no. 1034; G. Syria: Aṣqar, nos. 1827,2484; Frayha, no. 1441; Fegh., nos. 1448, 1502; Baum.,nos. 27, 291; Egypt: Taim., no. 131; Fā'iqa, no. 1107.

114

أمشى وامنى نفسى واقول الليله عرسى

'amšī wa amanni nafsi wa(a)gūl 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.

SMDW: Mosul: Socin, nos. 386, 387, 388; G. Syria: Fegh.,no. 197; Egypt: Taim., no. 318.

115

أم عابس تاكل الرطب واليابس

'umm 'ābes tākl ar-raṡub wal-yābes⁵

"[Like] fire. It devours both the wet and the dry." Said of a greedy man.

¹ Jayak., no. 22.² Aṣqar, 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.

116

أنا اطحن وانت تلهمين

'ana aṭ-ḥan wa(a)nti talhamīn

"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.

117

أنا عصاك اللّي ما يعصاك (تعصاك)

'ana 'aṣāk alli mā y'aṣāk (t'aṣāk)¹

"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.

118

أنا عود بعروض (من عرض) حزمه

'ana 'ūden b'arṣ (men 'arṣ) ḥezmuh

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 97; Juh., no. 393.

"I am [but] one stick in a bundle," i.e., I will agree if others agree.

119

أنا لأم ضلعي

'ana lāmmen ẓlū'i

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

120

أنا من صبيح غادي ما ادري اهل لي لقوني ولا ما لقوني

'ana men Ṣbeeḥ gādi madri 'ahli legōni wella mā legōni

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

Ṣbeeḥ: Ṣubaiḥ: a village about twenty miles north-west of ar-Rass.

121

أنت ابوه (ابوها) وسمه (وسمها)

'ant ebwah ('ebūhā) 'u sammah (sammha) (ant 'ebūh 'u sammuh)¹

"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.

122 ان رفعت ولا للشارب وان طمّنت ولا للحيه (إن رفعت للشارب وان طمّنت للحيه)

'en rufa't wala laš-šāreb we(en) ṭammant wala lal-leḥyeh
(var. la-lgāreb)

'en ruf'tah laš-šāreb we(en) ṭammantah lal-leḥyeh

(en rufa't 'ala aš-šāreb we (en) ṭammant 'ala al-leḥyah)

"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.

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 99; Juh., no. 374.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, p. 57, no. 130.

Sim. WM: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 693; Iraq: Tik., no. 380; Hanafi, nos. 461, 2153; Dal., 1, no. 226; Dabb., 1, p. 34; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 848; Fegh., no. 967; Frayha, no. 636; Egypt: Taim., no. 548.

123

إن زلّ غير فبالمریط بداله ✓

'en zall 'eer fbal-marbaṭ bedāluh

"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.

SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2741.

124

إن سلّمت عليه عدّ أصابعك

'en sallamt 'aleeh 'edd eṣābe'k

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

Sim. WM: Yemen: Goit., no. 61; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 868; Fegh., no. 19; Frayha, no. 652; Baum., no. 196; Egypt: Littm., no. 157.

125

إن شبعتم فبطوك وإن جعت أشتوك

'en šebe't (e)gbeṭōk we(e)n je't (e)šmetōk

"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'ān is also used figuratively to mean "well-to-do" and so is the verb šebe', "he became rich."

126

انشد مجرب ولا تشد طبيب

'enšed mjarreb 'u lā tanšed 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.

127

انفرت سبحتهم

'enfretat sabḥat-hum

"[The string of] their rosary is broken." A metonymy (كناية) for, "they broke up or disbanded."

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

128

إن فريت فريت (شقيت شقيت) جيبي وان سكت سكت على عيبي

'en 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; Ḡul., p. 56; Dabb., 2, p. 527.

129

أنفق ما بالجيب ياتي ما بالغيب

'anfedz mā bal-jeeb yāti mā bal-geeb¹

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: Ašqar, no. 279; Egypt: Taim., no. 138.

130

إن لاحت ولاً ما ضرهما الفحل (الجمال)

'en ladzhat wella mā zarrha al-faḥal (al-jemal)

"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.

131

إن ما سبقت وهي جذعه ما سبقت وهي لقيه (ما سبقت وهي جذعه تسبق لقيه . ما سبقت وهي بكر تسبق رباع)

'en mā sbegat we hi jde'eh mā sbegat we hi ledziyyeh (mā sbegat we hi jde'eh tasbeg la'dziyyeh. Mā sbegat we hi betser tasbeg rubā')

"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!)

132

إن ما مضى ما تلاش (إذا ما مضى شين ما بقى شين)

'en mā meḏāš mā talāš² ('eda mā meḏa šīn mā bega šīn)

"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.

meḏāš: *مضى شى* talāš: *تلاشى* šīn: *شى*

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.

- 133 إن مدح اسرف وان سب اسرف
 'en medaḥ asraf wen sabb asraf
 "If he praises [someone] he exaggerates, and if he disparages [someone] he exaggerates too."
 SMDW: Oman: Jayak., no. 281.
- 134 ادبش هببشك واخل الصلاطين تقاثل
 'ehbeš habišek 'u kall aš-šalāṭīn 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.
- 135 أهج عن شعبي وشعبي تبرأ لي
 'ahejj 'an š'aba we š'aba tabrā li
 "I flee from š'aba but š'aba keeps up with me [wherever I go]."
 š'aba: name of a mountain.
 SMDW: three classical proverbs: Zamak., 1, no. 1959;
 'Ask., no. 36.
- 136 أهل المقول بعافيه
 'ahal al-'gūl b'āfyeh¹
 "People of sense are scarce." (They do not involve themselves in dangerous situations.)
 Sim. WM: Egypt: Taim., no. 137; Fā'iqa, no. 1126.
 NS: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 21.
- 137 أهل مكة أبخص بشعابه
 'ahal Makkeh 'abkaš be š'ābah²
-
- ¹ Cf., Juh., no. 430.
² Cf. 'Ubūdi, 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

أوباره 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: يَكْتَفَا من صوفا

139

أوط الحسّ

'ūt al-ḥess

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

140

أول نجم من آب يحرق المسمار بالباب، وأوسط نجم من آب يخر العنب
ومكثّر الارطاب، واتلى نجم من آب فاتح للشّتا باب

'awwal najmen men 'Āb yehredz al-mesmār bal-bāb, wōṣaṭ

najmen men 'Āb mwakkren al-'nab we mtsattren al-erṭāb,

watla najmen men 'Āb fāt-ḥen laš-šta bāb

"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."

'Āb: normally used (in Iraq and Syria) as the equivalent for the month of August, is also used in this weather prognostic to refer to the hottest period of the year.

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

¹ See A. al-Qalqaṣāndi, Subḥ al-'A'šā, 1 (Cairo, 1963), p. 302.

1, 2; Dabb., 1, p. 102: أول عشرة من آب تحرق المسمار بالبَاب، وثاني عشرة من آب تغل العنب وتسوي الارطاب، وثالث عشرة من آب تفتح من الشتا باب

141 الباب ارخص من ثمنه

'al-bāb 'arkaṣ men tmenuh

"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.

142 باب خوص يهجه الهواء (باب السعف يرميه الهواء)

bāb kūṣ yehejjuh al-hawa¹ (bāb es-sa'af yermih al-hawa)

"[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)."² Said of a weak character. Cf. no. 1112.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 1388

143 الباب مفتوح والغرب مبطوح التي يجي والتي يروح يروح

al-bāb maftūḥ wal-garb mabṭūḥ, 'alli yeji yeji walli yrūḥ_e
yerūḥ

"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.

144 بالرّيش

bar-riš

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

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 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).

SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, nos. 391, 1249.

- 145 بالك تعيل ولا تريخم لمن عال والمرجه بالك تطلق حباله
 bālek te'īl 'u lā tareekam lmen 'āl wal-marjleh bālek
 t-ṭalledz ḥbālah

"Beware of comitting 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

tareekam: to show weakness; to be similar in weakness and submissiveness to the vulture (rkameh, fus.: rakmah).

- 146 بت نازی

batten nāzi

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

- 147 بدال الكلب كلب ✓

bedāl al-tsalb tsalb

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

- 148 بدوى وبعباته رقعه

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.

- 149 براسه هوش (هوم)

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.

150 برد الصّفرى توقّه وبرد الوسم تلقّه

bard aṣ-ṣferi tawagguh 'u bard al-wasem talagguh¹

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

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

151 البردان يجيب الحطب

al-bardān yejīb al-ḥaṭab²

"He who is cold should fetch the fire-wood." Cf. the English proverb, "Let them that be cold blow at the coal."³

152 برق تعدّاك لا تستخيله لى عاد ما ترجى رعاياك ترعاه

bargen ta'addāk lā testekīluh lā 'ād mā tarji ra'āyāk tar'āwh

"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.

153 برق حريول

barg ḥreewel

"[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.

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 445.

² Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 117.

³ ODEP, p. 132.

154

البركة سهم خفيّ

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.

155

برّ وصله

berr 'u ṣilah

"[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 ṣilat ar-rahīm, that is, the helping of one's kith and kin.

156

بريرة هآيس

berīrat Hāyes

"[Like] the favour done by Hāyes."

Said of a present or an offer which seems good and useful while in fact it is harmful or causing one some trouble.

157

البس لي حجر هاش ✓

al-bess lā ḥjer hāṣ

"[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; قد يقدم العير من نعر على الأسد;

Baghdad: Tik., no. 481.

158

بشت ابن عميره: ما شاف من الطاعة يشوفه معصيه

bešt Eben 'Amireh mā šāf mnaṭ-ṭā'eh yšūfuh ma'eṣyeh

1

ODEP, p. 835.

"[Like] the cloak of Eben 'Amīreh: what it has witnessed of piety, it will witness of impiety." Eben 'Amīreh 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.

159

بشّر النخل بفلاح جديد

baššr an-naḵal bfallāḥen jedīd¹

"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.

160

بصيص العين ولا (اشوى من) عماه . (البصيص ولا العمى)

beṣīṣ al-'een 'u lā ('ašwa men) 'amāh (var. al-beṣīṣ 'u lal-'ama)

"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: الكحل أحسن من العمى; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 1242, 3472; Singer, no. 34; Fegh., no. 2307; Tallq., no. 134; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1790, 2946.

ašwa men: better than

161

بطن الشبعان على الجوعان ونى

baṭn aš-šab'ān 'alal-jō'ān weniyy⁴

"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 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 121; cf. Juh., no. 457.

² ODEP, p. 564.

³ Ibid., p. 56.

⁴ Cf. Juh., no. 1100.

⁵ ODEP, p. 438.

Sim. Wf: Mecca,¹ Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 182, no. 27; Yemen:
Akwa', 1, no. 33; Goit., no. 1019; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul):
Tik., nos. 1199, 1200; Hanafi, nos. 975, 976; Yahuda,
no.3; Ğul. p. 770: الشبعان ما يفت للجيمان Egypt: Taim., no. 1644.

162

بطني مهوب جراب لاحد

baṭni mahūb jrāben 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.

163

بعرصى ابراهيم

bu'erṣi 'Ibrāhīm

"[Like] Ibrāhīm's gecko." Said of a person who in 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.

Sim. MDW: Iraq: Tik., nos. 2060, 2082; Dal., 1, no. 655; Dabb., 2, p. 412: مثل العقبي تادغو وتجعغ نفسا; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4174; Frayha, no. 3509; Stephan, no. 871; Egypt: Taim., no. 1472; Littm., no. 323; a classical proverb: 'Ask., no. 1942; Zamak., 2, no. 104.

164

بعير الظهر قليل (معدوم)

be'ir az-ẓahar dzelīl (m'adūm)²

"Camels with strong backs are few."

165

بعير شمال

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 Quraiš, 7 (959), p. 10: الشبعان ما يفت للجيمان

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.

166 بقر اهل القواره: يوخذن منهم ويباعن عليهم

begar 'ahal al-Gwāreh yūkaden menhum we ybā'en 'aleehum¹

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

al-Gwāreh: a village in al-Qaṣīm, about 50 miles north-west of Buraida.²

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

167 البقره دایسه

al-bgereh dāyseh

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

168 البیل بخشومه سفا (بخشم البیل سفا)

al-bell bekšūmah sefa (var. bekšūm al-bell sefa)

"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.

169 بلشة الحضر ركع وتسلم

balšt al-ḥaẓer rak' 'u taslīm

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

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 Ramaḍān in the supposition

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.

170

البيل هزلي والمعزب غطيان

al-bell hazla wal-m'azzeb Ḡṭayyān

"The camels are thin and weak and the boss is Ḡṭayyān."

Said in reference to double trouble.

This proverb was said by a camel driver who was hired by a certain Ḡṭayyān, 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 Ḡṭayyān, 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.

171

بنات ماجد واجد

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."

172

بنا عقيل : واحد يرفد الجدار وواحد ياخذ العرقه

bna 'Geel: wāḥden yarfd al-jdār 'u wāḥden 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-Qašim, and Iraq, Syria

and Egypt. They belonged to different tribes and districts.¹
 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.).

173

البندق العوجا به رميه

al-bendag al-'ōja bah ramyeh²

"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.

174

بهار البن بن

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.

175

بيت السبع (عش الطير) ما يخلى من العظام ✓

beet as-sabe' ('ešš aṭ-ṭeer) mā ykala mn al-'zām³

"The lair of the lion (var. the nest of a falcon)⁴ is never
 devoid of bones." Said of someone who has money (or some-
 thing else) to spare though he denies it.

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

¹ See J.L. Burckhardt, Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys, II (London, 1831), pp. 28-29, and Musil, Rwala, pp. 278-280.

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).

Tik., no. 554; Hanafi, no. 417; Dabb., 1, p. 124; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2877; Frayha, no. 1054; Tallq., no. 36; Stephan, no. 1; Baum., no. 264; Singer, no. 32.

176

بيت جربوع

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.

177

بيت ما به تمر أهله جياع

beeten mā buh tamer ahaluh jyā'

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

The origin of this proverb is the ḥadīṭ, "بيت لا تمر فيه جياع أهله" related by Muslim, Aḥmad (b. Ḥanbal) and others from 'Ā'īṣah.¹

178

بيضة ديك: بالعمر (بالسنه) مره

beeḡat dīts bal-'umer (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;

Ta'ālibi, Timār ul-qulūb, no. 794; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 985;

Baghdad: Tik., no. 565; Hanafi, no. 1900; G. Syria: Ašqar, 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.²

179

بيض معدود بجراب مشدود

beeḡen m'adūd bejrāben mašdūd³

¹ 'Ismā'īl b. Muḥammad al-'Ajlūni, Kašful-kafā'i wal-'ilbās 'amma(e)štahara min al-'ahādīti 'alā 'ālsinātin-nas, 1 (Beirut, 1352 A.H.), p. 294, no. 936.

² It is the phrase: زلقه بتموز, "a slip in July." I heard it from Mr. Najīb aš-Sihābī, 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. 37.¹

180

البيضة ما تصادم الحجر

al-beeḏah mā t-ṣādm al-ḥajar²

"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.

181

بين اذانه وزير طير

been edānuh wezīz ṭeer

"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.

182

بين له طرف السكين

bayyan luh ṭaraf as-sets-tsīn

"He showed him the tip of the knife," i.e., he evinced a hostile attitude.

183

تافل العافيه

tāflen al-'āfyeh

"He has spat out health," i.e., he has become extremely tired. Cf. no. 824.

184

تاكل الدجاجة عشاوه (عشاه)

tākl ad-dejājeh 'ašāwh

"A chicken could eat his supper." Said of a very timid or

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.

² Cf. Juh., no. 502.

weak person. Cf. the English proverb, "He cannot say boo to a goose."¹

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1180; Stephan, no. 421.

185

تبين لك لى جا عبيد من الجوف

tebīn lek lā ja 'Beed mn al-Jōf

"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. Rašīd. 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.²

186

تجمع النملة ويقوم الجمل (ما جمعتها النملة بشئ يلمه الجمل بلقمه)

tajma' an-namleh 'u yegūm al-jemal (ma jme'tuh an-namleh bseneh yelumuh al-jemal blegmeh)³

"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."⁴

Sim. WM: Mecca: اللى تحوشه الذره فى سنه يجى الجمل ياخذه فى خفه⁵

Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 900; Baghdad: Tik., no. 349; Hanafi, no. 219; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 504; Stephan, no. 122;

Egypt: Taim., no. 254; Burck., no. 80; Fā'iqa, no. 1763.

187

تجيب الصدوفات ما لا تجيب الوعايد

tejīb aṣ-ṣdūfāt mā la tejīb al-wa'āyed

¹ Browning, no. 7431.1

² See Encyclopedia Arabica, 3, 1st. ed., s.v. "Ibn Rašīd," p. 104.

³ The second version is common in al-Jawf. Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 139.

⁵ Quraiš, 36 (1960), p. 16.

⁴ Browning, no. 6994.

"Chances may bring what prearrangements do not."

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

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3565; Fegh., no. 2555;

Frayha, no. 2150; Egypt: Taim., no. 2385; Littm., no. 60.

188

تَحَزَّمْ لِلْحَصْنِ بِمِزْمِ اسَد

taḥazzam lal-ḥeṣni bmeḥzam 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.

189

تَحَّ لَهُ وَيَلْحَقْكَ

teḥḥ (tāḥ) luh 'u yalḥakk

"Say taḥḥ 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.

teḥḥ: imper. of taḥḥ; tāḥ is the imper. of tāḥa', to call a sheep by saying taḥḥ . . . taḥḥ.

Cf. nos. 616, 936, 987.

190

تَحْوِيلٌ مِنْ تَحْتِي الدَّرَجَةِ وَلَا مِنْ عُلُوِّهِ

t-ḥawīlen men t-ḥatiyy ad-drejah 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: Ašqar, no. 4412.

191

تَدَلَّ الْحَلْتَهُ

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".

192 تدورن ما تلقان (تدورني ما تلقاني)

tdawwran mā talgān (tdawwerni mā talgāni)¹

"If you had searched for me you would not have found me," i.e., I was very embarrassed.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 189.

193 ترزيه نجد (ترزيه الشمس)

terzīh Najd (var. terzīh 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.

194 ترعى وهى رويبزه

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.

SMDW: an old proverb: M., no. 4707; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2142.

195 تزته وياطا رجلك

tezettuh 'u yāṭa rejlek²

"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.

196 تسعين ابره ما يجنن (تجي) مخراز (مخيط)

tes'īn ebreh mā yejen (teji) mekrāz (mekyaṭ)

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: Ṭāliq., no. 434;

Abšīhi, 1, p. 36: كل مية عصفور ما يجو حدايه

197

تطورط أو ما تطورط، تجيك العليا وتتاك

(e)t-tōreṭ 'ōmā t-tōreṭ tejik al-'Alya 'u tetuffek

"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-tōreṭ: imperf. of tōraṭ. Not used in speech.

tetuff: imperf. of taff, to drink to the very last drop in a cup, glass, etc.

198

تعبّر بام شوشه لين (لما) تجيك المنقوشه

ta'abbar be umm šūšeh leen (lama) tejik al-mangūšeh

"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 المنقوشه. 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 šūšeh 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-mangūšeh 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 ṭibāq (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; Çul., p. 12: العَبُّ بِالْمَقْصَصِ لِمَا يَجِي الطَّيَارُ;

G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 417; Baum., no. 104; Stephan, no.

723; Egypt: Taim., nos. 231, 232; Burck., no. 47; Littm., no. 178.

199

تفتك الهوشه وابونا يتحزم

teftakk al-hōšeh webūna ytaḥazzam¹

"The fight is over and done with while our father is [still] girding himself [for the fray]." Said of a coward who poses as brave, one who is reluctant to participate in something and pretends to be preparing himself for it, or of one who is very slow even in doing the easiest task.

al-hōšeh: the fight.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1588; Hanafi, no. 1453.

Sim. MDW: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 298; Frayha, no. 2887.

200

تفلة ما تاصل الشارب

tafleten mā tāšal aš-šāreb

"[Like] expectoration which does not reach the moustache."

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, "Amtal", al-'Arab, 3 (1969), p. 849, no. 167.

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

201 تقل ممارس بسامه

tegl m'āras bsāseh

"Like cats courting." Said of an outburst of noise or clamour.

tegl: tegel: like, as. Originally the verb tegūl: taqūl.

bsāseh: plural of bess, cat.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 216, no. 15.

202 التمر خصّ والزاد قصّ

at-tamer kaṣṣ waz-zād gaṣṣ¹

"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.

203 تمرّة خرج

tamrat kerj²

"[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.

204 التمره ما تجيه (تجيها) اللواحيس

at-tamreh mā tejyah (tejīha) al-lāwāḥīs³

"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.

- 205 تعرف بالديار راحة، وتمعرف بالرجال رباحه، وتمعرف بالنسا قباحه
 teme'erfen bad-dyār rāḥeh, 'u teme'erfen bar-rjāl rubāḥeh,
 'u teme'erfen ban-nsa gubāḥeh¹

"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."

teme'eref: the colloquial verbal noun equivalent to the fus..:

تعرف على . The verb is tema'raf: to try to know.

- 206 تمن وسوا صلبه

temman we swa ṣlubeh

"[The meal is] temman [a kind of poor quality rice] and it is cooked by ṣlubeh nomads."

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

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

swa (سوا): cooking; sawwa: to cook; also "to do" in other contexts.

- 207 تنكس أم السلطان عن الحج؟

tanks umm aṣ-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 nekas, to return.

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

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 1276. In al-Jawf the following version is used by the learned men: معرفة البلاد اماره ومعرفة الرجال تجاره ومعرفة النساء خساره ma'arft al-blād emāreh 'u ma'arft ar-rjāl tjāreh, u ma'arft an-nsa kasāreh: "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

208

تَوَدَّى الْبِيرَ مِنَ الرَّعَابِ

tawadda al-bīr mn az-ze'āb

"The well has become tired of the water drawers." Said when someone has had all patience lost with him.

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

209

تيس عَاهِرَه

tees 'āhreh

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

210

ثور أَدْرَع

tōrn adra²

"A black-headed ox." Said of an imprudent person. Such a

¹ J.B. Kelly, Britain and the Persian Gulf (Oxford, 1968), p. 101.

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 "والأدرع من الخيل والشاء ما اسود رأسه
وابيض سائره والانشى درعا".

211 ثور كيت: يتحالي الذبح على السرح (يتحالي الموت عن السواني)

tōr Skeet: ytaḥāla ad-dabḥ 'alas-sarḥ (var. ytaḥāla al-mōt 'anas-sawāni)

"[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.

212 جادة بقر

jāddat begar

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

213 جاك الذيب جاك وليده

jāk ad-dīb jāk wleeduh

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

Said of repeated interruptions and threats.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 98, no. 4.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Tik., no. 683.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 1061; 'Ask., no. 568.

214 جاك عمك والبلح

jāk 'ammek wal-balaḥ

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

¹ Tik., no. 666; Hanafi, no. 515; Çul., p. 46; Dal., 1, no. 426.

² Nūri, 2, p. 191; Akwa', 1, no. 1133.

³ I. al-Jawhari, Aṣ-Siḥāh fil-Luḡah (Cairo, 1865), p. 586.

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.

215 جاك يا مهنا ما تمنى (يا مهنا جاك ما تمنى)

jāk yā Mhanna mā temanna (var. yā Mhanna jāk mā temanna)

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

temanna: tatamannā

216 الجالى فانى

al-jāli fāni

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

217 الجحر على قد النثله

al-jeḥer 'ala gadd an-neṭīleh

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

218 جحر يوسك (ياسك) ما يضيق بي

jekren yūse'k (yāsa'k) mā yeḏīdz 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.

jekr: juhr, hole, burrow.

219 جدار قصير ✓

jdāren geṣīr¹

"[So and so is like] a low wall [easily leapt over]." Said of a modest or defenceless man of whom advantage may be taken. Cf. the English, "Men leap over where the hedge is lowest."²

NS: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1204.

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 603.

² Browning, no. 8346.

SMDW: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 143; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 216: طوفه
 هيطه; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., nos. 765, 1105;
 Hanafi, nos. 610, 1672; Socin, no. 465; G. Syria: Ašqar,
 no. 1864; Fegh., no. 464; Frayha, no. 430; Egypt: Taim.,
 no. 1110; Littm., no. 105.

220

جدّ البقر ثور

jedd al-begar tōr

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

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 199.

221

جرادة باليد ولا عشر طائرات (طيّرات) ✓

jarādeten bal-yad wala 'ašren 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: Ta'ālībi, Tamtīl, p. 198:

عصفور في الكف خير من كركي في الهـوا؛ Oman: Jayak., no. 187.

222

الجراده من جراد والمطيّه من ركاب

al-jarādeh men jarād wal-meṭīyyeh 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."¹

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

223

جرىوع أشبع (بدّ على) غزو

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.

badd 'ala: to be sufficient for a number of people or things.

224

جرد البريسم ولا جديد القطن

jard al-brīsam wala jedīd al-geṭen

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

jard: worn-out; old, as opposed to "new".

al-brīsam: silk--from the Persian, 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.

225

جرد الشمال ولا جديد الحساوى

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 hasāwi one, that is, one made in al-Ḥasa in eastern Arabia, which was of a poorer quality.

226

جرّة غنم: يعصى بعضه بعض

jerrat ganam ye'mi ba'aḏha ba'az

"[Like] sheep's spurs: some of them obliterate the others," i.e., the spur of one sheep is usually obliterated by the

¹ Browning, no. 7888.

sheep following it. Said of muddled talk which is difficult to follow.

227

جزا ناقة الحج ذبحه ✓

jeza nāgt al-ḥejj dabḥah

"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 (fidyah). 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; Ḍabbi, p. 70: ذنب صحر أنها أتحتفه وأكرمه; Zamak., 2, nos. 419, 195; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 39, لقطة 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. 672.

228

جلد مهوب جلدك جرّه على الشجره

jelden mahūb jeldek jerruh 'alaš-šjereh¹

"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: Nūri, 1, p. 100, no. 11; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1235; Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 479; Egypt: Taim., no. 964.

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 164.

² جلد مو جلدك جر عليه الشوك ; See Quraiš, 69 (1961) back page.

229

الجمال كروى والمحجان (المشعاب) من الشجره

al-jemal kruwi wal-meḥjān (al-meš'āb) mnaš-šjereh¹

"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"² 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.

230

جنيدان (جليدان) النطول

Jneedān (Jleedān) an-neṭūl

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

an-neṭūl: the thief; from neṭal, to steal. This word how-
ever 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.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 4659; 'Ask., no. 1947.

231

جرخة اهل الصفه: من دخل منهم لبسه

jōkt ahal aṣ-ṣuffeh men dakal menhum labsah

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

Ahal aṣ-ṣuffeh (ahluṣ-ṣuffah) "the people of الصفه 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]."¹

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

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

232

جوزوهن واعينوا عليهن

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'iqā, no. 1169.

233

الجوعان (العطشان) يكسر الحوض

al-jō'ān (al-'aṭṣān) yakser al-ḥōḏ

"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:² Oman: Jayak., no. 171; Mosul: Dabb., 1, p. 273; Ḡul., p. 96; Egypt: Taim., no. 1911.

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

234

جوع وحده

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:¹ مویا ما لحه ووجیه کالحه;
Oman: Jayak., no. 120; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi,
no. 2541; Gul., p. 156: صوا وصداع راس; Palestine: Baum.,
no. 45; Egypt: Taim., no. 870.

235

جیت من البران کبدی ذایبه

jīt mn al-berrān tsabdi dāybeh

"I came from the deserts, my liver is melting [with wild desire]." Said of someone who has a wild fling after a period of deprivation. Cf. the English, "As hungry as a hunter." Sim. MDW: Lebanon: Frayha, no. 1311; Egypt: Fā'iqā, no. 1109.

236

جید خاطر ردی معزب

jāyyden kāṭer rediyyen m'azzeb

"[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 : jāyyden ma'azzeb rediyyen kāṭer, "[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.

237

جیران مقبره

jīrān megbereh

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

238

حاضرة غبره

ḥāzreten Ḡebreh

¹ Ibid., 53 (1960), p. 16, recorded by Ḥasan Nāṣir Gāri.

"Ḡebreh is here!" Ḡebreh, "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]." ¹

239

حالة له الحرجه

ḥālleten 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: تحل له الميتة

240

حام على المرضعات

ḥām 'alal-merz'āt

"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.

241

حب اللحي (الاحي) تطيق به

ḥubb al-lḥiyy (al-lḥa) taṭḏzī'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; Ḡul, p. 16:

اضحك عالرجال حب لهما ; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1279;

Singer, no. 28; Landb., no. 102; Egypt: Taim., no. 839;

Littm., no. 327.

242

حبل ليف: ما ينتحزم به

ḥabel lif mā 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."¹

243

حبّه وبقم صديق

ḥubbeh 'u befum ṣedīdz

"A kiss in a friend's mouth." Said of a good thing given to a close friend or relative.

244

حتى الخنفس ينفس (يعض)

ḥetta al-kunfes yenfes (ye'eẓẓ)

"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

حجام وقلاع ضروس

ḥajjām 'u gallā' ẓrūs²

"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

حج بقضيان حاجه

ḥejjen bgezyān ḥājah³

"[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.

247

حجته بوریده

ḥejjetuh bwerīduh¹

"His excuse is in his jugular vein." Said of one who is always ready with an excuse or a pretext.

248

حجل برجل

ḥejlen brejel

"[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."²

249

حجل واطوق

ḥajal wa(a)ṭwag

"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."

250

الحدب يعرف ينام

al-ḥadab y'aref yanām³

"[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.

SMDW: a classical proverb: 'Ask., 2, no. 1218.

251

الحدار ما يردّ القدر

al-ḥadar mā yeredd al-gedar⁴

¹ Cf., Juh., no. 659.

² Browning, no. 9358.

³ Cf. Juh., no. 277.

⁴ Cf. ibid., no. 664; also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 182.

"Caution will not stave off Fate." One cannot take precautions against the inevitable.

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

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 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.

252

الحرّ حرّ ولو مسّه الضرّ

al-ḥerr ḥerr 'u lō massuh aḏ-ḏerr

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

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

Ident: Baghdad: Tik., no. 805; Hanafi, 2, p. 241;

G. Syria: Frayha, no. 1376; Egypt: Burck., no. 117.

253

الحریم مفاتيح الرجال

al-ḥarīm mefātīh ar-rjāl

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

254

حسون مهوب فيد ليول

Ḥassūn mahūb feed lyūl

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

255

حصان اشقر: من قاده ما ربح

ḥṣānen ašgar men gāduh 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: Nūri, 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

256

حصان اهل القواره

ḥṣān ahal 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: Nūri, 1, p. 100.

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

257

حصيني قدّ

ḥṣeeni dzedd

"[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.

dzedd: fuṣ. qidd, dry leather.

258

حطّ الجرى حدر الفرس اما نجح والّا قمص

ḥeṭṭ al-jrayy ḥadr al-faras 'umma nebaḥ wella gumaṣ

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

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

259

حطب عميا

ḥaṭab 'amya²

"[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.

260

حطّ بينك وبين النار مطّوع

ḥeṭṭ beenek 'u been an-nār mṭawwa'³

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!

261

حطّ دونه مرفق

ḥaṭṭ dūnuh marfaq

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

marfaq: fuṣ: mirfaq, elbow.

262

حطّ لنا تمر ولو على كربه

ḥett lena tamer 'u lō 'ala krubeh

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

krubeh: 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.

263

حفار القبور يقول يا الله ميت

ḥaffār al-gbūr ygūl yā 'Allah mayyit

"The gravedigger says: 'O 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 him-
self even if it comes through the misfortune of others.

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

264

حَقّ وافق طبقه

ḥeggen wāfaq ṭbuguh

"[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.

hegg: huqq, little tin.

This proverb seems to be a colloquial Najdi version of the classical proverb:¹ وائق سنّ طبقه

SMDW: classical and post-classical proverbs: see M., nos. 322, 2987; 'Ask., no. 1785; Ṭāliq., no. 44; Mecca,² Yemen: Goit., no. 200a; Akwa', 1, no. 1047; Iraq (Baghdad, Mosul and among the nomads):³ 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.

265

الحقوق تبي حلو

al-ḥgūg tabi ḥlūg

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

tabi: imperf. "it wants, it needs".

NS: Iraq: Weissbach, no. 40; Hanafi, no. 684; Dal., 1, no. 602; Ḡul., p. 56.

266

حكم قراقوش

ḥukm Grāgūš

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

Grāgūš: "Bahā' al-Dīn Ibn 'Abd Allah al-Asadi (Mamlūk of Asad al-Dīn Shirkūh) al-Rūmi (of Asia Minor) al-Māliki al-Nāṣiri, officer of Malik al-Nāṣir Yūsuf (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 القدر دور على فطاه لما التقاه , Quraiš, 34 (1960), p. 16; and جوزوا مشكاح على ريمما ما على الاتين قيمه , *ibid.*, 20, p. 16.

³ A. Ḥafiri, *op. cit.*, p. 130, no. 199.

⁴ Encyclopédie de l'Islam, 1st ed., vol. 2, pp. 786-787, "Ḥarākūsh".

Ident : Iraq: Tik., no. 855; Hanafi, no. 682; Dal., 1, no. 609; Dabb., 1, p. 167; Ğul., p. 54; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4165; Frayha, no. 3503; Egypt: Amīn, p. 173; Baq., p. 293.

267

حكة وتوجع

ḥets-tseh 'u tewehweh

"Itching and shuddering."

tewehweh: verbal noun of the verb tawahwah, 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.

268

حكي بالفات نقص بالعقل

ḥatsyen bal-fāyet nagṣen bal-'agel¹

"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.

269

حلتة عما

ḥaltat 'aṣa²

"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; Ğul., p. 76; G. Syria: Baum., no. 249; Tallq., no. 11.

270

حمار الصلبي : يرعى الحيا بعيونه

ḥmār aṣ-Ṣlubi: yar'aal-ḥaya be'yūnuh

¹ Also Juh., no. 703.

² Also ibid., no. 665.

"[Like] the ass of a Şlubi: it grazes with its eyes only."

Şlubi: one who belongs to the Şlubeh or Şalab tribe, a tribe of obscure origin, considered socially inferior to other tribes. It is said that a Şlubi 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: Nūri, 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: Aşqar, nos. 4150, 4151; Fegh., no. 1697; Egypt: Taim., no. 1413.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: Zamak., 2, no. 706; M., no. 2930; Mecca: Hurg. no. 41.

271

حماره ما له ذنب

ḥmāruh mā luh danab¹

"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 (caḍi:qāḍi) 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,

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

حمود هو حمود

Ḥmūd hu Ḥmūd

"Ḥmūd is Ḥmūd," 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."

SMDW: Yemen: Goit., no. 732.

273

حنّا عصفير و ابا زيد سدره ومن طاح مّا يلتجي في ظلاله

ḥenna 'aṣāfīren we (e)Bā Zeed sedreh, 'u men ṭāḥ menna
yelteji fī ḏlālah

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.

Qiṣṣatu Banī Hilāl.

274

حنك حمار

ḥanats ḥmār

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

SMDW: Palestine: Stephan, no. 942.

275

حوار (حوير) ربيع: إن دنتق ولا جرّه، وان رفع راسه ولا درّه

ḥwār (ḥwayyer) rebī' 'en dannag wala jerreh we(e)n rufa' rāsuh wala derreh¹

"[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.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1988.

276

حوفك يا الخرقا كوليه (عيشك يا ظلما كوليه)

ḥōfets yal-karga kūleeh² ('eešets yā Ḥalma kūlih)

"You cooked it, O clumsy woman, so you eat it (var. O Ḥalma, it is your food and you eat it)."³

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 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.

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

277

الحيا متبوع

al-ḥaya matbū,¹

"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.

278

حيث شجرتہ

ḥayat šjertuh

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

279

الحية الرقطة ولا الضيف المضحى

al-ḥayyt ar-ragṭa walaṣ-ṣeef al-meṣḥi²

"Better a speckled viper than a guest who stays till late in
the morning." This proverb is used facetiously.

NS: Syria (among the bedouins).³

280

خارق عادة

kāredz 'ādeh

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

281

خاطر الليل مجفئ

kāṭr al-leel majfiyy⁴

"The guest [who comes] at night is not well received."

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

SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2715; G. Syria: Ašqar,

¹ Also Juh., no. 736.

² See also Musil, op. cit., p. 464.

³ See Gertrude L. Bell, Syria, The Desert and The Sown
(London, 1919), p. 64: "Ḥayyeh rubda walā ḍaif muḍḥa." 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.

⁴ Cf. Juh., no. 1198.

no. 2632; Fegh., no. 1599; Frayha, no. 2217, Tallq., no. 94.

282 الخال خال الى يوم الدين

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.

283 خالك مالك، اخوك من أمك طشه

kālek mālek 'ekūk mn ummek ṭeššuh

~~your [real] uncle is your money, throw away your half brother [from the mother side]~~
ṭešš: imper. of tašš, to throw away. This word is used by

bedouins.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., no. 2484; 'Ask., no.

1200; Mosul: Socin, no. 299; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 625.

284 الخد ميدان والخيال قرح (وهن قرح)

al-kadd meedān wal-keel (wehen) gerrah¹

"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.

gerrah: plur. of dzāreh (fuṣ, qāriḥ): "a horse is called so when he finishes teething and enters his sixth year" or "in its eighth year or older; aged horse."²

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

285 خذ من بمره وقت على ظهره

ked men b'aruh 'u fett 'ala ḡharuh³

"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

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.

286

خذ من حكى العاقل نصفه

ked menḥatsy al-'ādzel neṣfuh¹ (var. ḥatsy al-'ādzel yanges neṣṣuh).

"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.

287

خراب السفينه

karāb as-sefineh³

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

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 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.

288

خرز ترز

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.

289

خرق على جعره

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.

290

خزام العير من ذنبه

kzām al-'eer men dnebuh¹

"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: Nūri, 1, p. 129.

SMDW: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 649; Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 503

يكتفا من صوفها ; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1949; Ašqar, nos.

4424, 4425, 4426; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1138, 1817.

291

الخسارة ما هنا خساره: أما المره ولا الحماره ✓

al-kasāreh māhna kasāreh, 'ummāl-mereh wellal-ḥmāreh

"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: Ašqar, no. 853.

māhna: mā huna, there is not.

1

Also ibid., no. 774.

292

الخشوه عند عقيل ما هي هينه

al-kasweh 'end '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).

293

خشبه رجال

kšebāt rajjāl

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

294

خشك منك لو كان اقطم (عوج، لو اعفك)

kašmek menk lō kān aqṭam ('awaj;¹ 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)."²

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

Sim. WM: 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; Çul., p. 24:

الإظفر ما ينشلع من اللحم; Egypt: Taim., no. 680; Lebanon: Frayha, no. 2501.

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

295

خطى الحرب قصار

kṭa al-ḥarb qṣār³

"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.

296

خلى الدرعى ترعى

¹ Cf. ibid., no. 777.

² The last version is used in al-Jawf.

³ 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

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 99.

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

297

خَلَّ حَارَكٌ يَبْرُدُ

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.

298

خَلَّ (خَلَّى) حَرَمِلًا بِكَبِدِ مَلِهْ

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'ib (aš-Ša'ib) 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.

² See al-Jawhari, op. cit., p. 586.

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.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 200.

299

خَلْ كُلِّ شَاوِي عَلِي قَلْبِيه

kall kell šāwyen 'ala dzelibuh

"Leave every shepherd at his [own] well," i.e., do not interfere in the affairs of others.

300

خيال البلهاء راعيها

kayyāl 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

301

الخَيْرُ عِنْدَ ذِكْرِهِ

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: Nūri, 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.

302

الخييل خسر لى قل النصى

al-keel kešer lā 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.

303

دآب جراد : ما تدرى وش تصيد ووش تخلى

dābb jarād: mā tadri weš tešid 'u weš tkalli

"[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

304

دآب سليم (سليمه , دآبة سليمه)

dābben selīm (selīmeh; dābbeten 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".

305

دآب عمى : تطيح العصافير بافمه وياكله

dābben 'ama: teṭih al-'aṣāfir 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.

SMDW: Oman: Jayak., no. 225.

306

داس سكيينه

dāssen skeetsīnuh

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

307

دامها (دامه) خضرا ما هافت

dāmha kaḡran mā hāfat¹

"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"² and "Make hay while the sun shines."³

SMDW: Mecca: Hurq., no. 53; Sāsi, no. 287.

308

داو الهجن بالعصا والنسا بالنسا

dāw al-hejen bal-'aṣa wan-nsa ban-nsa

"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.

al-hejen: camels

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.⁴

309

الدايم شديد

ad-dāyem šedīd

"What is done all the time is burdensome."

310

دبر تحت وبر

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, "Amṭāl", al-'Arab, 2 (1968), p. 519, no. 29.

² ODEP, p. 781.

³ Ibid., p. 501.

⁴ See H. Granqvist, "Marriage conditions in a Palestinian Village", Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum, vol. 6

(Helsingfors, 1935), p. 209: اقهر النساء بالنسا ولا تضربهن بالعصا and ما يرى الا انسى الا انسى

dubaren taḥat wubar¹

"Sores covered by hair." Cf. "Whited sepulchres."

dubar: plur. of dbereh, a sore on a camel, a horse or a donkey's back.

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

311

الدّيس ما يلزق إلا على شقّ لاحسه

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: yaltaṣiq, it sticks.

šedz-dz: fuḡ., šidq

312

الدّجاجة تعرف بيضها

ad-dejājeh t'aref beeḡaha

"[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.

313

دخان جلّه

dakkān 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

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 242.

² ODEP, p. 176.

³ Also Juh., no. 825.

314

دخانه ولا هبوب شماله

dakkānah wala habūb šemālah¹

"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: Ġul., p. 64: دخان اليعمي ولا برد اليعمي ;

G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1128; Frayha, no. 1605; Landb., no.43.

315

دخله الماء

dkaluh al-ma'

"Water entered him," i.e., he felt a twinge of fear. Cf.

"He got cold feet."

Sim. WM: Mosul:² راح اليمى تحتو

316

درويش ما يسرب كلام

derwiš mā ye'reb kalām

"[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.

317

الدّره من الجرّه (ما تجى الدّره إلّا على الجرّه) ✓

ad-derreh mn al-jerreh (mā teji ad-derreh ella 'ala al-jerreh)³

"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.

² Socin, "Der Arabische Dialekt von Mōsul und Mārdīn," ZDMG, 37 (1883), p. 207.

³ Also Juh., no. 835.

318

دفن بالرجال ولا دفن بالرّمال

dafnen bar-rjāl wala dafnen bar-rmāl

"Burying [favours] 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.

319

دقّ الحساب تدوم العشرة

dadz-dzedz al-ḥsāb tedūm al-'ešreh¹

"Be precise in reckoning up [with your friends] and the friendship will last." Cf. the English proverb, "Short reckonings make long friends."²

dadz-dzedz: fuṣ., دقّ; the change is a result of the affrication of the qāf.

SMDW: Oman: Jayak., no. 87; Reinhardt, no. 123; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 118; Hanafi, nos. 475, 1045, 1046; Dabb., 1, p. 243: صد يقك دوم حاسبو كل يوم ;
G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 918; Fegh., no. 1317; Frayha, no. 3053; Egypt: Taim., no. 659; Burck., no. 548.

320

دلو ذباب: لا بوسط الماء ولا بيد الجانِب

dalu Debādeb lā bwaṣṭ al-ma 'u lā byad al-jādeb³

"[Like] a bucket let down in the well of Debādeb: 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."

Debādeb: (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

دلو ما ودلو طين

dalū ma' 'u dalū ṭīn¹

"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: Nūri, 1, p. 139.

322

دَمَّ (طَمَّ) البير يقل ورده

dumm al-bīr yegell werduh

"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: Nūri, 1, p. 205.

NS: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 35.

SMDW: two old proverbs: 'Ask., nos. 118, 783; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 338.

323

الدنيا تجمع وتفرق

ad-denya tajma' wetfarredz²

"Life brings [people] together and [then] disperses [them]."

324

دهنة مرتوق

dehnat 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.

¹ Also ibid., no. 836; 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 251.

² Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 258.

325

دوا جمعه: لا ينفع ولا يضرّ

dwa Jem'eh lā yanfa' 'u la yeẓerr

"[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 Nūri, 1, p. 114, no. 27.

SMDW: Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 359, لا يضر ولا ينفع; Ašqar, nos. 1624, 4255.

326

دور الزور عند الرمراه

dawwr al-urar 'end ar-rumrāneh

"Look for the monitor lizard at the rumrāneh [the Chenopodium morale] bush." Said when one finds a person in the expected place.

The monitor lizard often dwells near a rumrāneh. 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.

327

دوّرت عايف روحه وازريت أنا ألقاوه كلّ حسب نفسه من الطيبين

dawwart 'āyef rūḥuh wa(a)zreet ana algāwh kellen ḥasab nafsuh mn aṭ-ṭayybīni

"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."¹

'āyef: active participle of 'āf, to refuse.

dawwart: I looked for.

'azreet: 'azra: to be unable to. Used by bedouins.

328

ديان عتبه: إن ما اوفاك ما عناك

dayyān 'tebeh: 'en mā 'ōfāk 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.

329

دين وعلى بدوى

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.

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 826; Çul., p. 65: دين كردى لينكر ولينطى; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2506.

330

ذبة بقرعه

dubbeten begre'eh¹

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

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

gre'eh: pumpkin

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1963.

331

ذراعہ كيس

drā'uh kīs²

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

332

ذکر الحیا والخیرین یبین

detsr al-ḥaya wal-kayyrin yebin

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

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 866

² Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 274.

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.

342

راس ظبي ما به عراش ✓

rās ḡabyen mā buh 'rāš¹

"[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-Kalāwi. He said in one of his well-known poems:

وهي لي وشيري يا اهل السرف والحجا كما راس ظبي ما وراء عراش

"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.²

¹

Cf. *ibid.*, no. 889.

²

See A. Kamis, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

'rāš: from 'araš, to eat meat off the bone with some effort.

343

راس ما به هوا موته وحياته سوا

rāsen mā buh hawa mōtuh 'u ḥayātuh sawa

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

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 719.

344

راسي وراس شعيله

rāsi 'u rās Š'eeleh¹

"[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.²

345

راع الحاجه ملحاح

rā' al-ḥājah melḥāḥ

"A man with a need [should be] persistent."

346

راع الحلال يركب على الدبره

rā' al-ḥalāl yartsab 'alad-dberēh³

"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.

347

راع الحنا يحثني طيزه ✓

rā' al-ḥenna yaḥḥanni ṭīzuh

"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: من كان زادهن طلا استه ; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1304; Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 930; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 701; Fegh., no. 1120; Frayha, no. 513; Egypt: Taim., no. 311; Fā'iqa, no. 1950.

348

راع السدس ما يطرد الحمار عن الكدس

rā' as-seds mā yaṭred al-ḥmār 'an al-keds

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

349

راع الشقا ما يهتني برقود

rā' aš-šega mā yehteni bergūd

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

Sim. WM : Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 802.

SMDW: a classical or post-classical proverb: M., no. 2856; Zamak., 2, no. 676.

350

الراكب ما يشوف الماشي ✓

ar-rātseb mā yšūf al-māši

"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

351

الراي عقب الري

ar-rāy 'egb ar-riyy

¹ ODEP, p. 777.

² Ibid., p. 867.

³ S.G. Champion, Racial Proverbs (London, 1966), p. 22.

⁴ Quraiš, 21 (1960), p. 16.

"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

رَبَّنَا وَرَبَّكَ اللَّهُ

rabbena 'u rabbk Allah

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

353

الرَّجَالُ مِنَ الرَّجَالِ يَرْتَوُونَ

ar-rjāl mn ar-rjāl yertewūn

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

354

رَجَعَ الْمَاءُ لِمَنَاقِعِهِ (الْمَاءُ يَنْكَسُ لِمَنَاقِعِهِ)

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

الرَّجُلِيُّ مَا يَبَارِي الْكَيَّالَ

ar-rejli mā ybāri al-kayyāl

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

356

رَدَاةُ الْعَقْلِ مَا لَهُ مَكْوَى (مَصِيبُهُ . . .)

redāt al-'agel mālah matswa (mšībeh)

"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."¹

redāt: fus., radā'at رَدَاةٌ

matswa: from kawa, to cauterize.

The second variant of this proverb is NS in Egypt.²

357

رَدَّ الذِّيبُ جَاكَ الذِّيبُ

redd ad-dīb jāk ad-dīb

1

ODEP, p. 75.

2

Baq., p. 277, قَلَّةُ الْعَقْلِ مَصِيبُهُ

"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.

358

رفيقه الجيد

refīdzuh 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.

359

رَقَعَ فِيهَا زَرْبُولَكَ

radz-dze' fīha 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.

zerbūl: (old usage) boot.

radz-dze': raqqi'

360

رَقَلَتْ رِجْلُهُ

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.

361

رَقِيَ حِلْوَانٌ : لِيَ رَقِيَ زَلْفَهُ حَوْلَ زَلْفَتَيْنِ

redzi Ḥelwān: lā rega zelfeh ḥawwal zelfeteen

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

This proverb is common in al-Bkeeriyah in al-Qaṣīm. 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'iqa, no. 975.

362

رکب عباس دبابس

retseb 'Abbāsen Dabbās¹

"'Abbās rode Dabbās." Said of a group of people who are milling around in complete chaos.

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

363

رکز راسه

rekaz rāsuh

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

SMDW: Mosul: Çul., p. 53: حط العما بالحوض

364

رکز الخيل بجد

rakz al-keel bajd (ṭa'n al-keel bajd)

"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.

bajd: verbal noun of bejad, to cut something (e.g. a sack) strongly.

365

رج الجميلات بفراسهم

remḥ al-Jmeelāt bfarashum²

"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.

al-Jmeelāt: the name of a tribe.

SMDW: Egypt: Bājūri, p. 113: عجز ضربوا عجز قال احم عجز في بعضهم

366

روح ضاربن متمنيك

remḥen ḡarban mtemaṭnik

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

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 687.

² Also ibid., no. 961.

SMDW: Mosul: Dabb., 1, p. 208: رجل على ورجلك في الفلقه ;

Lebanon: Frayha, no. 1809.

367

الرجح على أول ركزه

ar-remḥ 'ala awwal rakzah¹

"The [quality of a] spear is evident from its first striking."

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 157.

368

رعى عرس

rami 'ers²

"[Like] shooting at a wedding," i.e., not aimed at a target.

Said of thoughts or talk of a random nature.

369

رمية ابن بختيار

ramyat Eben Bekīt

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

370

رمية من غير رامى

ramyeten men geer rāmi³

"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.⁴

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3857; Ḡul., p. 94,

عصاة كثر

371

روس قوم ولا اذنان اصحاب

rūs gōm 'u lā adnāb aṣḥāb

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

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; Quraiš, 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.

372

زادك وميسورك ولين المحبه أخير من كبش كبير يجاب

zādek 'u meesūrek 'u līn al-maḥabbah 'akeer men kabšēn
tsebīren yjābi¹

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

meesūr: anything which one can afford to offer, especially of food.

SMDW: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1190; Egypt: Littm., no. 290; Taim., no. 780.

373

زان لك المضراب

zān lek al-meẓrāb

"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.

374

زيبيل متقطعة عراوه (عراه)

zebīlen mtegaṭṭ'aten 'rāwh

"[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.

375

الزمان اطول من امله

az-zemān aṭwal mn aḥluh²

"Time [lasts] longer than people." Time continues while people pass away.

¹ This proverbial verse was first composed by 'Ali al-Gubāli in a poem beginning:

يا على شب النار يا على شبه لي مال في امشراخات الهضاب
See M.S. Kamāl, al-'Azhār an-Nādiyah, vol. 3 (Cairo, n.d.), p. 97.

² Cf. Juh., no. 1021.

NS: Mosul: Socin, no. 449.

376

الزود اخو النقص

az-zōd ekw an-nagṣ¹

"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: Nūri, 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: كلّ زائد ناقص

377

زود على الحمى مليله

zōden 'ala al-ḥumma melīleh²

"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: Nūri, 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, زود المبله طين

378

زين (حط) لرجليك مراقي

zayyen (ḥeṭṭ) lrejleek marādzi

"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.

379

ساحتي راحتي ، بطني جرابي

sāḥati rāḥati, baṭni jrābi

"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.

jrāb: food sack.

SMDW: Iraq: Hanafi, no. 1239; Dal., 1, no. 289; Çul.,

p. 92: عصاتي وعباتي; Oman: Jayak., no. 169.

380

السَّارِقُ مِنَ السَّارِقِ كَالْوَارِثِ مِنْ أَبِيهِ

as-sāriq min as-sāriq kal-wāriṭ min 'abih

"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.

381

ساعة الحب قصيره

sā't al-mḥebb geṣīreh²

"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.

MS fol. 119: يوم السرور قصير

382

سبيل تفاق

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 fī sabīl Allah, for the cause of God.

tefaḡ: gun (old usage)

383

سبيت ما له بيت

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.

384

سحابة أهل فيد : يا رب هاته يا رب اقلعه

saḥābt ahal 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.

egla': 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.

385

سراج نهار

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: أضيح من سراج في شمس

386

سرح جردي

sarḥ jerdi

"[Like] the roaming of a rat [it does not stray far from its burrow]."

jerdi: jurḍ: large rat.

387

سكاري وعقولك معه

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.

388

سلامة من سلامة أسلم

salāmeten men Salāmeḥ aslam¹

"To be safe from Salāmeḥ 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; Ṭāliq., 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; Nūri, 2, p. 210: السلامة غنيمة 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.

389

السلام يَرْتُ كَلَامَ وَالْكَلامِ يَرْتُ بَطْنِجَ (عشا)

as-salām yerret kalām wal-kalām yerret baṭṭiḡ (‘aša)

¹ Cf. ibid., no. 1010 and 'Ubūdi, 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.

390

سلعة حمادي ما تربح

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.)

Ḥamāda: al-Ḥamāda: a sub-tribe who live in al-Qašim.

This proverb is probably confined in usage to al-Bkayriyyah

391

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; Ṭāliq., no. 116; Ta'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 197. It is also known at the present time in G. Syria and Egypt. See Ašqar, no. 2353; Burck., no. 108;

Taim., no. 1161; Littm., no. 475.)

392

السّما ياخذ رصاص واجد

as-sema yāked reṣāṣen wājed

"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.

yaked: ya'kud: (here) to have enough room for.

wājed: plenty, much, many.

393

السّم ما يوكل تجرّه

as-summ mā yūkal tajerbeh¹

"Poison cannot be consumed for the sake of experiment."

Said concerning the advisability of avoiding exposure to unnecessary dangers.

394

سمين الما بارده (البارد سمين)

semīn al-ma bārduh (var. al-bāred semīn)

"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.

395

سندا يا دبيس

Sanda ya Dbees

"[This is] Sanda O 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

396

سّن شايب

senn šāyeb

"[Like] an old man's tooth." Said of a solitary person or

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 339.

someone who is alone.

397

السؤالف تبى هله

as-sawāleḥ tabi halah

"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-sawāleḥ: plur. of sāleḥ, story, conversation.

tabi: the imperf. form of baga, to want, to need.

halah: 'ahalah (fuṣ., 'ahluha), its people.

398

سيف بدو (موس بدو)

seef (mūs) badu

"[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: سكين صلبه ترقل وتقص

399

سيوره من متونه

syūrah men mtūnah

"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.

400

شاف النجوم الضحى (نجوم الضحى، وراوه النجوم بالضحى)

šāf an-njūm aḥ-ḥaḥa (njūm aḥ-ḥaḥa; warrāwh an-njūm baḥ-ḥaḥa¹

"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 'Aṣim, no. 191; Bakri, p.

367, رأى الكواكب مظهرها; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 606, no. 37;

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, "al-'Amtāl al-'Ammiyya fī Najd," al-'Arab, 2 (1968), p. 520.

Yemen: Goit., no. 1255; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1094; Ḡul., p. 99: غوانى انجوم السما بالضحى; Dabb., 1, p. 104: ايغوينو انجوم الضحى; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1192; Frayha, nos. 2087, 2579; Egypt: Burck., no. 86.

401 الشّام شامك إلى منّ الدهر ضامك، والهند هندك لي قلّ ما عندك
 aš-šām šāmek elāmenn ad-dahar ḡāmek wal-Hend Hendek lā gall
 mā 'endek¹

"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.

elāmenn: (adv.), when. Equivalent to the two adverbs lā 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; Ḡul., p. 77; Dabb., 1, p. 228.

402 شاة الله بأرضه

šāt 'Allah ba(a)rḡuh

"[He is] the ewe of God on His earth." Said of a simple-hearted or naïve person.

ba(a)rḡuh: bi 'arzihi, on His land (or earth).

SMDW: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 136, no. 1; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1132; Baghdad: Tik., no. 664; Hanafi, no. 514; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1585; Egypt: Taim., no. 1465; Littm., no. 200.

403 الشاة المذبوحه ما يضرها الصلح

aš-šāt al-maḡbūḡeh mā yeḡerrha(a)ṣ-ṣalk

¹ 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, Tamtīl, p. 40.

NS: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2391; Stephan, no. 28; Egypt: Taim., no. 2952.

404

شاهد ملاك

šāhed malāts

"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.

405

شاهد ومزكى

šāhed wemzats-tsi

"[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.

406

شاوره واحرمه

šāwruh we(e)ħermuh

"Consult him even though you fail to heed him." People are often satisfied by merely being consulted.

407

شباط مقرع البيان

šbāṭ mdzardz' al-bībān

"Šbāt is the rattler of doors," i.e., it brings violent winds.

Šbāt: this term is applied in Najd to a period of winter coinciding with the month of February.

mdzardze': act. partic. of garga', to rattle.

408

شباط يقلع النخل

Šbāt ydzall' an-nakal

"Šbāt roots out palm-trees." Violent winds are usually frequent at this period of winter. See no. 407 above.

409

ش بلاش ما يسواش

šen balāš mā yeswāš

"A thing given free is worth nothing."

šen: var. for šayyen, a thing.

balāš: bilā šay', free, without price.

mā yeswāš: var. for mā yeswa šayy', not worth anything.

SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., nos. 1070, 1504; Egypt: Taim., no. 2584.

410

الشتا يبي صميل والصف خيره عندك

aš-šta yabi šemil waš-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.

šemil: milk-skin.

yabi: imperf. of baga, to require, want, need.

411

شرا ولد الزنا ولا تغذاته¹

šra weld az-zna wala tgadātuh¹

"To buy a bastard [lit. the son of adultery] is easier than to nurture it."

weld: son.

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 1080.

tḡadātuh: tagdiyatuh

Sim. WM: post-classical Egyptian proverb: Abšīhi, 1, p. 35,
 شرا العبد ولا تربيته ; Yemen: Goit., no. 611; Akwa', 1, no.
 460; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2145; Dabb., 2,
 p. 584, مشتارة العبد ولا ترباته ; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 434;
 Frayha, no. 2007; Fegh., no. 2473; Egypt: Burck., no. 450;
 Taim., no. 1659; Littm., no. 474.

412

شرب على غير الظما يجرح الكبد

šerben 'ala geer az-ḡuma yajraḡ al-tsabd

"Drinking without thirst hurts the stomach." This proverb is a quotation (with slight modification) of the Najdi poet Rāšid al-Kalāwis' verse:¹

شرب على غير الظما يجرح الحشا وقرب على غير الموده لاش

I.e., excess is harmful.

al-tsabd: al-kabid, stomach.

413

الشرط أربعون لنا عشرون ولكم عشرون

aš-šarṭ arba'ūn lanā 'iṣrūn walakum 'ešrūn²

"The reward is forty [i.e., riyals]: twenty for us, and twenty for you." Said of corrupt officials who share the gains (of a bribe).

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 imām 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

¹ See A. Kamīs, 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.

414

الشَّرَّ مَهْوبٍ مِيعَادٍ

aš-šarr mahūb mi'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.

mahūb: mā huwa bi, is not.

415

شعرته حمرا

š'artuh ḥamra

"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;

Baghdad: Tik., no. 1968; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4004.

416

شغل مشيلش بالظلمة

šegl Mšeeleš baḡ-ḡalma

"[Like] the work of Mšeeleš in the dark." Mšeeleš appears in this proverb as an archetypal bungler; if he does something in the dark it will of course be even worse.

417

شف وجه العنز واحلب لبن

šef wajh al-'anz we(e)ḥleb leban²

¹ See also idem., "Sālfat mṭawwa' al-badw al-jāhel," Min 'Asāṭirina aš-Sa'biyyah, 1 (Beirut, 1967), p. 303.

² Cf. Juh., 1084, 2422; 'Ubūdi, op. cit., p. 516.

"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: Nūri, 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:

Fā'iqā, no. 352; a classical proverb: 'Ask., no. 128.

418

الشَّقُّ أَوْسَعُ مِنَ الرَّقْعَةِ

aš-šagg 'ōsa' mn ar-reg'eh¹

"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: الشَّقُّ كَبِيحٌ وَالرَّقْعَةُ صَغِيغِي

أَتَسَعُ الْخِرْقَ عَلَى الرَّاقِعِ: 20

419

شَقَّ غَرْبَهُ

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."

420

الشَّمْسُ مَا يَخْتَبِئُهَا الْمَنْخَلُ

aš-šams mā ygaṭṭyah al-menkul

"The sun cannot be hidden by a sieve."

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 183, no. 31; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 997; Oman: Jayak., no. 133; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul):

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 372.

Tik., nos. 1230, 1496; Hanafi, nos. 1006, 1330; Socin, no. 499.

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2456; Singer, no. 9; Frayha, no. 2052; Fegh., no. 1327.

421 شمس على روس (أطراف) الدوايب

šamsuh 'ala rūs (aṭrāf) ad-dawāyeb¹

"His sun is at the tops of the palm-branches," i.e., he is departing soon (when the sun is about to set, it shines on the tops of the trees).

Sim. WM: Mosul: Dabb., 1, p. 237: شمس عصغ على روس الحيطان

SMDW: two post-classical proverbs: M., no. 3791; Ta'ālibi, Timār, p. 423, ما هو إلا شمس العصر على القصر; Baghdad: Tik., no. 2079.

422 شور من لا يستشيرك عداله كما وصف من ينفخ بكير وهو طافي

šōr men lā yestešīrek 'adāleh tsema waṣf men yanfuk btsīren
we hu ṭāfi

"Giving advice to him who does not ask you for it is reprehensible. It is like blowing with bellows on a fire that is already out."

This proverb is a verse composed by Mḥammad al-'Abdallah al-Gāzi. It begins with the word tara, "let it be known to you that", which is missing here.²

423 شوط بقره

šōt bgereh³

"[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.

² See A. az-Zāmil, 'Azwā'un 'alal-'Adab aš-Ša'bi (Jedda, n.d.), p. 41.

³ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 377.

This phrase is used in Lebanon: see Faraj, p. 347.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 2956.

424

شونه شوف سلقه (طير)

šōfuh šōf slegeh (ṭeer)

"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

الشوى ما ينتدبر

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

شوى هناك ولا كثير عناك

šwayyen hannāk wala tsetiren 'annāk

"A little thing you obtain easily is better than a big thing you obtain with much difficulty."

427

شوى ولا بالنعله وانا شاريها بمدين

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; Ğul., p. 69, رجلى ولا الحذا

¹ See M., nos. 578, 580; 'Ask., nos. 309, 313; Zamak, 1, nos. 54-61.

428

شئى بلاش ريحه بين

šayyen balāš rebḥuh bayyen¹

"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

شئى ترجيه ولا شئى تاكله

šayyen tarjīh wala šayyen tākluh²

"A thing you hope for is better than a thing you are consuming now."

Sim. WM: Mecca.³

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Ta'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 18, المأمول خير من المأول; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 596; Hanafi, nos. 461, 2232, Socin, no. 505.

430

شئى النعجه بماله

šayy(e)k an-n'ajeh bmālah

"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.

šayyek: lit., make a sheikh, i.e., give a free hand in something.

431

شئىن يجمال ولا زين يهمل

šeenen yjammal wala zeenen yhammal⁴

"Rather an ugly thing [or person] beautified than a beautiful one neglected." Often used by women. Said of the effect of

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 380.

² Also ibid., no. 381.

³ See Qurais̄, no. 24 (1960), p. 16.

⁴ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 382.

personal adornment.

432

صاح (عوى) عليه الجوّ

ṣāḥ ('awa) 'aleeh al-jaww¹

"The atmosphere shouted (var. howled) at him," i.e., everybody was against him, or all were united in asking him to do something (e.g., at a meeting).

433

صاد عصفورين بحجر

ṣād 'eṣfūreenen bḥajar²

"He caught two sparrows with one stone." The equivalent of the English proverb "To kill two birds with one stone."³

Sim. WM: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 534; Iraq: Tik., nos. 782, 1428; Hanafi, no. 1248; Dal., 1, no. 548; Dabb., 1, p.

247; Ḡul., p. 163; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1357; Mak, no.

23; Faraj, p. 337; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 1133.

SMDW: a class. prov.: M., no. 1834; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1084.

434

صاروا شعيب ونقرتين

ṣāraw še'īb 'u negreteen

"They became a valley and two depressions [of land]," i.e., they split into many groups.

435

صام عام وافطر على بصل ✓

ṣām 'ām wa(a)fṭar 'ala buṣal

"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:

صام سنه وفطر على بصله; Abšīhi, 1, p. 35: صام حولا ثم شرب بولا

Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1267; Hanafi, no. 1056;

Ḡul., p. 79: صام سنى وفتح على بصلى; G. Syria: Ašqar, no.

2535; Frayha, no. 2133; Baumann, no. 375; Stephan, no. 914;

Egypt: Taim., no. 1722; Burck., no. 369; Littm., no. 356.

¹ Cf. ibid., no. 388.

² Cf. Juh., no. 1294.

³ Browning, no. 9499.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Ṭāliq., no. 329.

436

الصبر مفتاح الفرج

aṣ-ṣaber meftāḥ al-faraj

"Patience is the key to relief."

This proverb has been familiar since the Middle Ages.

Maidāni mentions it among his collection of post-classical (muwallad) proverbs.¹ 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.

437

الصبر يقطع المصران

aṣ-ṣaber ygaṭṭ' al-meṣrān

"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 aṣ-ṣabr and "aloe" is aṣ-ṣabir, in Najd dialect aṣ-ṣaber is used for both "patience" and "aloe".

438

صَبِّ لِلِّي عَلَى أَيْمَنِكَ لَوْ كَانَ أَبَا زَيْدٍ عَلَى أَيْسَرِكَ

ṣubb la(a)lli 'ala 'eemank lō kān 'Ebā Zeed 'ala 'eesark

"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,

¹

See M., 2, p. 418.

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.

439 صَبِيٌّ (مَغْنَى) الْمَوَالِفِ: إِنْ وَخَدُوا غَنَّى وَأَنْ سَلَمُوا غَنَّى

ṣebeyy (mganni) al-mawālfēh 'en wekdaw ganna we(e)n salmaw ganna

"[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-mawālfēh: people who collect camels, tend them and trade in them. It is usually pronounced mwallfēh, 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-Mawālfēh 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: مَثَلُ الَّذِي ضَيَّعَ جَمَلَ خَالَتُو إِذَا لَقَانُوا غَنَّى وَإِذَا مَا لَقَانُوا غَنَّى; 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.

440 صَبِيٌّ وَبِالصَّيْفِ

ṣbayy 'u baṣ-ṣeef

"A little boy, and it is summer time," i.e., he has no experience of hard times.

441 صَبِيٌّ وَبِأَيَّامِ الرِّخَا رَابِي

ṣbayy 'u ba(a)yyām ar-rakā rābi

"[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.

442

صحن يا منقاش

ṣaḥan yā mengāš

"[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.

443

صخلة الشعيب ما تحب إلا التيس الغريب

ṣeklet aš-še'ib mā t-ḥebb ella at-tees al-garīb¹

"[Like] the young nanny-goat of aš-še'ib: 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'ib: name of a province in Najd; also "water-course".

Sim. WM: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 648.

444

صد بما أقبلت به

ṣedd bmā agbalt buh

"Turn your face away [i.e., go away] with what you have brought." Said to a person who breaks bad news or predicts misfortune.

445

صدقان (خلان) الرخا عدّهم لك قوم

ṣedgān ar-raḡa 'eddehum lek gōm

"Consider [your] fair weather friends [lit. friends of the time of plenty] as enemies."

1

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 Mḥammad al-Gāzi:¹

أحذرك خلان الرخاء عدّهم قوم خلان من دامت نعيه ودام
فإلى ادبوت دنياك عدوك معدوم مروا ولا ردوا عليك السلام

gōm: qawm, dialectically used for "enemies".

446

الصديق اللّٰى ما ينفع مثل العدو اللّٰى ما يضرّ

aṣ-ṣedīdz allī mā yanfa' metl al-'aduww allī mā yeẓerr

"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.

447

صقّه الرّمى

ṣaggehuh ar-ramī

"The shooting made him deaf," i.e., he became confused by others' noise and shouting at him.

saggeh-: (pronounced saggah in pause), to make deaf.

448

صلابخ واقصه: الكلّ منهن يقدهح

ṣalābīk Wāgṣeh al-kell menhen yadzdaḥ

"[Like] the pebbles of Wāgṣeh: each one of them strikes fire." Said of a group of people who are equally sharp, hot-tempered, etc.

ṣalabīk: plur. of ṣelbūk, pebbles, shingle.

Wāgṣeh: is probably Wāqīṣah 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 aṣ-Ṣayṭān, and

¹ See A. az-Zāmil, op. cit., p. 103.

² See "The Geology Map of the Darb Zubaidah", Map no. 1, published by the United States Geological Survey.

a watering place belonging to Banī Ka'b, and a place on the road to Kufa before Dī Mark, and a place in al-Yamāmah."¹

449

الصلاة ما اغنت مقيمها

aṣ-ṣalāt mā(a)gnat Mdzīmeh

"Prayers did not make Mdzīmeh rich."

Mdzīmeh was a poor old bedouin woman who prayed most of the time.

450

صوت عالي ويطن خالي (مثل الطبل . . .)

ṣōten 'āli 'u baṭnen kāli (var. meṭl aṭ-ṭabel, ṣōten . . .)²

"A loud noise but empty within (var. like a drum . . .)."

Cf., "Empty kettles make most noise."

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 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.

451

صوط ولهاس

ṣōṭ 'u lahas

"Sometimes the whip, sometimes a nudge [lit. a whip and a nudge]."

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."

lahas: the meaning of this word is not clear. It is not used apart from this phrase. It probably means, as A. Juhaimān explained it,³ a nudge or a gentle movement of the foot or the heel of one who is riding an animal to urge it

¹ Maḥmūd b. Ya'qūb al-Fairūzābādi, al-Qāmoos (Calcutta, 1817), p. 891. See also Ibn Rosteh, al-'A'lāk an-Nafīsa, vol. 7, ed. by M.J. Degoeje (Leiden, 1891), p. 175 and Alois Musil, Northern Nejd (New York, 1928), p. 232.

² Cf. Juh., no. 2190.

³ See A. Juhaimān, al-'Amtāl, 2, p. 31.

to walk quickly.

452

صياح خلا

ṣayyāḥ kala

"[He is] a shouter in the desert," i.e., a voice in the wilderness.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3294; 'Ask., no. 1731; Iraq (Baghdad and among the Iraqi bedouins): Tik., no. 1863; Zafīrī, no. 246; G. Syria: Singer, no. 4209; Egypt: Taim., no. 899.

453

صياد الفهود يصاد

ṣayyād al-fhūd yṣād¹

"He who hunts leopards will [himself] be hunted." Cf. the English proverbs, "At length the fox is brought to the furrier"² and "The biter bit."

454

صير العمر فاني

ṣayyūr al'umer fāni³

"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.

455

ضالة الغنم لك أو لأخيك أو للدّيب

zāllat al-ganam laka 'aw li 'akīka 'aw lad-dīb

"[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 ḥadīth:⁴

وقال كيف ترى في ضالة الغنم؟ قال النبي ^{صلى الله} عليه وسلم: خذها
فإنما هي لك أو لأخيك أو للدّيب

¹ Cf. ibid., no. 1827.

² ODEP, p. 284.

³ Also Juh., no. 2806.

⁴ See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukāri, 1st ed. (Cairo, 1343 A.H.), vol. 2, p. 40.

SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1721; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2212.

456

الضَّبُّ مَا يَعْرِفُ رَبَّهُ لِيْنَ يَسْلُقِيْ

aṣ-ṣabb 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: 'ilā '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: مَا يَعْفُفُ اللّٰهَ اِلَّا عِنْدَ الزَّلْقِ; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 4129; Landb., no. 125; Egypt: Burck., no. 632; Littm., no. 30.

457

الضَّبُّ وَعِشْرَتُهُ

aṣ-ṣabb 'u 'oṣṣzetuh¹

"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.

'oṣṣezeh: class. 'awsajah

SMDW: Palestine: Stephan, no. 845.

458

ضَحْكُ حِجَاةٍ

ṣahak ḥjājuh

"His eyebrow laughed," i.e., he felt happy and pleased. This proverb is an example of personification.

459

ضِرَاطُ نَمْلِ

ṣrāṭ namel²

"[Like] the farting of ants." Said of something of little

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 440.

² Cf. idem., "al-'Amtāl al-'Āmiyya", al-'Arab, 3 (1969), p. 414, no. 105; also Juh., no. 1176.

or no effect.

460

ضرب (طق) أنجر

ḡarab (ṡagg) anjar

"He let down an anchor [into the ground]," i.e., he stayed sitting for a very long time.

anjar: anchor

461

الضرب (الطق) ما ينفع بالحديد البارد

aḡ-ḡarb (aṡ-ṡagg) mā yanfa' bal-ḡadīd al-bāred

"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.

462

ضربة بالمسحاة عن عشر بالمطيرقه

ḡarbeten bal-mes-ḡāt 'an 'ašren bal-mṡeerdzeh¹

"A stroke with a spade is worth ten with a little hammer."

Sim. WM: two post-classical proverbs: Zamak., 2, no. 494;

ṡāliq., no. 291.

463

ضربة (طقة) فى راس غيرى مثل شطب (طق) بالجدار (...كسها بعدل تبين)

ḡarbeten (ṡaggeṡen) fī rās ḡeeri meṡel šaṡben (ṡaggen)

bal-jdār (ṡennaha b'edel teben)²

"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.

šaṡb: crack.

Sim. WM: Oman: Jayak., no. 158; Reinhardt, no. 93; Yemen: Goit., no. 660; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1317; Hanafi, no. 1116; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2616; Fegh., no. 208; Frayha, no. 2192; Landb., no. 116; Egypt: Hanki, p. 59.

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 1180.

² Cf. ibid., no. 1175.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 4527; 'Ask., no. 1835;
a post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 409: هان على النظارة ما
 يمرّ يظهر المجلود ; Egypt: Taim., no. 1701.

464

الضعيف زنج

aḏ-ḏ'ayyef zank

"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

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 2112.

465

الضعيف ضعيف النفس

aḏ-ḏ'if ḏe'if an-nafs

"The poor (weak) man is the poor (weak) in spirit."

466

ضو هرم

ḏaww 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.

ḏaww: fire, from the class. ḏaw', light.harm: see below, no. 820.

SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., no. 2104; Hanafi, no. 2026; Lebanon: Faraj, p. 348: شبح بريح ; Egypt: Burck., no. 687.

467

الضيف بامر (في حكم) الضيف

aḏ-ḏeef ba(a)mr (fī ḥkm) al-mḏayyef

"The guest is at the whim [lit. order] of the host," i.e., he should leave matters of entertainment, lodging, etc., to his host.

Sim WM: Palestine: Baum., no. 97.

468

طاح اللي براسه

ṭāḥ alli brāsuh

¹ ODEP, p. 639.

"What is in his head fell," i.e., he ate humble pie.

469

طاحت بالقلب وهي تقول يا احباني

ṭāḥat bal-dzelīb we hi tegūl ya(e)ḥebbāni

"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.

dzelīb: قلب , a well.

470

طاح عليه الجدار

ṭāḥ 'aleeh al-jdār

"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.

471

طارت الطيور بارزاقه ✓

ṭārt aṭ-ṭyūr ba(a)rzāgah¹

"The birds have flown off with their catches." Said when someone misses something after arriving late.

Ident.: a post-classical proverb: Abšīhi, 1, p. 136;

Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 180, no. 2; G.Syria: Ašqar, no. 2643;

Fegh., no. 2975.

472

الطارش بوقفه

aṭ-ṭāreš bwafguh²

"[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.

ṭāreš: active participle, from ṭaraš, to travel; to go away from one's hometown or land (old usage).

1

Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 423.

2

Also Juh., no. 1194.

473

طافى نار

ṭāfi nār

"His fire is out." He is a good-for-nothing.

474

طالت عرضت

ṭālat 'u 'arḡat

"It [i.e., a subject of conversation] has become diffuse and lengthy."

475

طرشة صونون

ṭarṣat Ṣawanwan

"[Like] a trip of Ṣawanwan."

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-Qaṣīm, where a man by the name of Mḥammad at-Tweeni, nicknamed aṣ-Ṣawanwan, 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-Madinah, 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 'Aṣim, no. 393; Bakr, p. 287: سقط العشاء به على سرحان; four post-classical proverbs: M., 2, p. 172: كصاحب الفيل يركب بدانق وينزل; ماصدنا شيئا والذي كان معنا لُفت; بدرهم; M., 2, p. 399: طول الغيبة وجانا بالخيبه; Abšihī, 1, p. 36: Oman: 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.

476

طَقَّهُ وَلَا تَشَقِّ خَلْقَهُ

ṭegguh 'u lā tešegg kleguh¹

"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.

477

طَقَّ وَمَاتَ

ṭedz-dz 'u māt²

"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."

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 1219.

² Also Juh., no. 1223; Cf. 'Ubūdi, "al-Amtāl al-Āmmiyyah fī Najd," al-'Arab, 3 (1969), p. 296, no. 88.

478

الطنزه تمدّ مدّ

aṭ-ṭenzeh 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; Zamak., no. 876;

a post-classical proverb: Ta'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 43: من عير عير ;

Egypt: Taim., nos. 472, 2846.

tmadd: passive imperf. of madd, to hand.

madd: verbal noun of madd.

479

طواری عوده

ṭawāri 'Ōdeh

"[Like] the erratic notions of 'Ōdeh." A man who is always thinking of doing something different is likened to a certain 'Ōdeh.

480

طوال الخيل تحمي قصاره

ṭwāl al-keel t-ḥama gṣārah¹

"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.

481

الطيب متبوع والجفا مكلّى

aṭ-ṭīb matbū' wal-jefa mkalla

"Goodness (generosity) is pursued and aloofness is forsaken." People tend to befriend good and useful people.

482

الطيبين ما عليهم وسوم

aṭ-ṭayybīn mā 'aleehum 'usūm²

"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.

483

الطير اللّی یصید الحباری ما یصید القبص

aṭ-ṭeer alli yeṣīd al-ḥabāri mā yeṣīd 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.

484

طیر شلوی

ṭeer Ṣalwa

"[He is] the falcon of Ṣalwa." Said in praise of a daring and helpful man.

485

الطیور علی اشباهه تقع ✓

aṭ-ṭyūr 'ala ašbāhah tega'³

"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: الطيور علی ألفتها تقع;

Mecca; طیر فی السما لو وقع قال الطیور علی اشباهه تقع⁵

Baghdad: Tik., nos. 420, 1367; Hanafi, no. 271; G. Syria:

Aṣqar, no. 2707; Frayha, no. 2288; Baum., no. 101;

Stephan, no. 722.

SMDW: Mosul: Socin, nos. 82, 205; Egypt: Taim., no. 1833;

Littm., no. 436.

486

العادات قاهرات ✓

al-'ādāt qāhirāt

"Habits are tyrannical [lit. overpowering]." Cf. nos. 632, 1029, 1030.

¹ CDEP, p. 209.

² Browning, no. 7881.

³ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 439.

⁴ Browning, no. 6949.

⁵ Qurais̄, 72 (1961), back page. (This proverb is recorded by Sākir Sulaimān Šukūri.)

SMDW: five post-classical proverbs and numerous contemporary proverbs: e.g., Tāliq., no. 261; Goit., no. 1329; Jayak., no. 115; Nūri, 1, p. 252, no. 16; Tik., nos. 1570, 39, 1343, 1754; Hanafi, no. 1430; Weissbach, no. 177; Ašqar, 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.

487

عاش هتيم بلا لبن ✓

'āš 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.

488

عاقل آل مره (عنه): قال من عاقلكم يا آل مره (عنه) قالوا: هالمربط

'āḍzl Āl Merreh ('Anezeh): gāl men 'āḍzelkum yā Āl Merreh ('Anezeh)? gālaw: hāl-mrabbaṭ

"[Like] the wise men of Āl 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).

Āl Merreh: 'Ālu 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: Nūri, 2, p. 142.

489

العاقل خصيم نفسه

al-'āḍzel kaṣim nafsu¹

"A wise man is his own opponent," i.e., a wise man subjects himself to self-criticism.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 233.

Sim. WM: Egypt: Taim., no. 1843.

1

Also Juh., no. 1254.

490

عاقته الشنات

'āldzetuh aš-šānāt

"Blame sticks to him." Regardless of what good work he does, fault is always found with him. Cf. nos. 230, 191, 415, 548.

aš-šānāt: blame.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 4659; 'Ask., no. 1947.

491

عبد ابن غنام: يوم طاح بالقلب قال تراك عتيق

'abd Eben Ḡannām: yōm ṭāḥ bal-dzelīb gāl tarāk 'atīdz

"[Like] Eben Ḡannām's saying 'You are free' to his slave when he jumped down a well," i.e., to make virtue out of necessity.

This proverb has the following story: Eben Ḡannām 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 Ḡannām." After he had fallen down the well, Eben Ḡannām shouted to him, "You are free! You are free!" but it was too late.

SMDW: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, no. 138: إن طار الطير قول سبيل ;

Yemen: Akwa', 1, nos. 511, 1190; Egypt, Taim., no. 797.

492

عبد هل البصر لا علم ولا بصر

'abd hal al-Beṣur lā 'elm 'ulā beṣur

"[Like] the slave of the people of al-Beṣur: 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-Qaşim. They are also called al-Kbūb.

hal: 'ahal: 'ahl

493

عبد مأمور

'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.

494

عبيسات بلبين

'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.

495

عجاج وما هماج ونسأل الله الخراج

'ajāj 'u man hamāj '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.

496

عجاجه يتبعه سيل

'ajājūh 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.

497

العجّاز يعلم الغيب

al-'ajjāz ya'lam al-ḡeeb¹

"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: الكسلان منجم والبخيل طبيب

498

العجز ابن البجز ابن الفقر ابن الموت

al-'ajz ebn al-bajz ebn al-fagr ebn al-mōt²

"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."³

al-bajz: word without meaning of its own, rhyming with al-'ajz to give emphasis. an example of 'itbā''.

499

العجول عجول ولو ملك

al-'ajūl 'ajūl 'u lō malak

"The precipitate man [by nature] remains precipitate even if he becomes a king.

500

عدّ له ولا تناظره

'edd luh 'u lā tnāzruh

"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.

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 1255.

² Also ibid., no. 1263.

³ See G.L. Apperson, English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases (London, 1929), p. 355.

501 عدوّ جدّك ما يودّك وصحيب ابوك يالفك

'aduww jeddek mā yeweddek 'u ṣeḥīb 'ebūk yālafk

"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

ṣeḥīb: friend.

The first sentence is expressed with SMDW in Iraq: Tik., nos. 1392, 1402; Hanafi, no. 1203; Ḡul., p. 95; Dal., 1, no. 587; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 2792; Stephan, no. 220; Egypt: Taim., no. 1956; Littm., no. 280.

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 صديق الوالد عم الولد

502 عدوّ عينك يطيح بأفمه

'aduww 'eenek yeṭīh befmuḥ

"May your enemy be exposed to [so and so's] vicious tongue [lit. may the enemy of your eye fall in (so and so's) mouth]," i.e., so and so has a slanderous tongue and therefore I wish that only your enemy and not you, be exposed to his defamatory speech.

503 عدوّ قاعه

'aduww gā'eh³

"He is an enemy from the bottom," i.e., an implacable enemy.

504 عذر البخيل رمضان

'edr al-bekīl Rmeḏān

"Rmeḏān [Ramaḏān] is the miser's excuse." Since everybody is fasting in the month of Ramaḏān, a miser finds it a good

¹ ODEP, p. 842.

² See M., 1, p. 418; Abšīhi, 1, p. 29.

³ Cf. Juh., no. 1267.

excuse for not offering food.

505 العذر ما يملأ بطن جوعان

al-'eder mā yamla baṭen jōān¹

"Excuses do not fill a hungry man's belly." Cf. the English proverbs, "Fair words butter no parsnips"² and "The belly is not filled with fair words."³

506 العرس أبين من الخطبه

al-'ers 'abyan mn al-keṭbeh

"The wedding is clearer than the betrothal."

507 عرضته عرضة ابا الحصين (حصنى)

'erṣetuh 'erṣat 'eba 'l-ḥṣeen (heṣni)

"Coming across him is like coming across a fox," i.e., he is as inauspicious to come across as a fox.

ḥeṣni: fox. 'eba 'l-ḥṣeen: 'abal-Ḥuṣain, the kunya of the fox.

People consider it inauspicious if a fox crosses the path in front of them.

508 عز الدنيا بالمال وعز الآخرة بالأعمال

'ezz ad-denya bal-māl 'u 'ezz al-ākreh bal-a'māl

"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 'Alī b. 'Abī Ṭālib's saying:⁴ الدنيا بالمال والآخرة بالأعمال
NS: Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 73: عز الدنيا بالأموال وعز الآخرة بالأفعال

509 عزيمة الغراب و ابا الحصين

'azīmt al-grāb we(E)bal-Ḥṣeen⁵

¹ Also Juh., no. 1271 and cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 459.

² ODEP, p. 241.

³ Browning, no. 8947.

⁴ See Ta'ālibi, Tamṭīl, p. 30.

⁵ Cf. also Musil, op. cit., p. 23.

"[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 ('aṣīd) 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.

'azīmeḥ: invitation, from 'azam, to invite.

NS: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): the crow is replaced by the stork, al-laglag: Hanafi, no. 1232; Dabb., 1, p. 270.

510

عشيرة رميزان : عدمها اخير من وجودها

'Šīrat Rmeezān: 'adamha 'akeer mn 'ujūdah

"[Like] the tribe of Rmeezān: it would be better for it not to exist than to exist."

Rmeezān: Rumaizān: the well-known Rmeezān b. Ḡaššam who belonged to the Tamīmi tribe of Āl Bū Se'id. He was appointed an emir on Rōḡat Sdeer (Rawḡatu Sudair) by aš-Šarīf Zayd b. al-Ḥusain of Mecca. He was killed by one of his cousins in 1074 A.H.¹ The proverb alludes to Rmeezān's verse in which he satirizes his tribe:²

يا جبر تشكى الملح واشكى رفاة
أذن عدمها خير لي من وجودها

¹ See A. az-Zāmil, op. cit., p. 143. 'A. b. Kamīs, however, mentions the year 1079 as the year in which Rmeezān died. See 'A. b. Kamīs, al-'Adab aš-Ša'bi fī jazīrat al-'Arab (Riyadh, 1958), p. 179 (note).

² See Qāsim āl-Tāni, Diwān aš-Šaik Qāsim āl-Tāni wa Qaṣā'id 'Ukra (Qatar, 1384 A.H.), p. 119.

511 عَشِيرَهَا يُوَقِّرُهَا وَصَحِيْبَهَا يَمْرَمُرُهَا

'ašīraha ywafferha 'u ṣeḥībaha 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.

ṣeḥīb: friend; lover.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 988.

512 عَصَا ابْنِ سَحِيمٍ عَنْ ظَهْرِهِ

'aṣa Ebu S-ḥeem 'an ḡharuh

"The rod of 'Ebu S-ḥeem ['Abū Suḡaim] 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.

513 عَصْفُورٌ هَيْشُهُ دَائِمٌ يَقْرُقِي

'eṣfūr hiṣeh dāymen ydzōdzi

"[Like] a sparrow in a thicket: always twittering." ✓

hiṣeh: sing. of the collective noun hiṣ, thicket of small palm trees.

dāymen: dā'īman

ydzōdzi: yuqawqi', twitter, chirp.

514 العَصْفُورُ يَهْنَعُ الرَّشَا

al-'eṣfūr yahaz' ar-rša

"[Even] a sparrow bends down a strong rope."

SMDW: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 122; Lebanon: Landb., no. 54;

Egypt: Littm., no. 370.

515 عَطَاوَهُ كَلِمَةٌ حَرِشًا

'aṭāwh tselmeten ḡarša

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).

516 عفن الماء ولا عفن الرجال

'afn al-ma wala 'afn ar-rjāl

"Stinking water is better than a stingy man."

N.B. jinās tāmm between عفن, stinking water and عفن, stingy.

517 عفن طمع

'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.

518 عقيل دون عقله

'geel dūn 'eglah¹

"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).

519 على الطول يقطع الحبل الحجر

'ala aṭ-ṭūl yaqṭa' 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: Goit., no. 1149; Cline, no. 10.

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 1309.

² ODEP, p. 141.

520

على طهور من بقيعا

'ala ṭehūren men Bgee'a¹

"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.

521

على غير اهلها ما تجيب راس ماله

'ala geer 'ahalha mā tejīb rāsmālah²

"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

522

على هوى (نحايا) القلب تسير الاقدام

'ala hawa (naḥāya) al-galb tesīr al-'adzdām

"The feet go in the direction the heart desires." Cf. no. 769.

SMDW: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 86; Baum., no. 80; Fegh., no. 1279; Frayha, no. 89; Landb., no. 56; Egypt: Taim., no. 1309; Littm., no. 438.

523

على يباس اطهر

'ala yebāsen 'aṭ-har³

"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.

524

علك ما يسوى هز اللحية

'eltsen mā yeswa hazz al-lehyeh

"[Like] chewing gum which is not worth the movement of the

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 أكو علك اليهزّ الدقن

525

العلم بحر ماله ساحل

al-'elm baḥaren māluh sāḥel

"Knowledge is a shoreless sea."

NS: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1452.

526

علمني القرايه ربيعى راحوا

'allemni al-dzrāyeh 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.

527

عليك بالجادّه ولو طالّت وبت العمّ ولو بارت

'aleek ba 'l-jāddeh 'u lō ṭālat 'u bent al-'amm 'u lō bārat¹

"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, درمع الأيام اذا دارت وخذ بنت العم ولو بارت

¹ Also ibid., no. 483.

² ODEP, p. 56.

528

عليك بالطيب ولو علقك الدين

'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

529

عليهم عمايم وهم خمايم

'aleehum 'amāyem we hum kamāyem

"They are empty-headed for all their fine turbans." Cf. nos. 668, 986, 1188.

Sim. WM: Egypt: Baq., p. 66, عمايم على بهائم

530

عمى القموع

'ama 'l-gmū'

"[Like] the blind man of the date stems [gmū'--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.

'ama: fuṣ., 'a'mā, blind.

SMDW: Palestine: Stephan, no. 801; Egypt: Taim., nos. 2044, 2747.

531

العمى عمى القلب

al-'ama 'ama 'l-galb

¹ See F. Jamīl, 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: Ašqar, no. 341.

The meaning of this proverb is an adaptation of the Qur'ānic verse:¹ إِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارَ وَلَكِن تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبَ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ

532 عَمَى يَأْمُرُنِي وَأَنَا أَمْرُ الْكَلْبِ

'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.

533 عَنَاقٌ وَتَيْسٌ تَيْسٌ وَعَنَاقٌ

'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 Ḡul., p. 55: حَسَنٌ كِجَلٌ

وَكِجَلٌ حَسَنٌ; Egypt: Taim., no. 756; Littm., no. 481;

Lebanon: Frayha, no. 1558.

534 عَتْرُ الشَّيْخِ تَطَاحٌ

'anz aš-šyūk tnāṭeḥ²

"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.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 227; Lebanon: Faraj, p. 355.

SMDW: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3665; Fegh., no. 1739; Frayha, no. 2994; Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 627.

535

عنز بدو طاحت بعيس

'anz badwen ṭāḥat b'abas¹

"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 ṭāḥ followed by the prep. b., be, or fī 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."

SMDW: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 75; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 1156, 2797.

536

عنز دقاش راسه ما به مخ

'anz Dgāš rāsah mā buh mekk

"[Like] the she-goat of Dgāš: there are no brains in her head."

Dgāš: another name for Ibrāhīm al-Ḥẓeef who lived in al-Bkayriyyeh in al-Qašīm. 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.

¹ Cf. ibid., no. 1348.

537

عتر ربيطه

'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.

538

عتر ركبت جمل

'anzen ratsbat jema1

"[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.

539

العتر ما تناطح الجمل ✓

al-'anz mā tnāṭ-ḥ al-jema1¹

"A goat does not butt [lit. butt against] a camel." Said of one who is not strong enough to compete with someone superior.

540

عود نسور

'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.

541

العوض ولا القطيعه

al-'awaṣ 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.

542

عيال المفاليس كثر الالباس

'yāl al-mefālīs keṭr al-ebālīs

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, op. cit., no. 493.

² ODEP, p. 344.

"The sons of the bankrupt are as numerous as devils."

keter: as many as.

543

عيب السابقات قطوع

'eeb as-sābdzāt gṭū'

"The [only] defect in horses which outstrip [the field] is scratches." (Sc. Great men may have their foibles.)

544

عيت تقضبه الارض

'ayyat tageḏbuh al-arḏ

"The earth refused to hold him." Said of one who is restless and cannot stay long in one place. Cf. nos. 940, 941.

545

عيد ختامه (غدا عشا عيد ختامه)

'īden ktāmeḥ (var. ḡadan 'ašan 'īden ktāmeḥ)

"A feast and plough supper in one (var. a dinner, a supper, a feast and plough supper in one.)"

ktāmeḥ: 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.

546

العيد عيد الله وعيد الخوندات ولا الصبايا كل يوم لهم عيد

al-'īd 'īd Allah 'u 'īd al-kwandāt wella aṣ-ṣebāya 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).

547

العين بصيره واليد قصيره

al-'een beṣīreh wa-'l-yad geṣīreh¹

¹ 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; Ğul., p. 171;
G. Syria: Aşqar, no. 2969; Fegh., no. 648; Frayha, no.
2487; Egypt: Taim., no. 2014.

548

العين عليه جريه

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: jarī'ah

549

العين وما شاقا والنفس وما طاقت

al-'een 'u mā šāgat wa 'n-nafs 'u mā ṭāgat¹

"What the eye delights in, what the soul can bear." Equival-
ent to the English proverb, "Every man to his taste."²

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1338; Ğul.,
p. 150, النفس ما تشتهي والقلب ما يهوى

550

عيون جمل (بشير)

'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: كعكبي عير; Ibn 'Abdi Rabbihi, 'Iqd, 3,

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 58.

² ODEP, p. 230.

³ See A.S. Hornby and others, The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 2nd ed. (London, 1963), p. 715.

p. 100: هما كفرسى رهان وكركتى بدير وهما زندان فى وعا' ; Kuwait:

Nūri, p. 57: ما فى الكلوتين أحسن

551 الغارب غارب والسنام سنام

al-gāreb gāreb wa 's-sanām sanām

"The withers are withers and the hump is a hump."

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."¹ 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.

552 غازى مع مهنّا (المهنّا)

gāzyen ma' Mhanna (al-Mhanna)²

"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."³

¹ See Juh., no. 565.

² The variant, I was told by Dr. A. al-'Utāimīn, is used in 'Unaizah.

³ See J. Burckhardt, Notes on the Bedouins and the Wahabys, 1, pp. 5-6.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: M., 1, p. 125: قد تعود خبز
 وإنه لشراب بأنقع; a classical proverb: Bakri, p. 134: السفره;
Baghdad: Tik., no. 2178; Hanafi, no. 771.

553

غايب شيطانه

gāyben šeeṭānuh

"His demon is absent." Said of one who is in a benign mood,
 contrary to his usually uncertain and explosive one.

554

غذ جريك ياكلك ✓

gadd 'ejrayyek yāklek¹

"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

jrayy: dimin. of jeru, a wolf or a dog puppy.

555

الغره أشوى من وجيه الطالايب

al-gerbeh 'ašwa men wjîh aṭ-ṭalālīb

"Banishment is better than creditors' faces."

'ašwa men: better than.

talālīb: plur. of tallāb, creditor.

556

غرشة بدوى

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.

garšeh: a bowl made of porcelain.

557

غزو الحكاك

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.

558

غَطُّ بِه ذَبَابٌ ✓

gaṭṭ buh dbāb¹

"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

غَلَايِبُ قَوْمٍ عَلَى أَهْلِهِ مَا تَخْيِرُ

galāyeb gōmen 'ala 'ahalah mā tegīṣ

"People's triumphs over members of their own family should not cause anger."

'ahalah: 'ahlihā.

560

غَمْرٌ صَنْخٌ

gemr ṣnūk

"[Like a bunch of date-stalks," i.e., they slip each to a

†

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.

gcmr: gemer, a big bunch (of sticks, wood, reeds, stalks, etc.): fuṣ., gumr, armful. (See Wehr, p. 684.)

snūk: plural of ṣenk, a dry raceme of a palm-tree "which curves and from which the fruit-stalks are cut off."¹

561 ✓ الغنم غنيمه ولا تحطه لك راسمال

al-ganam ganimeh 'u lā t-ḥeṭṭah lek rāsmāl²

"Sheep are good booty, but do not make them your capital," i.e., they are too vulnerable to survive during a year of drought and can also easily be stolen.

The first part is identical with a post-classical Arab proverb: Ta'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 346, and in modern Homs (Syria).³

562 غنم كربلا

ganam Karbala."

"[Like] the sheep of Karbala." Said of naïve people who are easily deceived.

563 فاتت يا ونيان

fātat ya Onayyān⁴

"It is too late Onayyān!" Said of a missed opportunity.

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'iyah to the Ḥijaz, they passed through al-Qaṣīm.

¹ Lane, p. 1997.

² Cf. Juh., no. 1405.

³ Dr. Ḥassān al-Ḥājj Ibrāhīm told this verbally to the writer. He lives in Homs.

⁴ Also Juh., no. 1410.

When they came near Mt. 'Ebān (fuṣ., 'Abān), Onayyān told 'Abdullah 'Āl Saud stories in which he made allusions to him about escaping and taking refuge in 'Ebān 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, بَيْقَةُ صَوْمِ الْأَمْرِ; Ta'ālibi, Kāṣṣu 'l-kaṣṣ, p. 20: فَا ت مَا نَبِيحَ وَالْفَا ت لَا يَرْدُ; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1132; Goit., no. 902.

564

فرحة أم بنت

farḥat 'umm bent²

"[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: Nūri, 2, p. 223.

Sim. MDW: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1236; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2583; Hanafi, no. 2665; Dabb., 1, p. 297, فرحة الما دامت وعين السهر الما نامت; G. Syria: Aṣqar, nos. 562, 1689; Egypt: nos. 2092, 3079.

565

الفرخ يقوقى بالبيضة

al-fark ydzōdzi bal-beeḏeh³

"The [clever] chick cheeps in [its] egg." Said of a precocious child.

¹ This tale was told to me by my uncle, Mḥammad aṣ-Ṣāleḥ as-Sudais.

² Also Juh., no. 1425.

³ Also ibid., no. 1429.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 245, no. 13; Oman: Reinhardt, no. 55.

SMDW: four contemporary Arab proverbs of different variations current in: Mecca: Sāsi, nos. 223, 105; G. Syria: Fegh., nos. 2905, 2982; Frayha, nos. 1680, 2584; Ašqar, no. 2081, Stephan, nos. 748, 840, 841, 842, 843; Singer, no. 92; Baum., no. 74; Huxley, no. 49; Landb., no. 139; Tallq., no. 56; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., nos. 31, 1531, 525; Hanafi, nos. 821, 1010; Socin, nos. 420, 421, 422; Egypt: Taim., nos. 32; 1263; Littm., no. 87; Burck., nos. 478; Fā'iqa, no. 173.

566

الفرس من طبع الفارس ✓

al-faras men tab' al-fāres

"Like horse, like horseman [lit. a mare gets its character from its rider's]." The equivalent of "Like master, like man."

NS: G. Syria: Stephan, no. 162; Faraj, p. 358: الفرس من

ورا الفارس

Sim. WM: Mosul: Socin, no. 21; Egypt: Littm., no. 309.

567

فسقة الطّواف شينه

fasget aṭ-ṭawwāf šeeneh

"Fastidiousness is a bad thing in a beggar."

aṭ-ṭawwāf: the beggar, from tāf, to beg, especially by going around.

fasgeh: a mašdar from fesedz, to exceed the limit.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 1237.

568

فقر ادق من العنزوت

fagren 'adagg mn 'l-'anzerūt

"Poverty ground more fine than sarcocol [Penaea mucronata]."

Said of extreme poverty. This proverbial saying exhibits the same idiomatic reference to great poverty as the English

expression, "Grinding poverty".

569 الفقع حول الرّقه

al-fage' ḥōl ar-rdzeh

"Truffles are found near Melianthemum lippi shrubs." Some people add the imper. dawwer, look for . . .

al-fage': al-fage': truffles (in fuṣ. also called al-kama').

ar-rdzeh: a desert shrub of grey colour with small leaves.

570 فقة من جده غنيمه

fakketen (fets-tseten) men jḥeh ganīmeḥ¹

"Having nothing to do with Juḥa [Jḥeh 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.

571 فلان ارض ماطيّه

flān 'arzen māṭeyyeh

"So and so is [like] ground that is well trodden." Said of a harmless man who causes no trouble to anyone.

māṭeyyeh: mawṭū'ah

572 فلان ضرس علوّ

flān ḡersen 'luww

"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.

573 فلان معقّب الفنجال

flān m'aggab al-fenjāl

"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 فقه .

This practice is referred to in an incident which occurred between Barakāt aš-Šarīf and his uncle Mubārak b. Muṭlib over the former's misconduct with his uncle's wife. Mubārak told the coffee server: "عقب بركات الفنجال", "Pass over **Barakāt** [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 Barakāt said: "ليه تعقبني الفنجال؟", "Why did you pass me over . . ."¹

574

فلان نفضة خرج

flān nafḏat kerj

"So and so is the shaking(s) of a camel bag," i.e., he is a nonentity.

575

فلان وفلان مثل الضو والملح

flān we flān meṭl az-ḏaww wa'l-melḥ²

"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: مثل الناع والحطب; Gul., p. 53:

حبي ونعناع; p. 147: ناع وقطن; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1145;

Frayha, no. 3946.

576

فلان يعدى فلان الفنجال

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 تجيب بنت السلطان

al-flūs tejīb bent aṣ-ṣelṭān

"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: Nūri, 1, p. 246, no. 16; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3160; Mosul: Dabb., 1, p. 301.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Tik., no. 512; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 797; Frayha, no. 373; Baum., no. 138; Fegh., no. 1361; Tallq., no. 48; Egypt: Taim., no. 805; Fā'iqaḥ, no. 1951.

578

نى حضى ويلدغنى

fī ḥeṣni 'u yaldagni¹

"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'iqa, no. 497.

SMDW: Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 491: يركب بالسفينه ويغرس عين الملاح ;
Gul., p. 105: قيعد بالاسفينى ويبعج عين الملاح

579

قاطع (شارك) القوم حلالك

gāṭ' (šārṭs) 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

¹ This proverb is no doubt recently borrowed from neighbouring countries. The word yaldag is not a common Najdi word.

loss.

gāt': in pause it is gāte', imper. of gāṭa', to take a share of something.

šārts: šārik

halāl: property. It is also applied to camels in particular.

580

قال ابوك رمى؟ قال لا، قال جدك رمى؟ قال لا، قال رش ترمي له

gāl: 'ebūk ruma? gāl: la'. gāl: jeddek ruma? gāl: la'.

gāl: weš tarmī luh?

"'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. Abšīhi, 1, p. 36: قالوا للكلاب احربوا ; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2633; Ašqar, no. 2195.

581

قال ابوى وابوك أصحاب، قال الله يرحم هكالشيبان،

قال اليد مع اليد بركة، قال بالبنيان

gāl: 'ebūy we-būk 'aṣ-ḥāb. gāl: 'Allah yarḥam hakaš-šībān.

gāl: al-yad ma' al-yad barakeh. gāl: ba-l-bunyān.

"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

582

قال اخلقه قال اخلق له

gāl: 'ekelguh. gāl: 'ekleg luh¹

"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.

583

قال اكوذا واكوذا قال راع العله أبخص

gāl: 'etsu da we-tsu da. gāl: rā' al-'elleh 'abkaş

"'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 العلة, the one of the illness.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: 'Ask., no. 170; Zamak., no. 1417.

584

قال الامير اضربوه مية رطيهه قال انت يا الامير أماما عمرك دتيت

ولا ما تعرف الحساب

gāl al-emīr: eżerbūh myat reṭībeh. gāl: 'ant ya-l-emīr

'umma 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]'."

reṭībeh: green branch of palm-trees, used for flogging.

mā 'umrek: you have never in your life . . .

dedz-dzīt: didz-dz, pass. perf. of dagg, to hit, to strike.

585

قال الجربوع يطهر الافم قال عساوه يطهر روجه

gāl: al-jarbū' yṭahhr al-ufum. gāl: 'asāwh yṭahher rūḥuh

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, "'Amtal", al-'Arab, 3 (1969), p. 412, no. 102.

"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.

586 قال امش لما يجيك النوم . قال : وخر عن جان النوم

gāl: emš lama yejīk an-nōm. gāl: wakker 'ann jān an-nōm
 "'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.

'ann: 'anni

jān: jā'ani, come to me.

lama: until

wakker: imper. of wakkar, to move over.

587 قال انا أضحك بك قال اضحك بعقلك

gāl: 'ana 'aḏhak bek. gāl: 'eḏhak 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.

588 قال بحافر حصانك طينه قال خذها (خذها)

gāl bhāfr ḥṣānek ṭīneh. gāl: kdah (ked-ha)
 "'There is a piece of mud in the hoof of your horse,' he
 said. 'Then remove it!' the other replied." Said of some-
 one 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.

589 قال بلقمتك عود قال مضت

gāl: blegma(k)k 'ūd. gāl: meḏat

"'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.

قالت أنا بنت من يفري ويخييط ويذبح ويصلح ويبعد ويقرب،

590

قالت أنا بنت من يعرفه قبل تقع

gālat: 'ana bent men yafra 'u yekīṭ 'u yaḍbaḥ 'u yaṣlak
'u yeb'ed we yḍzarreb. gālat: 'ana bent men ya'arfah
gabel tega'

"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."

yaṣlak: imperf. of ṣalak (fuṣ., salak), to skin.

yafra: imperf. of fara, to cut.

591

قال تقدّم يا موت قال تقدّم يا سبب

gāl tedzaddam yā mōt gāl tedzaddam yā sebaḥ

"'Come quickly, O 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.

592

قالت وراك تدخل على وامت هالشين؟ قال بدرهم يا حلالى

gālat: warāk tadkel 'alayy want hā-š-šeen? gāl: bedreehem
ya ḥalāli

"'Why did you, who are so ugly, marry me?' she said. 'It was a matter of money [lit., with a little dirham],' he

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 ḥalāli!: My dear! lit. my property. A very common phrase especially when speaking to children.

SMDW: Mecca: Quraiš:¹ مجنون يا كل حلاوة بفلوسه ; 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: الأقرع أكل حلاوة قال بفلوساته

593

قال حصانك جموح قال ولد الغبرا فوجه

gāl: ḥṣānek jemūḥ. gāl: weld al-gabra fōgeh

"'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

قال خالاتكم يا بّي مثل أمهاتكم قال ما عاضني يا بّي بالأمّ عايض

gāl: kālātekm yā bay meṭl 'ummahātekm. gāl: mā 'āzeni
yā bay ba-l-'umm 'āyeḏ

¹ Quraiš, 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 bay: 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.

595 قال دوك خير قال ما تاخذه مخابتي، قال دوك شر قال

حطه بطرف عباتي (قال دوك خير قال ما تاخذه مخابتي)
 gāl: duk keet. gāl mā taħduħ meħbātī, gāl: duk šar gāl heṭṭuħ
 bīr-āp abtī (gāl duk keet gāl mā taħduħ yemħay)
 "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.

dūk: 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: Ṭāliq., no. 216.

596 قال رمحي قصير قال قرب خطوه يطول

gāl: remħi gešīr. gāl: dzarreb keṭweħ yeṭūl

"He said, 'My spear is too short.' 'Move a step nearer and it will be longer,' came the reply."

597

قال سو خير قال يجيك شرّ

gāl: saww keer. gāl: yejīk 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.

yejīk: yajī'uk

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Ṭāliq., 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.

598

قال طمرت بالشام سبعين باع قال هذا قاع وذاك قاع

gāl: ṭemart baš-šām sab'in bā'. gāl hada gā'en we dāk gā'

"He said: 'In Syria I leapt seventy fathoms.'¹ '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, bō' being used instead.

NS: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1569; Tik., no. 1722.

Sim WM: Mosul: Çul., p. 107, قال چطيتو بحلب اغبعين اضغاع قلولو

قاللو بحلب نطيت: 143; Syria: Tarjamān, p. 143; هادي اغض مثل هاديكا

أربعين قدم قاللو هون أرض وهنيك أرض

SMDW: Mosul; Socin (Der Arabische Dialekt von Mosul und

Mardin, ZDMG, 37 (1883), no. 631, p. 203): قالوا في حلب يطلع الحمار

; في السلم فهذا الحمار وهذا السلم; Egypt: Taim., no. 2165; Amīn

¹ 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.

p. 471, الميه تكذب الغطاس.

599 قال ته قال باذن من لا يفقه (. . . من لا يوحى ولا يفقه)

gāl: gah. gāl beden men lā yafgah¹ (var. men lā yūhi 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 قال وين اللي يفقه . . . "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; Ašqar, nos. 1272, 1274, 1273, 3797, 3093; Stephan, no. 491; Taim., nos. 899, 2910, 3082, 3027.

600 قال لا هم إلا هم العرس ولا وجع إلا وجع الضرس، قال لا هم

إلا هم الدين ولا وجع إلا وجع العين

gāl: lā hamm 'ella hamm al-'ers 'u lā weja' 'ella weja'

aḏ-ḏers. 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,¹ لا وجمع كوجع العين ولا هم 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: Nūri, 2, p. 121; Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 110.

601 قال له ارصد العنبه قال تحشن العناقيد السود

gāl luh: 'eršd al-'nebeh. gāl: twahḥšan al-'anādẓid 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.

twahḥšan: twahḥešni, it frightens me.

'eršd: in pause this verb is pronounced 'eršed, imper., watch, guard.

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1734; Hanafi, nos. 1580, 1585; Dabb., p. 72, الذيب سرحونو بالغنم قام بيكسى ;
 2, p. 539, الحصيني قلو لو نام مع الدجاج قال أخاف ينقغتي ; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2891; Egypt: Taim., no. 2180.

602 قال ما احلاك زمان! قال على ناس من ناس

gāl: māḥlāk zemān! gāl: 'ala nāsen men nās
 "'How sweet this life [lit. time] is!' he said. 'For some people,' came the reply."

māḥlāk: 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 (تعجب).

603 قال مكانك ضيق قال حجاجي وسيع

gāl metsānek ḥayyedz gāl ḥjāji wesī'

"'Your dwelling [place] is mean,' he said. The other replied,

¹ See Ta'ālibi, Tamṭil, p. 31.

'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 (wesī' h̄jāj), "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 ('agad h̄jājuh), "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

قال من اخوك يا اعرابي؟ قال من نفعني ونفعته

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

قال من أمرك؟ قال: من نهان؟

gāl: men 'amark? gāl: men nahān?¹

"'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 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: Gul., 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 هالنصين؟ قال من هالشجيره

gāl mneen hālgṣeen? gāl: men hāš-šjeereh¹

"'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."² Cf. no. 565.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 130, هالمرد من هالشجيره

SMDW: nine classical proverbs: e.g., M., nos. 32, 3581, 1161, 209; 'Ask., nos. 8, 1933, 995, 1783; Zamak., 1, nos. 745, 1438; Ibn 'Abdirabbihi, 'Iqd, 3, p. 102, ما أشبه جبل

الجبال بألوان صخرها

There is a great number of proverbs which express the same or a similar meaning but with different wording in all the regions concerned.

607 قال من هو الطيب قال تجيك اخباره (تاصلك علومه)

gāl: menhu aṭ-ṭayyeb? gāl: tejīk 'aḏkāruh (tāṣalk 'lūmuh)

"'Who is the most munificent man?' he asked. 'You are bound to hear of him [lit., his reputation will reach you],'³ came the reply."

608 قال من ورد الماء بحبال شرب، قال من ورد الماء برجال شرب ✓

gāl: men werd al-ma beḥbālen šereb. gāl: men werd al-ma berjālen šereb³

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 532.

² ODEP, p. 121.

³ 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.

609 قال هلّ قال عدّه زلّ (شهر هلّ عدّه زلّ)

gāl: hall. gāl: 'edduh zall (var. šaharen hall 'edduh 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.

610 قال وراك يهالشايب تمشي مقيد قال اللي قيدن يفتل

قيادك

gāl: warāk ya hāš-šāyeb tamši mgayyad? gāl: 'alli gayyedani
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 . . . ?

gayyedani: gayyadani

The second part of this proverb is NS as an Egyptian proverb.¹

SMDW: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 913.

611 قال ورا هالجمل يرغى قال بلاوه هالجمل

gāl: wara hāl-jemal yargi? gāl: 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.

wara: why?

balāwh: (lit. his cause is) because of. bala means "cause" or "reason" only in such a context.

¹ Taim., no. 329.

612

قال وش حاديك يهالمسار؟ قال هالمطره

gāl: weš ḥādīk ya hāl-mesmār? gāl: hāl-meṭregeh

"'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; ¹ Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1586; Tik., no. 1743; Socin, no. 203; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 744; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3208; Frayha, no. 2262; Fegh., nos. 1202, 1205; Baum., no. 453.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 29, no. 51.

613

قال وش حدك على مران (المّر) قال امر منه

gāl: weš ḥaddek 'ala merrān (al-murr)? gāl: 'amarr mnuh²

"'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; ³ Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2291; Tik., no. 2373; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2473; Frayha, no. 2059.

614

قال وش يفكك من ابغض ما تبغض قال احب ما تحب

gāl: weš yefekkek mn abgāz mā tebgeḡ? gāl: 'aḥabb mā t-ḥebb

"'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

قالوا وراك مطول عصاك قال عارف قدرى عند كلابكم (الكلاب)

gālaw: warāk mṭawwlen 'aṣāk? gāl: 'ārfen gadri 'end

tslābekum (al-tslāb)

"'Why are you taking such a long stick with you?' they asked.

¹ اللوح قال للمسار انت فلقتنى قال له لو كنت تعرف الدق اللي على رأسي كنت عذرتنى
see Quraiš, 51 (1960), p. 16.

² Cf. Juh., no. 1596.

³ See Quraiš, 53 (1960), p. 16. (This proverb is recorded by Ḥasan Naṣīr Gāri.)

'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.¹

616

قال وين؟ قال معهم

gāl: ween? gāl: ma'hum²

"'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, ~~661~~, 936, 987.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 141, وين رايحين؟ وياهم

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,

يهيب مع كل ربح ويسعى مع كل قوم ويدج نفي كل وكر ; numerous

contemporary proverbs from all regions which are included in this comparison except Yemen: e.g., Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 421; Hanafi, nos. 1612, 126, 1924; Weissbach, no. 233; Dal., 1, nos. 118, 134; Socin, no. 3; Ašqar, nos. 2249, 4104; Frayha, no. 3458; Fegh., no. 614; Baum., no. 555; Nūri, 1, p. 31, no. 56; Jayak., no. 139; Taim., no. 3148.

617

قال يا حلو طعم السنكر قالوا وش يدريك؟ قال ذايقه ولد

عم لي بالحسا عام اولاً

gāl: ya ḥelu ṭe'em as-senker! gālaw: weš yedriḳ? gāl:

dāydzuh walad 'ammen li bal-Ḥasa 'ām 'awwala

"'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-Ḥasa the year before last year,' he replied."

Applied in a jocular way to one who takes other people's

¹ See Quraiš, 48 (1960), p. 16: "ليه مكبر عصاتك قال خايف من الكلاب. This proverb is recorded by Ḥasan Nāṣir Gāri.

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 hadr use 'ām al-awwal instead.

ya helu: How sweet (it) is! ya is a particle of surprise or wonder.

618 قال يا شاري الحمارة اللي يرتقى النخل قال من دون ذا وينباع الحمارة

gāl: yā šāri al-ḥmār 'alli yarga(a)n-nakal! gāl: men dūn da 'u yenbā' al-ḥmār¹

"'Who will buy this donkey which can [even] climb palm-trees?' he [the auctioneer] asked. 'The donkey will be sold without all that,' he was admonished."

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,² and a contemporary Kuwaiti proverb.³

619 قال يا كبر الذيب! قال يا طول ذنبه! قال وين

هو؟ قال ما شفته

gāl: ya kubr ad-dīb! gāl: ya ṭul dnebuh! gāl: ween hu?
gāl: mā šeftuh⁴

"'What a big wolf [that] is!' he exclaimed. 'What a long tail he's got!' [another] exclaimed. 'Where is it?' the

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 853.

² See M., nos. 1391, 1916; Zamak., 2, no. 298.

³ Nūri, 1, p. 141, no. 16.

⁴ Cf. Juh., no. 1606.

first asked. 'Haven't seen it,' the other answered."

The second part of this proverb is rarely quoted.

620

القتيل كلب والنحايه مره

al-dzetil tsalb wan-na''āyeh 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.

621

قدر الشركا (الشركه) ما يغلى (يفجء ينجع)

dzedr aš-šreka (aš-šerkeh) mā ygali (yefūḥ, 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: دست الشركه ما يغلى

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.

176: فطيرة الشرك ما تطبخ

622

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 مفلس, "It has become so lean [i.e. a sheep] that every bankrupt ventures to offer a price for it" (i.e.,

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 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:

لقد هزلت حتى بدت من هزالها كلاها وحتى سامها كل مفلس

"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.

623

قراد رمضا

grād ramza

"[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.

624

القرعا تفتخر بشعر بنت اخته

al-gar'a tefteker bša'ar 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 الرعنا بشعر بنت خالتها, see Abšīhi, 1, p. 38; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 162; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 458; Tik., no. 595; Socin, no. 280; Ğul., p. 109; G. Syria: Ašqar, 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.

625

قروى لا تشبع ولا تروى

garwa, lā tašba' 'u lā tarwa¹

"[Like] Garwa: neither her hunger nor thirst is ever satisfied." Said of a greedy person.

¹

Also Juh., no. 1638.

Garwa: name of a female dog.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 227.

SMDW: Lebanon: Talliq., no. 153.

626

قصيره تقطع طويله

geşireh tagta' tewileh¹

"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.

627

قضب الخدّ

geżab 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.

628

قضية العمى شاته

gażbet al-'ama šātuh²

"[Like] the way in which a blind man grasps his sheep."

gażbeh: verbal noun (maşdar) of geżab, to hold (fuş., qabaz).

Sim. WM: a post classical Baghdad proverb: Ṭāliq., no. 608;

Iraq: Hanafi, no. 137; Dal., 1, no. 307; Dabb., 2, p. 424,

مسكو مسكة عميين.

629

قضى حورك وابنيه

geżzi ḥawiyiys webneeh³

"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.

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, no. 565.

² Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 559; Juh., no. 1646.

³ Also Juh., no. 1649.

hawī: house, used in Riyāḍ and probably the 'Āreḍ region.

SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 77.

630

قطر مع قطر يجي غدیر (قطره مع قطره تجي غدیر)

gaṭer ma' gaṭer yeji ḡadīr (gaṭreh ma' gaṭreh teji ḡadīr)

"[A few] rain drops with [other few] rain drops make a rain pool (var. a drop with a drop makes a pool)." Cf. the English proverbs, "Many drops make a shower"¹ and "Little and often fills the purse."²

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 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.

631

قطع الجواد

gaṭṭa' al-jawādd³

"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-jawādd: plur. of jāddeh, foot-path.

632

قطع الخشوم ولا قطع الرسوم

gaṭ' al-kṣūm walā gaṭ' ar-rsūm⁴

"[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.

rsūm: traditions. This has the same meaning as slūm, plur. of salm, custom.

1

ODEP, p. 509.

2

Ibid., p. 467

3

Cf. Juh., no. 1520.

4

Also ibid., no. 1653.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 252, no. 16; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1430; Çul., p. 107.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1570; Lebanon: Faraj, p. 355; Egypt: Taim., no. 2254.

633

قَطَمَ الرَّغَا

geṭam ar-rga

"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.

geṭam: (fuṣ., qaṭam), to cut, to cut a tip off something.

634

قلبني عساي انفعك

dzallebni 'asāy 'anfa'k¹

"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, اقلبني أنفعك, 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 رب طمع يهدى الى طبع, '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: Nūri, 2, p. 228.

635

قلع الضرس الفاسد ولا علك عليه

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.

636

قل هلا لو بالقلب بلا

gel hala lō bal-galb bala

"Say 'Hallo!', even if there is ill feeling in [your] heart."

SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1060; Egypt: Taim., no. 206.

637

القلوب شواهد

al-glūb šawāhed

"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 ḥadīth:¹ القلوب تتشاهد

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 257; Lebanon: Frayha, no. 2776.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1607.

638

القمر يتيه منازل

al-gemar yetih manāzluh

"[Even] the moon may miss his mansions." Cf. the English proverbs, "Homer sometimes nods"² and "There are spots even in the sun."³

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.

639

قوبعة الاشبقراوى ما توقع بالاظله

gōbe't al-Ešseedzrāwī mā twadz-dze' bal-eẓelleh

"[Like] al-Ešseedzrāwī's lark. It does not perch in the shade."

A lark was shot at by a certain al-Ešseedzrāwī while it was perching in the shade, and so the bird learnt to avoid

¹ See Ta'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 27.

² ODEP, p. 379.

³ Ibid., p. 767.

the shade.

al-Ešeedzrāwī: name of a men who comes from the town of Ešeedzer ('Ušaiqir) in al-Wašm in Najd.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 84; Zamak., 1, no. 1632.

640

قولة لا ما لها دوا

gōlat 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.

641

قولة ما ادري ما له عاقبه

gōlat mādri mā lah 'ādzbeh

"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, نازانم، راحت جانم

642

قوم تعاونوا ما دلّوا

gōmen ta'āwanaw mā dallaw

"People who cooperate will not be humiliated," i.e., will not fail.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 152, no. 12; Baghdad, Hanafi, no. 162.

643

قوم حمرا

gōmen ḥamra

"[They are] red raiders." Said of avaricious, unfriendly people.

644

كان الكذب أنجى فالصدق أنجى وانجى

tsān al-tsedb anja faṣ-ṣedz-dz anja wanja¹

"If lying is safe, then telling the truth is yet safer."

tsān: if.

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 386.

NS: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 312; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 926.

Sim. WM: a classical proverb: M., no. 354.

645 كان انت تبكي يا عشيري فانا اصيح

tsān ant tabtsī yā 'ašīri fana aših

"If you are crying, my friend [because of your desperate need for something], I am [also] weeping [for the same reason]."

tsān: if

'aših: imperf. of sāh, to cry.

'ašīr: friend, husband or wife.

SMDW: a classical proverb: Zamak., 1, no. 1615.

646 كأنه ذباب أو صرير باب

ka'annahū dubāb 'aw šarīru bāb

"As though he were a fly or the creaking of the door," i.e., take no notice of him.

647 الكبد ملما تاكل وتنسى

al-tsabd malsa tākl 'u tansa

"The stomach is smooth; it eats and forgets." Said of an ungrateful person who denies the benefits he has received.

al-tsabd: the stomach, the liver.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 24.

648 كبر الحمار (البحيش) بقولة اش ✓

tsabbr al-ḥmār (al-jḥeeš) bgōlt ašš

"Make an ass (var. a little donkey) appear big by saying 'ašš' [loudly]." By shouting loudly at one's beast one indicates that it must be a big strong animal.

ašš: an interjection used with donkeys to make them stop.

Sim WM: Palestine: Stephan, no. 131.

649 كبر طميه

kubur Ṭemeyeh

"As huge as Ṭemeyyeh."

Ṭemeyyeh: Ṭamiyya, a mountain on the way between Madinah and al-Qaṣīm.

650

كَبَّ لَهُ وَيَأْكُلُ

kubb luh 'u yākel

"Throw [any food] for him and he will eat." Said of an un-intelligent 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.

651

كَبَّه لَا تَحَارِشْهُ

kebbeh lā t-ḥāršeh

"Leave him alone, do not provoke him." Said of a hot-tempered person who is easily provoked.

kebb: imper. of kabb with a muraqqag doubled ba', to leave.

It is used in al-Qaṣīm by the bedouins only.

652

كَبِيرُ الْمَهْبِلِ

tsebīr 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 criticising 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.

653

كَثْرُ الْجَهَامِ وَلَا شِمَاتِ الْمَدَا

ketr al-jahām 'u lā šemāt al-'ada¹

"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

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 2839.

is false than to run the risk of giving joy to your enemies.

jahām: an appearance in the distance, or on the horizon.

NS: Mecca,¹ G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 346; Fegh., no. 2097;

Frayha, no. 2814; Landb., no. 30; Egypt: Taim., no. 2282.

654

كثّر الخطم يسمي

ketr al-kaṭum ye'mi²

"Repeated interruptions make one lose sight." Said of someone who becomes confused after being repeatedly interrupted.

655

كثّر ما له شتت شانه

tsatter māluh 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.

656

الكثره غلبت الشجاعة

al-kaṭreh glubat aš-šejā'eh

"Great numbers prevail over courage."

Ident.: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2459; Fegh., no. 1518;

Frayha, no. 2846.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 24; Oman: Jayak., no. 203;

Mecca: Sāsi, no. 330; Iraq: Weissbach, no. 69; Tik., no. 1590; Hanafi, no. 1454; Egypt: Taim., no. 330; Littm., no. 470.

SMDW: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 88

657

كحل باكيه

kehel 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.

¹ Quraiš, no. 7 (1959), p. 10.

² Cf. Juh., no. 1686.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 229.

658 كَدَاك بَغِير بَلْدِه لَا لِه وَلَا لَوْلْدِه
 tsaddāden bgeer bleduh lā luh wala lūleduh¹

"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, Tamtīl, p.

195, الضيعة غني غير بلدك لغير ولدك ; Egypt: Taim., no. 3107;

Littm., no. 236.

659 الكذب زماله رديه

al-tseḍb zmāleten redeyyeh²

"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)."³

zmāleh: ass

redeyyeh: radī'ah, bad, weak.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 231.

Sim. MW: Egypt: Taim., no. 2339.

660 كَذْح (كُتْح) بِالْمَا

tseḍaḥ (tsetaḥ) bal-ma

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 260.

² Cf. ibid., no. 1699.

³ ODEP, p. 461.

"He threw sand into the water," i.e., he made a mistake, he offended someone.

661

الكذوب يَغْدِي صدقه

al-tsedūb yegdi ṣedz-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,"¹

yegdi: he wastes, loses.

ṣedz-dz: ṣidq

Sim WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2787; Egypt: Taim., no. 3168.

662

الكرم منطى العيوب

al-karam mḡaṭṭi 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: Fegh., no. 1554; Frayha, no. 3404.

663

كروة اهل سدير جزاك الله خير

karwat 'ahal Sdeer jezāk Allah keer²

"[Like] the payment of the people of Sdeer. It is [just], 'May Allah reward you!'" Sa'īd 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!'"³

karwat: karweh, rent.

Sdeer: Sudair, a district in central Najd

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 6.

¹ ODEP, p. 457.

² Cf. Juh., no. 1279.

³ ODEP, p. 289.

664

كريم من مال غيره ✓

tserīmen men māl geeruh¹

"He is [only] generous with the money of others."

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 7; Baghdad: Tik., no. 2713.Sim. WM: Mosul: Dabb., p. 503, يكرم من كيس غيره; 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.

665

كسر الجوز على راسك

kassar al-jōz 'ala rāsek²

"He cracked walnuts on your head," i.e., he offered unacceptable conditions for a deal; he drove a hard bargain.

666

كسر عصاه ولا طرح قبيله

kesar 'ašāwh 'u lā ṭarah dzebīluh

"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.

667

كفى أم البها ما بها

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.

668

كلاب عليها ثياب

tslāben 'aleeha tyāb

"[They are] dogs in human shape [lit., dogs with clothes on

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 584.² Cf. Juh., no. 2739.³ Also 'Ubūdi, "al-'Amtāl al-'Āmmiyyah fī Najd," al-'Arab, 2 (1968), p. 524, no. 37.

them]." Said of a disreputable group of people.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 746; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1022; Egypt: no. 1847.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 8.

669

كلام يجمد على الشارب

kalāmen yajmed 'alaš-šāreb¹

"Words which set hard on the moustache." Said of serious talk which is claimed to be absolutely true and trustworthy.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 248.

670

كلب تعسس ولا كلب ربح

tsalben ta'as'as walā tsalben rubaḥ²

"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.

NS: a classical proverb: M., no. 3043; 'Ask., no. 1420, Zamak., 2, no. 747.

Sim. WM: a post-classical proverb: Ta'ālibi, Tamṭil, p. 354:

كلب رابض and Ibn 'abdi Rabbihi, p. 108: كلب رابض
طواف خير من أسد رابض ; Iraq (Baghdad, Basrah and Mosul):

Tik., no. 743; Hanafi, no. 2406; Dal., 1, no. 516; Ḡul., p. 111, كلب دوار أحسن من سبع مغبوط ; Socin, no. 200; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3664; Fegh., no. 2828; Frayha, no. 2995;

Landb., no. 192; Stephan, nos. 433, 522.

SMDW: Oman: Reinhardt, no. 83.

671

كل بقرة له قرون

kell(e)bgerten lah grūn

"Every cow has horns."

¹ Also Juh., no. 1785.

² Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 591.

672

الكلب ما ينجح إلا عند بيت أهله

al-tsalb mā yanbeḥ ella 'end beet 'ahaluh¹

"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: Nūri, 2, p. 26; G. Syria: Ašqar, 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.

673

كَلِّ بِه حَقَّه

kellen buh ḥagguh

"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.

674

كلب ودّمي له

tsalb 'u demmī 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.

675

كلب وله سلوقي

tsalb 'u luh selūgi

"[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.

676

كلب ينجح لك ولا كلب ينجح عليك

tsalben yambeḥ lek wala tsalben yambeḥ 'aleek⁵

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 1787.

² ODEP, p. 196.

³ Qurais̄, 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.

677

كلب ينبج ما يعض ✓

tsalben yanbeḥ mā ye'ezz

"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, كلب النباح ما يعض

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2825.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: M., 1, p. 357, السّنور الصّباح

لا يصطأ دشيئا; Lebanon: Faraj, p. 346, السّنور الصّباح لا يصطأ دشيئا

and p. 340, دجاجة هاللى بتقاتى ما بتبض; Egypt: Burck., no.

340; Iraq: Weissbach, no. 192

678

كلّ تمر به حشف

kell tamren buh ḥašaf

"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.

679

كل حبة تدلّ باب (بيت) هله

kell ḥabbeten tdell bāb (beet) halah

"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 dall, to know the way.

halah: 'ahalah: 'ahluhā

680

كل حدر نجم

kellen ḥader 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.

681

كل حر يشبعه (بيزیه) منقاره

kell ḥerren yešeb'uh (yīzīh) mengāruh¹

"The beak of a thoroughbred falcon is sufficient for it," i.e., it will obtain enough food with it.

herr: free, but here it is a noun meaning "thoroughbred falcon".

NS: Iraq (among the bedouins): Zafīrī, no. 202.

682

كل حصيني تابعته عجاجته

kell(e) ḥṣeenyen tāb'etuh 'ajājetuh

"Each little fox is followed by its cloud of dust," i.e., everyone leaves his mark.

683

كل حنيني واشرب لبن والبس جروختك الحمرا

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 'Unaizah in al-Qaṣīm 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, سبّرى عصيد قالت ما بش ذره قال and no. 353; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1728; Dabb., 2, p. 448, سبّرى لحوح and no. 353; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1048; Frayha, no. 1513; Egypt: Šuqair (quoted by Akwa'), p. 98: قالوا لبنت الملك أهل البلد ماتوا من الجوع. قالت: يأكلو قشور البقلّاه; قالوا للسلطان الناس جوعه قال يأكلوا بقلّاه

684 كَلّ خينه (خاينه) عليه من الله بينه (باينه)

kell kayyneh (kāyneh) 'alyah mn 'Allah bayyneh (bāyneh)

"God is aware of every wrong doing."

685 كَلّ درّه عنده شانوب

kell derreh 'endah šādūb

"There is a shark near every pearl." Cf. the English,

"Every rose has a thorn."

686 كَلّ دون عانيه

kellen dūn 'ānīh

"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.

687 كَلّ سابق لا يجزع مّن سبقه

kell sābdzen lā yajza' memmen sbegeh

"A person who outstrips others should not be annoyed if others

outstrip him." Cf. no. 786.

688

كَلَّ سَابِقَةَ تَغْبِقَهُ يَدَهُ

kell sābdzeten tagabgah yedah¹

"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.

tagabgah: (tagbiqūhā) from gabag (fuṣ., gabaq), originally, "to give to drink in the evening," but later meaning simply "to give to drink."

yedah: yaduhā.

689

كَلَّ شَجْرُهُ تَذَرِي عَلَى جَذْعِهِ

kell (e)šjerten t_{darri} 'ala jed'ah

"Each tree provides shelter [from wind and cold] for its own trunk," i.e., one must help one's family, relatives and dependants.

t_{darri}: imperf. of darra, to give dara (shelter).

690

كَلَّ شَيْءٌ مَا يَسْتَحْيِي مِنْ وَقْتِهِ

kell šen mā yesteḥi men wagtuh

"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'in

691

كَلَّ شَيْءٌ (كَلَّ شَيْنٌ) وَلَا لِمَسِ الْخَشْمِ

kelleš (kell šīn) wala lems al-kšūm²

"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, šīn 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:¹ قطع الروس ولا هدد العمائم; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 633; Egypt: Taim., no. 1366.

692 كل شيء زهأوه تمامه

kell šayyen zahāwh temāmuh

"Everything is at its best when it has reached its climax [lit. at its completion]."

693 كلش ينفع

kellš yanfa'

"Everything is of some use."

Ident.: Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 332.

694 كل صغير به ملح إلا وليد الدآب

kell (e)šgayyer buh melḥ 'ella wleed ad-dābb

"Every young thing is beautiful save a young snake."

melḥ: beauty.

Sim. WM: Yemen: Goit., no. 918.

695 كل ضناوه امثاله

kellen zanāwh 'emtāluh

¹ Quraiš, 11 (1960), p. 16.

"Every man's children resemble him." Cf. no. 606.

696 كَلَّ عَلَى قَدْرِ حَالِهِ يَشْتَكِي بِلَوَاوِهِ

kellen 'ala gader ḥālun yeštēki balwāwh

"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.

Sim. WM: Mosul: Ḡul., p. 116, كَلَّمَن عَلَى كَدِّ حَالِهِ مَبْتَلَى بِلَوَاتِ

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 1674; Ḡul.,

p. 111, كَلَّمَن بَلِيْتُو عَلَى قَدْوِ ; Dabb., 2, p. 336, كَلَّمَن هَمُّو عَلَى كَدِّهِ

G. Syria: Gegh., nos. 652, 655; Frayha, no. 2974; Egypt:

Burck., no. 558.

697 كَلَّ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ سَرَا [الجوف: سِرا] وَأَنَا عَلَى هَمِّي سَرِيْتِ

kellen 'ala hammuh sara [sera in al-Jawf] wana 'ala hammi sareet¹

"Everybody went to do his own business, and I went to do mine."

698 كَلَّ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الزَّمَانِ وَآكِفٌ

kellen 'aleeh(e)mn az-zemān wātsef²

"Everybody has their sufficient share of trouble."

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 13.

699 كَلَّ لَحْمَةٌ لَهُ مَقْطَعٌ

kell (e)lḥamten lah magṭa³

"Every piece of meat has a joint at which it should be cut."

700 كَلَّ لَوْ مَوْتُهُ بِهَوَاوِهِ مَا مَاتَ

kellen lō mōtuh bhawāwh mā māt

"If a man's death were decided by himself, he would never die."

bhawāwh: according to his wish; bhawāk: as you like.

¹ Also Juh., no. 1707.

² Cf. ibid., no. 1725.

³ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 623.

701 كلمة حرشا ولا عشر تماليس

tselmeten ḥarša wala 'ašren 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.

702 كل نفس دواه غذاه

kell nafsēn dwāh gdāh

"Everybody's [best] medicine is their [customary] nourishment."

Sim. MDW: G. Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 87: كل عليل بعقاقير بلده يداوى

703 كل ياكل من كويسه ويونس بحميسه

kellen yākel men kweesuh we ywannes beḥseesuh

"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.

704 كل يحكى على قدر جماله

kellen yḥatsi 'ala gadr jmāluh¹

"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.

705 كل يسنى ولا كل يروس

kellen yasni wala kellen yerūs²

"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.

706

كَلَّ يَصُبُّ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ صَوْتًا

kellen yeşubb men rāsuh şōt

"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.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 230.

707

كَلَّ يَقْطَعُ اللَّحْمَ عَلَى قَدْرِ أَمِّهِ

kellen ygaṭṭ' al-laḥam 'ala gadr efmuh

"Each one cuts the meat [into pieces] to suit his [own] mouth."

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Aşqar, no. 1425; Frayha, no. 2960.

708

كَمَّ حَافِرٌ طَاحَ فِيهَا حَفْرًا

tsamm ḥāfren ṭāh fimā ḥafar¹

"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."²

Sim. WM: a classical proverb: 'Ask., no. 1701; Zamak., 2, nos. 1302, 1303; a post-classical proverb: Ta'ālibi,

Kaşşul-kāşş, p. 19,

مَنْ حَفَرَ بَثْرًا لِأَخِيهِ وَقَعَ فِيهَا

Mecca: Sāsi, no. 577; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2143; Tik., nos. 2218, 2567; Ğul., p. 177; Dabb., 1, p. 81; Socin, no. 154; Yemen: Goit., no. 1346; G. Syria: Aşqar, no. 5017; Fegh., nos. 1982, 2686; Egypt: Singer, no. 89.

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 2600.

² ODEP, p. 187.

709

كَمْ ضَاع لِي مَعَ الْعَرَبَانِ مِنْ جَمَلٍ

tsamm ʒā' lī ma' al-'erbān men jemał

"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.

710

كَمْ فَاطِرٌ شَرِبَتْ بِجَدِّكَ حَوَارٍ

tsamm fāṭren šarbat bjeld ḥwār

"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."¹

fāṭer: old she-camel.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 22; Baghdad: Tik., no. 755.

SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., no. 754; Hanafi, no. 594; G. Syria:

Fegh., no. 2207; Frayha, no. 3031; Stephan, no. 392;

Egypt: Bājūri, p. 38, الخروف يسبق أمه على المجزرة

711

كَمْ يَدٌ عَذَّبَتْ رَجُلًا

tsamm yaden 'addebat rejel

"Many a hand torments a foot." Many people act against their own interests.

712

كُنْ رَحِيمًا (نَسِيبًا) وَلَا تَكُنْ ابْنَ عَمٍّ

ken reḥīm (nesīb) 'u lā tekūn eben 'amm²

"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.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 23; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul):

Tik., no. 1713; Hanafi, 2, p. 246; Dabb., 1, p. 347; Ḡul.,

¹ Ibid., p. 753.

² Also Juh., no. 1812.

p.112.

Sim. WM: Oman: Jayak., no. 149.

713

كَنَّهُ بَقَّةً بِالْدَعِيْسَةِ (بِرَقَّة)

tsennuh baggeten bad-De'īseh (braggeh)

"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.

714

كَنَّهُ جَائِبٌ (قَاطِعٌ) رَاسِ الدَّوَيْشِ (كَلِيْب)

tsennuh jāyben (gāṭ'en) rās ad-Dewīš (Kleeb)

"As though he had cut off the head of ad-Dewīš (Kleeb)."

ad-Dewīš: Faiṣal ad-Dewīš (or Duwīš), a chief of the Muṭair tribe who, with his followers, participated in the Ikwan rebellion against 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Saud in 1929. He died in the same year.² 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.

Said of one who vaunts his prowess.

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., 1, no. 28.

715

كَنَّهُ شَائِلُ السَّمَا (الدُّنْيَا) عَلَي رَاسِهِ

tsennuh šāylen as-sema (ad-denya) 'ala rāsuh

¹ The second version is used in al-Jawf.

² See H. Philby, Saudi Arabia (London, 1955), pp. 308-312.

"As if he were carrying the sky (var. the world) on his head."

Said of an extremely arrogant person.

716

كيل عمله

tseel 'emleh

"[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.

717

لى احتجت للحلتيه حظه بخشمك

lā(e)ḥtajt lal-ḥeltīteh ḥeṭṭah bkašmek

"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.

718

لى انهج عليك باب طمع سده بباب ياس

lā(e)nhajj 'aleek bāb ṭuma' sedduh b-bāb yās¹

"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.

719

لا يد الحجاز (الحباس) من ضربة عصا

lā bedd al-ḥajjāz (al-ḥabbās) men ṣarbat 'aṣa²

"He who separates fighting people (var. a jailer) is bound to receive a blow.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 2703; Hanki, p. 11: ما ينوب المخلص

الا تقطيع الهدوم

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, "Amtal," al-'Arab, 3 (1969), p. 923, no. 187.

² Cf. ibid., 1, no. 643; Juh., no. 1826.

720

لا بدّ الحيّ من الحيا

lābedd al-ḥayy mn al-ḥaya

"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

721

لا تاخذ الدنيا خراس ومقوات يقطعك من نقل الصّيل البراد

lā tākd ad-denya k_rāṣen -u hagwāt yagṭa'k men nagl aṣ-ṣemil al-barādi²

"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.

hagwāt: plur. of hagweh, from the verb haga, to think; e.g., hagweti ennuh rāh, I think he went away; hageet, I thought.

semil: milk-skin.

al-barādi: al-barād, cool weather.

SMDW: a classical proverb: 'Ask., no. 271.

722

لا تبوق ولا تخاف

lā tebūg 'u lā takāf

"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.

723

لا تحبّ ولا تكره

lā t-ḥebb 'u lā takrah

"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-Nabaṭ, 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: Nūri, 2, p. 28.

724

لا تحرك داب نيمه

lā t-ḥarrets dābben neemeh

"Do not stir a sleeping serpent." Equivalent to the English, "Let sleeping dogs lie."¹

725

لا تحقر من النار شريره ولا من البنى صغيره

lā t-ḥager mnan-nār šrayyreh wala mn al-bniyy ṣḡayyreh

"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, الشر يبدؤه صغاره: see M., no. 1953; 'Ask., no. 1011.

al-bniyy: girls.

726

لا تحكك بالبل وانك حويشى

lā taḥakkak bal-belli wa(a)nt ḥweeši²

"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.

ḥweeši: dimin. of ḥāši, young camel.

taḥakkak: tataḥakkak

SMDW: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 47; two classical proverbs:

M., nos. 115, 2933.

727

لا تزاعم (تعاند) من إذا قال فعل

lā tzā'em (t'āned) man 'idā 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'em: 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.

728

لا تطاح 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 trāḥ 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 tāraḥ, to play the game of aṭ-trāḥ
(emṭāraḥ or treḥi), a game played by two persons each of
whom tries to throw the other down.

SMDW: Yemen: Goit., no. 988.

729

لا تطمع تحرم

lā taṭma' teḥram

"Do not covet, or you will be denied it."

Sim. WM: Egypt: Bajūri, p. 16: الحريص محروم

730

لا تعاف العدّ يجذبك الغدير المطر ما دام للّى يشربونه

lā ta'āf al-'edd yajdebk al-gadīr al-meṭar mā dām lalli
yašrebūnuh

"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.

731

لا تفرح بمجلة أمك على التسور تراوه من قل ما معه

lā tafraḥ be'jelt 'ummek 'ala at-tannūr tarāwh men gell mā
ma'ah¹

"Do not be pleased at the speed with which your mother bakes;
it is only because she has but little [flour]."

men gell: min gillat

NS: Lebanon: Faraj, p. 334.

732

لا تقول برلما (لين) توكي

lā tegūl 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 'ōtsa, fuṣ., 'awka, to tie up a sack full
of grain, flour, etc., or a sheep-skin full of water or milk,
with a cord (وِكَاءَ).

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; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 3813,

4863, 4861; Fegh., nos. 2052, 2416; Frayha, no. 3127;

Huxley, no. 56; Tallq., no. 149; Egypt: Baq., p. 244: لا تقول

فول حتى يصير بالسيول

733

لا تموت يا حمار لما يجيك الربيع ✓

lā temūt ya ḥmār lama yejīk ar-rebī'²

"Do not die O donkey until the spring comes!" Said by some-
one who badly needs something but is told to wait a long time
before he can have it.

Sim. WM: a post-classical proverb: Abšīhi, 1, p. 34: اقعد

يا حمار حتى يبيت لك الشعير; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 141, no. 61;

Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 485; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik.,

¹ Cf. ibid., no. 1850.

² Cf. ibid., no. 2122; also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 653.

no. 2315; Hanafi, no. 2228; Ğul., p. 125; Palestine:
Stephan, no. 239; Burton, no. 91.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: M., 1, p. 89: إلى أن يجئ
بينما يجئ الدرايق من Abšīhi, 1, p. 34: الترياق من العراق مات المسوع
العراق يكن المسوع مات Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi,
no. 2229; Tik., no. 1486; Dabb., 1, p. 287: عيش يا كديش لمن
يجيك الحشيش; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3903; Fegh., no. 2781;
Stephan, no. 170; Huxley, no. 64; Tallq., no. 111; Egypt:
Taim., no. 2012.

734 لا تشد الصلوك عن مذاهبه

lā tanšd aṣ-ṣe'lūk 'an medāhbuh

"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 Abun-Našnāš
an-Nahšali:¹

وسئلة اين ارتحالي وسائل ومن يسأل الصلوك أين مذاهبه ؟

Tabrīzī explained the meaning of the last sentence
by saying, "أى يجب ألا يسأل الصالحك عن مذاهبهم وطرقهم لأنها لا تعلم"
(The su'ulūks should not be asked about where they are going
because it is not known (even to themselves).)²

735 لا تشد العريس ليلة عرسه

lā tanšd al-'errīs leelat 'ersuh

"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: Ğul., p. 162: لا تمدح الكنى بيوما
ولا الراعى بسنتو; Egypt: Taim., no. 2482.

¹ See A. al-Iṣfahānī, al-'Aḡāni (Cairo, 1950), 12, p. 172.

² See Tabrīzī (Yaḥya b. 'Ali), Šarḥ at-Tabrīzī 'ala Dīwān Aš'ār al-Ḥamāsah, vol. 1 (Cairo, 1296 A.H.), p. 167.

736

لى جاد الزرع اوفينا الدين

lā jād az-zar' 'ōfeena ad-dayyān

"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.

737

لى جاد حظك باع لك واشترى لك فوايد من كل الآفاق تاتيک

lā jād ḥazzek bā' lek weštarā lek fawāyden men kell al-āfāg
tātīk¹

"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 is a verse from a well-known poem composed by
aš-Šarīf Mḥammad b. 'Awn of Mecca, beginning with:

يا الله يا اللى كل حتى يسالك يا واحد كل يخافك ويرجيك²

This proverbial verse is expressed in old, post-clas-
sical and contemporary proverbs with different wording. See
'Ask., nos. 122, 436; Ṭāliq., no. 144; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 107;
Mosul: Socin, no. 407; Egypt: Taim., no. 2293; Littm., no.
42.

738

لا جسمه ولا يسامه

lā jesāmeh 'u lā besāmeh

"[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 appoint-
ing him governor of Iraq. It is believed that 'Abd al-Malik
was at first far from being impressed by the appearance of

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 388.

² See 'Abd Allah Kālid al-Ḥātam, Kiyār mā Yultaqaṭ min aš-Ši'r an-Nabaṭ, I (Damascus, 1952), p. 215.

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." (الجسامه للابل والبماه للنسا)

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3828; a post-classical proverb: Ta'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 337: كَابِن اللبُون لَا ظَهْر فِيرَكِب
 ; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 363; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2628; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 607; Egypt: Taim., no. 1811.

739

لاجل عين تكرم ديره

lajel 'een takram dīreh

"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: لاجل عين تكرم ألف عين; Egypt: Littm., no. 464; Taim., no. 2487.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Ta'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 273: بعلة الزرع يسقى القرع; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2723; Tik., no. 2632; Yemen: Goit., no. 1248; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 1275, 1105; Fegh., no. 1961; Frayha, nos. 2297, 2865, 2868; Huxley, no. 62; Egypt: Taim., no. 2488.

740

لى حجّت البقر على قرونه

lā ḥajjat al-begar 'ala grūnah¹

"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: لَمَن بِيض الدِّيكِ عَالِوَدَّ; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2971; Frayha,

¹ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 279; also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 40.

no. 1137; Stephan, no. 795; Baum., nos. 281, 282, 284, 285, 283; Huxley, no. 70.

741

لى حكم القدر عى البصر

lā ḥakam al-ḡedar 'emy al-beṣar

"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 ḥadīth related by al-Ḥākim from Ibn 'Abbās.¹ However, Ta'ālibi attributes it to Ibn 'Abbās himself.²

NS: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 304; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 358;

Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., no. 122; Hanafi, no. 56;

Dal., 1, no. 84; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 196; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 747; a post-classical proverb: Zamak., 1, no. 485.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: M., no. 48; 'Ask., no. 113.

742

لا ذى ولا بنت الذى

lā dī wala bent alladī³

"[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:

كابن اللبون لا ظهر فيركب ولا لبن فيحلب; Zamak., 2, no. 1026;

a post-classical proverb: M., no. 3542; 'Ask., no. 1903;

Zamak., 2, no. 921; Iraq (Mosul and among the Bedouins):

Dabb., 2, p. 356, لا ينقلى ولا ينشوى; Zaffirī, no. 213; G. Syria:

Burton, no. 175; Ašqar, no. 4974; Egypt: Taim., nos. 2497, 2499, 2507; Fā'iqa, no. 543.

¹ See I. al-'Ajlūni, op. cit., no. 281.

² See Ta'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 41.

³ Cf. Juh., no. 1873.

743 لا زاد الشّيء عن حدّه انقلب إلى ضده

lā zād aš-šayy 'an ḥadduh 'engalab ela ḩedduh

"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.

Ident.: Mosul: ḩul., p. 19; Egypt: Baq., p. 260; Fā'iqa, no. 741.

744 لى سلم الرأس جاله طاقية

lā selm ar-rās jāluh ṩāgiyyeh

"If the head is safe, a cap is [easily] found for it," i.e., one should care about the important things.

745 لى شفت طويل عاقل فاذكر الله

lā šeft ṩewīlen 'ādẓlen fedker 'Allah

"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.¹

746 لى شفت لك عاقل ترى الهمّ باريه والمستريح اللى من العقل خالى

lā šeft lek 'ādẓel tara al-hamm bārīh wal-mešteriḩ allī mn al-'agel kālī.²

"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 'Ašim, no. 101; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 229; Egypt: Taim., no. 1842; Bājūri, p. 19: الغشيم مستريح

¹ Stephan, "Lunacy in Palestine Folklore," JPOS, 7, no. 19.

² Cf. Juh., no. 2239.

747

لى شفتهم ما يبونك فكل وطير عيونك (ناس ما يبونك كل
غداهم وطير عيونك)

lā šeftehum mā yabūnek fkel 'u ṭayyr 'yūnek (nāsen mā
yabūnek kel gadāhum 'u ṭayyer 'yūnek)¹

"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.

mā yabūnek: they do not like you (lit. they do not want you).

ṭayyr 'yūnek: 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.

748

لى صار المجرّ فوق المسرّ ترى الحضيري كد نشر

lā šār al-Mejarr fōg al-mesarr tara al-ḥẓeeri tsed nešar²

"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, fuṣ., judād (جذاز) or srām (صرام)). It is a common practice for farmers in Najd to put unripe dates

¹ Cf. ibid., no. 353.

² Also 'Ubūdi, "al-Amṭāl al-'Ammiyyah," al-'Arab, 2, p. 18, no. 1.

on roofs. These dates are called rejī' (رجيع).

This proverb is attributed to the bedouins.

al-Mejarr: fuṣ., al-Majarraḥ, 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 فَاءُ الْمَبِيِّبَةِ in the conditional sentence.

al-hzeeri: dimin. of al-hzeri, the townsman, the sedentary man.

tsed: gad, is likely to be, nearly, has . . .

SMDW: a classical proverb: سَطِي مَجْر تَرْطَب هَجْر

749

لِي صَارَتْ لِحْيَتِكَ مَنُتُفَهُ مَنُتُفَهُ فَخَلَّكَ مَعَ أَوَّلِ النَّاسِ

lā ṣārat leḥyakk mantūfeh mantūfeh fkallek ma' awwal an-nās
 "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.¹

mantūfeh: object partic. of netaf; however, it is here used to mean, "going to be, certain to be". The repetition of the

¹ Dickson tells of a little incident which took place in 1935 in Eastern Arabia, in which Amir 'Abdullah b. Jluwi, Governor of al-Ḥasa, ordered that the beard of a certain Falāḥ abu Ja'sha' should be shaved off every Friday for a month. This was a punishment for Falāḥ's negligence in his duty. He was told to conduct a prisoner (who stole two camels) to Hufuf. While Falāḥ 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:

كن في الأول ولو بحلق اللحي

750 لي صار قبيلك القاضي من تقاضي

lā šar dzebilek al-gāzi men tgāzi¹

"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: Ašqar, no. 925; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 314.

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 715; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 2017.

751 لي صار لك رفيق بالسطايا يديك فانصه لقضيا -حاجة قبل ينصاك

lā šār lek refīdzen bal-'aṭāya ymannik fenšuh legz̄ya ḥājeten gabul yanšāk

"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."

'enšuh: go to him; from neša, to go intentionally to someone; to proceed straight to someone.

752 لي صرت حازيها بالك توني

lā šert ḥāziha bālek tawanna

"If you are thinking of doing something, do not act slowly, i.e., do it now.

ḥaziha: thinking of doing it (anything)

bālek: beware; equivalent to the classical إياك أن

tawanna: tata'annā

753 لي ضحكتموا فاعفروا لي

lā zaḥaktu fe(e)gumzū li

"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.

754

لى طاح الـجمل كثر السكاكين

lā ṭāḥ al-jemal tsatrat as-sekāt̄s̄in

"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'iqā, no. 1011.

755

لى طاح من طى الركيه طيه ترى طى الركيه طاح

lā ṭāḥ men ṭayy ar-rets̄iyyeh ṭayyeh, tara ṭayy ar-rets̄iyyeh ṭāḥ

"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.

ar-rets̄iyyeh: fuṣ., ar-rakiyyah, the well. Used in poetry and certain set phrases.

756

لى طالت خطاه فاعرف انه نكارة (فهي رباضة)

lā ṭālt kṭāḥ fe(e)'ref ennah nakkāreh (fehi rabbāzeh)!

"If its [i.e., an ass's] strides are long, then it must be fractious." This proverb is figuratively applied to one who promises much, but does not keep his word.

A donkey which throws off its load and runs away is

¹ S.G. Champion, op. cit., p. 27, no. 317.

called nakkār or nekūr, and a donkey which kneels down without warning is called rabbāz.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 61, no. 14; Basrah: Dal., 1, n.89.

757 لى (يوم عقب ما) طقت صمت نخوده

lā (yōm, 'egub mā) ṭga'at ṣammat fkūdah¹

"When she broke wind (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; Ḡul., p. 94;

Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 222, no. 33.

Sim. WM: Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 895; Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 27.

758 لى طلع المرزم فامل المحزم

lā ṭala' al-Merzam fe(e)ml al-meḥzam

"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 (meṭ-ḥan, 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.

fe(e)ml: ناملأ

759 لى طلعت الجوزا فامل الحوزا

lā ṭla'at al-Jōza fe(e)ml al-ḥōza

"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.

hōza: pocket, not used apart from this saying.

760 لي طلع سهيل تلمس التمر بالليل

lā ṭala' S-heel, talammaṣ at-tamer bal-leel¹

"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: الى طلع

السييل وتلمس التمر بالليل (When Canopus rises, trust not the creek and gather dates even at night).²

S-heel: Suhail, Canopus. Lane says, "it rises aurorally in central Arabia early in August . . . At the time of its rising the fruits ripen."³

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 الصّفرى, corresponding approximately October, November, and December."⁴ But

'Abdulla b. Kamīs mentions 25 August specifically as the day on which Canopus rises,⁵ which is most likely and which shows that the appearance of Canopus marks the final period of summer.

NS: Basrah: Dal., 1, no. 65.

761 لي طلعت الكليبين خذ الحفنه من المدين

lā ṭla'ann al-Kleebeen ked al-ḥafneh mn al-meddeen

¹ See also 'A. Kamīs, Rāšid al-Kalāwī (Riyadh, 1972), p. 329.

² Musil, op. cit., p. 8.

³ Lane, pp. 277, 1454.

⁴ Musil, op. cit.

⁵ See 'A. Kamīs, op. cit.

"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 الأصغر the constellation Canis Minor with its main star Procyon.¹ They rise on 12 August.²

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.

762

لِي عَادَ الْحَمَارُ وَلَا سَائِقُهُ

lā 'ād al'ḥmār wala saydzuh!

"May the donkey not return, nor its driver!" Said of a person of whom one is glad to be rid.

763

لِي عَدَّتِ الْقَرَايَا مَا عَدَّ وَتَالٌ

lā 'eddat al-garāya mā 'edd Wtāl³

"When villages are counted, Wtāl 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.

Wtāl: (pronounced 'ūtāl) a village in 'Yūn al-Jwa in northern Qaṣīm.

SMDW: two post-classical proverbs: Ṭāliq., no. 88; Abšihī, 1, p. 35:

ذَكَرُوا الْمَدْنَ جَاءَتِ الْقَرْيُ تَحْجَلُ ; Kuwait: Nūri,

1, p. 62, no. 144; Oman: Jayak., no. 112., Iraq (Baghdad

and Mosul): Tik., no. 673; Dabb., 2, p. 557: عَدِينَا كُلُّ الْجَبْرِيَّاتِ

¹ H. Wehr, A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic (Wiesbaden, 1966), p. 836.

² See 'A. b. Kamīs, op. cit.

³ Cf. Juh., no. 1912.

ما ظل غير جريو خان ; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2097; Baum., no. 5; Egypt: Burck., no. 276.

764

لى عزمت بك فانتخ

lā(e)'zemat bek fe(e)ntak

"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.

'zemat: she ran against the will of her rider.

entak: imper. of 'entaka, to shout one's war cry (nakwah).

Members of each clan have their own distinctive war cry.

765

لى غاب البس الحب يا فار

lā gāb al-bess el'ab ya fār

"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; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1340; Tik., no. 1503; Dabb., 2, p. 291; Ğul., p. 95; G. Syria: Stephan, no. 412; Landb., no. 138; Frayha, no. 2504; Baum., no. 416; Ašqar, 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: غابت

السبع لو غاب على ; Mosul: Ğul., p. 73: السباع ولعبت الضباع

; الصوت واويها ; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2993.

766

لى غرقت سفينتك فاوط على سكانه

lā gardzat sefinakk fe(e)ūṭ 'ala sekkānah

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.

SMDW: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 20, no. 28; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 150; Manch. MS, fol. 25: اذا غرق مركبك زیده بدفشه; a post-classical proverb: Ṭaliq., no. 37.

767 لي غلبوك بالكثير فاغلبهم بالسمن

lā(e)glebōk bal-keṭer fe(e)glebhūm 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.

768 لي فأت الفوت ما ينفح الصوت

lā fāt al-fōt mā yanfa' aṣ-ṣōt¹

"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; Ṣafīri, no. 210.

769 لي فز القلب سارت الرجل

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.

770 لا قارى ولا محط للاخوان صحفه

lā dzāri wala mḥeṭṭen lal-akwān ṣ-ḥafeh

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, "al-Amtal al-'Ammiyyah," al-'Arab, 2 (1967), p. 18, no. 2.

"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 ṣ-ḥafeh [full of food]]." Said of someone who is absolutely passive and will not bestir himself.

mḥett: active participle of ḥatt, to put; here means "to offer or give a meal".

ṣ-ḥafeh: a wide wooden plate, formerly commonly used in Najd. The word is classical and is mentioned in the Qur'ān:¹

يطاف عليهم بصحاف من ذهب وأكواب . . . " الآيه

al-akwān: applied to those who study, read, and are concerned with religious knowledge.

Cf.nos. 742, 787.

771 لاق الصياح بصياح تسلم

lādz aṣ-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: Nūri, 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 ابا زيد قومة سرنى بها ميران ابا زيد متى يقوم؟

lā gām Ebā Zeeden gōmeten sarrenī baha meer enn Ebā Zeeden meta yegūm?

"When Ebā 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. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 659; also Juh., no. 1830.

773 لي قضيت الجعري قطع اذانه

lā geḏabt al-j'ari gaṭṭ' edānuh

"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.

geḏabt: geḏab, to hold: fuṣ., gabada.

al-j'ari: a rarely-used word for "dog".

SMDW: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 22, no. 32; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3203; Fegh., no. 300; Frayha, no. 2659; Egypt: Taim., nos. 600, 667; Burck., no. 56; Littm., nos. 340, 341; Fā'iqa, no. 793.

774 لي قطعت الرأس ما عاش الذنب

lā geṭa't ar-rās mā 'āš ad-danab

"If you cut off the head, the tail will not live."

775 لي قطعت راسي بالجهل متى ترجبه

lā geṭa't rāsi bal-jahal meta trats-tsbuh

"If you cut off my head with [your] folly, when will you put it back?"

776 لي تمنع خاطرکم بالما فارووه

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.

777 لا قوا الروای بالما

lādzu ar-ruwway bal-ma

"Meet the water carrier with water," i.e., take water for him. A water carrier may be thirsty even though he is carrying water.

lādzu: imper. of lāga, to meet someone, suffixed with the 2nd person pl. pronoun.

778 لي كثر الحكمة انقطع الحبل

lā tsatrat al-ḥkumeh engeṭa' al-ḥabel¹

"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 'aḥkam, to wind a rope until its cords hold fast.

SMDW: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 5: كثر الدق يفك اللحم; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 3446, 3457; Burton, no. 112; Frayha, no. 2837; Egypt: Taim., no. 1316; Littm., no. 490.

779 لي كثر خير الله تنعت رعاته

lā tseter keer Allah dzan'at r'ātuh

"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.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 22, no. 31; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 81.

780 لا مال إلا مع رجال شحايح

lā māl ella ma' rjālen šaḥayeh

"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."²

781 لي مت ما سألتي عن ويل الحيا ولا من حفر قبري ولا من دفني

lā mett mā sāyalt 'an wabl al-ḥaya 'u lā men ḥafar gabri 'u lā men defanni

"When I die I shall not care about rainfall, nor about who digs my grave, nor who buries me." Cf. the French phrase

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 حمارى ما يظل حماره تتهدد ; المعالف ويقع عالتبن نار ; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 1210, 176; Frayha, nos. 3785, 922; Stephan, no. 195; Mak, nos. 8, 34;

782

Tarjamān, p. 138: من بعد حشيشى ما يثبت حشيش ومن بعدى ما حدا يعيش
لى مدح البس زق بالطحين

lā mdeḥ al-bess zagg baṭ-ṭeḥīn

"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: مدحنا القس خفى بالبيعه ; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 10: كلب مدحناه سرق ; Egypt: Taim., no. 2168.

783

لى هبت قابات الغيران

lā habbat gābalat al-gīrān

"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. 37: إذا هب الهوا يفوت بكل النقوب ; Egypt: Burck., no. 24.

784

لى واعدت جمال فواعد عشره

lā wā'adt jammāl fwā'd 'šereh

"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.

785 لي وافك خير فوافقه

lā wāfagk keeren fwāfdzuh

"If you meet a good thing introduce yourself," i.e., if you come across a good thing do not hesitate to benefit from it.

786 لا يجزع سابق من سبقه

lā yajza' sābdzen memmen sbegh

"A man who outstrips others should not be annoyed if others outstrip him." This proverb is a version of proverb no. 687 above.

787 لا يهوش ولا يلقط حصي

lā yehūš 'u lā ylaggeṭ ḥaṣa

"[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: لا يسيح ولا لا كان ولا لم حجار; Gul., p. 161: لا يسيح ولا

يمطي الجفاب; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1171; Frayha, no. 3079;

Manch. MS, fol. 110; Egypt: Taim., no. 1428.

Cf. nos. 742, 770.

788 لحم صوابه

laḥas ṣawābuh

"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]."¹

N.B. This does not imply the same meaning as the English expression, "he went away to lick his wounds."

789 لحم العلماء (المشايخ) ماسموم

laḥam al-'ulama (al-mešāyek) masmūm

¹ ODEF, p. 623.

"The flesh of religious scholars ('ulema) 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.

790

اللحم تنط من القدر

al-lhameh tenett mn al-dzeder

"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-lhameh: also metaphorically used for one's relatives.

tenett: imperf. of natt, to jump.

al-dzeder: 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'iqa, no. 2011.

791

لحمة ثعلب مسكوت عنه

lhamat t'alab maskūten 'anah¹

"[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-ḥṣeen are used instead. See proverbs nos. 257, 682, 934.

NS: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3752; Fegh., no. 2894.

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, no. 678; cf. Juh., no. 1877.

792

لحية غانمه

lehyeten gānmeh

"[He is] a gaining beard," i.e., he is a good man.

lehyeh: beard. It here signifies "man" by synecdoche.

793

لحية يرضيه مدّ الشعير وش يزعله

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: yurđiha.medd: see nos. 427, 761.yeze'lah: yez'elha: makes it angry

794

اللسان هبّره

al-lsān habreh¹

"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 بنى قاله "It says what it wants to say."

795

لسانه يلوط اذانه

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.

796

لقمة اليتيم كبيره

legmet al-yetīm tsebīreh

"An orphan's mouthful is [considered] large." Cf. nos. 415, 943, 959.

797

لقمة على فاقه ازين من مية ناقه

legmeten 'ala fāgeh 'azyān men myat nāgeh

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, no. 681.

"One mouthful [of food] when badly needed is better than a hundred she-camels."

798

لك نيك ولا مسابق

lek neets wella msābag?¹

"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?"

799

للذّر من أموال الرجال نصيب

lad-darr mn amwāl ar-rjāl neṣīb

"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.

800

لم يكرم الضيف حتى تكرم راحلته

lam yakram aḡ-ḡeef ḥetta takram rāḥletuh

"A guest has not been entertained well until his mount has been entertained well."

801

لو التمر عند البدو ما باعوه

law at-tamer 'end al-badu mā bā'ōh²

"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.

802

لو الدعا يصب صاب الذيب

law ad-d'a yṣīb ṣāb ad-dīb

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'a: often used for invoking God's name against someone. It can also mean "wishing good to someone by praying to God."

sāb: 'asab, 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; Fā'iqa, no. 1587.

803

لو به خير ما عافه الطير

lō buh keer mā 'āfuh 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: Abšīhi, 1, p. 31.

SMDW: a classical proverb: Ibn 'Ašim, no. 353; a post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 257: لو كان في البومة خير ما تركها

لو كان في البقلة خير

لو كان في البوم خير لما سلم، ولو

الصياد ; Ta'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 273: لاأكلها الكلب ; idem, Kāšš, p. 28: لو كان في البوم خير لما سلم، ولو ; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1688; Tik., no. 1889; Socin, no. 288; Oman: Reinhardt, no. 158; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2823; Frayha, no. 3212; Burton, no. 43; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 42: لو بالبوم خير صادته الصياد ; Egypt: Burck., no. 581.

804

لو بهم عاقل ما اخذوا صولى

lō behum 'ādzlen mā(a)kadaw šōli!¹

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.

805

لو تدرى وش فى جرجيرك ما عطيته بعيرك

lō tadri weš fī jarjīrek mā 'aṭeetuh be'īrek¹

"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: 'آى شى'

jarjīr: (known in Mecca and Egypt as jirjīr) 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.

806

لوقى، لا كلب ولا سلوقى

lūgi, lā tsalb 'u lā selūgi²

"[He is like] a half-bred hound. It is neither a dog nor a greyhound."

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 105, no. 1.

¹ Also ibid., no. 1915.

² Also ibid., no. 1919.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3949; Baghdad: Tik., no. 2107.

807 لولا المرّبي ما عرفت ربي

lōla al-mrabbi mā 'ereft rabbi¹

"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: Ašqar, no. 3840; Manch. MS, fol. 91.

NS: Yemen: Goit., no. 1046.

808 لولا خيلهم طرّحناهم

lōla keelehum ṭarraḥnāhum

"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.

Sim.WM: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1920.

SMDW: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 44.

809 لولا دقاق المال ما جا جلاله

lōla dgāg al-māl mā ja jlāluh

"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."

dgāg: equivalent to the classical adjective: دقيق

jlāl: equivalent to the classical adjective: جليل

Cf. no. 630.

810 لو ياخذ ثيابي

lō yāked tyābi

"[Even] if he takes my clothes," i.e., I do not know him at all.

¹ Also ibid., no. 1906; 'Ubūdi, no. 687.

811 لو يذّر على الجرح كان ييرا (يشوى)

lō ydarr 'alal-jarḥ tsān yabra (yešwi)

"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.

yešwi: imperf. of 'ašwa, to heal.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 233; Egypt: Amīn, p. 434;

G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3137.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 2442; a post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 330: ملح على جرح; Mosul: Dabb., 1, p. 69:

يتصلّى على اذ يالو: p. 493; البيسوينفع للمعمرات

812 اللّيل مع من عدا به

al-leel ma' men 'adā buh¹

"The night is on the side of him who raids in it."

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 258: اللّيل جنّة الهارب

813 ليلة الدّخلة جاها الحيف

leelt ad-dakleh jāha al-ḥeez

"At [her] wedding night she menstruated." Said of anything which is not available when needed.

Ident.: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1776.

814 ما احد يكتب روحه شقى

mā(a)ḥaden yakteb rūḥuh šedziyy

"Nobody puts himself down as unlucky," i.e., nobody admits his own shortcomings, speaks unfavourably of 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: Ašqar, no. 718; Frayha, no. 427; Egypt: Taim., no. 1031;

¹ Also ibid., no. 690.

² ODEP, p. 570.

Fā'iqa, no. 1978.

SMDW: Mosul: Socin, no. 86; Dabb., 2, p. 420: مجدّ يقول
لبني حاضن; Baghdad: Tik., no. 2122; G. Syria: Ašqar,
 no. 3982; Mak, no. 20; Egypt: Taim., no. 2614.

815 ما احلاك ساكت :

mā(a)ḥlāk sāket!

"How sweet you are [when] silent!" Said to one who is quick
 to forget his manners and often talks in a rude way.

816 ما ادري انا ارج للشام ولا أفجر البركة

mā(a)dri ana arūḥ laš-šām wella afjer al-bart^useh

"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 ord-
 inary 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.

817 ما اردا من ضمينه إلا ديانه

mā(a)rda men ḡemīnah ella dayyānah¹

"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.

SMDW: Mecca: ما احسن من قديد إلا عسفان²; Baghdad: Tik., no.
 1234; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3865; Frayha, no. 2054; Egypt:
 Taim., no. 2578; Fā'iqa, no. 402.

818 ما انشقت ميراته تخر

mā(a)nšaggat meer ennah tekerr³

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 2075.

² Quraiš, 50 (1960), p. 16.

³ Cf. Juh., no. 1971.

"There are no holes in it [a water skin] but it leaks."

Said of a contradictory statement.

meer: but.

tekerr: imperf. of خَرَّ, to leak.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2133.

819 ما بالبیر یدیه المغراف

mā bal-bīr yeddīh al-megrāf

"Whatever is in the well, the scoop brings up."

megrāf: a scoop or any bowl, pot, etc., which is used to scoop up something, especially liquids.

yeddīh: yeddi: imperf. of 'adda, to give.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., no. 3159; Zamak., no.

754; M., no. 3352; Mecca: اللی ینزل فی القدر تطلعه الملعقه¹;

Kuwait: Nūri, 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.

820 ما بالحمز احد

mā bal-ḥamz aḥad²

"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.

al-ḥamz: (saltwort or salsola kali): "one of six bushes all of them known under the common name of ḥamz (chenopodiaceae) such as³ ثمران، عجم، وعراد، هرم، ورمث، شبرم"

821 ما بالفار طاهر (ما بالفار فار طاهر)

mā bal-fār ṭāher (mā bal-fār fāren ṭāher)⁴

¹ Quraiš, 36 (1960), p. 16.

² Also Juh., no. 2085.

³ See H. Dickson, op. cit., p. 632.

⁴ 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,"¹ and "Of evil grain no good seed can come."²

SMDW: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 57: ما في الحيتين حيه مسلمه

Iraq: Socin, no. 134; Weissbach, no. 232; Hanafi, no. 1832;

Tik., no. 2004; Ğul., p. 16; ما اكو حيتي صالحه; Dabb., 2,

p. 575: ما اكو حيه بين الحيتي صالحه; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 4029.

3221; Stephan, nos. 476, 962; Egypt: Taim., no. 2430;

Littm., no. 511; Baq. p. 858: زي التعابين مفهاش طيب

822 ما بحصيدته لقااس (لقاط)

mā bḥaṣīdetuh legās (legāṭ)³

"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."⁴

ḥaṣīdeh: part of a plot or field which has already been harvested.

legās: verbal noun, from talaggas, to clean. Cf. no. 870.

NS: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1992; Hanafi, no. 1842.

823 الماء بكرة (عرة) الدلو

al-ma bekrubt ('ergāt) ad-dalu

"Water is at the bucket's brim." Said of something which is very close at hand.

krubt: (in pause pronounced krubeh): 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.

¹ ODEP, p. 234.

² Browning, no. 8510.

³ Also Juh., no. 2095.

⁴ ODEP, p. 328.

824

ما به عرق يسقى عرق

mā 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

825

ما بهم عاصب راسه

mā behum 'āṣeb 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.

826

ما به نطاش

mā buh neṭāš

"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.

827

ما بين سهيل والمرزم نجم يبيس غزير الجم

mā been S-heel wal-Merzam najmen yībes gazīr al-jamm¹

"The star which rises in [the period] between Canopus and Canis Major dries out abundant water [in wells and springs]."

The reference is to الكليين, the constellation of Canis Major (الكلب الأكبر) and the constellation of Canis Minor (الكلب الأصغر)

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.

¹ See also Abdul-Rahmān Sādiq aš-Šarīf, Mantiqat 'Unaizah (Cairo, 1969), p. 63.

828

ما تبرك إلا عند الأيفة

mā tabrek ella 'end alāyfah

"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.

alāyfah: alāyef: plur. of 'elīf, fellow beast; the equivalent of "friend" for people.

829

ما تحرم يميني فعايله

mā teḥram yemnan fa'āyilah

"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'āyilah: f'āyel: 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:

اليطبخ حسو يتحسانو

830

ما تضحى على معشأوه

mā tẓahḥi 'ala m'aššāwh

"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."

tẓahḥi: imperf. of ẓahha, he (e.g., a shepherd) stayed with his flock in a place in the late morning to allow animals to graze.

m'ašša: place where a shepherd lets his animals graze in the evening.

831 ما تطلع العوجا إلا من عدم العدله

mā taṭla' al-'ōja ella men 'adam al-'adleh

"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.

832 ما تنجز لحمته

mā tanjaḥ lhamtuh

"His slice of meat never gets well cooked." Said of someone who cannot make up his mind.

tanjaḥ: imperf. of nejaḥ, to be [i.e., food] ready, well cooked.

833 ما جا بالما غدا بالما

mā ja bal-ma gada bal-ma

"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.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 63; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul):

Hanafi, no. 1855; Tik., no. 2017; Ḡul., p. 123: مال الماي للماي ;

Dabb., p. 302: مال الماي راح للماي

SMDW: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 34; Frayha, no. 459; Egypt:
Taim., nos. 2644, 2970.

834 ما حرّك داواك

mā ḥarrek dāwāk¹

"That which heats, cures." Said to a person who complains when taking medicine that it is unpleasant.

835 ما حصلت كليت

mā ḥaṣṣaleet kaleetuh

"What I earn I eat," i.e., I save nothing.

The form of كليت 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, ḥaṣṣaleet, is used in this peculiar form to parallel the form of the second.

836 ما خلى بجلده صح

mā kalla bjelduh meṣaḥḥ

"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.

meṣaḥḥ: a safe place (in the body, i.e., not hurt).

837 ما دام لك ما طاب لك يا ابن رواف

mā dām lek mā ṭāb lek ya Ben Rawwāf²

"What you like will not last you for ever (E)Ben Rawwāf," i.e., good things do not last.

838 ما درى بك يا بعروضه

mā drī bets ya be'ūzeh³

"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.

person who blusters or tries to assert his imaginary importance.

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'alibi, Tamtil, p.376:

قالت البعوضة للنخلة: استمسكى فإني عنك ناهضة، فقالت: ما أحسست وقوعك فكيف نهوضك؟

ناموسة باتت على شجرة أصبحت تقول خاطرك. قالت لها

غطت برفشه عا قرن: G. Syria: Fegh., p. 726: وأنت كنت على أي ورقه؟

; الجاموس لمن طارت قالت لا تواخذني تقلت عليك. قلا ما استحسيت فيك

ناموسه باتت على شجره وقالت لها الصبح امسكى

Egypt: Bajūri, p. 160:

839

روحك أحسن أنا طابره
ما دسم شارب من لا غبره (اللى ما ينجر شارب ما يدسمه)

mā dassam šarben men lā gabbereh ('alli mā ygabber šārbuh mā ydassmuh)¹

"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,² Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 93.

840

ما نخرت العين إلا للبكا

mā dekrat al-'een ella lal-btsa

"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.

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 883; Juh., no. 2338.

² See Quraiš, 24 (1960), p. 16.

841

ما ذكر من الزرق اباعر

mā dtser mn az-zerg ebā'er¹

"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

842

ما ذكر من زيد طعنه

mā dtser men Zeeden t'aneh

"Who ever heard of a thrust of Zeed's?" i.e., Zeed is feeble.

843

ما ذكر واد من التويبع سال

mā dtser wāden mn at-Tweebe' sāl³

"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 Rāshid al-Kalāwi):

التويبع براق وراعى مخايل ولا ذكر واد من التويبع سال

"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 (gōzāwi) 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-tābi': the Hyades. It is also called

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 2067.

² Musil, op. cit., p. 334.

³ Cf. Juh., no. 2087, and 'A. Kāmīs, op. cit., p. 324.

⁴ Musil, op. cit., p. 9.

by Muslim astronomers الدبران or التابع or تابع النجم ;
so called because it follows the Pleiades.¹

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., nos. 167, 3990; Zamak.,
2, no. 726.

844 ما زايدك من ليك (ما زاده من ليله) الآ ظلما

mā zāyedk men leelek (mā zāduh men leeluh) ella ḡalma

"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.

845 ما سدّ الاثني سدّ 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 ḥadīṭ:

"طعام الاثني يكفي الثلاثة وطعام الثلاثة يكفي الرابعه"³

NS: Yemen: Goit., no. 1112

Sim WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1152; Tik., nos. 524, 1346;

G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1090; Aṣqar, no. 2213; Frayha, no.

1831; Egypt: Taim., no. 215.

846 ما سويت سوى بك

mā sawweet sewwī bek

"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: saww'a, to do.

¹ See Lane, p. 296.

² ODEP, p. 224.

³ al-'Ajlūni, op. cit., no. 1527.

sewwi: Passive perf. of sawwa.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 54.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3093; 'Ask., no. 1460; Zamak., 2, no. 781; Yemen: Goit., no. 1102; Mosul: Gul., p. 141: مثل ما تصنع تلقى ; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 508, 512, 516; Frayha, no. 3622; Stephan, no. 43; Egypt: Taim., no. 276; Fā'iqa, no. 1813; Burck., no. 659.

847

ما ضاع حقّ وله طالب

mā ḡā' ḡaggen 'u luh ṭallāb¹

"No right was ever lost so long as it had a claimant."

Sim. WM: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 422; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 68;

Oman: Jayak., no. 256; Baghdad: Tik., no. 2369; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1677; Egypt: Bājūri, p. 13.

SMDW: Mosul: Dabb., 1, p. 167: الحق ما يقتلوا بطا ; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1670.

848

ما ضرّ مقتول طعنه

mā ḡarr madztūlen ṭ'aneh

"A stab will not harm a slain man."

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 120; Yemen: Goit., no. 1095.

849

ما طاح راح

mā ṭāḡ rāḡ

"Whatever falls, disappears." Said when something is lost immediately after being put down.

Sim. WM: Oman: Jayak., no. 260.

850

ما عاشت باللقط

mā 'āšat 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.

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 2049.

Barakāt aš-Šarīf of Mecca had a servant whom he wanted to test and see how trustworthy he was. While they were out travelling, Barakāt, 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.

851 ما عقب هدم الركايا صداقه

mā 'egub hadm ar-rekāya ṣedāgeh

"No friendship [can be restored] after the demoliton 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.

852 ما على راسه شجرة

mā 'ala rāsuh šjereh

"There is no tree on his head," i.e., he is not easily distinguished, he does not stand out in a crowd.

853 ما على كريم شرط

mā 'ala tserīmen tešerreṭ

"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: Nūri, 2, p. 55; Oman: Jayak., no. 265.

854 ما عند ذيب لذيب عشا

mā 'end dīben l-dīben 'aša

"A wolf has no supper for a [another] wolf." Cf. no. 855.

SMDW: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1183.

855

ما عند زيد لعبيد شي

mā 'end Zeeden i-'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 عنده إلا مفاتيح التبن

mā 'enduh ella mefātīh at-teben¹

"He has nothing but the keys of the straw [store]." Said of one with the least important responsibility in a business.

857

ما عنده باللحي شعر

mā 'enduh bal-lhey' 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 عنده سالفه

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 عنده 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: Nūri, 2, p. 235.

860

ما عندي لك إلا ما طرّق الحداد

mā 'endī lek ella mā ṭarrag al-ḥaddād²

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: بينه وبينى ما صنع الحداد

861

ما عين قايلة آه من خير

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

ما فاتك من الزرع إلا السبل

mā fātk mn az-zar' ella as-sebal¹

"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

ما فيها مومي شليله

mā fiha mūmi šelīluh

"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 'ōma (class. 'awma'a) (here), to move (e.g., a long shirt, a tree).

šelīl: 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.

1

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 725; cf. Juh., no. 3005.

864

ما كان شرط كان سلام

mā kān šart kān salām

"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: Nūri, 2, p. 5.

Sim. WM: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 67; G. Syria: Ašqar, 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: Ašqar, no. 2433; Tallq., no. 81; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1661, 1662, 1663.

865

ما كثر من شئ مله

mā tseter men šayyen meleh¹

"Too much of anything makes it distasteful [lit. what is much becomes tasteless]."

meleh: to be tasteless.

866

— ما كل بيضا شحمه

mā kell beežan š-ḥameh

"Not every white thing is a piece of fat."

Ident: a classical proverb: Zamak., 2, no. 1199; Mosul: Gul., p. 130.

SMDW: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 60: ما كل مدلقم جوز; Mosul: Socin, no. 397; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1117; Baum., no. 566; Mecca: Sāsi, nos. 464, 465, 466.

867

ما كل رجان يعيضك برجال وما كل من ركب المطايا يدل

mā kell rajjālen y'īzek brajjāl 'u mā kell men retsb al-meṭāya ydelli

"Not every man can be a substitute for another; and not every

¹ 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 سؤد وجهه قال أنا حداد ; Kuwait: Nūri, 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: Ašqar, 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 المحروم للظلمه (ياكله العيار)

māl al-maḥrūm laḡ-ḡalameh² (yākluh al-'ayyār)

"The wrongdoers (var. the trickster) get(s) the mean man's money."

al-maḥrūm: in Najd a miser is often called maḥrūm. The term implies that by being tight-fisted he has deprived himself of many enjoyments.

al-'ayyār: the trickster.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 103; Yemen: Goit., no. 1243; Akwa', 1, no. 813; Oman: Jayak., no. 297; Egypt: Taim., no. 2647; Littm., no. 492.

869 المال شجرة 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 لقي الحصاد يلقى المتلّس

mā lega al-ḡaṣṣād 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-ṡtalagges: act. partic. of talaggas, to glean.

871

ما لك إلا ولد يقرأ

mālk ella waladen yagra

"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.

872

ما للبراري والسَّعه مثل

mā lai-barāri was-se'eh metīl¹

"There is nothing like the wide open places." Said in disparagement of airless cities and in praise of the open countryside.

873

ما للصلاب إلا أهله

mā laṣ-ṣalāyb 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 aṣ-ṣalāyeb (it is not used apart from in this proverb) apparently means "relatives" or literally, "people who descended from ones loins (صلب)."

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 62.

SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., no. 2360; Egypt: Taim., no. 2663;

a classical proverb: M., no. 3529.

874

ما له ريح هاببه

mā luh riḥen hābbeh

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, "al-'Aṡtāl ai-'Ammiyyah," al-'Arab, 2 (1968), p. 533, no. 58.

"There is no air blowing in him," i.e., he is not likeable.

875

ما له زبده

mā luh zebdeh

"There is no butter in it." A remark made in the dairy in disparagement of thin milk. Used proverbially of idle talk.

876

ما له سدّ

mā luh sadd

"He has no lid," i.e., he does not keep a secret.

877

ما له محرث

mā luh mḥarat

"He has to be handled tactfully," i.e., he must be handled with kid gloves because he is irascible.

This metaphorical phrase is said of someone who though he may appear to be reasonable when keeping silent, does not actually know how to speak properly or to reply coolly to criticism. Cf. no. 815.

mḥarat: noun of place (اسم مكان) from ḥarat, to move sand or the like with one's finger or hand or with a small tool.¹

This verb came to mean, "to raise a subject or to approach someone about a subject." The latter meaning fits the proverbial expression given above.

878

ما له مدى

mā luh meda

"He has no distance," i.e., his endurance is short; he is hot-tempered and quickly shows his feelings.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 2446.

879

ما له مذرى

mā luh madra

"He has no [fixed] direction for winnowing." Said of one

¹ In al-Qaṣim the classical meaning of حرث, to plough, is not known except in the word الحرائث used as a variant for الفلاحه, (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: Ašqar, no. 3155; Fegh., nos. 2384, 3041; Frayha, nos. 2902, 3061; Stephan, no. 860; Cannan, JPOS, vol. 8, p. 146, انت زى ورق الخبيزه ; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 204; Amin, p. 67: زى روائع امشير كل ساعه فى حال

ما لى تيس

880

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: Ašqar, no. 4049; Frayha, nos. 617, 345; Egypt: Amīn, p. 465: لا له فى التور ولا فى الطحين

881

الما ما سمن الضفادع

al-ma mā samman az-ẓefāde³

"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.

882

الما ما يعرض على عاقل ويعافه

al-ma mā ye'raḡ 'ala 'ādẓl 'u ya'āfuh⁴

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

الما ما يغطيه النكج (النقيح)

al-ma mā ygaṭṭih an-netsiḥ (an-nedzīḥ)

"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.

an-netsiḥ: (in 'Unaizah, an-nedzīḥ): sand which gathers in a well from its newly-dug sides.

884

ما مع الما أميهات

mā ma' al-ma 'ummeehāt

"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.

SMDW: many classical proverbs: e.g., M., nos. 823, 3153, 3010; Zamak., 2, nos. 192, 240, 608, 1246; two post-classical

proverbs: Ṭāliq, no. 70; M., 1, p. 88: إذا جاء نهر الله

الدنيا هي ; Ta'ālibi, Kāṣṣul-Kāṣṣ, p. 12: بطل نهر معقل

; Yemen: Goit., no. 1410; Mosul:

Ḡul., p. 70: بحر والناس غدران ; G. Syria: Burton, no. 99;

Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 745.

885

ما ملحقو للدنيا طرف

mā malḥūgen 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.

ad-denya: the world. It is also occasionally used to mean

"money", e.g., فلان عنده دنيا, "So and so has great wealth."

886 ما من ورا عَصَّ الرِّقِيصِ غَنِيمَه

mā men wara 'eṣṣ ar-rgee'i ganīmeḥ

"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.

'eṣṣ: backbone.

ar-rgee'i: the swallow

ma men wara: very common phrase meaning, "nothing can be expected", e.g., ما من وراه خير, "no good will come out of him."

SMDW: Mosul: Socin, no. 7.

887 ما مهَّدتُه

mā mahhadannuh

"They [i.e., women] never had [the opportunity of] cradling him," i.e., he was a highly exceptional man. Cf. no. 1194.

888 ما نَبِيٍّ مِنْ خَيْرِكِ إِلَّا كَفَايَةَ شَرِّكَ

mā nabi men keerek ella kfāyat šarrek¹

"The only good we ask of you is that you keep your evil from us." Cf. no. 388.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 133.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Bakri, p. 286: لَيْتَ حَظِّي مِنْ

أَبِي كَرَبٍ سَدَّ عَنِّي خَيْرَهُ خَبْلُهُ

889 ما نَفَعَتِ الذِّيبُ ذَهَانَتَهُ

mā nfa'at ad-dīb dahānetuh

"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.

dahāneh: cleverness, craftiness.

SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1830.

¹ Also Juh., no. 2020; cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 750.

890

ماوه قريّب

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.

891

ما هنا دمّ إلا بفصد عرق

mā hna dammen ella bfaṣd 'erdz¹

"Blood cannot be drawn off [lit. no blood] except by opening a vein." Cf. no. 1004.

mā hna: there is not . . .

892

ما هنا عمر يسوى التوبه

mā hna 'emren 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.

893

مهيب الشّرهه على اللّى يزرع بالطّايه الشّرهه على اللّى يدّينه

mahīb aš-šarheh 'ala alli yazra' baṭ-ṭāyeh aš-šarheh 'ala alli ydayynuh²

"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-šarheh: blameworthiness.aṭ-ṭāyeh: house roofsSim. WM: Yemen: Goit., no. 320; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1816; Fegh., no. 750; Frayha, nos. 1937, 3935.¹ Cf. Juh., no. 2001.² Cf. ibid., no. 1934.

894 ما وطا الحمار وطاوه سابقه

mā weṭa al-ḥmār weṭāwh sāydzuh

"Whatever the donkey sets foot on, his driver [also] sets foot on."

895 ما يبي له شيخ (مطوع)

mā yabī lah šEEK (mṭawwa')

"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.

mṭawwa': religious scholar.

Sim. WM: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2264;

Dabb., 2, p. 385: ما ينقاد له غوچه قاضي

896 الماء يتبع المطامن

al-ma yatba' al-meṭāmen¹

"Water gathers in [lit. follows] low-lying ground." Said of a rich man who is mean.

meṭāmen: plur. of maṭman, 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'iqa, no. 9400; Bājūri, p. 40:

الماء ما تجرّيش الا في الواطى

897 ما يتحسّف الا راع الرديّه

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.

¹ Cf. ibid., no. 1039.

rā': rā'i: equivalent of the classical رأى, of.

ar-rediyyeh: ar-rādī'ah: misdeed.

898

ما يجيك منه القرص مثلوم

mā yejîk mnuh al-gerş matlûm

"A loaf from him has not been tampered with," i.e., he rarely makes any mistake.

899

ما يحرك الرابضه

mā yḥarrts ar-rābḏeh¹

"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: Ṭāliq., no. 465; Baghdad: Hanafi, nos. 226, 1843.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 234.

900

ما يخلى جمل بالقاع ياخذونه اهله او تاكله السباع

mā ykalla jemalen bal-gā' yākdūnuh 'ahaluh 'ō tākluh as-sbā'

"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.

901

ما يدري وش عشاوه البارج

mā 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.

902

الما يدل الخبز

al-ma ydell al-kubz

¹ 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: Çul., p. 56: العيش أيريد لوروش

903

ما يرغى

mā yargi

"He [i.e., a camel] does not roar." This phrase is used figuratively for a composed and self-possessed person who seldom complains.

yargi: (fuṣ., yargu): to roar (a camel).

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 2167.

904

ما يسوى الجربوع حطبه (جربوع ما يسوى حطبه)

mā yeswa al-jarbū' ḥṭebuh (jarbū'en mā yeswa ḥṭebuh)

"A jerboa is not worth the firewood with which it is roasted."

Cf. the English, "The game is not worth the candle."¹

905

ما يسوى ملى اذنه شعير

mā yeswa maly ednuh še'ir

"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: Nūri, 2, p. 234: ما يسوى ترس بطنه

Sim. WM: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2668;

Tik., no. 2336; Çul., p. 128 and Dabb., 2, p. 380: ما يسوى

ما يستاهلش مل ودينه نخاله; Egypt: Amīn, p. 469: ثلاث اذنو نخالى

906

ما يشد حاشى وبالبيت جمل

mā yšadd ḥāši 'u bal-beet jemał

"A young camel is not saddled if there is a [full grown] camel around [lit. in the house]."

yšadd: passive imperf. of šadd, to saddle.

¹

ODEP, p. 295.

hāši: young camel, male or female. See no. 726.

907 ما يصبر على جهلى إلا اهلى

mā yaşber 'ala jhali ella ahali¹

"Only one's [lit. my] family puts up with one's [lit. my] folly."

SMDW: two post-classical proverbs: M., 2, p. 257: ليس

لا يصبر على الخل إلا دوده

908 ما يصبر على الجور إلا الثور

mā yaşber 'ala al-jör ella at-tör

"Only an ox tolerates oppression."

NS: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2269; Dabb., 2,

p. 390; G. Syria: Aşqar, no. 3937; Fegh., no. 1943; Frayha,

no. 3297.

909 ما يطرب لمليح

mā yaṭrab l-meliḥ

"He does not rejoice at anything beautiful," i.e., he is a fastidious person who is difficult to please.

melih: beautiful, fine.

SMDW: Mecca: ما يعجبه العجب ولا الصيام فى رجب²; Baghdad:

Tik., no. 2344; G. Syria: Aşqar, no. 3939; Frayha, no. 3252;

Egypt: Taim., nos. 2678, 2683; Littm., no. 117.

910 ما يعرف الخيل إلا ركابها

mā ya'arf al-keel ella rekkābaha³

"Nobody knows horses except those who ride them."

911 ما يعرف المصدّره من المورده (الموردّه)

mā y'arf al-mşaddreh mn al-mūrdeh (al-mwarrdeh)⁴

"He does not distinguish between [the camels] which are coming from the well and those which are going towards it." Cf. no.

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 772.

² Quraiš, 94 (1961), p. 16.

³ Also Juh., no. 1939.

⁴ Cf. ibid., no. 1971.

913.

al-mṣaddreh: f. active partic. of ṣaddar, it (a water-drawing animal) went away from the well.

al-mūrdeh: f. active partic. of 'ōrd, it (a water-drawing animal) went towards the well.

Sim. WM: among the Iraq bedouins: Zafirī, no. 241.

912

ما يعرف ديك العباس

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

ما يعرف كوعه من كرسوعه

mā y'aref kū'uh men kersū'uh¹

"He does not know his wristbone from his elbow," i.e., he is grossly ignorant; he cannot distinguish anything.

al-kū': 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":²

"الكوع طرف الزند الذى يلى الإبهام، والكرسوع طرفه الذى يلى الخنصر"

Cf. nos. 911, 858, 859, 901.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 69. Iraq: Tik., no. 2349;

Weissbach, p. 681; Dabb., 2, p. 377; Ḡul., p. 128; G. Syria:

Fegh., no. 135; Frayha, no. 3324; Mecca: Sāsi, no. 419;

Egypt: Baq, p. 83.

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: Nūri, 2, p. 235: ما يدري وين ربّه حاطه فيه : p. 66: ما عنده ما عند راشده : p. 69: ما يعرف طعم حلقه and ما يعرف البيا من التّسا : Iraq: Weissbach, no. 52; Tik., nos. 2346, 2357, 2359, 1345; Dabb., 1, p. 107: ما يفرق بين : Ḡul., p. 132: طرطيس ما يعغف الجمعه من الخميس : Ḡul., p. 228: ما يعغف اش اكو بالانجيل والکچا : Zafīri, no. 242.

914

الما يغسل السّم

al-ma yaḡasl as-summ

"Water cleanses away [even] poison," i.e., water cleans even utensils in which there was poison.

915

ما يغمض على القداة

mā yḡammeḡ 'ala al-dzedāt¹

"He does not close his eye on the slightest speck," i.e., he cannot bear the least annoyance.

al-dzedāt: al-qada: the speck

SMDW: a classical proverb: 'Ask., no. 1608.

916

ما يقال لساکت وين انت غادی

mā yḡāl lsāket ween ant ḡādi²

"A silent person should not be asked 'Where are you going'"

917

ما يقدر يحك راسه

mā yḡdar yeḡekk 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: ما يطيق يحك ناسو ; G. Syria:

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 777; Juh., no. 1944.

² Cf. Juh., no. 2041.

Ašqar, no. 4327.

918

ما يقعد بالربق إلا عيال الغنم

mā yag'ed bar-rebdz eila 'yāl al-ganam¹

"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.

919

ما يقند السلطان بملكه

mā yqalld aš-ṣeltān bmelkuh²

"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."³

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 74.

920

ما ينحك له اللسان

mā yenḥakk luh al-lsān

"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.

921

ما ينساق ولا ينقاد (حمار صلب لا ينساق . . .)

mā yensāg 'u lā yengād (ḥmār ṣalab lā yensāg . . .)

"He cannot be driven, nor can he be led (var. like a donkey of Ṣalab, he cannot be . . .)." Said of an impossible person. Ṣalab: Ṣlebah (also called Ṣleeb): see nos. 270, 206. A donkey owned by the Ṣalab, 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

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 'engād, to allow oneself to be led.

Sim. WM: Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 356: ما ينركب ولا ينقاد

922 ما ينصاد نفسه

mā yensād nfesuh

"His breath cannot be captured," i.e., he is very difficult to please.

yensād: pass. imperf. of 'ensād, to be captured.

nfesuh: nafasuh

923 ما ينطال راسه

mā yenṭāl rāsuh

"His head cannot be reached," i.e., he is proud.

yenṭāl: pass. imperf. of 'enṭāl, to be reached (by a stretched-out hand, etc.).

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 298; Frayha, no. 323.

924 ما ينطح الخيل الا بنات عمه

mā yanṭaḥ al-keel ella banāt 'ammah

"Only a horse can face up to horses [lit. nothing faces up to horses except their cousins]." Cf. no. 593.

yanṭaḥ: imperf. of netah, to meet, to face up to.

925 ما ينفع الدال (الهائج) قوله ما عليك

mā yanfa' ad-dāll (al-hājj) gōlat "mā 'aleek"

"To say to a scared (fleeing) man 'Don't be afraid,' does him no good."

ad-dāll: 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.

926

ما ينقرض له سهم

mā yengerez luh saham

"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.

927

ما يوجس الجمره إلا واطيه

mā yūjs al-jamreh ella wāṭyah

"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

Sim. WM: Mecca:² ما تحرق الجمره الا رجل واطيها ; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2305; Tik., nos. 1954, 1955; Ḡul., p. 28; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 1642, 1643; Fegh., no. 1124; Frayha, no. 867; Landb., no. 187; Burton, no. 140; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 48; Egypt: Taim., no. 2923.

928

ما يوخذ عقب النذير إلا هتيم

mā yūkād 'egb an-nedīr ella Hteem

"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 Quraiš, 39 (1960), p. 16.

929

ما يولد عالم (ما ولد من الناس عالم)

mā yūlad 'ālem (mā wled mn an-nās 'ālem)

"No man is born a scholar." Cf. the English proverb, "No man is born wise."¹

SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., no. 2117.

930

مبصوط زمانه

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.

931

متى بالعمر تمرّ؟

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.

932

متى تيبس الجله ومتى ينجض العشا ومتى ينتلى بطن اليتيم عصيد

meta teebas al-jalleh, 'u meta yanjaz al-'aša, 'u meta yenteli baṭn al-yetīm 'aṣīd

"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.yanjaz: (fus. yandaj), to be well-cooked.yenteli: imperf. of 'entala (fus. 'imtala'), to be full.'aṣīd: thick paste made of flour and ghee.

¹ See Browning, no. 8455; Apperson, p. 449.

² Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 790.

متبع مدّور الطلايب

933

Mteeḥ mdawwr aṭ-ṭalāyeb

"[He is like] Mteeḥ 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.

934

مثل ابا الحصين ينحر اللي يقطر نخروره

metl 'ebal-Hṣeen yanḥar alli yaḡṭer nekrūrah

"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 شاة ابا الحصين, "[Like] the sheep of the fox." Cf. the English proverb, "Humble hearts have humble desires."²

'ebal-Hṣeen: (fuṣ. 'abal-Husain), the fox.

yanḥar: imperf. of naḥar, to go to.

nekrūr: nasal mucus (مخاط).

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1105; Gul., p. 78: صيدتو جواده; G. Syria: Burton, no. 183; Faraj, p. 349: هيدى صيدة ثعلب; Egypt: Taim., no. 1422; Baq., p. 56, no. 43: زي القراد ما يركب الا الجته الضعيفه

935

مثل ارنب العبد ترفع اذن وتطمّن اذن

metl arnab al-'abd 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-tammen: imperf. of tamman, to lower.

936

مثل اصغاه الكلاب لي تتاوين نبح

metl 'aṣḡah al-tslāb lā tetāweban nebaḥ²

"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.

Sim. WM: Iraq: Weissbach, no. 233; G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 2249.

'aṣḡah: (fus., 'aṣamm), deaf.

937

مثل الابره تمشي وتدفن جرته

metl al-ebreh tamši 'u tadfen jerretah

"[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.

938

مثل الارنب تلاقى العصا

metl al-arnab tlādzi al-'aṣa³

"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.

939

مثل الدجاجة العاطله تغسد بيضه بندروقه

metl ad-dejājt al-'āṭleh tfassed beezah bedrūḡah

¹ For the full story, see the tale "الحطى من طيب اللحم", in 'A. Juhaimān, 'Asātīr ša'biyyah min qalb jazirat al-'Arab, 2 (Beirut, 1968), p. 200.

² Cf. Juh., no. 1443; 'Ubūdi, "al-'Amtāl al-'Āmmiyyah fī Najd," al-'Arab, 3 (1969), p. 683, no. 154.

³ 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."¹

'āṭleh: 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 وانت كمثل

البقرة الصفراء تحلب وتدق الحليب ; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4162; Fegh., no. 2218; Frayha, no. 3488; Egypt: Taim., no. 1399; Littm., no. 258.

940

مثل الدجاجة التي حاصرتها البيضة ✓

metl ad-dejājt allī ḥāṣretha al-beeḏeh

"[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: زى اللي عليه بيضة ; G. Syria: Frayha, no. 1330; Stephan, no. 772.

Cf. no. 941.

941

مثل الدفّاع (الزنبور) اللي بذنبه خوصه

metl addaffā' (az-zembūr) allī bednebuḥ kūṣeh³

"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: مثل الكلب المحفوق رجله ; Ḡul., p. 89: عصفور على قلاعي ; p. 35: مثل عصفور زرزورى ينزل ; p. 139: ايرج ويجى مثل خصو الحلاج ; p. 140: مثل مكوك الحيك ; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4266; Landb., no. 112.

¹ ODEP, p. 151.

² See Alberto Socin, "Der arabische Dialekt von Mōṣul und Mārdīn," ZDMG, 37 (1883), p. 207.

³ Cf. Juh., nos. 1807, 2154.

942

مثل الديك يَدْن ولا يصَلِّي ✓

metl ad-dīts yedden wala yṣalli

"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.

943

مثل الذئب مغبوط الحشا جايح

metl ad-dīb mgabūṭ al-ḥaša jāye'¹

"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.

944

مثل الرفضة يقتلون الصحابه ويتطهرون من دمّ البعوض

metl ar-Rfezeh yaqatlūn aṣ-ṣaḥābeh we yeteṭahharūn men damm
al-ba'ūz

"Like the Rafiḍites: 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

ar-Rfezeh: (ar-Rāfiḍah): the Rafiḍites, see H. Gibb and
J. Kramers, Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam (Leiden/London,
1953), p. 466.

SMDW: two post-classical proverbs: M., 2, p. 429: يأكل الفيل

يفتى على الإبره ويبلع الجمل³; ويغتصم بالبقه

¹ Cf. ibid., no. 1798; 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 818.

² ODEP, p. 767.

³ See Quraiṣ, 10 (1960), p. 16.

Baghdad: Tik., no. 2088; Egypt: Taim., nos. 2187, 3166;

Amīn, p. 466: لسانه يسبح وقلبه يدبج

945

مثل الرّيح القصير قبل بحلق راعيه

metl ar-remḥ al-geṣīr gubalen bḥalg rā'ih

"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 tanwīn.

946

مثل العثر التي تحرت عن السكين

metl al-'anz alli ḥaret 'an as-sets-tsīn

"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-ḥaret: imperf. of ḥarat, to move sand, straw, etc; to uncover something under it. The fusha meaning of ḥarat (to plough) is rarely used. Cf. nos. 61, 951.

Sim. WM: two classical proverbs: Zamak, 2, no. 701; Bakrī, p. 359 and Ta'ālibi, Kāṣṣul-kāṣṣ, p. 14: لانتكن كما لعثر تبحت

عن المدينة

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 1020; 'Ask., no. 544.

947

مثل المبعد يقود ويخزي

metl al-Meb'ad yegūd we ykazzi

"[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 كمثل الشيطان إذ قال للإنسان اكفر فلما كفر قال إني
 "بري، منك إني أخاف الله رب العالمين"

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 Iblīs. 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: تسبيح النار وتقول يا ستار:

948

مثل المنشار يأكل بالروح والجية

metl al-mensār yākel bar-rōḥeh 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-rōḥeh: the going.

al-jayyeh: the coming.

949

مثل النخلة الموجة (نخلة عوجا) بطاطه (طبايها) بغير حوضه

metl an-nkalt al-'ōja (nkalten 'ōja) beṭāṭah (ṭubābha) bgeer ḥōḏah

"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."

beṭāṭ: (in the Jawf district ṭubāb) 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'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 304: فلان كالإبره تكسو الناس واستها عاربه

Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 232, no. 63; Yemen: Goit., nos. 662,

799; Mosul: Socin, nos. 31, 88; Gul., p. 38: بيذا المروحه

; ايسو حواسو ويبيض حواس الناس; Dabb., 1, p. 45: وتهدف للجيران

G. Syria: Fegh., no. 757; Frayha, no. 3668; Landb., no.

82; Egypt: Taim., no. 1499; Amīn, p. 65: نانت اينها يعيط

وراحت تسكت ابن الجيران.

950

مثل أم العروس فاضيه ومشغوله

metl umm al-'arūs fāzyeh 'u mašgūleh

"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.

951

مثل أم قبيس (القبيس، مقياس) تجدع روحه بالزوّ

metl umm Gbees (al-Gbees; Megbās) tajda' rūḥah baḏ-ḏaww

"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.

tajda': imperf. of jeda', to throw.

az-zaww: fire (from the fus., ad-daw', light).

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 1000; 'Ask., nos. 56,

1156; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2052; Dabb., 2,

p. 409: ايحوم حول الناع مثل طيغ; Gul., p. 33: مثل طيغ الجنّي

الجنّي; p. 139: مثل البروانه تحشل نفسا عالناع; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4239; Stephan, no. 910.

952

مثل باب الكعبه ما يفتحه الا ابو شيبه

metel bāb al-Ka'beh mā yafteḥuh ella Ebu Šeebeh

"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 Seebeh: (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. Jamīl, op. cit., p. 9.

953 مثل رضاح العبس يوم بقى عليه عبسه لافه (يوم بقى وحده خلاه)

metel razzāḥ al-'abas yōm bega 'aleeh 'beseh lāfah (yōm bega waḥdeh kallāh)

"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.

razzāḥ: one who breaks something (e.g. date-stones) with a stone, hammer, etc. From the verb rezah.

al-'abas: date-stones, the sing. is 'beseh. They are also called fesam (plur. of fsemeḥ) by bedouins and in southern Najd.

yōm: when.

lāf: to throw away.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: Ḍabbi, p. 82: كالطاحنه .

Ḍabbi comments: "رغموا أن أناسا من العرب كان لهم في مملكتهم شدة فكلّفوا أمة

لهم طحيناً أوعدوها إن لم تفرغ منه ضربوها فطحنته حتى إذا لم يبق إلا ما لا يبال به ضجرت

" : فاخترت حتى قتلت نفسها " Ask., no. 145.

954 مثل زين مرة العمى

metel zeen mert al-'ama

"Like the beauty of a blind man's wife [never appreciated by him]."

zeen: beauty

mert: merēh (imra'ah): wife, woman

al-'ama: (al-'a'mā) the blind man

955 مثل سيل التبن تحسبه ورا وهو قدام

metel seel at-teben taḥasbuh wara we hu dzeddām

"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.

956

مثل ضو الخوص

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.

957

مثل كلاب الرميّة كلّ راح مع وادي

metel t̄slāb ar-ramyeh kellen rāḥ ma' wādi

"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.

958

مثل لحمة البقره (لحمه بقره) ما تنقض الوضو

metl lḥamt al-bgereh (lḥamat bgereh) mā tangḻ al-weḻu

"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.

959

مثل مرة العمى قبل مليومته

metel mert al-'ama gubalen malyūneh

"[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.

gubalen: gubal: always: see no. 945.

malyūneh: (fus: malūmah) obj. partic. of lāma, to blame.

960

مثل يبيس ابو تلال حسافة على الاكل

meṭel yebīs 'Ebu Tallāl ḥsāfeten 'ala al-atṣel

"Like the dry dates of Ebu Tallāl: They are too good to be eaten."

yebīs: a type of hard dry dates, one of the best types of dates.

Ebu Tallāl: 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.

ḥsāfeh: something whose loss causes regret. From ḥasaf, taḥassaf, he felt sorry (see no. 897 above).

961

مجري نغميش لا يدخل ولا يطلع

mejra Ngeemeš lā yadkel 'u lā yaṭla'

"[Like] the door-latch of Ngeemeš: 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: Ašqaṣ, no. 4201.

962

المحترى شبعان

al-meḥteri šab'ān

"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-meḥteri: the waiting; active part. of 'ehtara, to wait for.

963

محرات النار

meḥrāt an-nār

"[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.

964

مخروق كَفّ

mkarūg tsaff

"There is a hole in his hand [lit. of a pierced hand]." Said of an openhanded generous person.

965

مخزيتة ذنوبه

mkazzyetuh dnūbuh¹

"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 (تاء التانيث) plus the 3rd person masc. sing. suffix -'uh. 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 أنا عازبه "I have invited him"; أنت عارفن , "You have known me."

966

المداري ما ياوي

al-mdāwi mā yāwi

"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.

967

مدبر بالدار أخير من حدار

mdabbren bad-dār 'akeer men ḥaddār²

"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.

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, "al-'Amṭāl as 'Ānmiyya fī Najd," al-'Arab, 2 (1968), p. 533, no. 57.

² Cf. Juh., no. 2227.

haddār: one who comes with al-hadreh (الحدرة), "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: التدبير نصف
 ; Ta'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 198: التقدير في المعيشة نصف الكسب ; المعيشة
Mecca: Sāsi, nos. 220, 428; Yemen: Goit., no. 446; Akwa',
 1, nos. 1055, 1056, 1057; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1501; Iraq
 (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., nos. 603, 952, 2375; Ğul., p.
 134: ماى ; Dabb., 2, p. 391: من دبر ما جاع ومن فقح ما تشلح ;
 البير بالتدبير ; Egypt: and 1, p. 71: الديبر ما جاع والرّقع ما عرى ;
 Fā'iqa, nos. 1364, 1862.

968

مدور قعود جدته

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.

ge'ūd: young male camel.

969

المرجله حبله طويل ومدود وولد الردى تقصر عن الما حباله

al-marjleh ḥablah ṭewīlen 'u mamdūd, 'u weld ar-redi tagṣer
 'an al-ma ḥbāleh

"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: (fuṣ., rujūlah) manliness.

weld: walad: son.

ar-redi: ar-radī'

970

المرء فى بيته لا يكرم ولا يهان

al-mar'u fī baytihi lā yukram walā yuhān

"A man should not be met reverentially nor belittled in his

own home," i.e., a host should not be treated in either of these extreme ways.

971 مرّ (درب، طريق) الكلب على القصاب

maradd (darb, ṭerīdz) al-tsalb 'ala al-gaṣṣāb¹

"The dog will return (var. the dog's way leads) to the butcher."

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, pp. 107, 203; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 783; Tik., no. 961; Dabb., 1, p. 192; Ḡul., p. 65.

SMDW: two post-classical proverbs: M., 1, p. 230: الحبة تدور

طريق الحافى على أصحاب النّعال وطريق: p. 442; والى الرّحى ترجع

طريق الحافى على أصحاب النّعال وطريق: Tāliq., no. 306; Iraq (Baghdad and

Mosul): Hanafi, no. 612; Tik., no. 771; Ḡul., p. 56: الحبابى

ولا بد من تجى الحبابى اتم الرّحى: Dabb., p. 35; وتفلى وتقع باثم الفحا

G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 1732, Fegh., no. 2033; Baum., nos. 55,

56; Tallq., no. 46; Landb., no. 179; Singer, no. 126;

Egypt: Taim., nos. 1976, 2282, 2742; Burck., no. 122; Amīn,

p. 322: يعاود الأقرع يفوت على بيع الطواقى

972 المرسال ما يوضع له راس

al-mersāl mā yūẓa' luh rās

"A messenger should not be beheaded." Cf. the English proverb,

"Messengers should neither be headed nor hanged."²

Sim. WM: Egypt: Taim., no. 2723.

973 المرزعه مهيب مثل الام

al-merẓ'eh mahīb meṭl al-umm

"A wet-nurse is not the same as a mother."

mahīb: ما هى ب

974 مرّ على برد ومرّ سموم، ولا يذرى البردان كثر الهدوم

marren 'ala barden 'u marren semūmi 'u lā yedri al-bardān

keṭr al-hdūmi

¹ Also ibid., nos. 829, 2238; 'Ubūdi, 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 tanwīn: sometimes.

semūm: (samūm): name of a hot wind which sometimes blows in Arabia.

ketr: verbal noun, equivalent of katrat

al-hdūm: plural of hedem, clothes.

975

مرة شينه وعشا شوي

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 tanwīn.

976

مرهف النطاقه

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 (yanteg)): the colloquial word for نافقاه اليربوع, 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.

977

مزج بزح

marzhen brazh

"[It is] joking mixed with serious talk."

Sim. MDW: a post-classical proverb: M.,¹, p. 318: ربّ مزج في غوره جدّ

978

المزج قرصة ملح

al-mazh graḥat melh

"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.

979

مسعود بعين أمه غزال

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, Najdīs 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'ālībi, Tamtīl, p. 379: قالت الخنساء: لأما ما أمر بأحد إلا يزق علي قالت من حسنك تعوذ يسين; G. Syria: Fegh., nos. 893, 3030; Ašqar, nos. 462, 1950; Baum., nos. 68, 449; Stephan, nos. 737, 896, 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. 178; Iraq: Hanafi, no. 965; Tik., no. 1189; Dal., 1, no. 583; Dabb., 1, p. 148; Gul., 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.

980

مسها لئن والس بانياه

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 Ṭālib's saying:¹ الدنيا كالحية لئن
مسها والتسم الناقع في أنيابها ; cf. nos. 668, 986, 1188.

SMDW: four classical proverbs: M., nos. 746, 1387, 3580;

'Ask., no. 79; Bakri, p. 107: والذئب يكتنى ابا جمعه; Mecca:

Hurg., no. 57; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4175; Baghdad: Tik., nos. 880, 1169.

981 مشى على العزيز يوم ولا على المذله ألف عام

mašyen 'ala al-'ezz yōm wala 'ala al-medalleh alf 'ām

"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

Sim. WM: Egypt: Taim., no. 2007.

982 المشى ولا خبيث المراكب

al-maši wala kabīt al-marātseb

"Walking is better than a bad conveyance."

983 مصر ما عمر بمره

mašer mā 'mer bmarreh³

"Egypt was not built all at once." Cf. the proverb, "Rome was not built in a day."⁴

'mer: pass perf. of 'amar, to build.

NS: Baghdad: Tik., no. 2152; Hanafi, 2, p. 252.

SMDW: Egypt: Baq., p. 339: الدنيا ما انخلقتش في يوم

984 مصر يعمر الدنيا ولا تعمره

mašer ya'amr ad-denya wala ta'amruh

"Egypt builds the world and the world does not build it."

¹ See 'Ibn 'Abī 'Aun, Kitāb at-Tašbihāt, ed. M.A. Khan (London, 1950), p. 316.

² ODEP, p. 52.

³ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 816.

⁴ ODEP, p. 683.

Said in praise of Egypt.

985

مُضْحِي هَلَّ الْعَيُونِ

mṣaḥḥa hal al-'Yūn¹

"[Like] the gathering of the people of al-'Yūn (al-'Uyūn) in the forenoon." Said of people who, having nothing to eat, pass the time talking and telling tales to each other.

mṣaḥḥa: (fuṣ., mudaḥḥa) 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 (الضحى) for a meal.

hal: 'ahl

al-'Yūn: (fuṣ., al-'Uyūn plur of 'ayn) this is understood to be 'Yūn al-Jwa ('Uyūn 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.

986

مَطْوَعٌ بِالْخَفَا وَإِنْ شَافَ شَيْئًا لَمْ يَنْقُلْهُ وَإِنْ قِيلَ هَذَا حَرَامٌ رَاحَ يَخْتَسِمُهُ

mṭawa'en bal-kafa wen šāf šen laššuh wen dzīl hāda ḥarāmen
rāḥ yektaššuh²

"[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.

laššuh: he ate it. lašš 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 لسان يسج وقلب يذبح

Littm., nos. 300, 329.

987

مع الخيل يا شقرا

ma' al-keel ya Šagra

"[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.

988

معايد القرينين

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 'āyad, to go to see others on a feast day and give them felicitations. The man to which this phrase refers, supposedly attended the 'id 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.

989

معلق برطب

me'eldzen 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.

990

معلق عباته بالكره

m'alledz 'abātuh bal-krubeh¹

"[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.

991

معها سقاها وحذاها

ma'ha siqāha wa ḥidāha

"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 ḥadīth:²

قال كيف ترى في ضالة الخنم قال صلى الله عليه وسلم: "خذها فإنما هي لك أو لأخيك أو للذئب" ثم قال: كيف ترى في ضالة الإبل؟ قال: فقال: "دعها فإن معها حذاءها وسقاءها ترد الماء وتأكل الشجر حتى يجدها ربها"

992

المفصولة ما به لبن (ما تحلب)

al-mḡaṣūbeh mā bah leban (mā t-ḥaleb)³ ✓

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 817; Juh., no. 2254.

² See Bukāri, op. cit.

³ Also 'Ubūdi, 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:

والمدقع ما يهوش G. Syria: Frayha, no. 2992; Egypt: Taim., nos. 2055, 2441.

993

المغنيات الخيل والمال النخل

al-megenyāt al-keel wal-māl an-naḳal

"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. 31.

994

المقدى ما يبى المقدى

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-murnjat, the enriching ones.

meaning of al-mdzaddi may be, the proverb is used of occupational rivalry or *jealousie de métier*.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 112: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2501; Tik., no. 2881; Ğul., p. 30; Dabb.,¹p.93. SMDW: M., 2, p. 129 and Ta'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 170: ¹ القاص لا يحب القاص; Mecca:² شحات يكره شحات وراعى البيت يكره الجميع²; Yemen: Goit., no. 1093; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, nos. 386, 1215; Tik., no. 1403; Ğul., p. 15: اسكاني ميحب منقل; G. Syria: Fegh., nos. 1602, 1799; Manch. MS, fol. 59: شحار ميحب صاحب مخلايه; Egypt: Taim., no. 1648; Burck., no. 233; Fā'iqa, no. 233.

995

مقرن شوش

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 šūšeh, the long hair of the head.

996

ملك الموت يموت

malak al-mōt yemūt³

"The angel of death [also] dies." Said of someone who maltreats or troubles other people, and ends by being troubled himself.

997

من احتال اکتال ومن دور لقي

men ehtāl etstāl 'u men dawwar lega⁴

"He who endeavours [e.g., to find grain], will weigh [it], and

¹ See also 'Alī b. Muḥammad at-Tawhīdi, 'Aklāqul-Wazīrain, ed. Muḥammad b. Tāwīt at-Ṭanjī (Rabat, 1965), p. 517.

² See Qurais, 70, p. 16. (This proverb is recorded by Ḥuṣain Aḥmad Sāwli.)

³ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 826.

⁴ Cf. Juh., no. 2381.

he who searches [for something], will find [it]."

dawwar: to look for, to search.

lega: (fuṣ., laqiya) to find.

Sim. WM: Mecca: Sāsi, 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.

998

من اصله كلب نبيح

mn aṣluḥ ṭsalben nebaḥ

"He who is a dog by origin, will bark."

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 475; Stephan, no. 463; Fegh., no. 1969; Egypt: Fā'iqah, no. 1686; Taim., no. 664.

SMDW: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1969.

999

من أكل حمير الناس يزوزي بالقرب

mn akal ḥmayyr an-nās yzōzi bal-grab¹

"He who devours the people's donkey will have to carry the water-skins [himself]." Cf. no. 846. 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 ḥmār, donkey.

yzōzi: imperf. of zōza: to walk with short steps under a load.

al-grab: plur. of dzerbeh (fuṣ., qirbah), water-skin.

NS: G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 547; Fegh., no. 2272.

1000

من أكل نفع نفسه

mn akal nefa' nafsuh

"He who eats, does himself good."

Sim. WM: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 269; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 43,

¹ Cf. ibid., no. 2277.

no. 93; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2667; Tik., no. 2597; Dabb., 1, p. 89; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 86; Frayha, no. 442; Baum., no. 133; Egypt: Taim., no. 276.

1001

من انصح بارض ورثه

mn anṣaḥ ba(a)rṣen warṭaḥ

"Whoever treats land well [e.g., farming it well], will inherit it."

'anṣaḥ: to try to do something to the best of one's ability.

warṭaḥ: waritahā, he inherited it.

1002

من اوفى دينه نامت عينه

mn 'ōfa deenuh nāmat 'eenuh

"He who repays his debt, sleeps soundly [lit., his eye sleeps]."

NS: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2200.

Sim. WM: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 1143; Dabb., 2, p. 520; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 1858.

1003

من باق حلف

men bāg ḥalaf

"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: Nūri, 2, p. 239.

SMDW: G. Syria: Aṣqar, no. 3279; Frayha, nos. 2702, 2703; Egypt: Taim., nos. 2176, 2178; Littm., no. 302.

1004

من بغى الدح ما قال اح

men бага ad-daḥḥ mā gāl aḥḥ¹

"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-daḥḥ: 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'iqā, no. 1906.

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Burton, no. 149.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: 'Ask., no. 1648; M., nos. 543, 4016; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 532; Frayha, no. 387; Egypt: Fā'iqā, no. 1738.

1005 من بغا (و)ه كله خلا (و)ه كله

men baḡā(w)h kelluh kallā(w)h kelluh³

"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-ṭayyeh" (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: "lō 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: Nūri, 2, p. 77.

NS: G. Syria: Baum., no. 577; Ašqar, no. 4046.

Sim. WM: a post-classical proverb: 'Ask., 2, p. 190 and Ta'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 44: من طمع في الكّل فاته الكّل ; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2666; Socin, no. 359; Dabb., 1, p. 86; Ğul., p. 97; Yemen: Goit., no. 1191; Egypt: Taim., no. 3120.

1006

من تجر بمال الرجال أفقره

men tejar bmāl ar-rjāl afgarōh

"He who becomes rich through the wealth of others, will be made poor by them."

tejar: to become rich.

1007

من تطتّر بضمع اليد ضلع بالرجل قبل الصبح

men teṭannaz bḡal' al-yad ḡala' bar-rejel gabl aṣ-ṣebḡ

"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: Nūri, 2, p. 92: من عيب ابتلى ;

Baghdad: Tik., no. 1792; Egypt: Taim., nos. 272; 2846.

1008

من جاد قعده ما خاب ضاويه

men jād g'aduh mā kāb ḡāwīh

"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 ga'ad when not suffixed), lit. those with whom one sits, i.e., companions, friends.

ḡāwī: act. part. of ḡawa, to arrive (especially as a guest or on an errand); ḡāwīh is literally, "the one who arrives

¹ ODEP, p. 9.

with a message from him."

1009

من جا على غير دعوى قعد على غير فراش

men ja 'ala geer d'awa ga'ad 'ala geer frāš¹

"He who comes uninvited, sits without a mat."

Cf. the English proverbs, "An unbidden guest must bring his stool with him"² 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: اليحيى بلا عزيبي يقعد بلا بساط;

G. Syria: Fegh., no. 1577; Frayha, no. 4168; Egypt: Baq.,

p. 47: اللى بييجى من غير دعوه يقعدع الارض: 47

1010

من جا عند الذنب يصبر على ما جا (و)ه ✓

men ja 'end ad-danab yašber 'ala mā jāwh

"He who sits near the backside, must suffer the outcome [lit., whatever comes to him]." Cf. the English proverb, "He that touches pitch shall be defiled."⁴

SMDW: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 274; Yemen: Goit., no. 119; Oman:

Reinhardt, no. 143; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 96: من قعد عند الحداد;

Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, nos. 1759,

2796; Tik., no. 2676; Dabb., 1, p. 90: اليلعب مع البرزوى يتحمل;

G. Syria: Ašqar, nos. 596, 664; Fegh., no. 2937;

Tallq., no. 21; Stephan, no. 418; Baum., no. 142; Frayha,

no. 393; Egypt: Taim., nos. 509, 512, 514; Littm., no. 428.

1011

من جالس الجربى على الحول يطللى (من دانس الجربى جرب) ✓

men jālas al-jarba 'ala al-ḥōl yeṭlla (men dānas al-jarba jreb)

"He who sits with scabrous people, will have to be smeared with pitch soon [lit., within a year]," i.e., he himself will

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 annoint.

jreb: pass., "was afflicted by mange or scabies".

Sim. WM: Lebanon: Frayha, no. 2314.

SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 432; Egypt: Taim., no. 1839.

1012

من جرف لدحديرا

men jerfen ldeḥdeera

"From an incline to a slope," i.e., from one bad thing to another.

deḥdeera: a slope.

Ident.: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 438.

Sim. WM: Egypt: Taim., nos. 1798, 2839; Littm., no. 53.

1013

من حج فرضه يقضب ارضه

men ḥajj farḥuh yaḡḡub arḥuh

"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.

yaḡḡub arḥuh: lit., "he holds his ground." An idiom which means "he should stay where he is."

1014

من حرم الادب حرم الخير

men ḥerm al-edab ḥerm al-keer

"He who is deprived of good manners, is deprived of the best thing."

herm: (in pause pronounced hrem) pass. perf. of haram, to deprive of.

1015

من حشّ عليك رَوّ عليه

men ḥašš '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."¹

ḥašš: (perf.) This refers to a common practice in Najd. In a good year with plenty of grass (ḥašīš) 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.

1016

من حقر صيدته ما انجزه

men ḥagar ṣeedetuh mā(a)njeḥah

"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.

1017

من حكى لك حكى فيك

men ḥatsā lek ḥatsa fīk

1

Ibid., no. 614.

"Who chatters to you, will chatter of you."¹ This proverb is apparently a slightly modified quotation of a dictum of aš-Šarīf Mḥammad b. 'Awn:²

تحرّز بسو الظنّ، وابصر بحالك واحذر جلس ضايح الرأى يغويك

من سو طبعه، إن حكى بك حكى لك، يرضى عدوك بالتّميمه ويرضيك

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 878.

SMDW: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 673; Manch. MS, fol. 97;

Egypt: Taim., no. 597; Fā'iqa, no. 2371.

1018

من خلى عشا (و)ه أصبح يلقا (و)ه

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: Nūri, 2, p. 78; Yemen: Goit., no. 1170.

Sim. WM: Mecca:⁴ من وفر غداه لعشاه التقاه ; Egypt: Taim., no. 2883; Fā'iqa, no. 2311.

1019

من دخل مصر بلاش طلع منه بلاش

men daḡal Mašr blaš ṭala' mnaḥ blaš

"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.

blaš: bilā šay'.

1020

من دليه البوم ضاع

men delīluh al-būm ḡā'

¹ This translation is itself an English proverb. Cf. ibid., p. 116.

² See 'A. az-Zāmil, op. cit., p. 105.

³ ODEP, p. 700

⁴ See Quraiš, 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:² من دليله اليوم مأواه الخراب; Mosul: Socin, no. 152; G. Syria: Stephan, no. 736; Ašqar, no. 411;

Egypt: Taim., no. 49; Fā'iqa, no. 311; Burck., no. 65.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 130: قد ضلّ من كانت العميان تهديه; Iraq (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. 22; Baum., no. 60; Huxley, no. 78; Frayha, no. 3174; Stephan, nos. 773, 824; Egypt: Taim., no. 108.

1021 من ذا سليقه ومن ذا نويقه

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 ذقنا فهو عازرنا

men dāg mā degna fehu 'āderna

"He who tastes [i.e., experiences] what we have tasted, will excuse us."

SMDW: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1407.

1023 من ذكرك ما حقرك

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:

من افترنى ما حقرنى ; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1648; Singer, no. 44;
Burton, no. 173.

1024 من رافق المصلين صلى ومن رافق الموليين ولى

men rāfaḡ al-mṣallīn ṣalla 'u men rāfaḡ al-mwallīn walla¹

"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.

1025 من رد ما كنه شرد

men radd mā ṭsennuh šarad²

"If a man returns it is as though he did not run away."

ṭsennuh: ka'annahu.

šarad: to escape.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 86; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4539.

1026 من رقع الدنيا تبذه فتوقه

men ragga' ad-denya tebedduh ftūḡah

"The man who tries to darn this world's [rents] will find the holes give him much trouble."

1027 من شاف ما يعاف فارق ما يحب

men šāf mā ya'āf fārag mā yḡebb

"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.

1028 من شاور ما عطى

men šāwar mā 'aṭa

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".

1029

من شبَّ على شيءٍ شابَّ عليه ✓

men šabb 'ala šayyen šāb 'aleeh¹

"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.

1030

من صار له عادة ما خلاها

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 ✓

1031

من طلبك ما عذرك

men ṭalabk mā 'aḍark

"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.

SMDW: two post-classical proverbs: M., 1, p. 417: صاحب الحاجة

صاحب الحاجة أبله لا يرى الرشد: Ta'alibi, Tamīl, p. 466: أعمى

; صاحب الحاجة أعمى: Mosul: Gul., p. 79: إلا في قضائها

Egypt: Burck., no. 378.

1032

من طول الغيبات جاب الغنایم

men ṭawwal al-geebāt jāb al-ganāyem

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 861.

² ODEP, p. 907.

³ Ibid., p. 162.

"He who tarries long, shall bring rich booty."

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 89; Iraq (among the Bedouin): Jamīl, p. 15.

NS: Lebanon: Frayha, no. 3841.

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1339; Dabb., 1, p. 90: اليغيب يجيب واليبقى يخبى; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 879; Fegh., no. 1217; Egypt: Taim., no. 611.

1033 من عادكم يا عم ما عاداه العيد عسا (و)ه ينقل مطحنه فى ذراعاه

men 'ādekum yā 'amm mā 'āduh al-'īd 'asāwh yangel meṭṭhanuh
fī drā'uh

"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.
meṭ-han: small basket, made of palm-leaves. Used mainly for fresh dates.

1034 من عاش حيله مات فقر

men 'āš ḥīleh māt fager

"He who lives by cunning, dies poor."

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 90; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1770; Tik., no. 2704; Ḡul., p. 36; Dabb., 1, p. 90. Sim. WM: Yemen: Goit., no. 1176.

1035 من عدلك يا ابن برجس

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 من عنا إلينا وجب حقه علينا

men 'ana 'eleena wejab ḥagguh '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 من عنده أنثى وذكر حمد ربّه وشكر

men 'enduh enta 'u dekar 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 من عني يمشى مسلم عشي كافرين

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 من عين الزبده على شارب الذئب

men 'ayyan az-zebdeh 'ala šārb ad-dīk?¹

"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-dīk: the dog (originally the male hyena).² The word is rarely used in its literal meaning, but often metaphorically of a person whom the speaker considers bad.

1040 من عين فارة بذنبه خيط

men 'ayyan fāreten bednebah keet?

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.

1041

من قرصته الحية جفل (خاف) من الحبل ✓

men greṣtuh al-ḥayyeh jefal (kāf) mn al-ḥabel¹

"He that has been bitten by a serpent, is afraid of a rope."²

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 اللّی یقرصه الحنش یخاف من الحبل ; Iraq: Weissbach, no. 86; Hanafi, no. 1637; Tik., no. 2187; Socin, no. 172;

Dabb., 2, p. 360; Ḡul., p. 45; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 91;

G. Syria: Fegh., no. 550; Ašqar, no. 4383; Stephan, no.

883; Baum., no. 171; Frayha, no. 3726; Egypt: Fā'iqa, no. 1822; Taim., no. 2769.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb of several variations: M., no. 4132; Ṭāliq., no. 506; Zamak., 2, no. 1323; Ta'ālibi, Tamtil, p. 377: من نهشته الحية and من لسعه الأرقش يخشى الرشاء الأبرش ; حذر الرسن ; Mosul: Socin, no. 461.

1042

من كمه للرحى

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.

¹ Also Juh., no. 2319.

² This translation is itself an English proverb. See ODEP, p. 62.

³ Ouraiš, 42 (1960), p. 16. The proverb is recorded by Šākir Sulaimān aš-Šukūri.

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 الجدم للزردم

1043 من لا يتشرك لا تنطيه (لا تباديه بالشور)

men lā yestešīrek lā tenṭih (lā tbādih ba-š-šōr)

"Do not give advice [lit. do not give him; var. do not begin and offer advice] to one who does not consult you."

tenṭi: imperf. of 'anta, to give. The ن replaces the ع in this word. However, it is rarely used in normal speech except in the northernmost parts of Najd.

šōr: advice, opinion.

SMDW: Oman: Jayak., no. 59.

1044 من لقي اخير من اهله بات

men lega akeer mn ahaluh bāt¹

"Whoever finds a family better than his own, spends the night [with them]."

NS: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2270; Ğul., p. 172; Dabb., 1, p. 86.

1045 من له حظ لا بدّه لاقيه

men luh ḥaẓẓ lābedduh lādẓih

"Whoever has a destiny, is bound to meet it."

1046 من له حيله فليحتال (اللى له حيله يحتال)

men luh ḥīleh falyaḥtāl (alli luh ḥīleh yeḥtāl)²

"Whoever has an expedient, let him use it."

Sim. WM: a classical proverb: Lisān, 11, p. 186: من كان ذا

حيلة تحول

1047 من له عتر فيفزع

men luh 'anz fyafza³

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]."

1048 من مَصَّ اللَّيْمُونَ عَرَفَ طَعْمَهُ

men maṣṣ al-leemūn 'erf t'amuh

"He who sucks lemons, knows their taste."

1049 من هُونِ الدِّيبِ يَقْرَدُ ؟

men hūn ad-dīb ygarrad?

"Is the wolf so docile as to have its ticks picked?" Said metaphorically of a hard person.

hūn: ease, docility.

ygarrad: imperf. pass. of garrad, to pick ticks off an animal's skin.

1050 مَنِيحَةٌ لِيَلِهِ مَا تَطْرُدُ عَلَيْهِ

menīḥat leeleh mā taṭred 'eemeh

"The thirst for milk is not assuaged by having milk for one day."

menīḥat (in pause pronounced menīḥeh): 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): Ẓafīri, no. 240.

SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 218.

1051 من يَقُولُ لِلغُولِ عَيْنُكَ حَمْرًا ؟

men yegūl lal-gūl 'eenek ḥamra'?

"Who can say to an ogre, 'Your eye is red'?"

NS: Mecca: Quraiš, 46, p. 16; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1033, 2909.

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2203; Tik., nos. 2184, 2280; Socin, no. 6; Gul., p. 133 and Dabb., 2, p. 431; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 5415; Egypt: Taim., no. 1615.

1052

المهدى مغدى

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 'agda, to lose.

1053

الموت مع الجماعة رحمة

al-mōt ma' al-jemā'eh reh¹meh

"Death with one's own people is a mercy."

Ident.: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 461.

NS: G. Syria: Singer, no. 50; Tarjamān, p. 133.

Sim. WM: a post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 329.

SMDW: Iraq (Basra and Mosul): Dal., 1, no. 587; Ġul.,

p. 55: المقتول مع ربه ما مقتول; Dabb., 2, p. 427: حشر مع الناس عيد

1054

الموت كأس على كل الناس

al-mōt kāsēn 'ala kell an-nās

"Death is a cup given to all people."

1055

مؤلم العصابه قبل الفلقة

mwallmen al-'šābeh gabl al-falgeh

"He is preparing the bandage before he has been wounded."

Cf. the **English** proverb, "To cry out before one is hurt."²

mwallem: act. part. of wallam, to prepare, to make ready.

falgeh: head wound

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 163, no. 12.

1056

الناس مثل التمل ما يجي إلا على الدسم

an-nās meṭl an-namel mā 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,

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 901.

² ODEP, p. 158.

"Rich folk have many friends."

SMDW: a classical or post-classical proverb: M., no. 168;

Mosul: Socin, no. 207; Gul., p. 67: الذبيني ما تجي إلا عا لحلا

G. Syria: Frayha, no. 4210.

1057

النّاس مدافن شوك

an-nās medāfen šok

"People are [like] places where thorns are buried," i.e., one does not discover their bad qualities at first.

1058

ناقعة عريمان: إن ثارت نارت، وإن نرخت ما ثارت

nāgt 'Areemān: 'en tārat nārat we en nawwakat mā tārat

"[Like] the camel of 'Areemān: if she gets up she bolts and if she has knelt down she will not get up." 'Areemān (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).

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 124.

1059

نام من نام، وسرى من سرى، وعند الصابيح يتحدّ القوم السرى

nām men nām 'u sara men sara 'u 'end al-meṣābiḥ ytaḥammad al-gōm 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

¹ Ibid., p. 674.

proverb: عند الصّباح يحد القوم السرى, see M., no. 2382; 'Ask., no. 1189; and Zamak., 2, no. 570.

1060

نبت براسه نخله

nebt brāsuh nkaleh

"A palm-tree grew out of his head," i.e., he became extremely angry.

1061

نبحه وبر

nabḥat waber

"[Like] the barking of a hyrax," i.e., once. It is said that a hyrax barks once before he dies.

1062

نبي نداويه واعميناه

nabi ndāwyah wa (a)'meenāh¹

"We wanted to cure it [i.e., an eye] but we blinded it [instead]."

Sim. WM: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 173; Iraq: Hanafi, no. 535; Tik., no. 670; Yahuda, no. 15; Socin, no. 123; Dal., 1, no. 448; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2286; Tarjamān, p. 139; Manch. MS, fol. 38; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1157; Egypt: Taim., no. 941; Littm., nos. 202, 203.

1063

نجد يكتفى عذاها عن غذاها

Najd yakfi 'adāha 'an gdāha

"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 Meḥda al-Habdāni:² نجد يعزى عن غذاها عذاها, or the poet quoted the already common proverb but changed its text.

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 240.

² See Muhammad as-Sudairi, 'Abṭālun min as-Sahra', 1 (Beirut, 1968), p. 218.

1064

نخر بالرماد

nakar bar-remād

"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.

1065

التخل أكرم من أهله

an-naḡal akram mn ahaluh

"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.

1066

نسدّ نغب ويطيح ثلم

nesedd nagb 'u yeṭiḥ ṭelīm

"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.

ṭelīm: a low wall with a part or parts of it fallen.

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Ta'ālibi, Tamṭil, p. 439:

Iraq: مثل الاحمق كالتوب الخلق إن رفأته من جانب تخرق من جانب

Weissbach, no. 9; Hanafi, no. 2343.

1067

نصف الحرب مزاح

neṣf al-ḡarb mzāḥ¹

"Half of the war is a joke." Even in war-time, people do not take everything seriously.

1068

نصف المال نظره

neṣf al-māl naḡreh

"Half [the value] of belongings is how they look." An attractive appearance is an important element in the value of something.

¹ Cf. Juh., no. 2243.

نصف عقلك مع خويك

1069

neṣf 'aglek ma' kawiiyek

"Half of your intellect lies with your companion," i.e., two heads are better than one.

kawiiy: companion.

1070

نط اطويق

naṭṭ (e)ṭweedz

"He leapt [to the top of] ṭweedz," i.e., he categorically denied the charge.

ṭweedz: (ṭwaiq) the well-known range of mountains in southern Najd.

Some people refer to a man's denial simply by saying "ṭweedz" which is a reference to this proverbial idiom.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 216.

1071

نعدّ الليالي والليالي تعدنا والعمر يفنى والليالي بزايد

ne'edd al-layāli wal-layāli te'eddena wal-'emur yafna wal-layāli bzāyed¹

"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; Ğul., p. 148; Egypt: Baq., p. 21.

1072

نعمتان مجهولتان الصّحة في الأبدان والأمن في الأوطان

ne'matān majhūlatān aṣ-ṣeḥḥatu fil-'abdān wal-'amnu fil-'awṭān

"Health in body and security in one's homeland are two undervalued boons." This proverb is a quotation (with modification) of the ḥadīṭ:² نعمتان مغبوط فيهما كثير من الناس الصّحة والفراغ

¹ This is composed by Rāšid al-Kalāwi the famous Najdi poet. See 'Abdallah b. Kamīs, op. cit., p. 297, and Šafīq al-Kamāli, aš-Ši'r 'ind al-Badw (Baghdad, 1964), p. 375.

² See Ta'ālibi, Bardūl-'Akbād fil-'A'dād (Constantinople, 1301 A.H.), p. 104.

NS: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2361; Tik., no. 2438.

1073

النفس أرحم من الوالدين

an-nafs arḥam mn al-wāldeen¹

"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.

1074

النفس ما له ردم

an-nafs mā 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.

1075

النفس مهيب حiale

an-nafs mahīb hyāleh

"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.

hyāleh: 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 حiale, whether fallow or not.

¹

Cf. Juh., no. 2458.

1076

نفسه نفس طير

nafsuh nafs ʔeer

"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.

1077

نقل الماء على الماء حزامه (حزامه)

nagl al-ma 'ala al-ma ḥazābeh (ḥazāmeḥ)

"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.

ḥazābeh or ḥazāmeḥ: 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 تصبّ ماءً حتى تجد ماءً

1078

نكس بریح عفته

nekas briḥen '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.

1079

النملة لو ريشت ماتت

an-namleh lā rayyešat mātāt

"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 rayyaš (he grew wings) figuratively to mean "he became debauched."

Sim. WM: a post-classical proverb: M., 1, p. 88; Ṭāliq., no. 62; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 174; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 297; Iraq (Baghdad and Basrah): Hanafi, no. 2376; Tik., no. 2447; Dal., 1, no. 194; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 3024; Egypt: Burck., no. 11; Fā'iqah, no. 706.

1080 النوم للهلباج والكلب والنسا ما يهتني بالنوم سرحان ذيب
an-nōm lal-helbāj wal-tsalb wan-nsa mā yehteni ban-nōm
serḥān dībi

"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 النوم للهلباج والنسا (Sleep is for the idiotic and women).

helbāj: (fus., hilbajah) idiotic.¹ Not used except in this saying.

1081 هاضلة عنزه
hāzleten 'anzuh²

"His goat has returned," i.e., at the moment he is in a bad mood.

hāzleten: (hāzleh plus the tanwīn) act. part. of hazal, used of animals and meaning "to come back in the evening after being away grazing during the day."

1082 هالباب من فوق هالخرابه
hāl-bāb men fōg hāl-karabeh

"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.

men fōg: (lit. from above): this idiom is used in such

¹ See Lisān, 2 (Beirut, 1955), p. 392.

² Cf. Juh., no. 2557.

contexts as this proverb to mean, "it is too good for . . ."

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 98, no. 3; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2480.

SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., no. 2482; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4699; Fegh., no. 2617.

1083

الخبز مهوب من هكالمعجين

hāl-kubz mahūb men hakal-'ajīn

"This bread cannot be from that dough."

NS: a post-classical proverb: Abšīhi, 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

الهبال مهوب يهزز بيرق

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 ما هو ب

yegezz: imperf. of غَزَّ (to raise something).

beerag: banner, flag. The word is originally Turkish.¹

SMDW: G. Syria: Fegh., no. 716; Frayha, no. 1286.

1085

هَجِّ افمك ولك رزق الطير

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

هَجَّ عَلَى جامد الخ

hajj 'ala jāmd al-mekk

"He escaped on solid brains," i.e., he ran off as fast as

¹ See J.G. Hava, Al-Farāid, Arabic-English Dictionary (Beirut, 1964), p. 914.

he could; he took to his heels.

hajj: to escape; to flee

jāmd: jāmid, act. partic. of jemad, to be frozen, to be solid.

SMDW: one classical proverb: M., no. 2269; and the two well-known classical proverbs: "أطلق فرّ لا يلوى على شيء" and "ساقية للريح"; a post-classical prov: Ṭāliq., no. 154.

1087

هَجَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ وَطَاحَ بِالسَّرِيَّةِ

hajj mn al-gōm 'u ṭāḥ bas-seriyyeh¹

"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."²

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 123, no. 3; Baghdād: Tik., no. 911.

Sim. WM: Oman: Jayak., no. 164

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., nos. 2681, 3064; 'Ask., no. 1445; two post-classical proverbs: Ṭāliq., no. 349; Ta'ālibi, Kāṣṣu-l-kāṣṣ, p. 23: "فرّ من القتل وفي الموت وقع"; idem., Tamṭīl, p. 237: "فر من القطر وتعد تحت الميزاب"; Yemen: Akwa', 1, no. 1105; Oman: Jayak., nos. 163, 165; Iraq (Baghdād and Mosul): Tik., nos. 424, 2273, 2474; Dabb., 2, p. 439: "من الكربة الى دور البلا"; G. Syria: Aṣqar, nos. 1935, 4418; Fegh., nos. 2155, 2858; Huxley, no. 55; Tallq., no. 179; Frayha, no. 1920; Landb., no. 61; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1283, 1612.

ṭāḥ: to fall down. When it is followed by the propositions بـ, في, or على it means, "to find suddenly", as in the proverb.

1088

هَدَّاجٌ تَيْمًا مَرُوي كَلَّ عَطَّاشَان

Haddāj Teema meruyen kell 'aṭṣān

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

1089

الهدم أسرع من البنا

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

1090

هذا العويد وهذا اطريفه

hāda al-'weed 'u hāda ṭrefuh³

"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.

SMDW: Mosul: Gul., p. 155: هل طين من هل طين وهل كعك من هل عجين

1091

هذا بلا شليفه

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 Šleefeh!" i.e., I cannot escape death even if I keep away from all possible causes of danger.

1092

هذا شليلي وغطاي

hāda šelīli 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.

šelīl: long Arab dress or its hem. The word is used by bedouins.

1093

هذا يحلف وهذا يصطفر

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: yastagfir, "he says أستغفر الله" which is usually employed when someone says something and then soon regrets it.

SMDW: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 899; Tik., no. 394.

1094

هذي ترورك والثانية بضلوك (والأخرى تصورك)

hādi terū'ek waṭ-tānyeh beḥlū'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.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 134.

NS: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2505; Tik., no. 2474.

1095

هرج على غير النشامي غتا بال

harjen 'ala geer an-nešāma gata bāl

"Talking to other than worthy men is a mental burden."

harjen: (harj plus the tanwīn): talking, (from haraj, to talk, to speak).

an-nešāma: plur of našmi, worthy, meritorious, good.

gaṭa: discomfort, trouble.

This proverb is taken from a few verses attributed to a poet nicknamed al-Mṭōṭeḥ (al-Muṭawṭiḥ) 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-Mṭōṭeḥ, insulted by his hosts' behaviour, replied:

ماني على كثر الموالف بخيل وهرج على غير الشامى غثا بال
ومعزى عندى سواة الفصيل واثرانه ثور ماهوب رججال

which translates as follows

I do not mind telling stories

But to do so to other than worthy men is a
mental burden.

My host is sitting with me like a calf

And I see that he is an ox, not a man.

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-Mṭōṭeḥ 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!"

- 1097 الهند عجز يغني دراويشه (عسى الهند يغني دراويشه)
 al-Hend 'ejez yegni darāwīšuh ('asa al-Hend yegni . . .)¹
 "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.
 SMDW: a post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 257 and Ta'ālibi, Tamīl, p. 273 and Ṭāliq., no. 429: ليت النجل يهضم نفسه ;
 G. Syria: Fegh., no. 737; Manch. MS, fol. 46: دوب مصر تقم
 ليت النجل يهضم نفسه , fol. 92: بخراجها

- 1098 الهوش على الطاقية
 al-hōš 'ala aṭ-ṭāgiyyeh
 "Quarelling is taking place over a skull-cap [i.e., over a trifle]." Cf. no. 1157.
 al-hōš: quarrel; fighting.
 aṭ-ṭāgiyyeh: the skull-cap.

- 1099 الهوش مهوب بالتفطن
 al-hōš mahūb bat-tefeṭṭen
 "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".

- 1100 الواحد ما ينطح الجماعه
 al-wāhed mā yanṭaḥ al-jemā'eh
 "One man cannot hold out against a group [of men]."
 yanṭaḥ: imperf. of neṭaḥ, to hold out against, to withstand. In other contexts, "to meet, to oppose".

¹ Cf. ibid., no. 2567.

ورخص المال على الفقرا

1101

wa rekṣ 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.

1102

واش يبي يجيكم يا اهل صبيح

wā šen yabi yejīkum ya(a)hl šbeeḥ

"What a thing is going to happen to you O people of Šbeeḥ." This proverb is attributed to a prayer leader ('imām) of Šbeeḥ, a village near ar-Rass in al-Qašīm (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 تعجب and šen is شي. See proverbs 409, 690.

1103

وشين الخرج على الحمار

wa šīn al-kerj 'ala al-ḥmār!

"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 fuṣ: ما اشين (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.

1104

وشين الرغا عقب الهدران (الرغا عقب الهدران عيب)

wa šīn ar-rga 'egb al-hdarān (ar-rga 'egb al-hdarān '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-hdarān: verbal noun (fus., al-hadīr): 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-rga (ar-rugā') the other,
 ordinary camel braying which expresses complaint and dis-
 comfort.

1105

وشين السرج على البقره

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; Ğul.,
 p. 140.

SMDW: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 152: يا شين السعف على الجمل!

1106

وجه تعرفه ولا وجه تذكره

wajhen ta'arfuh wala wajhen tentsruh³

"The face you know is better than a face you do not know."

tentser: imperf of 'ankar, here meaning "to fail to recog-
 nize; 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; Ğul.,
 p. 45; Egypt: Taim., no. 274; Fā'iqah, no. 1809.

1107

الوجه فتر

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)."¹

1108

وجهه مغسول بمرق

wajhuh mǧasūlen bmarag²

"His face is washed with soup," i.e., he is utterly shameless.

The origin of this proverb is probably the post-classical Arabic proverb: كأن وجهه مغسول بمرقة الذئب. See M., 2, p. 172; Tāliq., no. 405.

SMDW: Mecca: وجهه سطيحه ما يبالي بالفضيحة³; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Dabb., 2, p. 408: مثل الحقوقه ما ينتفع ورجا; Hanafi, no. 1341; Palestine: Baum., nos. 606, 392.

1109

رداعتك يا الشجره

wedā'ats-ts yaš-šjereh⁴

"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.

¹ H. Wehr, op. cit., p. 694.

² Also Juh., no. 2486.

³ See Quraisš, 94 (1961), p. 16.

⁴ Cf. Juh., no. 943.

1110

وَدَّعَ الْجَحْرَ ضَرْطَاهُ

wadda' al-jeher zarṭeh¹

"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: Fā'iqaḥ, no. 4.

1111

وَدَّكَ وَلَا الرَّجَالَ قَوْلُهُ عَقَالَهُ لِي قَالَ قَوْلَ تَمَّ لَوْ حَالَ بِهِ حَالٌ

weddek wala ar-rajjāl gōluḥ 'agāluḥ lā gāl gōlen tamm lō ḥāl
buh 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 Mḥammad al-'Abd Allah al-Gāzi. Another version of it is:²

وَالرَّجُلُ بِالْوَجِبِ لِسَانُهُ عَقَالَهُ إِلَى قَالَ عِلْمَ تَمَّ لَوْ حَالَ بِهِ حَالٌ

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.

1112

ورقة فرجه

wregat ferjeh

"[Like] paper in an [open] window." Said of an irresolute person. Paper in a window is blown by the slightest breeze. Cf. no. 142.

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, no. 944.

² See 'Abdallh az-Zāmil, *op. cit.*, p. 133, line 18 and *Dīwān an-Nabat*, ed. Kālid Muḥammad al-Faraj, pt. 2 (Damascus, 1952), p. 7.

³ ODEP, p. 380.

ferjeh: hole used in old-fashioned houses in Najd as a window.

1113

وسومه بخشومه

wsūmah bekšūmah¹

"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.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 243.

NS: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 2176.

SMDW: three classical proverbs: M., no. 5; 'Ask., nos. 28, 60; Zamak., 1, no. 1163; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1433, 1942.

1114

وش الارنب لو لا اذانه

waš 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.

1115

وش العصفور ومرقته

weš al-'ešfūr wemregtuh²

"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; Çul., p. 14; Lebanon:

Faraj, p. 349: شو الصرص وشو مرقته

Sim. WM: a classical proverb: M., no. 3901; 'Ask., no.

1679; Mosul: Socin, no. 417; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 144;

Egypt: Fā'iqah, no. 278.

1116

وش جاب باسم الله لعشانا

weš jāb besmellah l'ašāna

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: Qurais̄, 104, p. 16; Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 29, no. 50.

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3946; a post-classical proverb: M., 1, p. 89: ايش في الضربه من هلاك النجل ; Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1028; Tik., Jamharah, 1, no. 347.

1117

وش علم البقر رقى الطوايا ✓

weš 'allam al-begar redzy aṭ-ṭawāya¹

"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.

aṭ-ṭawāya: 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.

1118

وش الطويرات بداركم ؟

weš hāṭ-ṭweerāt 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 pretended to have forgotten everything belonging to his home and asked his mother what she called that 'long-tailed beggar' meaning the cat."¹

1119

وش يخلى الفقر من الرزق الزهيد

weš ykalli al-faġer mn ar-rezq az'zehīd

"What does poverty spare of a meagre livelihood?"

1120

وش يدري الثور انى عنتر

weš yedri at-tōr enni 'Antar?'²

"How can the ox know that I am 'Antar?'"

'Antar: the famous pre-Islamic poet-hero 'Antarah b. Šaddād 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: Nūri, 2, p. 145.

1121

وش يهم السما من نبح الكلاب ✓

weš yhemm as-sema men nabḥ 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.

¹ See E. Brewer, Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Phable (London, 1970), p. 657.

² Also Juh., no. 2531 and cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 892.

Sim. WM: a classical or post-classical proverb: M., no. 3510; Abšihī, 1, p.37; Zamak., 2, no. 943; Ta'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 954; Baghdad: Tik., no. 2332; Hanafi, no. 1615; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 4605; Fegh., no. 2849; Frayha, nos. 2067, 3165; Egypt: Burck., no. 81.

SMDW: 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: بحر ما تعكرو ساقيه; Egypt: Taim., no. 747.

1122

وقف الباب على صايره

wegaf al-bāb 'ala ṣāyruh¹

"The door has got stuck on its hinges," i.e., it will move no more. Said of something which can no longer be tolerated.

sāyr: (in pause, ṣāyer) hinges.

1123

ولد بطني يعرف رطني

walad baṭni y'aref raṭni²

"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: Nūri, 2, p. 141.

NS: Mecca: Sāsi, no. 420; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 24;

Egypt: Fā'iqah, no. 174; Baghdad: Tik., no. 2120.

1124

ولد التميمي يأتي قبل حينه

weld at-Temīmi yāti gabul ḥīnuh

"The child of a Temīmi [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 Temīmi baby cannot wait in his mother's womb for the usual nine months.

weld: walad: son.

¹

Also Juh., no. 2508.

²

Also ibid., no. 2515.

1125

ولد الحبيب من البغيضة طبع الجمه عليه
 وولد البغيض من الحبيبه واقف يضحك عليه

weld al-ḥabīb mn al-begīzeh ṭabbah al-jammeh 'alayyah
 'u weld al-begīz mn al-ḥabībeh wāḏzfen yaḏhak 'alayyah
 "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. ṭabbah: 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: Ašqar, no. 25; Egypt: Fā'iqah, nos. 178, 179.

1126

الولد رخيص ببيشارته

al-walad rekīšen bebsāretuh¹

"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.

bebsāretuh: the bšāreh is a reward usually given to the person who brings the good news (ybaššer) of his birth to a boy's father.

1127

ولد ولدك ولدك وولد بنتك لا

والشمر ينبت بجلدك ولا بكفك لا

وكل بعقله راضى الا بماله لا

¹ Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 957.

walad weldek weldek 'u walad bentek la'
 aš-ša'ar yanbat bjeldek wella btsaffek la'
 'u kellen b'agluh rāzi ella bmāluh 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 Ašqar, 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; Ḡul., p. 12; Dabb., 1,
 p. 18; G. Syria: Frayha, no. 35; Egypt: Bājūri, p. 169.

The second verse, the meaning of which is insigni-
 ficant, 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 Ḡul., 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.

1128

يا الله بحمير اركبه ولا حمان يركبن

yā(A)llah beḥmayyren artsebuḥ wala ḥṣānen 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.

yartseban: yarkabuni: it rides me.

1129

يا الله سنة ذباب ولا سنة قراد

yā(A)llah sent dbāb 'u lā 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.

1130

يا الله فليقه كود نويقه

yā(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 falgeh, head wound.

nweedzeh: dimin. of nāgeh, she-camel.

kūd: a particle equivalent to لعلّ.

1131

يابد الصياد من رفقة الكلب

yābedd aṣ-ṣayyād mn refdzt al-tsalb

"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 لا يَدّ.

Sim. WM: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 1103; Tik., no. 1312.

1132

يا بدّ قوّة منه ضعف ويا بدّ ضعف منه قوّة

yābedd guwweten mnah ṣu'f 'u yābedd ṣu'fen mnuh guwweh

"Strength may breed weakness and weakness may breed strength."

mnah: minhā, from it.

- 1133 يا جدّه قولى لجدّتك ترء جمال أمّ أمها غادى
 ya jaddah gūlay ljaddats-ts tara جمال ummā ummaha gādi
 "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 inter-
 mediaries.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 149.

- 1134 يا حمود يظهر لك صدقان من القوم ويظهر من الربح الموالين عدوان
 yaḥmūd yaẓhar lek ṣedgānen mn al-gōm 'u yaẓhar mnar-rab'
 al-mwālīn 'edwān
 "O Ḥmūd, among enemies you may find friends and amongst your
 close friends enemies."

ar-rab' (in pause pronounced ar-rabe'): the friends.

'edwān: plur. of عدوّ, enemy.

- 1135 ياخذ من الحافى نعال
 yākd mn al-ḥāfi n'āl
 "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"¹ and "He would skin a louse, and send the hide to market."²

NS: Irag (Baghdad): Hanafi, nos. 2769, 2773; G. Syria:

Frayha, no. 821; Egypt: Burck., no. 162.

- 1136 يا ربّ عدلها عن الضلع والميل ولا فمّلها على الخلق كلّه
 yā rabb 'addelha 'an aẓ-ẓal' wal-meel--wella fmayyelha 'ala
 al-ḥalg kallah³

"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-mayl) verbal noun of māl, to tilt (for example, a load on an animal's back). Both limping and tilting of the load makes an animal uncomfortable.

1137

يا شاري الدون بدون تحسبك غابن وانت مغبون

yā šāri ad-dūn bdūn taḥasbek gāben wa(a)nt mḡabūn¹

"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 gaban, to overreach.

mḡabūn: (magbūn) pass. partic. of gaban

NS: post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 328; Ta'ālibi,

Tamtīl, p. 198; Tāliq., no. 448; G. Syria: Faraj, p.341;

Egypt: Fā'iqah, no. 1700.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 151.

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, n. 2681; Tik.,

no. 358; Gul., p. 124: مسترخص اللحم عند المرقه يندم ; Dabb.,

2, p. 61: اللحم الرخيص يخسف الكدور ; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 2442;

Ašqar, no. 5089; Frayha, no. 1778; Egypt: Littm., no. 473.

1138

يا شق من يخيظك؟

yā šagg men yekīṭek?

"O tear! who will [be able to] sew you up?" i.e., you are beyond repair. Said of a mistake which cannot be rectified.

1139

يا شين فسفة الطواف

yāšīn fasget at-ṭawwāf!

"How unbecoming is fastidiousness in a beggar."

fasgeh: n. from the perf. verb fesedz which is used in the

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 972.

Najd vernacular to mean, "he became rich after having been poor and began to be finical."

at-tawwāf: the beggar

yā šīn: equiv. to the fus., ما أشين, how bad is . . .!

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 3¹25; G. Syria: Frayha, nos. 3993, 346.

1140

يا شين لسب الفطر

yā šīn le'b al-feṭṭar!¹

"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-feṭṭar: plur. of fāter, an old she-camel.

1141

ياطا السريح عناد

yāṭa as-serīḥ 'nād²

"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-serīḥ: 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-rša), this latter being connected to the upper part of the water bucket and to the camel's saddle. To tread on as-serīḥ while the swānī operation is going on is to disturb it and prevent the rope from functioning.

¹ Also Juh., no. 2587.

² Cf. Juh., no. 2478.

1142 يا طير ابن برمان جنباك حنّا يا ناقل الحيه على راس راعيك
 yā ṭeer Eben Burmān jebnāk ḥenna, yā nāḍzl al-ḥayyeh 'ala
 rās rā'ik

"O falcon of Eben Burmān! We brought you! O you who carry the snake to your owner's head." Said of ingratitude and the returning of evil for good. Cf. nos. 227, 554, 578, 1147. Cf. also, the English proverbs, "He brought up a bird to pick out his own eyes" and "To bite at the hand that feeds you."¹

Eben (Ibn) Burmān 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 Burmān's head.

ḥenna: we

rā'ik: your owner. راعى here is the equivalent of the fuṣ.,
 صاحب

1143 يا عشاننا يا غدانا ما لنا همّ حذاك
 yā 'ašāna yā gadāna, mā lena hammen ḥdāk

"O our supper, O our dinner, we have no worry but you." Said of those who live to eat.

ḥdāk: except you. ḥda (except) is an exceptive particle.

It is only used after the negative particle mā. It replaces the fuṣ., ما عدا

1144 يا غريب كن اديب
 yā garīb ken adīb²

"O stranger! Be well behaved!" A stranger should be well mannered and should avoid interfering in the affairs of others.

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; Ğul., p. 177; Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 153; Oman: Jayak., no. 314.
 NS: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 3014; Frayha, no. 2522; Fegh., no. 1239.

1145

يا فاح بالكون ياتيك مثله

yā fārḥen bal-kōn yātīk meṭluh

"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:

يا فاح باكونها جاك مثلها والاكون ما يفح بهن ذهين

"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-kōn: the war. Old usage, akwān, plur. of kōn.

SMDW: Oman: Jayak., no. 56.

1146

ياكل مع الذيب ويكي مع الراعي

yākel ma' ad-dīb 'u yabṭsi ma' ar-rā'i

"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."¹

NS: a post-classical proverb: Ta'ālibi, Kāṣṣ, p. 21.

Sim. WM: Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 491: يسرح مع الغنم وياكل مع الذيب

SMDW: a classical and a post-classical proverb: M., no.

4664; M., 2, p. 428: يقول للمارق اسرق ولصاحب المنزل احفظ متاعك

Mecca: Sāsi, no. 588; Iraq: Hanafi, no. 2788; Tik., nos.

2710, 2719; Dal., 1, no. 394; Ğul., p. 163: يقتل القتيل ويمشي

ويعشى خلف جنازته; G. Syria: Ašqar, nos., 1423, 1434; Fegh.,

1

ODEP, p. 689.

no. 27; Burton, no. 148; Egypt: Burck., no. 160; Littm., no. 324.

1147

يا لقطه غليص اللي حظ بحثله

yā legṭat Ḡleeṣ alli ḥaṭṭ bmeḥteluh¹

"O [what a thing! it is like] the find of Ḡleeṣ which he put into the fold of his garment."

meḥtel: (in pause pronounced meḥtal): 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 Ḡleeṣ was said to have found a snake frozen from the cold. He took it up tenderly and put it in his meḥtal. As soon as it felt warm and comfortable, it bit and killed him. However, in another version, Ḡleeṣ's find was said to have been the stock of a gun which he brought to his mother for use as fire-wood. 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

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 39.

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.

1148

يَا مَا غَدَا عَلَى الْحَاجِّ مِنْ جَمَلٍ

yāma gada 'alal-ḥājj men jema!¹

"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.

yāma men: many a

gada: to be lost.

Ident.: Kuwait.²

Sim W.M.: Baghad: Hanafi, no. 2638; Tik., no. 2585.

1149

يَا مَغْطَىٰ يَا مَكْشُوفَ

yā mgaṭṭa yā maksūf³

"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.

1150

يَا مَغِيْطُ دُوكِ رِشَاكِ

yā Mgeet dūk ršāk⁴

"O Mgeet, take your [own] rope."

This proverbial saying is taken from the following anecdote: a man by the name of Mgeet, 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

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." dūk: take. An اسم امر. It was originally dūnak and then the second consonant and the second vowel were elided.

ršāk: rša, rope, plus the 2nd pers. masc. sing. connected pronoun.

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 156; Baghdad: Tik., no. 2590 (Tikrītī states, nevertheless, that this proverb is common among the bedouins).

1151

يا من عین الغترة بدرب الحشاحيش

yā men 'ayyan al-getreh bdarb al-ḥašāḥiṣ?

"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.

al-ḥašāḥiṣ: plur. of ḥaššāš, one who collects grass. For a more detailed comment, see the comment on ḥašš, proverb no. 1015.

1152

يا مويقة عند الحضر لولا دقيق الظهر

yā mweedz'eten 'end al-ḥaḥer lōla dgayydz az-ḥaḥar!

"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 outweigh the toil extracted from him.

mweedz'eten: (mweedz'eh plus the tanwīn "en"), dimin. of mūge'eh, a traditional wooden Najdi dish in which cooked food is usually served.

dgavydz: (in pause dgayyidz), dimin. of dgāg, thin.

dgayydz az-zahar, lit. "The thin (bone) of the back", i.e., the backbone.

SMDW: Baghdad: Tik., no. 1601; Egypt: Taim., no. 2186.

1153

ياوي له عدوه

yāwi luh 'aduwwuh

"[Even] his enemy pities him," i.e., he is in an extremely miserable condition.

yāwi: imperf. of 'awa, to feel sorry for, to pity.

1154

بيعتها بالرخص من لا شراها

yebī'aha bar-rekṣ men lā šarāha¹

"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.

1155

يتعلق بهدبه

yta'allag behdebeh²

"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'ālibi, Tamtīl, p. 260:

إن الخريق بكل حبل يعلق ; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 1350; Tik., no. 151; Gul., p. 100; G. Syria: Fegh., no. 649; Egypt: Taim., no. 2052.

¹ Also ibid., no. 2647 and 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 986.

² Also 'Ubūdi, 1, no. 988 and cf. Juh., no. 2662.

³ ODEP, p. 205.

1156

يتنفس مع ابطه

ytanaffas ma' ebāṭuh

"He breathes with his armpits," i.e., he is a man of very equable temperament.

SMDW: Mosul: Gul., p. 36: ايقرط حما

1157

يتهاوشون (بتخانقون) على مريط البقره

ytahāwešūn (ytakānegūn) 'ala marbaṭ 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

ytahāwešūn: they quarrel; the perf. is tahāwaš.ytakānegūn: they quarrel; the perf. is takānag.SMDW: Egypt: Taim., no. 1533.

1158

يجوز العيد بلا حنا

yejūz al-'īd 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 'īd (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.

1159

يخبط ولا يسمي

ykabeṭ 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.

1160

يخلط الحوًّا مع البسباس

yakaḷṭ 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.

yakaḷṭ: (in pause pronounced ykaḷeṭ) fuṣ., yakliṭ

al-ḥuwwa: (launaea capitata naudicaulis) a small green edible herb with tender leaves.

al-besbās: (pimpinella cretica) a small green edible herb

1161

يد بالجال ويد بالرشا

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. 1881;

Zamak., 2, no. 938; Baghdad: Hanafi, 2, p. 255: يدك عالِحافر

وَعَالَسندان; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1448; Frayha, no. 85.

1162

يدخل بين الظفر واللحم

yadkel been az-zefer wal-laḥam

"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."¹

SMDW: a post-classical proverb: Tāliq, no. 589; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1344.

1163

يدخل على الحيايا بجحوره

yadkel 'alal-ḥayāya bejḥūrah²

"He enters the burrows of snakes," i.e., he keeps company with the most unlikely people.

1164

يدور القرش بذنب الهرش

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.

ydawwr: (in pause ydawwer) imperf. of dawwar, to look for, to search for.

garš: qirš, piastre (about one half new pence).

herš: old male camel.

SMDW: five classical proverbs: M., nos. 570, 571, 3778;

'Ask., no. 434; Zamak., 2, nos. 1227, 1152; Ta'ālibi, Timār, no. 321; Tamtīl, p. 4: لا يسقط من كفه خردله; Mosul: Socin, nos.

317, 454; Syria (Ḥimṣ): Ḥassān al-Ḥājj Ibrāhīm (verbally):

بيعصر حليب التمله and ما ينز على السخن; Mecca: Hurg., no. 5.

1165

يدور ولده وهو على كتفه

ydawwr 'uleduh we hu 'ala tsatfuh³

"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."⁴

Sim. WM: a post-classical proverb: M., 1, p. 121; Iraq

¹ ODEP, p. 30.

² Cf. Juh., no. 2292.

³ Cf. ibid., no. 518.

⁴ ODEP, pp. 94, 506.

(Baghdad and Basrah): Tik., no. 35; Dal., 1, no. 357;

G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 43; Fegh., no. 874; Frayha, no. 55.

1166

يذكره المألود للّٰى بالاصلاب

yadekruh al-mālūd lalli bal-ašlāb

"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: يوم جرى بالظائف له ظلال . 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-Qašīm near a village called az-Ẓalfe'eh (or Ḍalfa'ah) approximately eighteen miles northwest of Buraidah. The battle, which takes its name from the plain, was fought by people of al-Qašīm led by Zāmil b. Sulaim (of 'Unaizah) and Ḥasan b. Muhanna (of Buraidah) against the emir of Hā'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 Ḍalfa'ah, a town [*sic*] some eighteen miles due west of Buraidah. The Qasimis 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 Qasimi 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."¹

¹ R.B. Winder, Saudi Arabia in the Nineteenth Century (London/Melbourne/Toronto, 1965), p. 277.

1167

يرعد ويرق

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.

1168

يسرى بالمقال

yasri bal-'gāl¹

"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.

1169

يسنى بلا ما

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, Tamtīl, p. 281:

عقله مثل اللي بيدري في ² فلسطين; فلان يدّهن من قارورة فارغه
التبن

1170

يشوف القذاة بيمين رفيقه ولا يشوف الجتل بعينه ✓

yšūf al-dzedāt b'een refidzuh wala yšūf al-jetl b'eenuh³

"He sees the speck in his companion's eye, but does not see the stump in his own." The ḥadīt:⁴

يبصر أحدكم القذاة في عين أخيه وينسى الجذع أو الجدل في عينيه

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-'Ajlūni, 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.

jetl: (in pause jetel) a stump (of a tree).

Sim. WM: a classical proverb: M., no. 3095; Zamak., 2, no. 795; Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Tik., no. 2339; Çul., 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: Nūri, 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: Aşqar, no. 81; Fegh., nos. 215, 2186; Egypt: Taim., nos. 1226, 1401, 2031, 3105; Burck., no. 435.

1171

يشوف سارحة أمس

yšūf sārḥat 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

يشوف مناير مصر

yšūf manāyer Maşer

"He sees the minarets of Egypt," i.e., he is very happy.

1173

يملط الذيب على شاة الصعلوك ✓

yşallaṭ aḍ-ḍīb 'ala šāt aş-şe'lūk¹

"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

يصيد بقعة ماله قاعه

yeşīd bguffeten mā lah gā'eh

¹ Cf. 'Ubūdi, 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: fuṣ., عقبا, bottom (of a basket, pot, well, etc.).

SMDW: Yemen: Akwa', 1, nos. 451, 1016; Iraq (Mosul and among the bedouins): Ḡul., p. 163: ينفخ في رماة; Ẓafīri, no. 261; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1467; Egypt: Fā'iqaḥ, no. 526.

1175

يطلق له باصبع

yeṭegg luh be (e)ṣbe'

"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."

1176

يطلع بنبل (بيدع)

yaṭla' benbal (bebda')

"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 nubleh, a strange thing; something unusual.

bebda': the preposition be with bda', plur. of bed'eh (bid'ah).

1177

يطهر الارض التي ياطا به

yṭahhr al-arḡ 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

يظهر للحرب رجال

yaẓhar lal-ḥarb rjāl

"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.

1179

يعاف البطيه (العزيمه) ويدور الطوافه

ya'āf al-'aṭeyyah (al-'azīneh) 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.

'aṭeyyah: gift (lit. thing which is being given).

ṭwāfeh: begging; a thing which is given to a beggar.

'azīneh: invitation, from 'azam, to invite.

Sim. WM: Kuwait: Nūri, 1, p. 211, no. 1.

SMDW: Yemen: Goit., no. 428; Oman: Jayak., no. 107;

Mecca: عزيمانهم اتعزّزوا خصرناهم اتدّموا¹ Iraq: Hanafī, no. 560;

Tik., no. 719; Dal., 1, no. 679; Socin, no. 1; Ḡul., p. 58:

خطبوها اتعزّزت فاحوا واخلوها اتدّمت; G. Syria: Frayha, no.

2368; Egypt: Taim., no. 1159; Burck., no. 229; Littm., no. 352.

1180

يعثر بالدمنه

y'aṭer bad-denneh²

"He trips over a[n animal's] dropping," i.e., he is very weak."

Ident.: Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 2776.

¹ Qurais̄, 72 (1961), p. 16. (This proverb is recorded by Sākīr Sulaimān Šukūri.)

² Cf. Juh., no. 542.

1181

يعجز عن المظاره ويقضى جهاز المره

y'ajaz 'an al-menẓereh 'u yagẓi 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-menẓereh: the mirror.

jahāz: dowry

1182

يعنى لبغداد عشان شته

y'ani l-Baġdād 'alašān šatmeh

"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).

'alašān: for; equiv. to the fuṣ., min 'ajl.

SMDW: Iraq (Baghdad and Mosul): Hanafi, no. 2168; Çul.,

p. 135: من هونى للاكيسى على اكلة هغيسى

1183

يعيش على الطال

ye'iš 'alaṭ-ṭall¹

"He survives on dew," i.e., he is very contented and abstem-
ious. Some people add before this phrase "[He is like] a
cumin plant (cominum cyminum). It lives . . ."

Ident.: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 249.

1184

ينزل وينقض

ygazl 'u yangez

"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: تحلب وتطشو

1185

يفص بالما ويجرع البعارين

yegeṣṣ bal-ma we yjarr ' al-ba'ārīn²

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 ويختص بالبقه

SMDW: a classical proverb: M., no. 676; Zamak., 2, no. 99;

Baghdad: Hanafi, no. 374; G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1369.

1186

يقدم رجل ويؤخر رجل

ydzaddem rejel we ywakk_{er} rejel

"He puts one foot forward and draws back the other," i.e., he is affected by indecision.

NS: a post-classical proverb: M., 2, p. 428; Mosul: Gul., p. 36; Egypt: Burck., no. 771; G. Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 17.

Sim. WM: Mosul: Dabb., 2, p. 492; Baghdad: Tik., no. 1064; G. Syria: Frayha, no. 88.

1187

يقرا الخط مع قفا (و)ه

yagra al-kaṭṭ ma' gefā(w)h

"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.

1188

يقرا الكتاب ولا يهاب المزله

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 Mḥammad b. Hindi b. Ḥmeed al-Mgāṭi, a former shaikh of

'Utaibah. The first half is: *الشَّابُّ الَّذِي يَنْقُلُ الْكِبْرَ وَالزُّمَّ* (the old man who carries arrogance and pride). He is referring to Muḥammad b. Hādi, a former shaikh of G-ḥaṭṭān (Qaḥṭṭān).¹

1189

يَكْوِي بِاسْكَاتٍ

yatswi beskāt²

"He burns [you] quietly." Said of one who, despite his seemingly serene nature, makes wounding remarks.

NS: Kuwait: Nūri, 2, p. 250.

1190

يَمِدُّ أَبُو حَنِيفَةَ رِجْلَهُ وَلَا يِبَالِي

yemedd Ebu Ḥanīfeh rejluh wala yubāli

"Ebu Ḥanīfeh [Abū Ḥanīfah] stretches out his leg, and he does not care [any more]."

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 ybāli: (pronounced in its fasīh form) he does not care.

Sim. WM: Egypt: Fā'iqah, no. 56.

1191

يَمِدُّ يَدَ قَصِيرِهِ

yemedd yaden gešīreh

¹ See Muḥammad S. Kamāl "Qabīlatu 'Utaibah, 'Asluhā wa Furū'uhā", al-'Arab, 3 (1969), p. 828; and 'A. Ibn Kamīs, al-'Adab aš-Sa'bi, p. 298.

² Cf. Juh., no. 2746.

"He stretches out a short hand," i.e., he asks for a modest amount.

1192

يمسى جمر ويصبح رماد

yemsi jamer 'u yeṣbeh rumād

"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: Abšīhi, 1, p. 34:

بيات نار ويصبح رماد; Baghdad: Hanafi, 2, p. 239; Egypt:

Burck., no. 161; Hanki, p. 100; Littm., no. 7; Amīn, p. 69.

1193

يموت الفتى موتين موت من الفنا وموت من اختلاف الدارارى جدودها

yemūt al-feta mōteen mōten mn al-fana, 'u mōten mn ekṭlāf
ad-darāri jdūdha

"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 Rmeezān b. Ḡaššām at-Tamīmi.¹

1194

يموتن (تعقر) البيض ما جابن كليب

yemūtn (t'agar) al-biṣ mā jāban Kleeb!

"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-biṣ: the white ones--a reference to women.

1195

ينسى عشا (و)ه الباج

yansa 'ašā(w)h al-bāreḥ

"He forgets what he ate for his meal last night," i.e., he is

¹ See proverb no. 510 and for the poem see A. b. Kamīs, op. cit., note p. 179, and Qašīm āl-Tāni, op. cit.

extremely forgetful.

al-Bāreh: last night.

Sim. WM: G. Syria: Ašqar, no. 1464: Egypt: 'Arif, 1, p.

239: ينسى فطر أياه

1196

ينطح القوم بسعفه

yanṭaḥ al-gōm 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.

yanṭaḥ: imperf. of neṭaḥ, to meet. Cf. no. 98.

SMDW: two classical proverbs: M., nos. 1793, 4111; Iraq: Weissbach, no. 273; Hanafi, no. 2806; Tik., no. 2732.

1197

يوم الحمائد ملهيتك القمايد

yōm al-ḥaṣāyed melhyats-ts al-geṣāyed

"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

words "yōm al-ḥaṣāyed melhyats-ts al-geṣāyed" (at harvest time you were occupied with songs)."

Musil mentions another version of this saying in the tale which he records as follows: "once the Umm Sâlem 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-ḥaṣâjed w-enti hammeč al-ḥaṣâjed).' The Umm Sâlem replied, 'And yet my voice is often more precious than the whole of thee with thy ragged tail (ana yowmin mn ajjâm ṭrubi jeswâč jâ mḥazûkat ad-dnebi)."¹

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.

SMDW: Yemen: Akwa', 1, nos. 748, 750.

1198

يوم تعشى وارتكى قال ريحة عشاكم مستكى

yōm ta'ašša we (e)rteka gāl riḥat '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: بعد ما أكل وارتكى قال دا ريحته مستكى² G. Syria: Manch. MS, fol. 60; Egypt: Taim., no. 794; Burck., no. 141.

SMDW: Egypt: Fā'iqah, no. 11.

1199

يوم من طربى يسواك يا معكوفة الذنب

yōmin men ṭrubi yeswāts yā m'akūft 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 Qāḍi.

no. 1197 (the lark) where another version of this saying which was recorded by Musil is mentioned.

1200

يومه سنه

yōmuh 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 الخير عند ذكره (no. 301) is

"Sim WM" to the Iraqi proverb¹ ابن الحلال بذكوره .

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	4
2. Post-classical proverbs.	7

II In the present (other contemporary proverbs)

1. Mecca	10
2. Kuwait	56
3. Oman	2
4. Yemen	1
5. Iraq	44
6. G. Syria	15
7. Egypt	<u>6</u>
	145

(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	6
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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.

2. Post-classical proverbs	11
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	<u>29</u>
	282
	(23.5%)
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	<u>75</u>
	368
	(37.5%)

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	<u>41</u>
	62

II In the present (other contemporary proverbs)

1. Mecca	60
2. Kuwait	149
3. Iraq	181
4. Oman	24
5. Yemen	59
6. G. Syria	148
7. Egypt	<u>109</u>
	730

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 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

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. 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--Šagra and Żruma, the first is the largest town in al-Waṣm and the second is a small town in al-'Ārez ('Āriḍ); 1063 and 193--Najd; 520--Egee'a, a village between al-Qaṣīm and Ḥāyel; 320--Debādeb, the name of a well; 763--Wtāl, a village in 'Yūn al-Jwa in northern al-Qaṣīm; 384--Feed (Faid), a village near Ḥāyel; 663--Sdeer (Sudair) a Najdi district; 492--al-Beṣur, a group of villages near Buraidah; 166, 256--al-Gwāreh, a village about 50 miles north-west of Buraidah; 1102--Šbeeh (Šubaiḥ), a village near ar-Rass in al-Qaṣīm; 713--ad-De'iseh, one of the forementioned villages of al-Buṣer; 298--Ḥreemla (Ḥuraimilā'), the largest town in the district of aš-Še'ib; 1070--Ṭwedz (Ṭuwaitq), the well-known chain of hills in southern Najd; 185--al-Jōf (al-Jawf), a district in northern Najd; 985--al-'Yūn (i.e., 'Yūn al-Jwa, see above).

equivalents and sixty three proverbs (c. 5%) are used with minor differences in wording.¹

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 home²--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 Muṭair, the 'Awāzīm and the Rešāydeh tribes).³ It is therefore only natural that a close similarity in proverb lore exists in Najd

¹ 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 Ašqar, Frayḥa, and Feghali's collections of Syro-Lebanese proverbs and the "Baghdad proverbs" of Tikrīti) and may be adjudged 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.

² 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).

³ 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 Ḥakimah, 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-Zūr, 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 Šammar, '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.¹

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

¹ For the movement of tribes from Najd to Iraq, see e.g., A. Abū Hākimah, op. cit., p. 50; 'Abbās al-'Azzāwi, 'Asā'ir al-'Iraq (Baghdad, 1937), pp. 295-304, quoted by A. Abū Hākimah, op. cit., footnote no. 5, p. 36; Muḥammad al-Bassām, al-Durar al-Mafākhir fi 'Akhbār al-'Arab al-'Awākhir, British Museum, MS Add. 7358, fol. 43, quoted by A. Abū Hākimah, 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-Jenūbi, a poet who lived in the seventeenth century A.D. (eleventh century A.H.).¹
- (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.).²
- (iii) Proverb no. 185 refers to a certain "'Beed" ('Ubaid). This was presumably 'Ubaid b. 'Ali b. Rašīd, who lived in the nineteenth century³ (d. 1865 A.D./1282 A.H.).⁴
- (iv) Proverb no. 266 speaks of "Grāgūš", who lived in the twelfth century A.D.⁵
- (v) Proverb no. 361 refers to "Ḥelwān", who lived in the present century.⁶
- (vi) Proverb no. 372 is a verse composed by 'Ali al-Gebāli,⁷ 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"

¹ See 'A. az-Zāmil, op. cit., p. 143.

² For more information about them, see Encyclopédie de l' Islam, supplément, 1st ed. s.v. "'kail", and Musil, Rwala, pp. 278-280.

³ See F.E. Boustany, Encyclopedia Arabica, 1st ed., s.v. "Ibn Rašīd".

⁴ See 'A. az-Zāmil, op. cit., p. 145.

⁵ See Encyclopédie de l' Islam, 1st ed., s.v. "Karākūsh".

⁶ The writer is personally acquainted with him.

⁷ See M.S. Kamāl, al-'Azhār an-Nādiyah min 'Aš'ār al-Bādiya, 3 (Cairo, n.d.), p. 97.

(Abū Zaid al-Hilāli), who supposedly lived in the eleventh century A.D. (fifth century A.H.).¹

(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.).²

(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.³

(xii) Proverb no. 455 refers to "aṣ-Ṣawanwan"; he was probably still living in the 1930s.⁴

(xiii) Proverb no. 341 refers to "aṣ-Ṣūḥi"; 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 ar-Rešidiyyeh, who lived in عين الصنيع in as-Sirr.⁵

(xv) Proverb no. 536 refers to "Dgāš" who lived at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁶

(xvi) The poet Rmeezān, who was killed in 1663 A.D./1074 A.H. or in 1668 A.D./1079 A.H.,⁷ is mentioned in proverb no. 510.

This "Rmeezān" composed proverb no. 1193.

(xvii) Proverb no. 552 refers to "Mhanna", who was probably one

¹ See F. E. Boustany, op. cit., s.v., "Abū Zaid al-Hilāli".

² See 'A. b. Kamīs, Rāšid al-Kalāwi, p. 18.

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.

⁷ See 'A. az-Zāmil, op. cit., p. 143, and 'A. b. Kamīs, al-'Adab aṣ-Ṣa'bi, n. p. 179, and 'Abdallah K. al-Ḥātam, op. cit., p. 76.

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. 503 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-Qaṣīm.¹ 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 'Ikṡwān revolt against 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Saud in 1929. He died in that year.²

(xxi) Proverb no. 721 is a verse by the widely known poet 'Abdallah b. Sbayyel who died in 1938 A.D./1357 A.H.³

(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.),⁴ is mentioned in the story of proverb no. 850.

(xxiii) Proverb no. 960 refers to a certain Abū Tallāl, who lived in the first half of the twentieth century.

((xxiv) Proverb no. 1017 is the modified quotation of a verse

¹ See 'Umar R. Kaḥḥālah, Mu'jam Qabā'il al-'Arab, 1 (Beirut, 1968), p. 79, s.v., "Bassām".

² See H. Philby, Sa'udi Arabia, p. 312.

³ See 'A. az-Zāmil, op. cit., p. 145 and K.M. al-Faraj, op. cit., p. 196.

⁴ See 'A. b. Kamīs, al-'Adab aš-Ša'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. Rašīd who lived in the nineteenth century.²

(xxvi) Proverb no. 1166 is a verse by Ḥmūd b. Rašīd (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 Mehda b. Faiṣal al-Habdāni 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-Mgāṭi 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 Rašīd".

³ See R. Winder, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

⁴ See M. as-Sudairi, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

⁵ See 'A. b. Kamīs, *op. cit.*, p. 298; and M.S. Kamāl, "Qabīlatu 'Utaybah aṣluhā wa furū'uhā", *al-'Arab*, 3 (1969), p. 828.

⁶ The names concerned are given below; each is followed by the number of the proverb in which it is mentioned: ;Hreewel (153); Hāyes (156), Eben 'Amīreh (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 Jleedān (230); Ḥassūn (254); Ḥmūd (272); Jem'eh (325); Eben Bukīt (370); Sbeet (383); Sanda and Dbees (395); 'Odeh (479); Eben Ḡannām (491); Ebu S-ḥeem (512); 'Umm al-Baha (667); al-'Abbās (912); Mteeh (933); Ngeemes (961); Barjas or Eben Barjas (1035); 'Areemān (1058); al-Mṭōṭeh (1095); Eben Burmān (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 "tenanna", 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,¹ العلم بحر ماله ساحل. This type is also quite common in classical Arabic proverbs; the Maidāni collection contains 267 proverbs beginning with a definite noun.²
- 1.2 Proverbs Beginning with an Indefinite Noun: this type is

¹ No. 525

² A. Dhubaib, "A Critical and Comparative Study of the Ancient Arabic Proverbs Contained in al-Maidāni's Collection", an unpublished Ph.D. thesis submitted to Leeds University (1966), p. 38.

much rarer in modern Najdi proverbs. Only about thirty examples are found in our collection, for example, *حكي بالفايت نقص بالعقل*.¹ This type is also rare in ancient Arabic proverbs. Only fifteen examples are found in Maidāni.²

1.3. Proverbs Beginning with a construct (idāfa): This type is made up of about a hundred examples which equals about a tenth of the total number in our collection, for example:

أهل مكة أبخر بشعابه.³ The proportion is very similar in old Arabic proverbs. There are 372 nominal sentences beginning with an *idāfa* in Maidāni (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: *مصر ما عمر بعرة*.⁶

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 (لا) *mā*: 37 proverbs.⁷
- (b) Interrogative (وش) *weš*: 3 proverbs.
- (c) Particle (ما) *mā* expressing wonder or surprise: 1 proverb.
- (d) Particle (وا) *wā* expressing wonder or surprise: 5 proverbs.
- (e) Particle (يا) *yā* expressing wonder or surprise: 2 proverbs.

¹ No. 268.

² See *Dhubaib, op. cit.*, p. 39.

³ No. 137.

⁴ See *Dhubaib, op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁵ Nos. 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 273.

⁶ No. 983.

⁷ In Maidāni, only 19 proverbs are found of this type. See *Dhubaib, op. cit.*, p. 40.

- (f) The interrogative (مِنْ), class. مُن : 3 proverbs.
 (g) The particle of comparison or simile (كُنَّ) tsenn, class. كَان : 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.: سراج نهار¹ 58 proverbs.
 (b) Phrases beginning with an idāfa, e.g.: جرد البريسم ولا جديد القطن² 68 proverbs.
- 2.2 Phrases followed by a dependent clause as: مثل النخلة الموجا بطاطه بغير حوضه³ 56 proverbs.
- 2.3 Phrases beginning with أفعل من : 17 proverbs.
- 2.4 Phrases consisting of two or more Nouns and connected with the conjunctive و or the preposition ب, as حجام وقلاع حج بقضيان حجاه⁴ and ضروس⁵ 24 proverbs.
- 2.5 Phrases beginning with an Indefinite Noun, as اسم بلا جسم⁶ 46 proverbs.
- 2.6 Type A and not B (. . . ولا . . .): 5 proverbs.
- 2.7 Miscellaneous Phrases: there are about forty miscellaneous

1 No. 385.
 2 No. 224.
 3 No. 949.
 4 No. 245.
 5 No. 246.
 6 No. 37.

phrases, many of them consisting of a noun qualified by an adjective as: **عبد سامور**.¹

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%)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 بارزاقسه**.³ 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 lā (لى): 46
- (b) Sentences preceded by the conditional elā (الى): 6
- (c) Sentences preceded by the negative mā (ما): 19
- (d) Sentences beginning with the interrogative weš (وش): 2
- (e) Sentences in the formula فعل وفعل as طالت وعرضت:² 5
- (f) Sentences in the formula فعل ولا فعل as كسر عصاه ولا طرح
قبيله:³ 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 Maidāni 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 ما: 42 examples.
- (b) Sentences beginning with the negative لا: 3 examples.⁴
- (c) Sentences beginning with the negative لم: 1 example⁵
but this particle is not used in the dialect.
- (d) Sentences beginning with the conditional and hypothetical لو: 4 examples.
- (e) Sentences beginning with the interrogative وش: 3 examples.
- (f) Sentences beginning with the conjunctive pronoun اللى:
17 examples.
- (g) Sentences in the optative form, as: الله لا يعيزنا لسوانى البقر:⁶
3 examples.

¹ See Dhubaib, op. cit., p. 41.

² No. 474.

³ No. 666.

⁴ There are 146 verbal sentences beginning with the negative لا in Maidāni. See Dhubaib, op. cit., p. 41.

⁵ No. 800.

⁶ No. 79.

(h) Sentences in the formula *يفعل ويفعل* as *يفزل وينقض*¹ 9 examples.

(i) Sentences in the formula *يفعل ولا يفعل* as *يقرا الكتاب ولا يهاب*² 3 examples.

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 Maidāni (that is, 23 per cent of the total of that collection).³ This type is expressed in various ways such as:

(a) The Simple Command: either an affirmative simple command such as *أبعد عن الدّابّ وشجرتّه*⁴ there are 31 proverbs of this kind; or a negative simple command such as *لا تشد الصّلوك عن*⁵ *مذاهبه* there are twelve proverbs of this kind.

(b) Conditional Sentences: there are eighteen proverbs of this type in our collection,⁶ 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 *جواب أمر*. For example, *اقرب من الخوف تامن*⁷. The conjunctive *و* connects the two parts of the proverb in some of them as in *أبعد عن العيب*

¹ No. 1184.

² No. 1187.

³ See *Dhubaib, op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁴ No. 4.

⁵ No. 734.

⁶ Nos. 1, 2, 5, 19, 27, 40, 46, 49, 57, 58, 74, 113, 129, 322, 554, 655, 729, 1085.

⁷ No. 58.

¹ ذراع ونم

(c) Double Imperative: some proverbs in our texts (25) contain two verbs in the imperative linked by و. As in the old Arabic proverbs of Maidāni, the majority of proverbs in this group are of the formula "Do . . . and do . . .", that is, two affirmative imperative sentences, for example: **أكرم وجهك**

² وان ايديك

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: **أشدد مجرب ولا تشدد طبيب**³ 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 تحب ولا تكره**⁴ 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 **الإغراء** (instigation) and **التحذير** (cautioning) is very rare in our collection. Only three such proverbs are found.⁵

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: **الطائر تمّ مدّ**.⁶ Maidāni's classical Arabic proverb collection contains 66 proverbs of this

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).¹

3.5 Proverbs with Impersonal Verbs: the only impersonal verb (فعل جامد) is عسى which occurs twice.²

3.6 Proverbs in the Interrogative Form: there are 21 proverbs in our collection involving interrogation, thirteen of them are "dialogue proverbs",³ the other examples begin with متى and وش .

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 Maidāni's collection of classical proverbs (4,765), while in none of the post-classical proverbs of Maidāni (1,110) is this formula used. However, it is very likely that most 'af'al min proverbs in Maidāni 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."⁴ 'Abd

¹ Dhubaib, op. cit., p. 42.

² No. 83 and a version of no. 1097.

³ See below, p. 389.

⁴ S.D. Goitein, "The Origin and Historical Significance of the Present-Day Arabic Proverbs", Islamic Culture, 36 (1952), p. 173.

al-Majīd 'Ābdīn 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, rāwīs 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 Ṭāliqāni'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 13³ of these and medially in fourteen.⁴

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.⁵

¹ 'A. 'Ābdīn, al-'Amtāl fī an-Naṭr al-'Arabi al-Qadīm (Cairo, 1956), p. 97.

² Ṭāliq., 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.

⁴ Nos. 81, 160, 372, 375, 418, 506, 510, 555, 568, 797, 967, 1064, 1072, 1089.

⁵ Sāsi, nos. 17, 51, 129.

The Yemenī Proverbs of Ismā'il al-'Akwa' (1288) contains 28 examples in which 'af'al min is used (about 2 per cent).¹

In Oman, 'af'al is peculiarly followed by the preposition عن and not من, in two proverbs among the 320 collected and translated by A.S. Jayakar.² A third example in the same collection, however, shows that this is not always the case.³

Baghdadi proverbs have a relatively large share of this type: there are 80 examples (about three per cent) of it in Tikrītī's collection (2,749 proverbs).⁴

'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,⁵ we find 63 examples of this type in Frayha's collection (c. 1.5 per cent),⁶ and 26 examples in Feghali (c. 1 per cent).⁷

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.

⁴ Tik., nos. 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 41, 42, 49, 54, 55, 64, 65, 66, 70, 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 81, 97, 170, 171, 173, 181, 182, 183, 193, 204, 205, 209, 213, 220, 229, 230, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 244, 247, 260, 264, 266, 269, 272, 273, 301, 367, 368, 397, 412, 415, 425, 476, 477, 491, 567, 592, 596, 507, 621, 659, 689, 743, 789, 847, 963, 1112, 1242, 1253, 1281, 1282, 1401, 1404, 1463, 1527, 1632, 1726, 1946, 2003, 2108, 2112, 2553, 2743.

⁵ Ašqar, nos. 58, 59, 60, 61, 101, 106, 107, 118, 119, 122, 137, 138, 229, 267, 282, 315, 355, 360, 361, 366, 385.

⁶ Frayha, nos. 17, 19, 20, 27, 60, 69, 115, 210, 229, 232, 233, 248, 278, 291, 293, 294, 295, 457, 858, 977, 1188, 1238, 1261, 1442, 1518, 1519, 2001, 2054, 2057, 2058, 2060, 2082, 2083, 2715, 2779, 2781, 2786, 2905, 2349, 2351, 2422, 3250, 3372, 3373, 3700, 3735, 3908, 3921, 4032, 4152.

⁷ Fegh., nos. 62, 63, 64, 118, 123, 240, 329, 463, 644, 703, 1003, 1069, 1074, 1173, 1218, 1532, 1604, 1611, 1639, 1734, 2069, 2098, 2148, 2289, 2227, 2307, 3046.

common than in Najd, as it occurs in only one per cent (32 examples) of the Egyptian Colloquial Proverbs of Aḥmad Taimūr Pasha (3188).¹

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%).² 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 Ṭāliqāni's collection, and about a half of one per cent in Sāsi's Meccan collection. Its occurrence is thus widespread but nowhere does it form more than five per cent.

1.2 Proverbs of Comparison which begin with مثل, or one of its Equivalents

The particle of comparison, mitl, very rarely precedes the sentence in ancient Arabic proverbs. Among Maidāni's 4,763 proverbs only one begins with it.³ Another particle of comparison, ك (ka) is more commonly used (60 examples begin with it).⁴

¹ Taim., nos. 14, 15, 69, 179, 181, 197, 203, 204, 274, 295, 316, 426, 553, 679, 850, 1259, 1285, 1514, 1739, 2024, 2106, 2113, 2156, 2162, 2196, 2361, 2398, 2411, 2412, 2578, 2726, 3046.

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, 3166, 3167, 3173, 3176, 3179, 3180, 3186, 3188, 3189.

A third particle, **كان**, is used though rarely (it comes at the beginning of eight proverbs in Maidāni).¹ None of Maidāni's post-classical proverbs begin with **مثل**, and in Ṭāliqāni's proverbs only one begins with it.² On the other hand, we do not find any post-classical proverb in Ṭāliqāni beginning with **ك** but in Maidāni we find twelve of them.³

كان comes at the beginning of nine post-classical proverbs in Maidāni,⁴ and seven in Ṭāliqāni.⁵

مثل precedes about two and a half per cent (27 proverbs) of the total number of our collection.⁶

Another particle of comparison or simile is **تقل** (tegel) "as, like" which is probably a changed form of **تقول**, the imperfect of **قال** (to say). This is supported by the fact that some people still use **تقول** as a particle for simile.⁷ Although **تقل** is very common in every-day speech, it is rarely used in proverbs (only one example begins with it).⁸

A third particle of simile is **كَن** (tse_{nn}) (class. **كان**). It occurs at the beginning of three examples in our collection.⁹

None of the Meccan proverbs in Hurgronje's group begins with a particle of simile, but Sāsi's collection contains four proverbs beginning with **زى** (zayy), "as, like".¹⁰

¹ M., nos. 2988, 2989, 3048, 3049, 3058, 3063, 3073, 3177.

² Ṭāliq., no. 468.

³ M., 2, pp. 172-173.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ṭāliq., 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. Tegel is also common in Jordan, see Rokos b. Zā'id al-'Uzaizi, Qāmūs 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 ساع which is used instead of مثل,¹ and one proverb begins with مثل.² Jayakar's Omani proverbs contain no proverb beginning with مثل or an equivalent particle. About two and a half per cent (70 examples) of Tikriti's Baghdad proverbs begin with مثل,³ and the same proportion (75 examples) is found in Ḥanafi's collection.⁴ There is about four per cent (196 examples) of Frayha's Modern Lebanese Proverbs beginning with مثل,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 مثل⁷ and 32 beginning with its equivalent زى.⁸

The t of مثل changes, on the whole in Syrian proverbs to a t̄ (this is in conformity with what occurs in the Syrian urban dialect in general where the dental fricative sound represented in classical Arabic by ث is replaced by the dental plosive ت). In Egypt, as in the urban dialect of Mecca, مثل is rarely used. It does not occur in Taimūr's collection, and once more as in Mecca, it is replaced by زى 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, 986, 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, 2105, 2220, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2514, 2544, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2636, 2637, 2746, 2747, 2748, 2749, 2800, 2802, 2844, 2845, 2848, 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.

begun.¹

To sum up, we have seen above that the comparative particle مثل was almost never used at the beginning of classical or post-classical proverbs, the other particles ك and كَان being used instead. Among present-day Arabic proverbs, one finds زى taking the place of مثل in Mecca and Egypt, and alternatively in G. Syria. In Yemen عسا is more common than مثل, and in Najd tegel and tsenn are used in addition to مثل.²

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 من

The conjunctive pronoun من "who, he who", is placed at the beginning of 82 proverbs in the Maidāni collection which is about one and a half per cent of the total of its proverbs (4,765).³

من seems to be more commonly used in later periods. Among the post-classical proverbs in Maidāni, proverbs beginning with من account for about nine per cent (96 examples) of the total of all post-classical proverbs in that work.⁴ The

¹ Tain., nos. 1361-1599.

² In addition to these, we find تَقْل and بِيْعَه (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 Ṭāliqāni's collection (about five per cent of its proverbs (32 out of 613) begin with من).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 مین which is the general Meccan pronunciation of مین,³ and one example (apparently borrowed from classical Arabic) with من.⁴

About 4.5 per cent (64 examples) of Goitein's Yemeni proverb collection begin with من.⁵

In Oman مین (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 بو (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 Tikrīti's collection (2,749)⁹ and about half this number of Ḥanafī (23 examples out of 2,966).¹⁰

¹ Ṭāliq., nos. 442, 445, 447-449, 453, 455, 469, 471, 472, 476, 477, 478, 482, 483, 485, 487, 488, 492, 494-500, 506, 509, 512-515.

² Nos. 997-1011, 1013-1020, 1022-1034, 1036-1038, 1041, 1043, 1045-1048.

³ Sāsi, 425-436, 439, 441-443, 445-455, 457-460.

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.

⁶ Jayak., nos. 275-279, 281-283, 288-290, 292, 294, 295, 297.

⁷ Jayak., nos. 46-71.

⁸ See A. Jayakar, "The Omānee Dialect", JRAS, 21 (1889), pp. 666-667.

⁹ Tik., nos. 2191-2200, 2208-2210, 2212, 2216-2218, 2220, 2221, 2226-2229, 2232-2234, 2240, 2242, 2245-2249, 2251, 2253, 2263, 2264, 2268-2270, 2275, 2277, 2278.

¹⁰ Ḥanafī, 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 من 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--92 examples) in Ašqar, of which eighty proverbs begin with مِن (mīn)³ and twelve with من (man)⁴

Seventy-nine Egyptian proverbs from those in Taimūr's book begin with من, a proportion of two and a half per cent of the total 3,188.⁵

To sum up, proverbs beginning with conjunctive من 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 من and مِن and eight per cent of Jayakar's proverbs begin with the other conjunctive بو. 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, 1653, 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 Ašqar, nos. 4499, 4502, 4503, 4506-4511, 4516-4528, 4530-4547, 4549, 4551, 4553-4573.

⁴ Ašqar, 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 اللى and its Equivalents

Conjunctive pronouns الذى, التي 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 Maidāni's collection begins in this way. This is also true of the post-classical proverbs quoted by Maidāni. However, in Ṭāliqāni's collection of post-classical proverbs, one proverb begins with الذى.¹

Twenty-four proverbs in our collection (c. 2%) begin with the conjunctive pronoun اللى ('alli)² which is used in the Najdi vernacular in place of classical الذى, التي and their dual and plural forms (that is, اللى is not affected as to number or gender).³

About ten per cent (60 examples) of Sāsi's Meccan proverbs begin with 'illi⁴ and eight examples in Hurgronje's collection (also about ten per cent).⁵

The classical الذى is still common in Yemen. Eighteen examples of Akwa's proverbs and 26 of Goitein's begin with this pronoun.⁶ أذى ('adī) which stands for الذى 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'il al-'Akwa's book (1,288).

¹ Ṭāliq., no. 94

² 'alli is the Najdi pronunciation. It is pronounced 'illi 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 seem to be ل (li) which is used at the beginning of one example in Jayakar's small collection¹ and لى (lī) which occurs at the beginning of two sentences.²

A hundred and twenty Baghdad proverbs among those in Tikrīti'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 بلى بلى (libga!bi bgalbi) "What is in my heart is in my heart"⁷ (about 40 examples).⁸

In G. Syria, as in Baghdad, there are three conjunctive 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, 1476, 1477, 1848, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1990, 2025-2027, 2029, 2030, 2037, 2289, 2304, 2322-2326, 2328-2331, 2334, 2335, 2338, 2341, 2345, 2350, 2351, 2365, 2372, 2374, 2596, 2597, 2599, 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, 2699, 2701, 2704, 2717, 2722, 2729-2731, 2733, 2734, 2742.

⁵ Ḥanafi, nos. 212-235.

⁶ Ḥanafi, e.g., nos. 176, 440, 443, 461, 774, 1064, 1304, 1305, 1339, 1787, 1793, 1804, 1805, 1816, 1818, 1819, 1826, 1870, 1871, 1873, 1880, 1881, 2245, 2257-2259, 2280, 2290, 2292, 2295, 2647, 2708, 2715, 2717, 2721, 2728, 2733, 2735, 2747, 2749, 2757, 2759, 2760, 2763, 2768, 2775, 2777, 2779.

⁷ Ḥanafi, 2, p. 250.

⁸ Ḥanafi, 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,¹ 44 with 'il,² and 22 with 'illi),³

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).⁴ The same percentage of proverbs beginning with 'illi occurs in Ašqar's collection.⁵ The other variants of 'illi: 'alladi, halli, hal, and 'il, do not occur in either of Frayha or Ašqar.

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.⁶

The above details clearly show that:

- (a) neither الذی 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 Ṭāliqāni's collection beginning with this pronoun) that الذی began at that time to find its way to the beginning of the sentence together with the other conjunctive من which was more commonly used at the start of the sentence

¹ Fegh., e.g., nos. 85-88, 231, 232, 374-380, 454, 487, 504, 533, 535, 536, 668, 708, 709, 782, 835, 840, 923, 987, 1039, 1120, 1121, 1211, 1258, 1268, 1269, 1425, 1484-1487, 1520, 1575, 1656, 1755, 1808, 1866, 1982, 2057, 2109, 2493, 2550, 2935.

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 Ašqar, 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) الذی in modern Arabic proverbs is conserved only in Yemen; 'illi is used in Mecca, Baghdad, Egypt, and G. Syria; 'alli is used in Najd; li in Baghdad; 'il in Baghdad and G. Syria; lī in Oman; halli and hal in G. Syria; 'adi in Yemen.

2.3 Proverbs beginning with the Conditional إذا ('idā) and its Colloquial Equivalents

Contrary to what might be expected, the number of ancient Arabic proverbs in Maidāni beginning with the conditional particle إذا is relatively small (40 examples--about 0.8%).¹

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),² and about two and a half per cent (16 examples) among Ṭāliqāni's collection of proverbs current in Baghdad in the eleventh century.³

إذا rarely occurs in the Najd dialect and consequently is also rare in Najdi proverbs where it is replaced by lā and 'ela (lyā and 'elya in bedouin speech generally). About four per cent (44 examples) of our collection begin with lā;⁴ 'ela, apparently less common, precedes six proverbs.⁵ Only one

¹ M., nos. 48, 53, 63, 70, 79, 88, 90, 94, 101, 104, 105, 109-112, 155, 170, 171, 173, 177, 199, 212, 213, 282-285, 290, 291, 294, 296, 298, 299, 303, 331, 333, 344, 385, 387, 402.

² M., 1, pp. 88-89.

³ Ṭāliq., nos. 1, 28, 29, 31, 34, 37, 38, 40, 43, 46, 48, 62, 70, 91, 103, 105.

⁴ Nos. 717, 718, 736, 737, 740, 743-761, 763-769, 772-776, 778, 779, 781-785.

⁵ Nos. 66-71.

proverb, which is also used in a classical form, begins with |ʒ|. ¹

As in classical Arabic, |ʒ| in modern Najdi proverbs is also immediately followed by a verb in the perfect. In every case lā and 'ela are likewise followed immediately by a verb in the perfect.

About four per cent (24 examples) of Sāsi's collection of Meccan proverbs begin with |ʒ| ('iza)² (in the dialect of the majority of the urban population of Mecca--as in Syrian towns -- the dental fricative dāl (ð 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's book begin with |ʒ|. ³ Nevertheless, it has to be noted that proverbs in the book in question are arranged in alphabetical order, and as |ʒ| 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 |ʒ| 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, |ʒ| 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 Sāsi, 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, 98-113.

proverbs) begin with la which corresponds to لـا. This lends strength to the probability that when al-'Akwa' was recording these proverbs he wrote the classical لـا which is rarely used in modern Yemeni dialect in place of 'ela and la which are common (particularly in رداع, زمار, صنعا).²

Nine examples (c. 3%) of Jayakar's collection of Omani proverbs begin with لـا.³

لـا is quite common in Baghdad; about one and a half per cent (46 examples) of Ḥanafi and about 1.8 per cent (50 examples) of Tikrīti begin with this particle.⁴

Feghali's collection of Syro-Lebanese proverbs contains forty examples (c. 1.3%) beginning with لـا ('eza) (originally لـا, but the j 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 لـا 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 لـما which stands for لـا, حينما or عندما.⁸

The use of لـا 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 Hanafi, nos. 50-95; Tik., nos. 110-159.

⁵ Fegh., nos. 2, 3, 253, 254, 297, 330, 460, 671, 764, 850, 1216, 1217, 1280, 1281, 1356, 1357, 1454, 1523-1526, 1702-1706, 1870, 1871, 1917, 1955, 2059, 2060, 2143, 2144, 2170, 2334, 2405, 2759, 2784, 3024.

⁶ Ašqar, nos. 147-197.

⁷ Frayha, nos. 126-159.

⁸ Frayha, nos. 3195-3204.

⁹ Taymūr, nos. 96-99.

its equivalent إِذَا occurs at the beginning of nine proverbs.¹

We may sum up by saying that proverbs which begin with the conditional particle إِذَا 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 إِذَا or any of its equivalents.

It is clear from the above comparison that the classical conditional particle إِذَا is used in Mecca, Oman, Baghdad, Egypt--though rarely--and G. Syria, but is not used in Najd where it is replaced by لَا and 'ela ,² and rarely used in Yemen where it is also often replaced by لَا and 'ela .

2.4 Proverbs beginning with the Conditional إِن

Below are set out the figures and percentages of proverbs beginning with the conditional إِن in front of the name of the country, region, or town, and divided into the kind of proverb (e.g. classical/post-classical):

Classical:	Maidāni:	34 (c. 0.7%) ³
Post-classical:	Maidāni:	4 (c. 0.4%) ⁴
	Ṭāliqāni:	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, إِذَا has started to find its way into every-day speech in Najd.

³ M., nos. 55, 56, 69, 75, 76, 82, 91, 103, 123, 129, 149, 183, 204, 205, 212, 234, 240, 243, 248, 261, 278, 281, 286, 293, 305, 324, 340, 354, 357, 366, 369, 377, 380, 393.

⁴ M., 1, p. 88.

⁵ Ṭāliq., nos. 12, 33, 83.

⁶ Nos. 122-125, 127, 128, 130-133.

Mecca:	Sāsi:	2 (c. 0.3%) ¹
	Hurgronje:	none
Yemen:	Akwa':	17 (c. 1.5%) ²
	Goitein:	7 ³
Oman:	Jayakar:	3 (c. 1%) ⁴
Baghdad:	Hanafi:	7 (c. 0.2%) ⁵
	Tikrīti:	11 (c. 0.4%) ⁶
G. Syria:	Feghali:	34 (c. 1%) ⁷
	Frayha:	71 (c. 2%) ⁸
	Ašqar:	20 (0.4%) ⁹
Egypt:	Taimūr	115 (c. 3.5%) ¹⁰

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 ل)

Classical:	Maidāni:	22 (c. 0.5%) ¹¹
Post-classical:	Maidāni:	none
	Ṭāliqāni:	none

¹ Sāsi, nos. 287, 288.

² Akwa', nos. 684-686, 688-702 (ان ('in) is pronounced 'inna in most cases in these Yemeni proverbs).

³ Goit., nos. 157-163.

⁴ Jayak., nos. 29-31.

⁵ Hanafi, nos. 249, 251, 255-257, 259, 278.

⁶ Tik., nos. 379-389.

⁷ Fegh., nos. 48, 49, 191, 236, 300, 412, 509, 510, 627-630, 674, 789, 790, 930, 967, 1026, 1072, 1286, 1363, 1364, 1613, 1638, 1877, 1878, 1919, 1986, 2064, 2130, 2171, 2585, 2986.

⁸ Frayha, nos. 631-662, 664-702.

⁹ Ašqar, nos. 838-845, 847-958.

¹⁰ Taim., nos. 561-675.

¹¹ M., nos. 4637-4642, 4646, 4647, 4651-4653, 4661, 4663, 4690, 4695, 4705, 4706, 4718-4720, 4722, 4761.

Najd:	Our collection:	15 (c. 1.3%) ¹
Yemen:	Goitein:	24 (c. 2%) ²
Oman:	Jayakar:	2 (c. 0.6%) ³
Baghdad:	Hanafi	36 (c. 1.2%) ⁴
	Tikrīti:	28 (c. 1%) ⁵
Mecca:	Sāsi:	11 (c. 2%) ⁶
G. Syria:	Ašqar:	93 (c. 1.8%) ⁷
	Feghali:	37 (c. 2.5%) ⁸
	Frayha:	54 (c. 1.4%) ⁹
Egypt:	Taimūr:	76 (c. 2.5%) ¹⁰

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 l 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, 5015-5028, 5033-5050, 5053-5067, 5082-5096.

⁸ Fegh., nos. 163, 164, 235, 294, 296, 457, 458, 488, 842, 844, 927, 957, 958, 988, 1010, 1276, 1277, 1278, 1351, 1352, 1431, 1491, 1577, 1758, 1812, 1915, 2331, 2494, 2495, 2582, 2583, 2668, 2879, 2899, 3023, 3048.

⁹ Frayha, nos. 4156-4158, 4160-4163, 4165-4174, 4176-4178, 4181-4188, 4192, 4194-4197, 4201-4209, 4212-4214, 4224-4232.

¹⁰ Taim., nos. 3026-3030, 3032-3040, 3045-3062, 3065-3087, 3089, 3092, 3095, 3105-3113, 3115-3123.

2.6 Proverbs beginning with the Negative Command لا تفعل(Do not do)

Classical:	Maidāni:	58 (c. 1.2%) ¹
Post-classical:	Maidāni:	23 (c. 2%) ²
	Ṭāliqāni:	9 (c. 1.5%) ³
Najd:	Our collection:	15 (c. 1.3%) ⁴
Mecca:	Sāsi:	5 (less than 1%) ⁵
	Hurgronje:	1 ⁶
Yemen:	Goitein:	38 (c. 3%) ⁷
Oman:	Jayakar:	1 ⁸
Baghdad:	Tikrīti:	24 (less than 1%) ⁹
	Hanafi:	24 (c. 0.8%) ¹⁰
G. Syria:	Feghali:	44 (c. 1.5%) ¹¹

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 Ṭāliq., 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 'u, e.g., "lā tebūg 'u lā takāf" (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 Hurg., no. 20.

⁷ Goit., nos. 942, 947-949, 950-955, 957-964, 967, 969-971, 974, 977, 978, 981-985, 987-992, 995, 996, 999.

⁸ Jayak., no. 227.

⁹ Tik., nos. 1779-1801.

¹⁰ Hanafi, 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.

G. Syria (cont'd) Frayha:	60 (c. 1.5%) ¹
Ašqar:	58 (c. 1%) ²
Egypt: Taimūr:	5 (less than 0.2%) ³
Burckhardt:	7 (less than 1%) ⁴

To sum up, proportions of proverbs beginning with the particle of prohibition, لا الطيبه or لا الناهيه 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 Maidāni,⁶ and even these are likely to be post-classical. Both of them begin directly with the question (that is without قال, قيل 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.

⁵ See A. Taylor, The Proverb (Copenhagen, 1962), p. 156.

⁶ M., nos. 4086, 4647.

Only one of Maidāni's 1,100 or so post-classical proverbs is a dialogue proverb.¹ However, five dialogue proverbs which are almost certainly post-classical are included among the classical proverbs.² Four of these begin with . . . قيل (it was said to . . .). In Ṭāliqāni there are five dialogue proverbs,³ only in one of them do both sentences begin with قال,⁴ while both sentences begin with قال 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,⁵ and nine in Sāsi's collection (c. 1.5%).⁶ Each sentence of the Meccan dialogue proverbs begins with قال (gallu, he said to him (i.e., another) . . .) or the first sentence with قالوا (gālu, they said . . .) and the second with قالهم (galluhum, he said to them).

Only one dialogue proverb is found among Jayakar's seventy-seven Omani proverbs.⁷

Dialogue proverbs do not seem to be very common in Baghdad. Not more than seventeen of them are found in each of Ḥanafī's and Tikrīti's collections (c. 0.5%).⁸ They are more common among Syrian proverbs. There are seventy six dialogue

¹ M., 2, p. 382: "وقعت آجرة ولبنة في الماء فقالت الآجرة والابتلا لاه فقالت اللبنه فماذا أقول أنا."

² M., nos. 2838, 2856, 2904, 2922, 4663. 'Abd al-Majīd 'Abdīn also considers these five proverbs post-classical. See 'A. 'Abdīn, *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 Ḥanafī, nos. 1569, 1572-1584, 1586, 2039, and the proverb: "قالوله للغراب ليش تسرق الصابونه قال الأذيه طبع" (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 Ašqar.³

Syrian dialogue proverbs begin either with قال (he said), قالو (he said to him), or قالو (they said), followed by a question or a statement followed by another sentence beginning also with قال, قالو, or قالوا; or they begin directly with the question, as happens in some classical Arabic dialogue proverbs. Twenty three proverbs of those in Ašqar's book begin directly with the interrogative particle šū (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.

² Fegh., nos. 28, 65, 128, 129, 247, 318, 476, 813, 905, 983, 1202, 1397, 1474, 1789, 1856, 1938, 1939, 2202, 2203, 2305, 2306, 2383, 2479, 2796, 2797, 2824, 2890, 2891, 2918, 2949, 2950, 2986-2988, 3036.

³ Ašqar, nos. 2466-2488, 3201-3300, 5008.

⁴ Goit., nos. 35, 49, 166, 176, 193, 195, 315, 320, 562, 692, 820, 895, 1110, 1117.

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, 2148, 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 كل

كل (every, each) comes at the beginning of less than one per cent (42 proverbs) in Maidāni,¹ and a similar percentage (1%--17 proverbs) in Maidāni's post-classical collection; in two of them كلما (kullama, whenever) is used.² In Ṭāliqāni's collection, four proverbs begin with كل and three with كلما (c. 1%).³

كل (in Najd, kell) on the other hand precedes thirty proverbs in our collection (c. 3%),⁴ and in thirteen of them كل is nunated (kellen).⁵ Three proverbs begin with كلش (kelleš) and كل ش (kell šen) which are the dialectical versions of the classical كل شيء (kullu šay'in, everything).⁶

This noun is used at the beginning of sixteen Meccan proverbs in Sāsi's collection (c. 2.5%), in twelve of them it is pronounced kulli⁷ and kullan in four.⁸

كل is not as common in Yemen. Only seven proverbs in Goitein's collection begin with it,⁹ and seven others begin with kullin¹⁰ (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.

³ Ṭāliq., p. 26.

⁴ Nos. 671, 673, 678-682, 684-700, 702-707.

⁵ Nos. 673, 680, 686, 695-698, 700, 703, 704-707.

⁶ Nos. 690, 691, 693.

⁷ Sāsi, nos. 345-356.

⁸ Sāsi, nos. 341-344.

⁹ Goit., nos. 916-919, 1413-1415.

¹⁰ Goit., nos. 922-928.

Ten Omani proverbs in Jayakar's article begin with كل(kull) and in three of them it is nunated (kullun).¹

A little less than three per cent (77 proverbs) in Tikrīti's collection begin with كل(kull), in seven of them كلن (kullman) which is used instead of the nunated كل (kullun) is used, and كلما (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 tanwīn 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.

كل is used in its classical form (i.e., with kāf maḍmūmah) everywhere except Najd where it becomes kell (i.e., with a kāf maksūrah).

The nunated كل (kullun, everybody) becomes kellen in Najd,¹ kullman in Baghdad and Syria, kullīn in Yemen, kullmanhu in Egypt, but is used without change in Oman.

3.2 The "A and not B" (. . . ولا . . .) Type

The "A and not B" (. . . ولا . . .) 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 . . . ولا . . . occurs in not more than two proverbs in Maidāni.² It does not occur in Maidāni's post-classical proverbs, but the formula أفضل من is used instead.³ However, Ṭāliqāni's collection contains three proverbs in which ولا is used⁴ which shows that ولا existed even then by the side of أفضل من.

This pattern is used in 25 proverbs in our collection (c. 2%).⁵

¹ As only the ending en is used as tanwīn in Najd.

² M., nos. 271, 4032.

³ See e.g., the proverb: التَّحْسِنُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْحَمْنِ (M., 1, p. 151).

⁴ Ṭāliq., 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'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 Hanafi's collection of proverbs from Baghdad (c. 1%) and the same percentage (but 31 proverbs) in Tikrīti'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

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, 968, 1048, 1055, 1068, 1083, 1084, 1121, 1122, 1124, 1166, 1169, 1189, 1192, 1202, 1216-1218, 1239, 1253, 1257-1259, 1270, 1275.

⁴ Goit., nos. 222, 231, 257, 276, 278, 318, 363, 375, 402, 404, 409, 446, 471, 477, 491, 492, 502, 514, 520, 526, 538, 608, 610, 612, 627, 628, 646, 654, 684, 708, 731, 773, 839, 864, 871, 943, 1005, 1276, 1299, 1378, 1392, 1393, 1397, 1424.

⁵ Jayak., nos. 76, 89, 101, 108, 144, 194, 211, 268.

⁶ Hanafi, e.g., nos. 183-187, 319, 354, 363, 391, 402, 444, 563, 700, 901, 910, 948, 1063, 1110, 1242, 1280, 1287, 1298, 1371, 1430, 1560, 2172, 2188, 2302, 2303, 2306, 2406, 2408, 2412, 2458, 2770. Tik., nos. 245, 250, 321-323, 460, 521, 522, 551, 606, 613, 618, 681, 718, 1087, 1111, 1183, 1195, 1210, 1216, 1218, 1258, 1277, 1458, 1569, 1570, 1711, 2287, 2303, 2516, 2519.

⁷ Frayha, nos. 172, 259, 321, 324, 325-330, 340, 737, 799, 820, 827, 900, 951, 1092, 1175, 1210, 1216, 1228, 1279, 1291, 1297, 1298, 1456, 1474, 1478, 1517, 1558, 1605, 1613, 1801, 1812-1814, 1834, 1856, 1872, 1971, 1991, 1999, 2007, 2015, 2031, 2033, 2102, 2103, 2123, 2136, 2139-2146, 2158, 2174, 2376, 2381, 2440, 2506, 2532, 2586, 2603, 2630, 2814, 2857, 2859, 2995, 3753, 3778, 3925, 3941, 3944, 3947, 3996, 3998, 4104, 4170, 4236.

⁸ Fegh., nos. 41, 61, 76, 115, 121, 177, 189, 225, 301, 386, 390, 397, 516, 806, 1052, 1127, 1128, 1150, 1347, 1355, 1388, 1395, 1456, 1544, 1725, 1814, 1970, 2028, 2087, 2188, 2258, 2329, 2406, 2462, 2473, 2662, 2692, 2783, 2808, 2828, 2835, 3005, 3025.

(c. 2.5%).¹

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.² It varies between about three per cent in Yemen (Goitein) and one per cent in Baghdad (Ḥanafī and Tikrīti).

3.3 The "neither . . . nor . . ." (. . . ۛ . . . ۛ) Type

Although proverbs of the correlative conjunctions pattern, . . . ۛ . . . ۛ (neither . . . nor . . .) are comparatively rare in some regions, they find their way into Arabic proverbs both old and new everywhere.

The pattern . . . ۛ . . . ۛ illustrates a state of

¹ Taim., 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 Sāsi's collection which contains 618 Meccan proverbs includes only 10 of this type).

non-commitment to one of two attitudes, positions, or standpoints. 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 Maidāni's collection there are a mere fifteen proverbs (c. 0.4%).¹

It seems to be even rarer among post-classical proverbs and in fact does not occur in either Maidāni's or Ṭāliqāni'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.²

There are three proverbs of this type among the seventy-seven Meccan proverbs collected by Hurgronje.³ Surprisingly, 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,⁴ which makes one wonder whether the introduction of the , was actually used last century (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.⁵ 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 lā).

³ Hurg., nos. 15, 18, 55.

⁴ Sāsi, nos. 363, 371.

⁵ Akwa', no. 54.

however, is probably because other sections of Akwa's 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 Goitein'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 Ḥanafi's collection of Baghdad proverbs (2,966).³ The same percentage (but only 49 proverbs) occurs in Tikrīti'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, 968, and 993, the formula is . . . \forall , . . . \forall . . . \forall (neither . . . nor . . . nor . . .).

² Jayak., nos. 228, 298.

³ Hanafi, nos. 528, 826, 855, 1148, 1301, 1926, 1944, 1965, 1982, 1998, 2031, 2044, 2283, 2443, 2555-2562, 2564, 2565, 2567, 2572-2574, 2593-2595, 2598-2601, 2603-2605, 2607, 2609, 2611, 2612, 2614-2620, 2622-2630, 2632.

⁴ Tik., nos. 1160, 1345, 1474, 1764, 1665-1675, 1804, 1806, 1808, 1809, 1811-1814, 1825, 1826, 1829, 1831, 1833-1835, 1837, 1839, 1841, 1973, 2002, 2055, 2110, 2132, 2188.

⁵ Fegh., nos. 79, 133, 213, 284, 496, 536, 546, 607, 608, 610, 638, 760, 770, 817, 942, 1005, 1036, 1106, 1139, 1179, 1206, 1406, 1407, 1560, 1688, 1795, 1812, 1946, 2091, 2102, 2105, 2166, 2209, 2292, 2484, 2499, 2506, 2634, 2719, 2742, 2748, 2779, 2827, 2837, 2843, 2893, 2993, 3028, 3038. Frayha, nos. 188, 549, 579, 1282, 1396, 1748, 1780, 2279, 2342, 2348, 2349, 2445, 2698, 3063-3066, 3069, 3070-3079, 3142, 3143, 3145, 3146, 3151, 3152, 3154, 3155, 3157, 3158, 3160, 3161-3163, 3168, 3178, 3336, 3357, 3451, 3514, 3562, 3578, 3590, 3597, 3610, 3619, 3628, 3655, 3812, 3843, 4225.

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 . . ." (. . . $\text{إما} . . . \text{أو}$) 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 Maidāni's classical collection² and none in his post-classical collection. Ṭāliqāni'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

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 Ṭāliq., no. 52.

⁴ Nos. 105-111, 258.

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 Tikrīti (less than 0.2%)⁴ and in ten in Ḥanafi (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 . . . لاءِ . . . لا، while different forms are used in different places.

3.5 Proverbs beginning with the Negative Particle لا and its Equivalents

Approximately three and a half per cent (157 proverbs) of the classical proverbs of Maidāni begin with the negative particle لا,¹ and about two per cent (19 proverbs) of Maidāni's collection of post-classical proverbs begin in this way.² In Ṭāliqāni's post-classical proverbs, only eight (c. 1.3%) open with it.³

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 لا.⁴

Among Sāsi's Meccan proverbs, 23 (c. 4%) begin with لا⁵ and four others with its equivalent لا.⁶

About five per cent (seventy proverbs) of Goitein's Yemeni proverb collection begin with لا.⁷

¹ M., nos. 3748, 3750-3758, 3760, 3765-3768, 3772, 3775-3782, 3786, 3791-3793, 3796, 3798-3809, 3811-3816, 3818-3825, 3828, 3834, 3841, 3844-3849, 3850, 3855, 3859-3865, 3867-3871, 3873-3875, 3881-3883, 3886, 3888-3896, 3899, 3902, 3903, 3905, 3907-3909, 3919-3921, 2923-3927, 3930-3938, 3943-3945, 3947, 3948, 3951-3953, 3956, 3957, 3959, 3961-3967, 3969, 3971-3979, 3981, 3983, 3984, 3986-3988, 3992, 4008, 4023, 4024.

² M., 2, pp. 327-330.

³ Ṭāliq., nos. 446, 464, 465, 467, 479, 503, 504, 510.

⁴ Nos. 814, 816-818, 820-823, 825, 826, 828-831, 836, 837, 838-844, 847, 848, 850-863, 865, 870-880, 884-895, 897-901, 903-913, 915-929.

⁵ Sāsi, nos. 386, 390, 391, 392, 396-398, 402, 406, 408-411, 413-422.

⁶ Sāsi, 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. Ḥanafī's proverbs, for example, include only about two and a half per cent (74 proverbs) which begin with لَ.² There are also two other negative particles which are common in the Iraqi dialect, مَآو and مَو. Each of these two particles occurs at the beginning of a dozen proverbs in Ḥanafī's collection.³ The proportion is a little higher among Tikrīti's collection where about three and a half per cent (93 proverbs) begin with لَ,⁴ eleven proverbs begin with مَو⁵ and six with مَآو.⁶ The long vowel of mā 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 لَ.⁸ The other

¹ Jayak., nos. 238, 240, 244-256, 258, 264-266.

² Ḥanafī, nos. 1780-1785, 1790-1792, 1794-1796, 1806-1810, 1812-1815, 1817, 1820-1824, 1827-1829, 1862, 1864-1866, 1872, 1873, 1875-1879, 2055-2059, 2123, 2246-2249, 2255, 2260-2264, 2268-2273, 2275, 2276, 2278, 2279, 2281-2283, 2286, 2289, 2291, 2293.

³ Ḥanafī, مَآو from 1830-1842, مَو from 2233-2243.

⁴ Tik., nos. 1943, 1944, 1946-1961, 1964-1972, 1974, 1976, 1978-1982, 1985, 1989, 1991-1995, 2028, 2031-2036, 2038, 2116-2123, 2320, 2321, 2326, 2327, 2332, 2333, 2336, 2337, 2339, 2340, 2342-2344, 2346-2349, 2352, 2353, 2355-2364, 2366-2371, 2373.

⁵ Tik., nos. 2290-2300.

⁶ Tik., nos. 2003-2008.

⁷ The shorting of the لَ vowel occurs in the Najd dialect only when لَ is directly followed by a personal pronoun, as in manāb . . . (I am not . . . (originally . . . مَآو)), mahūb (he is not . . .) (see proverb no. 1099).

⁸ Fegh., nos. 33, 82, 83, 135-138, 140, 141, 183, 227, 366, 367, 402, 447, 482, 502, 528, 529, 659, 660, 702-704, 733, 734, 772-775, 819, 820, 912, 914, 985, 1110-1113, 1140, 1171, 1206, 1253-1255, 1339, 1340, 1412-1414, 1475-1478, 1569, 1570, 1632, 1690, 1691, 1693, 1694, 1747, 1798-1801, 1830-1832, 1861, 1943-1945, 2054, 2094-2097, 2125, 2216, 2217, 2248, 2311, 2312, 2314-2317, 2417-2419, 2436, 2437, 2559-2561, 2578, 2683, 2701, 2777-2779, 2840, 2841, 2925, 2942, 2995, 3019.

negative particle *موش* (*mūš*) 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 *موش* 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 *ل*⁴ and seventeen with *موش*.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 *موش*.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: *و* in Mecca and Baghdad, *موش* in Syria and Egypt, and *مانو* 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 Fegh., 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 Taim., nos. 2578-2591, 2593-2602, 2605-2618, 2621-2628, 2630-2640, 2651-2653, 2663-2679, 2682-2685, 2688-2704.

⁷ Taim., 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 *إِذْ* 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 *مِنْ*. 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 *أَفْعَلُ مِنْ* which expresses exaggerating comparison, or the use of a comparative particle. However, the *تشبيه بلائغ* (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 *تمرة خبز*,² while in some it is implied in the middle of the sentence, as in

ذراعك كيس.³

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 البرهيم ولا جديد القطن³ the words جرد (old) and جديد (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 شوي هناك ولا كثير عناك⁴. This kind of tibāq is rare and is used in no more than six proverbs.⁵

(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

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 collection¹ and in none of Maidāni'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 ناقص (incomplete jinās) as distinct from the جناس تام (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: الحقوق تبي حلوق.² The incomplete jinās is less common in classical proverbs and occurs in about four per cent (180 proverbs) in Maidāni.³

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 Maidāni-- 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,¹ and each of its two plural forms, 'ebā'er and ba'ārīn, occurs in one proverb.² The word al-faḥal which is applied to any large quadruped and therefore could mean a camel, occurs once.³ The word al-bell (class. al-'ibil) occurs in four proverbs,⁴ and al-hejen (like al-bell having no singular) is mentioned once.⁵

The word hwār (a young camel when just born or until weaned, that is, from the time of its birth until big and weaned,⁶ i.e., until it is one year old) is mentioned in two proverbs.⁷

Hāši (a young camel older than hwār) and its diminutive form, ḥweeši, occur in two examples,⁸ and ge'ūd (a young male camel for the first six years until its eye-teeth nīban become fully developed)⁹ is mentioned in two proverbs.¹⁰ But bakreh (a young she-camel) does not occur in this collection although the word is very common.

Herš (a male camel over 20 years of age) occurs once¹¹ and both fajer (a female camel over 20 years of age)¹² and its plural fettar are mentioned in one proverb each.¹³

Nāgeh (a female camel that has had a calf; an eight

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 نويقه (nweedzeh) in two proverbs.³

The word jde'eh (جدعه) (young she-camel in its fifth year)⁴ and ledziyyih (لديه) (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 restive¹⁰ and unpredictable.¹¹ They are valuable property.¹² They are valued for their meat.¹³ They are physically powerful.¹⁴ They are good for racing¹⁵ and drawing water from wells.¹⁶ Really strong camels are rare.¹⁷

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 bellies¹ 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 feeling⁵ 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 desert¹³ or rustled by nomads.¹⁴ For this latter reason, they are branded¹⁵ (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

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- 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

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.

⁸ No. 210.

⁹ No. 211.

¹⁰ Nos. 61, 908.

¹¹ Nos. 76, 79, 95, 166, 167, 195, 423, 740, 958, 992, 1105, 1117, 1157.

found.

They are clumsy.¹ They are incapable of running fast for long distances, for they grow weary easily and hence are no good for racing.² Cows cannot be saddled.³ They are used for drawing water⁴ and, like donkeys, for threshing.⁵

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.⁶

(d) The Donkey

The donkey occurs in nineteen proverbs, which amounts to about 6.5 per cent of all the animal proverbs,⁷ 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.⁸ It is an awkward and difficult beast.⁹ Losing donkeys is not a great loss, as a donkey can always be easily replaced by another.¹⁰

(e) The Sheep

Sheep are mentioned in fourteen proverbs, that is, about five per cent of the animal proverbs in this collection.¹¹

¹ No. 1117.

² No. 423.

³ No. 1105.

⁴ No. 79.

⁵ No. 167.

⁶ No. 958.

⁷ Nos. 93, 123, 195, 270, 271, 274, 290, 291, 348, 618, 659, 733, 756, 762, 894, 999, 1103, 1128.

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.¹ 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.² Lambs are submissive.³

(f) The Goat

Goats are represented in fourteen proverbs.⁴ 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.⁵ They are greedy.⁶ They are used for milking.⁷ They are physically weak especially compared with camels.⁸

1.1.2 Wild Herbivorous Animals(a) The Gazelle

The gazelle is mentioned in two proverbs.⁹ It appears as the symbol of beauty in one of them,¹⁰ and in the other its head is described as useless for food because there is little or no meat on it.¹¹

(b) The Rabbit

The rabbit is represented in three proverbs.¹²

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.¹ Its ears are a large part of it.²
Its body is small.³

(c) The Jerboa

The jerboa is mentioned in four proverbs,⁴ and a further proverb alludes to it by implication.⁵

The Qualities of the Jerboa

It is described as edible,⁶ unclean,⁷ worthless,⁸ and it is implied that it is intelligent (it makes several escape holes to its burrow⁹ and it thins the soil near these holes so that it collapses easily when the jerboa pushes it from below when trying to escape).¹⁰

1.2 Carnivorous Animals(a) The Lion

While about thirty classical Arabic proverbs in Maidāni's collection deal with the lion,¹¹ it is not so interesting to the people living in Najd at present. It is referred to in two proverbs in our collection.¹² This is only to be expected, for lions were common in Arabia in pre-Islamic times but are now extinct.

The word سبع 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 meat¹ 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.

⁵ Nos. 85, 213, 335-340, 354, 357, 619, 854, 889, 943, 1049, 1080, 1146, 1173.

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 heşni (حصنى) is used in one proverb,¹⁶ and

¹ Nos. 78, 147, 249, 258, 424, 532, 615, 620, 625, 668, 671, 672, 674-677, 773, 806, 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 bseeni (حسينى) in two.¹ the كنيه (epithet) of the fox, ابا الحصين, occurs three times² and ثعلب 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 per cent 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).¹ It fights hard when there is no escape.² It has a raucous voice.³

1.3 Rodents

Besides rabbits and jerboas dealt with above, mice and rats are referred to in five proverbs.⁴

The Qualities of Mice and Rats

The mouse is described as unclean.⁵ The mouse that dwells in a mosque is very poor,⁶ and the big rat does not go far from its burrow for fear of losing its way.⁷

1.4 Birds

1.4.1 Carnivorous Birds

(a) Falcons

Falcons are mentioned in seven proverbs.⁸ The word طير (teer) (fus. tayr) which in the dialect means "falcon" as well as "bird" is used in five of them, while the adjective-noun حرّ (herr) (free, falcon) which is applied to a thoroughbred falcon is used in the fourth. Even though the word صقر 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 Šalwa).⁹ Ambitious (a falcon that catches bustards does not (care to) catch

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.

grasshoppers).¹ They are ungrateful (a certain Eben Bermān 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).² They are hasty.³ They are sharp-sighted.⁴ They are carnivorous.⁵

(b) Eagles

Eagles are mentioned once.⁶ Longevity is ascribed to them.

(c) Crows

Crows are mentioned once.⁷ They are depicted as cunning.

(d) Owls

Owls are mentioned in one proverb.⁸ 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.⁹

(ii) Hens: Hens are referred to in four proverbs.¹⁰ They are depicted as weak,¹¹ stupid,¹² clumsy,¹³ and restless (before laying eggs).¹⁴

-
- 1 No. 483.
 2 No. 1142.
 3 No. 1076.
 4 No. 424.
 5 No. 175.
 6 No. 540.
 7 No. 509.
 8 No. 1020.
 9 Nos. 178, 912, 942.
 10 Nos. 184, 312, 939, 940.
 11 No. 184.
 12 No. 312.
 13 No. 939.
 14 No. 940.

(b) Sparrows

Sparrows are mentioned in five proverbs.¹ They are described as weak,² noisy,³ light in weight,⁴ and having diminutive bodies.⁵

(c) Lesser Bustards

Lesser bustards are mentioned in one proverb.⁶ They are described as good game birds.

(d) Larks

The crested lark, al-gōbe'eh (القوبعة), which is probably to be identified with the qunburah (قنبره), is mentioned in one proverb.⁷ 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 Sālem (mother of Sālem). It is mentioned in one proverb and depicted as feckless.⁸

(e) Swallows

The swallow, ar-rgee'i (الرقيعي), is mentioned in one proverb.⁹ It is described as skinny.

(f) The Night-piper

A bird called صوايَة الليل (lit. the night-piper) is mentioned in one proverb.¹⁰ It is made a symbol of extreme poverty. (It is commonly held that it pipes all night because

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 zabb (ضَب) lizard (uromastyx): this lizard is mentioned in two proverbs.⁹ It is depicted as incorrigible¹⁰ and loving its habitation.¹¹

(ii) The monitor lizard ('urar; fus. وِرْل): 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

¹ Nos. 20, 30, 181, 485, 565, 814, 1076, 1085, 1118.

² No. 20.

³ No. 30.

⁴ No. 181.

⁵ No. 485.

⁶ Nos. 112, 178, 179, 180, 939, 940.

⁷ No. 180.

⁸ No. 112.

⁹ Nos. 456, 457.

¹⁰ No. 456.

¹¹ No. 457.

¹² No. 326.

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 (نمل): 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 نذ: they are mentioned in one proverb and described as acquisitive.¹³

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.¹ They are typified as numerous,² edible,³ and coming in swarms.⁴

(c) Grasshoppers

A type of grasshopper species called gubaş 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).⁵

(d) Dragonflies

The dragonfly is mentioned once and depicted as restless (when a piece of palm-leaf is attached to its tail).⁶

(e) Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes are mentioned in three proverbs.⁷ They are described as worthless and of no account.

(f) Flies

Flies are mentioned in four proverbs.⁸

The Qualities of Flies

They are persistent.⁹ They are of no account.¹⁰ They are repellent.¹¹ 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.¹²

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.¹ They are described as of no account.²

(h) Camel Ticks

Camel ticks are mentioned in two proverbs;³ 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.⁴ The existence of ticks is resented, for their number multiplies at the time of drought, and they tend to bite emaciated camels.⁵

(i) Hornets

Hornets are mentioned once, and described as causing disturbance with their noise.⁶

(j) Lice

The louse is mentioned once, and described as lazy.⁷

(k) Scorpions

The scorpion is mentioned once, and described by implication as dangerous.⁸

(l) Moths

The moth is mentioned once. It is described as reckless (it throws itself into a flame).⁹

1.7 Aquatic and Amphibian Animals(a) Fish

The only fish that finds a place in our texts is the

¹ Nos. 90, 244.
² No. 244.
³ Nos. 623, 1129.
⁴ No. 623.
⁵ No. 1129.
⁶ No. 330.
⁷ No. 48.
⁸ No. 52.
⁹ No. 951.

large and dangerous shark. It is mentioned in two proverbs,¹ in each of which the sing. شازوب 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.²

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:

<u>Trait</u>	<u>Number of proverbs</u>
small size (of body)	2
sharp-sightedness	1
physical weakness	2

¹ Nos. 108, 685.

² No. 881

emaciation	3
physical strength	2
ability to carry burdens	1
having capacious bellies	1
ability to drink large quantities of water	<u>1</u>
	<u>13</u>

(b) Traits Relating to the Animal's Habits and Temperament

This group consists of some fifty characteristics derived from about eighty proverbs.

courage	2
cowardice and timidity	4
caution	1
intelligence	1
parsimony	1
ambition	1
persistence	1
uncleanness	2
cunning	1
restiveness	1
acquisitiveness	1
numerousness	1
worthlessness	2
clumsiness	1
restlessness	1
unpredictability	1
quick temper	1
laziness and fecklessness	3
submissiveness	1
imprudence	1
greed	1
aggressiveness	1
stupidity	5
ungratefulness	5
incurability	1
selfishness	2
cleverness	2
hypocrisy	1
unruliness	3
being perplexed	1
being mischievous	1
being unambitious	1
being of no account	1
aversion to carrying	1
ability to race and to run fast	3
being possessed of affection	2
ability to recognize one another	1
inauspiciousness	2
somnolence	1
lack of sense of honour	1
being noisy and disturbing	3
danger and frightfulness	6
being a nuisance	1
repulsiveness	1
unapproachability	1
being hasty	1
poverty	2

being carnivorous	1
being given to light sleep	1
ability to travel long distances	<u>1</u>
	<u>82</u>

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 (جرجير)

(a) Palm-trees

Palm-trees are mentioned in ten proverbs.¹ One of them is merely a saying attributed to the palm-tree in a fable.² The value of palm-trees as property is emphasized in some of these proverbs. Dates are referred to in twelve proverbs.³ They are depicted as the staple diet of the people.⁴ Date stones are mentioned in two proverbs⁵ and described as useful fodder for cows.

(b) Grape-vines

Grape-vines are mentioned in one example.⁶ Fruit trees and grape-vines were seldom grown in Najd (the sole proverb found contains a reference to the fact that a grape-vine

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.¹ Cornfields are referred to in another proverb.²

(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

1 No. 732.

2 No. 500.

3 No. 905.

4 No. 337.

5 No. 805.

6 No. 569.

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, عوشيز fuṣ., عوسج) 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-Nesiy

An-Nesiy (Aristida plumosa): smooth grass of great use as fodder, believed to have very good nourishing value, is mentioned in one proverb.⁴

(b) Al-Besbās

Al-Besbās (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-besbās.

¹ No. 326.

² No. 457.

³ No. 273.

⁴ No. 302.

⁵ No. 1160.

(d) Truffles

Truffles are represented in two proverbs.¹ 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,² two of them being metaphorical expressions:³ "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 Planets2.2.1 The Sky

The sky is mentioned in four proverbs.⁴ The sky in these proverbs signifies heaviness, remoteness, and unapproachability.

2.2.2 Stars

The word نجم occurs four times in two proverbs,⁵ but in three of them it means "period" rather than "star". The plural النجوم is mentioned twice,⁶ 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 الكليبين (lit. the two little dogs) are mentioned in one proverb,⁷ and alluded to by implication in another.⁸

Gemini, the Hyades, and the Milky Way are each

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 العزيم and Canopus سهييل 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 سماج (brackish water) is used in two proverbs. Water symbolizes "truth" in the proverb, "Water cannot be concealed by

¹ Nos. 748, 759, 843.

² Nos. 758, 760, 827.

³ Nos. 420, 421.

⁴ No. 638.

⁵ Nos. 402, 544.

⁶ Nos. 35, 68, 321, 354, 394, 495, 516, 608, 660, 776, 777, 823, 833, 881-884, 890, 896, 902, 914, 969, 1077, 1185.

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 Ṭweedz (Ṭuwaiq) escarpment,⁴ and to the mountain Ṭemiyyeh (Ṭamiyyah).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-ḡaha (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).¹

(b) Day

Day occurs in three proverbs, one of them being a metaphor: "His day is a year" i.e., he is very slow.² The plural 'ayyām' occurs in another proverb.³ Daytime, an-nahār, does not occur.

(c) Night

Night is mentioned in seven proverbs.⁴

(d) The Months

The month of Ramaḍān is referred to in one proverb.⁵ Months in general occur in another proverb: "'The new month has begun,' he said. 'It is as good as gone' came the reply."⁶

(e) The Seasons

Summer: summer occurs in two proverbs.⁷ It is described as very hot (one, therefore, has to carry a lot of water when travelling).⁸

Winter: winter is mentioned once,⁹ and the reference is twice made to a particularly cold period of winter, called شباط in Najd.¹⁰ The fact that this period is accompanied by violent winds and gales is emphasized in both proverbs.

Spring: spring is mentioned in three proverbs.¹¹ In one of them the common word for spring, الوسم, is used. The proverb

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).¹ The other two proverbs depict spring as a time of plenty and abundance. In fact, in each of them the word س refers to the plentiful rain, grass, and the consequent wealth which sometimes happens in spring.

Autumn: autumn is mentioned once.² 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;³ 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,⁴ in four of them the word زمان 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.⁵ The following are the pieces of weather lore which they contain.

When the two stars of Canis begin to rise in the sky,

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,¹ and water in wells and springs seeps away owing to the severe heat.²

When Gemini is seen in the sky, larger quantities of ripened dates can be found in clusters,³ and when Canis Major is seen, ripened dates become even more abundant.⁴

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.⁵

The time at which the Milky Way reaches the middle of the sky coincides with the end of the date harvest.⁶

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.⁷

During the period of šbāt (in the middle of winter), winds and gales become common in Najd.⁸

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

¹ E. Westermarck, Wit and Wisdom in Morocco (London, 1930), pp. 51-52.

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;¹ 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

¹ Nos. 2, 17, 114, 232, 308, 527, 577, 592, 600, 712, 735, 950.

² No. 600.

³ No. 232.

⁴ See R. Patai, From Golden River to Golden Road (London, 1962), p. 135.

⁵ No. 5~~2~~²⁷. 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 disapproved 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 Rmeezān 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.¹ It is considered not acceptable that one should offer help and support to strangers when one's own group is in need.²

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,³ but if he forgives, he will suffer humiliation.⁴

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."⁵

If a man intentionally causes injury or death to another, the male relatives (عائلة) of the perpetrator pay compensation (عقل) 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).⁶

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."⁷

A person is assumed always to be sympathetic towards a relative who is in trouble.⁸

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

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."¹ 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.² He is depicted by implication as a good-for-nothing.³ 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.⁴

(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).⁵

All offspring resemble their parents in nature.⁶

¹ No. 604.

² Nos. 23, 283.

³ No. 283.

⁴ No. 23.

⁵ No. 1127.

⁶ No. 695.

(e) 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.¹ 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.² 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."³

(f) Cousins

One can rely on one's cousins for support and help in times of need. A man with no cousins is often wronged.⁴ In spite of this acknowledgement of the importance of the rôle which cousins play in tribal society, cousins are scarcely mentioned in Najdi proverbs.⁵

A son-in-law is often treated as a more intimate member of the family circle than even a cousin.⁶

A boy is urged to marry his first cousin (the daughter of his father's brother), even if she lacks attractive qualities.⁷

¹ No. 282.

² No. 594.

³ No. 283.

⁴ No. 69.

⁵ Only the proverbs 69, 527, and 712, allude to cousins in our collection.

⁶ No. 712.

⁷ No. 527.

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

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.¹ Another emphasizes the influential power of women over men.² 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.³ 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."⁴ 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.⁵ A slave who carries out his master's foolish orders cannot be held responsible for their consequences.⁶ A slave is unambitious and cannot achieve significant goals.⁷ A certain "slave of the people of al-Beşur" is described as stupid,⁸ 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 الخبوب about 7 miles west of Buraidah in al-Qaşim. 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 townsmen who inhabit the few towns such as Riyadh, al-Karj, Hāyel, 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

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 be¹ (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."² 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.³

It is a part of the guest's entertainment that his mount is also entertained, that is, offered sufficient fodder and looked after.⁴

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. Kulthūm 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:

¹ No. 281. This proverb, however, is used facetiously.

² No. 279. This proverb is used facetiously.

³ No. 970.

⁴ No. 800.

صبت الكأس عنا أم عمرو وكان الكأس مجراها اليمين

"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:

" . . . عن أنس بن مالك أنّ رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أتى بلبن قد شيب بما . وعن يمينه أعرابي ، وعن يساره أبو بكر فشرّب . ثم أعطى الأعرابي وقال : "الأيمن فالأيمن" ."²

" . . . Anas b. Mālīk 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'."

" . . . عن سهل بن سعد الساعدي أنّ رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أتى بشراب ، فشرّب منه ، وعن يمينه غلام ، وعن يساره أشياخ . فقال للغلام : "أتأذن لي أن أعطى هؤلاء؟" فقال الغلام : "لا والله ! لا أوثر بنصيبى منك أحدا" ."³

" . . . Saḥl 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.

² Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj an-Nīsābūri, Saḥīḥ Muslim, ed. by Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī, vol. 3 (Cairo, 1955), p. 1603, no. 2029.

³ Ibid., p. 1604, no. 2030.

It is, therefore, not surprising that this custom is adhered to in Najd.¹ 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.² 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.³

It is considered a grave insult to pass over a person when circulating drink,⁴ 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.⁵ As the Tradition below shows, this rule is made by the Prophet:

". . . عن واهب بن كيسان سمعه من عمر بن سلمة . قال : كنت في حجر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وكانت يدي تطيش في الصحفة . فقال لي : يا غلام سم الله ! وكل بيمينك وكل مما يليك ."⁶

". . . Wahb b. Kaysān, 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

¹ No. 438.

² See also C. Doughty, op. cit., p. 245.

³ No. 438.

⁴ See nos. 573, 576.

⁵ No. 202.

⁶ Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj an-Nisabūri, op. cit., p. 1599, no. 2022.

your right hand, and eat from what is nearest to you"'.¹

The case is different, however, when eating dates. There is nothing wrong in selecting any date in the bowl.¹

(c) Eating Habits

In Najd, dates formed the staple diet.² Besides other provisions, camel meat, locust, and jerboas were eaten.³

(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.⁴ 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.⁵ 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 bšāreh by the father.⁶

(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.⁷

(g) Customs and Practices common among Farmers

(i) It is advisable and customary that fruit trees

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 ktāmeḥ 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: ⁴ كالأشقر إن تقدم نحر وإن تأخر عقر

"Like the light-coloured horse: if it advances it is slaughtered, and if it falls behind it is hamstrung;"

⁵ أشأم من السقراء على نفسها "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

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 (ašgar) 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 misdemeanour¹ (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 '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-Rāwi when writing about misdemeanours (الجنح) 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-Rāwi, al-Bādiyah, 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:

Only rich people know the value of money.¹

Only tight-fisted men acquire money.²

One should buy good commodities even if they are expensive.³

A thing given free is worth nothing.⁴ This last statement, however, is contradicted by another proverb which says, "The profit on a thing obtained free is already known."⁵

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-'Aḥsā' into one country in the second quarter of the present century.

(a) "[If you] attack a town dweller you will return safely."⁶ 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."⁷

(c) "Pound your grain and let the sultans fight each other."⁸

(d) "Share your property with the robbers."⁹

These proverbs bring to mind the fact that fighting, raids, and counter raids, were the order of the day at one

¹ No. 1101,

² No. 780.

³ Nos. 40, 528.

⁴ No. 409.

⁵ No. 428.

⁶ No. 49.

⁷ No. 107.

⁸ No. 134.

⁹ No. 579.

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,¹ and the proverbial phrase, "The judgement of Grāgūš"² is related to this topic.

The prevalence of corruption among officials is referred to in the proverb, "Grease the thong and it will move."³

9. Sport

Proverbs in our collection refer to the following sports and hobbies:

- (a) Foot racing.⁴
- (b) Horse racing.⁵
- (c) The trāh or mṭārah: a simple sport in which a participant merely tries to throw his opponent down.⁶
- (d) Shooting.⁷
- (e) Hunting.⁸

C. WISDOM PROVERBS

There is a relatively large number of pithy proverbs and sayings which can be classed as wisdom (ḥikmah) proverbs in our collection (approximately 330 examples, i.e., about 25

¹ No. 1051.

² No. 266.

³ No. 27.

⁴ No. 728.

⁵ No. 284.

⁶ No. 728.

⁷ No. 580.

⁸ No. 453.

per cent of the total).¹ 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,"² and "Keep away from danger and sleep,"³ 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,"⁴ 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.⁵

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.⁶

(ii) Deformities: there are references to blindness, baldness, and lameness.⁷

(iii) Treatment: cauterization, cupping, and phlebotomy are mentioned.⁸ The aloe and the asafoetida which are used as medicines are mentioned.⁹

¹ See, e.g., nos. 4, 5, 74, 126, 132, 205, 251, 265, 349, 403, 446, 489, 519, 547, 591, 621, 638, 670, 754, 866, 992, 1077.

² No. 724.

³ No. 5.

⁴ No. 604.

⁵ No. 547.

⁶ Nos. 13, 17, 377, 1011.

⁷ Nos. 160, 531, 624, 1007.

⁸ Nos. 245, 356, 583, 891.

⁹ Nos. 437, 717.

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 Taimūr Pāsha's Egyptian proverbs, M. Feghāli's Syro-Lebanese proverbs, 'A. Tikrīti's Baghdād proverbs, Sāsi's Meccan proverbs, and our collection of Najdi proverbs.

1. Wild Animals

	M.	Taim.	Fegh.	Tik.	Sāsi.	Our col- lection
Lions	30 c.0.60%	3 c.0.10%	11 c.0.35%	13 c.0.50%	1 c.0.15%	2 c.0.15%
Wolves	46 c.1.00%	5 c.0.15%	14 c.0.45%	13 c.0.50%	1 c.0.15%	18 c.1.50%
Hyenas	26 c.0.50%	1 0.30%	2 0.06%	-	-	1 c.0.10%
Foxes	16 c.0.30%	2 0.06%	4 0.13%	5 c.0.20%	1 c.0.15%	7 0.56%
Gazelles	18 c.0.40%	-	5 c.0.15%	3 c.0.10%	2 c.0.30%	2 c.0.15%
Dogs	63 c.1.30%	37 c.1.15%	48 c.1.50%	42 c.1.50%	5 c.0.80%	28 c.2.20%

2. Domesticated Animals

	M.	Taim.	Fegh.	Tik.	Sāsi	Our col- lection
Camels	264 c.5.50%	30 c.1.00%	38 1.25%	30 c.1.10%	4 0.65%	51 c. 4.00%
Cows	8 c.0.15%	18 c.0.55%	19 c.0.60%	10 0.36%	4 0.65%	18 c. 1.50%
Sheep	35 c.0.75%	14 c.0.50%	8 c.0.25%	14 c.0.50%	1 0.16%	14 c. 1.10%
Goats	26 c.0.50%	11 0.35%	33 c.1.00%	10 0.36%	1 0.16%	15 c. 1.20%
Horses	56 c.1.20%	9 c.0.30%	26 0.85%	21 c.0.75%	2 c.0.30%	19 c. 1.50%
Donkeys	63 c.1.30%	37 c.1.15%	48 c.1.50%	42 c.1.50%	5 0.80%	28 c. 2.20%
Cats	12 0.25%	25 c.0.80%	29 c.1.00%	16 c.0.60%	6 c.1.00%	6 c. 0.50%

On examining the above tables, one cannot fail to notice that, on the whole, animals are more frequently mentioned in Maidāni'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 Feghāli, and thirteen times in Tikrīti, it is mentioned thirty times in Maidāni; 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-

six in Maidāni.

The hyena is mentioned once in the present collection and that of Taimūr, twice in Feghāli, and is not mentioned in Tikrīti or Sāsi; but it occurs in twenty-six examples in Maidāni.

Foxes, gazelles, and dogs, are also much more frequently mentioned in Maidāni than in any of the modern proverb collections.

Except for cows and cats, domesticated animals generally are also much more frequently mentioned in Maidāni than in any of the collections of modern proverbs.

The two tables also show how infrequently animal proverbs appear in Sāsi'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, Tikrīti, 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%),¹ 7 in Taimūr (c. 0.2%),² and 4 in Tikrīti (c. 0.15%).³

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.

¹ M., nos. 552, 685, 835, 922, 2010, 2324, 3872, 3874.

² Taim., nos. 24, 167, 951, 1498, 1544, 1811, 2165.

³ Nos. 23, 1356, 2008, 2476.

	Taim.	Fegh.	Tik.	Our Collection
Grapes	4 c. 0.15%	21 c. 0.70%	6 c. 0.25%	1
Apples	1	-	1	-
Lemons	2	2 c. 0.07%	-	1
Figs	1	6 c. 0.20%	1	-
Pomegranates	1	1	3 c. 0.10%	-
Water Melons	3 c. 0.10%	4 c. 0.15%	1	1
Apricots	1	1	-	-
Peaches	-	-	1	-
Olives	-	3 c. 0.10%	-	-
Bananas	-	1	-	-

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 Maidāni'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 Taimūr's collection of Egyptian proverbs: onions (13 examples, c. 0.4%),

garlic and radish (each in three proverbs), aubergines (in 4 proverbs), cumin, qulqās, pumpkins, and mallows (kubbaiz) (each in two proverbs), okra, cabbage, carob, the mlūkiyya 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, qulqās 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.

	M	Taim.	Fegh.	Tik.	Sāsi	Our Collection
Corn	-	13 c.0.60%	2 c.0.06%	5 c.0.2%	-	2 c.0.2%
Barley	1	5 c.0.15%	5 c.0.20%	3	-	1
Maize	-	1	-	1	-	1
Millet	-	-	1	-	1	-
Lentils	-	-	3 c.0.10%	1	-	-
Beans (<u>fūl</u>)	-	7 c.0.20%	4 c.0.10%	-	-	-

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.¹ 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.²

¹ See R. Blachère, "La Littérature Proverbiale à l'Époque Archaïque", *Arabica*, I (1954), p. 69.

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 Tikrīti). 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 *Maindāni* (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 Maidāni'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 Tikrīti's collection (Baghdad).
- (d) Weather proverbs are almost non-existent in the collections of Maidāni, Tairūr (Egypt) and Sāsi (Mecca). In the former, only one such proverb is found,¹ 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 Maidāni indicates that he purposely excluded it. He probably realized that these sayings can hardly come under the category of proverbs,² for whereas proverbs are statements which "contain some element of wisdom or commonly accepted belief,"³ and which often possess some figurative, hyperbolic,

¹ M., no. 1269.

² See also R. Blachère, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

³ K. and M. Clarke, *Introducing Folklore* (New York, 1963), p. 88.

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.¹ However, another Najdi proverb as well as proverbs from Iraq and Egypt, and two Palestinian proverbs, strongly urge men to marry their first cousins.² 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,³ Lebanon,⁴ and Egypt⁵ are in favour of choosing a girl of noble origin, and a Najdi proverb advises against marrying from a family of lowly status.⁶

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: دور مع الأيام إذا دارت وخذ بنت العم ولو بارت

³ See Akwa', nos. 442, 580, 926.

⁴ See Frayha, no. 1673.

⁵ See Taim., no. 1126.

⁶ 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 rehim 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: حيدور الحمص والرّص وبیت القطيعه

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, 38; 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

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; Bājūri, p. 169.

⁵ Taim., no. 83.

(d) Cousins

The rôle of cousins as supporters of each other is evident in a Najdi verse which is used proverbially.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--when-ever 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

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,² اقهر النساء بالنساء ولا تضربهن بالعصا, 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 dogs³ 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: "šatsyetaḥ batsyetaḥ" (her complaint is her weeping).

¹ See no. 728 and Goit., no. 988.

² H. Granqvist, op. cit., p. 209.

³ Nos. 620, 1080.

⁴ See no. 564, Nuri, p. 223: فرجة 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 "مهيب جيزة نماری" (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 Nuri, 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-ḥa 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.

	Plosive	Fricative	Affricate	Lateral	Rolled	Nasal
Bilabial	b					m
Labio-dental		f				
Dental	t	d	s	z	l	
Interdental		ṭ	ṣ	ḏ		
Emphatic	ṭ	ṣ̣	ṣ̣	ḏ̣		
Alveolar		š	ts	j	dz	r
Palatal						n
Velar	k	g	ḳ	g̣		
Pharyngeal		ħ				
Glottal	ʔ	h				

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 s, h, z, h, are not dealt with.

1.1 Plosives

ḍ The speech sound represented in classical Arabic by ض is no longer articulated. No distinction whatsoever is made between the apico-labial ḍād and the emphatic za. This is also so in the dialects of Eastern Arabia.¹

ḡ The voiceless uvular plosive sound represented in Arabic orthography by ق 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 dz.

The occurrence of the palatal stop j as a replacement for ق is very rare. In fact it is hard to think of other than the word jesam and its various forms. It stands for qasam (to divide something). In contrast to this, the j is a common variant of ق in Qatar, Abu Dabi, Bahrain, and Dubai.²

ʾ 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., fār (mice) proverb no. 773 for fa'r; bīr, prov. no. 322 for bi'r (water-well); yūkāl, prov. no. 393, for yu'kal, passive imperf. of 'akāl (to eat). This phenomenon

¹ Cf. T.M. Johnstone, Eastern Arabian Dialects (London, 1967), p. 20.

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 rūs (heads), prov. no. 371, for ru'ūs; al-arz (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).

j 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 masjid, and 'eeza (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

z This corresponds to both ظ and ض in Arabic orthography, for as mentioned above, the latter is no longer distinct from the former in the dialect. ظ 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

t A voiceless interdental fricative as in classical

¹ Op. cit. The initial and medial hamza is, in a few cases, replaced by the pharyngal h as in ytahassaf (prov. no. 897) or ' as in hee'eh for hay'ah (committee).

² The inhabitants of Ḥawṭat Banī Tamīm and its area in southern Najd are exceptional to this case.

³ See Johnstone, op. cit.

⁴ See M. al-'Ubūdi, 1, p. 12.

⁵ In Lebanon for example, this occurs to the ṭ, as in saher (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

d 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.

s The voiceless dental fricative s (س) becomes emphatic (that is, changes to ص) in contiguity with an emphatic or a guttural, as happened in the following examples from our material: ṣalāṭīn for class. salāṭīn (sultans)(134); ṣeltān for class. sultān (sultan)(207); yṣallaṭ for class. yusallaṭ, passive imperf. of sallaṭ (to set someone on someone else or something)(1173); ṣekleh for sakl (young nanny-goat)(443); ṣōt for sawṭ (whip)(451); ṣalk for salk (skinning)(403); mabṣūt for mabsūt (happy, joyful)(930); yestgafer for yastagfer in "he says: 'astagfir Allah (I beg God to pardon me)" (1093).

1.3 Affricates

ts 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 matl; cf. A. Bloch and H. Grotzfeld, Damaszenisch-Arabishe Texte (Wiesbaden, 1946), p. 2. In Mecca the t is articulated either as s or t as in salāṣah or talāṭah for talāṭah.

² In Damascus for instance, d is replaced by z as in yā 'ustāz or by a d as in 'ākod (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: dahhīn for ḍai-ḥīn (now) and hāza (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 'eküts (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:

<u>'ehts</u> , talk: 19	<u>šerits</u> , partner: 38
<u>dīts</u> , cock: 178	<u>hanats</u> , jaw: 274
<u>tsabd</u> , stomach: 298	<u>skeetsin</u> , little knife: 306
<u>tselmeḥ</u> , word: 515	<u>tütsi</u> , you tie up (e.g., a sack):
<u>tsān</u> , if: 644	<u>'elts</u> , chewing gum: 524 732
<u>tsamm</u> , how many: 708	<u>etsu</u> , cauterize: 584

dz The affricate dz is a variant of ḡ 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 ḡ(q). 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:

<u>dzerib</u> , near: 23	<u>dzedah</u> , bowl: 91
<u>'anfedz</u> , spend: 129	<u>sedidz</u> , friend: 243
<u>lādz</u> , meet: 771	<u>refidz</u> , friend: 358
<u>nweedzeh</u> , a little she camel: 1021	
<u>'erdz</u> , vein: 824	

Unlike k, ḡ(q) 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: gteebats-ts (prov. no. 36), wedā'ats-ts (prov. no. 1109), jeddats-ts (your grandmother) (prov. no. 1133), melhyats-ts (prov. no. 1197), yeswats (prov. no. 1199).

of which are borrowed from classical Arabic (nos. 486, 622, and 991 for example), does it occur in its original sound: qaytūn (cat) (28); sariqah (theft)(28); sāriq (thief)(380); siqā (water skin)(991), qāhirāt (overpowering)(486); qad (has)(622); qāl (said)(727), yqalled (he imitates)(919), yaqatlūn (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, Šammār, 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 Dabi² mufakkam "l" occurs in some words such as:

Allah (Al:lah), proverb no. 76

ḡalma (ḡal:ma), dark, darkness, prov. 109.

kalla (ka:l:la), to leave, to let, prov. no. 296.

m Occurs as mufakkam as in 'ummaḥātekum (your mothers') proverb no. 594.

n The n when followed by k or g is an alveolar nasal allophone 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 r, 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 ḡ in Najd, i.e., as ts and dz. See ibid, p. 141.

² Cf. Johnstone, op. cit., p. 22.

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, tāh, prov. no. 470 and gāl, proverbs 600 ff.

2.1. Short Vowels

a A half open to open spread front vowel:

aḥad (someone), prov. no. 14; ḥalab (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:

'eseḥ (name), prov. no. 37; jeḥer (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; ṣgayyir (little), prov. no. 694.

u A close to half-close rounded back vowel²:

luḥ (for him), prov. no. 90; rāsuḥ (his head), prov. no. 706.

2.2 Long Vowels

ā A nearly half-open spread front vowel, as in 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. ṭayr), prov. no. 20; deen (class. dayn), prov. no. 329; been (class. bayn), prov. no. 181.

ī An almost close unrounded front vowel: dīb (wolf), prov. no. 336; dīts (cock), prov. no. 178; nesīb (chance), prov. no. 85.

ō A half-close to half-open rounded back vowel. It replaces the diphthong aw in classical Arabic, as in: nōm (sleep) (class. nawm), prov. no. 1080; šōf (eyesight) (class. šawf), prov. no. 424.

ū A long nearly close rounded back vowel, as in : ebūy (my father), prov. no. 581; Ḥmūd, prov. no. 272; yšūf (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 ā in Najdi bedouin speech, e.g., bāt and kār 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 ō as in šōt for šawt (voice), prov. no. 450 and tōr for tawr (bull), prov. no. 210.

Aw in the dialect replaces the monophthong ū in classical Arabic as in salmaw, prov. no. 439, for salimū (they reached safety); qālaw, prov. no. 615, for qālū (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 y, or a w, as

yākel (he eats), prov. no. 554; yāmer (he orders), prov. no. 532.
šāyeb (old man), prov. no. 396; gāyeb (absent), prov. no. 553.
tatāwab (to yawn), prov. no. 936.

2.5 Vowel Harmony

The anaptyctic helping vowels e, u, and a, occur frequently, as

jesem (body), prov. no. 37; rejel (foot), prov. no. 248;
ratub (wet), prov. no. 115; namel (ants), prov. no. 154;
laḥam (meat), prov. no. 2; baḥar (sea), prov. no. 525.

An anaptyctic vowel is often elided when it occurs in a noun in a muḍāf 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, a, i, and u, in some singular nouns, broken plurals, collective nouns, and relative adjectives are dropped,¹ as in:

'nab (class. 'inab), prov. no. 140 (grapes)
nsūr (class. nusūr), prov. no. 540 (eagles)
ṭwāl (class. ṭiwāl), prov. no. 480 (pl. tall)
fgara (class. fuqarā'), prov. no. 1101 (poor people)
bduwi (class. badawi), prov. no. 556 (bedouin)

But sometimes they are not dropped but reduced to the ultra short vowel e, as in:

reṣāṣ (class. raṣāṣ), prov. no. 392 (lead)

¹ An initial vowel is often elided when, in a singular noun, it is in contiguity with one of the long vowels, ā, ū, or ee, as in ktāb, prov. no. 1188; Ḥmūd, prov. no. 272; and Sbeet, prov. no. 383. But sometimes it is elided for other reasons as in sgayyir, prov. 694.

remād (class. ramād), proverbs 1064, 1192 (ashes).

'eşfür (class. 'uşfür), prov. no. 513 (sparrow)

sekātsīn (class. sakākīn), prov. no. 754 (knives)

sekāra (class. sakāra), 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.¹ Examples:

šjereh (tree), prov. no. 4; lsān (tongue), prov. no. 90;

šbeeh (name of a village), prov. no. 120; drejeh (stairs),

prov. no. 190. Hmūd (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)²

N. Najd: 'allamtehum.

However, the consonant cluster occurs everywhere where the first consonant is l of the particle al, as in:

al-fhūd (leopards), prov. 63; al-'qūl (minds), prov. no. 135;

al-bgereh (the cow), prov. no. 76; ar-rjāl (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

¹ See Johnstone, op. cit., p. 25.

² In the dialects of eastern Arabia, three-consonant cluster also occurs where the final element is h plus vowel, as in darabtha. See ibid., p. 26.

Arabia.¹

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; hets-tseh (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."² This does not apply to our dialect, thus:

yu'allimūn > y'allmūn (and not y'almūn as in the eastern
Arabian dialects)

yusallihūn > y'sallhūn (and not y'salhūn)

ysallimna > ysallmenn (and not ysalmen)

5. Stress

As in the dialects of eastern Arabia,³ long syllables are stressed when they are final, thus:

tyūr (birds), prov. no. 471; njūm (stars), prov. no. 400;

banāt (girls), prov. no. 171; rjāl (men), prov. no. 68.

harīm (women), prov. no. 79; hsān (horse), prov. no. 255;

velīn (he relents), prov. no. 96; yqīs (he dives), prov. no. 94.

ytahāwešūn (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; dzérbeh (water-skin), prov. no. 68;

be'ūzeh (mosquito), prov. no. 838; mtegātt'eh (it is cut),
prov. no. 374;

lēban (milk), prov. no. 417; ketbeh (engagement), prov. no. 506;

¹ See ibid.

² Ibid., p. 27.

³ See ibid.

teme'ref (knowing, getting to know), prov. no.205.

The antepenultimate syllable is stressed in types of forms to which the examples below belong:

éjtama' (to come together), prov. no. 12; mégberéh (cemetery), prov. no. 237; méhteri (waiting), prov. no. 962; má'esyeh (sin), prov. no. 158; göbe'eh (lark), prov. no. 639; mézarreh (harm), prov. no. 23; bu'ersi (gecko), prov. no. 163.

B - Morphology

1. The Verb

1.1 The Strong Verb

1.1.1 The Simple Verb

(a) The Perfect Tense¹

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'al and fe'el:

1 c.s.	nefa't	šebe't
2 m.s.	nefa't	šebe't (125)
2 f.s.	nefa'ti	šebe'ti
3 m.s.	nefa' (605, 1000)	šebe'
3 f.s.	nfa'at (889)	šab'at

(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 yazḥak (587), yadkel (1162), y'ater (1180), and yḥakum.

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' - yašba'.

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'in	tašbe'in	taketbīn
3 m.s.	yanfa' (925)	yašba'	yakteb (95)
1 c.pl.	nanfa'	našba'	nakteb
2 m.pl.	tanfe'ūn	tašbe'ūn	taketbūn
2 f.pl.	tanfe'en(n)	tašbe'en(n)	taketben(n) ³
3 m.pl.	yanfe'ūn	yašbe'ūn	yaketbūn
3 f.pl.	yanfe'en(n)	yašbe'en(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 Riyadh 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.

dialects.¹

1 c.s.	'agaleb	'a'aref
2 m.s.	tgaleb	t'aref
2 f.s.	tgalbīn	ta'arfīn
3 m.s.	ygaleb	y'aref (7, 912, 913)
3 f.s.	tgaleb	t'aref (312)
1 c.pl.	ngaleb	n'aref
2 m.pl.	tagalbūn	ta'arfūn
2 f.pl.	tagalben(n)	ta'arfen(n)
3 m.pl.	yagalbūn	ya'arfūn
3 f.pl.	yagalben(n)	ya'arfen(n)

(c) The Imperative

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 nafa' and šereb, whose imperfects as we saw above were yaf'al, are:

2 m.s.	enfa'	ešrab
2 f.s.	enfe'i	ešrebi
2 m.pl.	enfe'u	ešrebu
2 f.pl.	enfe'en(n)	ešreben(n)
(Riyad:	enfe'u	ešrebu)

But the imperatives of zəhak and le'əb keep a throughout, being as follows:

2 m.s.	eḏhak (587)	el'ab (74)
2 f.s.	eḏhaki	el'abi
2 m.pl.	eḏhaku	el'abu
2 f.pl.	eḏhaken(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".²

(d) The Passive

(i) The Passive perfect

The forms fa'al, fe'al and fe'el have the passive

¹ Ibid.

² The writer was told of this by Mr. Naṣr 'Awn aḏ-Ḍarraṭ 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 fe'l is used. The paradigms below give the conjugation of the verbs zarab, ketab, and 'eref, which represent these three forms.

1 c.s.	zrebt	ktebt	'reft
2 m.s.	zrebt	ktebt	'reft
2 f.s.	zrebtī	ktebtī	'reftī
3 m.s.	zreb	kteb	'ref
3 f.s.	zērbat	ketbat	'erfat
1 c.pl.	zrebna	ktebna	'refna
2 m.pl.	zrebtu	ktebtu	'reftu
2 f.pl.	zrebtēn(n)	ktebtēn(n)	'reftēn(n)
3 m.pl.	zērbaw	ketbaw	'erfaw
3 f.pl.	zērbān(n)	ketbān(n)	'erfan(n)

(ii) The Passive imperfect

Below is the passive imperfect conjugation of the verbs yazreb and y'aref

1 c.s.	azrab	'a'raf
2 m.s.	tezrab	te'raf
2 f.s.	tezrebīn	te'refīn
3 m.s.	yezrab	ye'raf
3 f.s.	tezrab	te'raf
1 c.pl.	nezrab	ne'raf
2 m.pl.	tezrebūn	te'refūn
2 f.pl.	tezreben(n)	te'refen(n)
3 m.pl.	yezrebūn	ye'refūn
3 f.pl.	yezreben(n)	ye'refen(n)

(e) The Active and Passive Participles

The declension of the active and passive participles of fetaḥ (to open) is as follows:

m.s.	fāteḥ	maftūḥ (143)
f.s.	fāṭ-ḥeh, fāt-ḥah	maftūḥeh, maftūḥah
m.pl.	fāt-ḥīn	maftūḥīn
f.pl.	fāt-ḥāt	maftūḥāt

When a guttural is the first radical of a verb, the pattern of that verb's passive participle is mfa'ūl as m'adūd (counted), prov. no. 179, Mḥamūd (name of a man). But there are exceptions to this rule, for example mahrūm (miser, stingy), prov. 868, 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 gazbat (holding), prov. no. 628. Here are some examples of verbal noun formations:

šerb (drinking), 70; 'atsel (eating), 63; rgūd (sleeping), 349; šōf (seeing), 424; hazz (shaking), 524; lahs (licking), 3; gōl (saying), 1111; hadm (demolishing), 1089.

Of the derived themes the following are convenient examples:

tedeyyin (incurring debt), 79; taslīm (finishing prayers), 169; t-hawīl (descending), 190; teme'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 sōlaf 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:

yuqattī'ūn > yqatt'ūn
qattī'ī > qatt'i
muqattī'in > mqatt'in

1.1.3 Geminate Verbs

(a) The Simple Verb

The table below shows the conjugation of the verb

hajj (to flee):

	<u>perfect</u>	<u>imperfect</u>	<u>imperative</u>
1 c.s.	hajjeet	ahejj	
2 f.s.	hajjeeti	tehejjīn	hejji
2 m.s.	hajjeet	tehejj	hejj
3 m.s.	hajj (1086,1087)	yehejj	
3 f.s.	hajjat	tehejj	
1 c.pl.	hajjeena	nehejj	
2 m.pl.	hajjeetu (hajjeetum) ²	tehejjūn	hejju (hejjum)

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 of Derived Themes

	Perf.	Imperf.	Imper.	Pass.Perf.	Pass.Imp.	Act. Part.	Pass. Part
II	kassar (665)	ykassar	kassir	kesser	ykassar	mkassar	mkassar
III	gābal (782)	ydzābel	dzābel	dzībel	ygābal	mdzābel	ngābal
IIIa	sōlaf	ysōlef	sōlef	sūlef	ysōlaf	msōlef	msōlaf
IV	asraf (133)	yesref	asref	esref	yesraf	mesref	mesraf
V	ta'allam	yta'allam	ta'allam	te'ellem	yta'allam en	mta'allam	mta'allam
VI	tahāwaš	ytahāwaš	tahāwaš	tehiweš		mtahāweš	mtahāwaš
VII	engeta' (776)	yengete'	engete'			mengete'	
VIII	ejtema' (12)	yejtene'	ejteme'	ejteme'		mejtene'	mejtema'
IX	eḥmarr	yehmarr				meḥmarr	
X	esta'mal	yesta'mel	'esta'mel	'este'mel	yesta'mal	mesta'mel	mesta'mal
or	est'amel	yest'amel	est'amel		yest'amal	mest'amel	mest'amal

2 f.pl.	hajjeeten	tehejjen	hejjin
3 m.pl.	hajjaw	yehejjūn	
3 f.pl.	hajjan	yehejjen	

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 hadr as well as some 'Anazi and Šammari people, as dumm (prov. no. 322) and dem, 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 īdi (I stretched my hand) and not madadt as in classical Arabic.¹

The active and passive participles of lamm (to collect something) are lāmm (prov. no. 119) and malmūm.

(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.

1919), p. 37, fakkeetum. The ending om is less common. It is a feature of Šammari and Hā'il speech. Cf. ibid., p. 49, "kānom šāfom yelfom 'ala . . ." equates to the southern Najdi, "kānaw šāfaw yelfūn 'ala . . ."

¹ For Egypt, see e.g., H.H. Fahmi, al-Marji' fī ta'rib al-Mustalahāt 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,¹ 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-Ġōf (al-Jawf).² 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 'aṭa (to give) for 'a'tā, prov. no. 515, is an exception.³

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.

² See Cantineau, op. cit., p. 193.

³ Nevertheless, most of the nomadic Arabs who inhabit northern Najd (e.g., 'Anezeh and Šammar) use 'aṭa instead of 'ata retaining the hamza. Cf. Landberg, op. cit., p. 41, and see proverb no. 1043.

māked for 'ātsel (fuṣ., 'ākil) and 'āked.

The table below gives the conjugation of the verb

'akal (to eat):

	<u>Perfect</u>	<u>Imperfect</u>	<u>Imperative</u>
1 c.s.	'akalt	'ākel	
2 m.s.	'akalt	tākel	kel
2 f.s.	'akalti	tāklīn	kūlay (276; in the proverb it is <u>kūlee</u> because of the suffix <u>-h</u>). Less commonly: <u>kli</u> and <u>'ekli</u>
3 m.s.	'akal (8, 64)	yākel (703)	
3 f.s.	'akalt	tākel (184)	
1 c.pl.	'akalna	nākel	
2 m.pl.	'akaltu (tum, tom)	tāklūn	kūlaw, klu, eklu
2 f.pl.	'akalten(n)	tāklen	kūlan, klen, eklen
3 m.pl.	'akalaw (-om) (see <u>akadaw</u> , 804)	yāklūn	
3 f.pl.	'akalan(n)	yāklen(n)	

The initial hamza in verbs in the imperfect is dropped, as the table above shows, and replaced by a lengthening. Such a hamza is also sometimes dropped completely (i.e., without being replaced by another sound) as in yedden for yu'addin, prov. no. 942, and yerret for yu'arrit, prov. no. 389, yetter for yu'atter, yeššer for yu'aššir.

(b) Medial and Final Hamza

These types are not very common in this dialect nor in the dialects of neighbouring eastern Arabia.¹

The final hamza is elided, as yagra (he reads) (1187, 1188), yamla (he fills (something)) (505).

1.2.2 Verbs with initial W and Y

The conjugation of the verb wešel or weṣal (to reach) is shown in the paradigm below:

	<u>Perfect</u>	<u>Imperfect</u>	<u>Imperative</u>
1 c.s.	weṣelt, weṣalt	'āṣal	
2 m.s.	weṣelt, weṣalt	tāṣal	'ūṣal
2 f.s.	weṣelti, weṣalti	tāṣelīn	'ūṣeli

¹ See Johnstone, op. cit., p. 47.

3 m.s.	wešel, weşal	yāşal (43)	
3 f.s.	waşlat, wşalat	tāşal	
1 c.pl.	weşelna, weşalna	nāşal	
2 m.pl.	weşeltu, weşaltu (weşaltom, -tum)	tāşelūn	'ūşelu
2 f.pl.	weşelten, weşalten	tāşelen(n)	'ūşelen(n)
3 m.pl.	waşlaw, wşalaw (-om, -um)	yāşelūn	
3 f.pl.	waşlan(n), wşalan	yāşelen(n)	

Verbs initial y are very rare in classical Arabic and modern Arabic dialects¹ 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 rāh (to go) is inflected as follows:

1 c.s.	2 m.s.	2 f.s.	3 m.s.	3 f.s.
reḥt	reḥt	reḥti	rāḥ (849)	rāḥat
1 c.pl.	2 m.pl.	2 f.pl.	3 m.pl.	3 f.pl.
reḥna	reḥtu or reḥtom(-tum)	reḥten(n)	rāḥaw or rāḥōm(-um)	rāḥan(n)

As in classical Arabic the characteristic vowel of the hollow verb in the imperfect is either ā as in nām - yanām, kāf - yakāf, 'āf - ya'āf, hāb - yahāb; or ī as in tāh - yetih (104), māl - yemil, şāl - yşil (103), bān - yebin (185); or ū as in gāl - yegul, rāh - yeruh (143), şāf - yşuf (158).

The paradigms below give the inflection of the imperfect and imperative of the verbs 'āf (to refuse (something)), rāh (to go away), and şāl (to carry) as each represents a type of hollow verb with different characteristic vowel:

Imperfect:

1 c.s.	'a'āf	'aşil	'aruh
2 m.s.	ta'āf	tşil	teruh
2 f.s.	ta'āfin	tşilīn	teruhīn

¹ Professor Johnstone notes the rarity of this type in the dialects of eastern Arabia. See Johnstone, op. cit., p. 48.

3 m.s.	ya'āf (1179)	yšīl (103)	yerūḥ (143)
3 f.s.	ta'āf	tšīl	terūḥ
1 c.pl.	na'āf	nšīl	nerūḥ
2 m.pl.	ta'āfūn	tšīlūn	terūḥūn
2 f.pl.	ta'āfen(n)	tšīlen(n)	terūḥen(n)
3 m.pl.	ya'āfūn	yšīlūn	yerūḥūn
3 f.pl.	ya'āfen(n)	yšīlen(n)	yerūḥen(n)

Imperative:

2 m.s.	'ef	šēl	reh ¹
2 f.s.	'āfay, 'āfi	šīlay, šīli	rūḥay, rūḥi
2 m.pl.	'āfaw, 'āfu	šīlaw, šīlu	rūḥaw, rūḥu
2 f.pl.	'āfan(n)	šīlan(n)	rūḥan(n)

1.2.4 Verbs Final Y

The conjugation of the typical verb, final y, ḥatsa (to talk) is given below:

1 c.s.	ḥatseet	1 c.pl.	ḥatseena
2 m.s.	ḥatseet	2 m.pl.	ḥatseetu (-um, -om)
2 f.s.	ḥatseeti	2 f.pl.	ḥatseeten(n)
3 m.s.	ḥatsa (1017)	3 m.pl.	ḥatsaw (-um)
3 f.s.	ḥatsat	3 f.pl.	ḥatsan(n)

The verb dara (to know) has another form deri, the first is conjugated as in the dialects of eastern Arabia,² the second as follows:

1 c.s.	derīt	1 c.pl.	derīna
2 m.s.	derīt	2 m.pl.	derītu (-um)
2 f.s.	derīti	2 f.pl.	derīten(n)
3 m.s.	deri	3 m.pl.	daryaw
3 f.s.	daryat	3 f.pl.	daryan(n)

The characteristic stem vowel of the imperfect of these verbs is a or i. The paradigm below gives the inflection of the imperfect of lega (to find) and sara (to travel at night):

1 c.s.	alga	asri
2 m.s.	talga	tasri
2 f.s.	talgeen	tasrīn
3 m.s.	yalga (16)	yasri (1168)
3 f.s.	talga	tasri
1 c.pl.	nalga	nasri
2 m.pl.	talgōn	tasrūn
2 f.pl.	talgan(n)	tasren(n)
3 m.pl.	yalgōn	yasrūn
3 f.pl.	yalgan(n)	yasren(n)

¹ 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.

² See ibid., p. 50.

The imperative of the verbs final y is almost the same as in the dialects of eastern Arabia. Thus:

2 m.s.	elg	esir (but <u>omš</u> (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: الافعال الجارده) are 'asa, kūd, both of which express a wish; 'une'em (class. نعم) and bīs (class. بئس).¹ 'une'em is usually used to express admiration of someone. bīs is rarely used, as in bīs 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 yedwed 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; yatsdaḥ--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; ṣaggah--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. 986, is rare everywhere; dannag--prov. no. 275, is a verb common in southern Najd as well as among most bedouins

¹ نعم and بئس were considered verbs by the grammatical school of Basrah while the rival school of Kūfah regarded them as nouns. Cf. 'Abd ar-Raḥman Ibn al-'Anbārī, Die Grammatischen Streitfragen der Baser 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; yīzi--prov. no. 65, is less common than yakfi; tašš (to throw away)--prov. no. 283 is used by bedouins, settled people use ḥaḍaf, halat, lāf, or neṭal 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 trilateral. 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'al
farah (joy), 45; faras (mare), 17; saham (share), 154.
Nouns of this pattern when suffixed with i, uh, eh, or ah, take the pattern f'al or f'el, e.g., fresi (my mare), shamah (her share).
2. fa'l
wajh (face), 62; lahs (licking), 3.
3. fe'l
kerj (saddle bag), 203; jeld (skin), 228.
4. fa'el or fa'il
habel (rope), 242; namel (ants), 1056; maši (walking), 982.
When a noun of this pattern is nunated (munawwan) or annexed (muḍaf), it takes the pattern fa'l as in baṭn as-šab'ān, prov. no. 161, not baṭen aš-šab'ān.
5. fe'al
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. infr.) or f'al, as in jmeluh (his camel) and lbanah (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'l.

¹ Patterns of nouns and adjectives in diminutive forms are not included.

7. f'ūl
rqūd (sleep), 349; Hmūd, 272.
8. fe'ūl
jemūh (headstrong), 593; tsedūb (liar), 661
9. fe'al
temman (a kind of rice), 206.
10. fe'ill
weniyy (slow), 161; sebiyy (servant), 440.
11. f'uill
'luww (upper part of something), 190, 572.
12. fa'uill
'aduww (enemy), 65.
13. fa'leh¹
Makkeh (Mecca), 137; namleh (ant), 186.
14. f'aleh
nkaleh (palm tree), 949; lhameh (a piece of meat), 790.
When a noun of this pattern is nunated or annexed,
it takes the pattern f'alh.
15. f'eleh
sjereh (tree, bush), 4; drejeh (stairs), 190.
When a noun of this pattern is nunated or annexed,
it takes the pattern f'elh.
16. fe'leh
šekleh (a young nanny goat), 443; reg'eh (patch), 148.
17. 'af'al
'ab'ad (farther), 3; afgar (poorer), 54.
18. fa'āl
salām (greeting, peace), 389; kalām (talking), 389.
19. fe'āl
semāl (north), 165; zemān (time), 375.
20. f'āl
hšan (horse), 255; jdār (wall), 219.
21. f'āleh
'šābeh (bandage), 1055; al-Gwāreh (name of a village),
166.
22. fa'āleh
jarādeh (a locust), 221; salāmeh (safety), 388.
23. fe'āleh
dejā'eh (chicken), 184; šejā'eh (courage), 656.

¹ Every feminine pattern ending with eh has another variant ending with ah, the former is the f. suffix in al-Qašim 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 ay(h).

24. fe'il
be'ir (camel), 164; delil (guide), 70.
25. fe'ileh
senineh (milk mixed with water), 15; tewileh (long), 626.
26. fā'el
yābes (dry), 115; šāreb (moustache), 122.
27. fā'l
dābb (snake), 4.
28. fā'leh
sālfeh (story), 858; 'āfyeh (health), 183.
29. fa''āl
fallāh (farmer), 159; dakkān (smoke), 313.
30. fe''il
'erris (bridegroom), 735; sets-tsīn (knife), 182.
31. fa''ūl
Hassūn (a man's name), 254; tamūr (oven), 731.
32. fa''āleh
šawwāyeh (piper), 54; na''āyeh (a lamenting woman), 620.
33. fa'lān
bardān (cold a.), 151; šab'an (replete), 161.
34. fa'la
Sagra (name of a town), 33; zālma (darkness), 109.¹
35. f'uli or f'eli
bduwi or bdewi (bedouin), 52; Šlubi (a member of the Šlubbeh clan), 270.
36. fā'ūl
sādūb (shark), 108.
37. fa'ūl
'arūs (bride), 950.
38. fa'il
kašim (opponent), 489; gadir (rain pool), 630.
39. fa'ileh
ganimeh (booty), 561; 'ašireh (tribe), 510.
40. fa'lal
Barjas (a man's name), 1035; 'agrab (scorpion), 52.
41. fe'lal
bendag (gun), 173.

¹ The mamdūd or prolonged noun in classical Arabic ceases to exist in this dialect. All mamdūd nouns become maqsūr or abbreviated as in the above two examples; other examples are: 'anya (259) for 'amyā', 'ōja (173) for 'awjā', Karbala (562) for Karbālā'.

42. fa'lūl
jarbū' (jerboa), 223.
43. fe'lūl
'esfūr (sparrow), 513; se'lūk (poor man), 734.
44. tfa'il
thawīl (descending), 190.
45. taf'il
taslīm (finishing prayers), 169.
46. mef'el
menkel (sieve), 420; meslem (Muslim), 1038.
47. mfa'al
mtawwa' (a religious man), 260; Mhanna (name of a man),
215.
48. mfa''el
mjarreb (experienced), 126.
49. maf'al
masyad (mosque), 47; marfag (elbow), 261.
50. mef'al
al-Mednab (place-name), 31; mejra (latch), 961;
al-meb'ad (the Devil), 947.
51. maf'el
masjed (mosque), 55.
52. mfā'il
mdāwi (healer), 966.
53. mtafa''el
mtalagges (gleaner), 878.
54. mef'āl
mengar (beak), 681; mesmār (nail), 140.
55. mef'eleh
menzerah (mirror), 1181; megberah (cemetery), 237.
56. maf'leh
marjleh (manliness), 145.
57. mafe'leh
ma'esyeh (sin), 158.
58. mef'aleh
merz'eh (wet-nurse), 973.
59. mtefa''leh
mtegatt'eh (it is cut into many pieces), 374.
60. maf'ūl
maftūh (opened), 143; mandūd (stretched), 969.
61. mfa'ūl
m'adūd (counted), 179; mkarūg (pierced), 964.

62. mfa'ūleh
mgasūbeh (forced), 992.
63. mfa'al
msābag (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 tüfek¹
- beerag (flag), 1184, from Turkish bayrak²
- 'anzerūt (sarco colla, Persian gum), 568 from Persian أنزروت³
- derwīš (dervish), 316, from Persian⁴
- zerbul (boot), 359, of unknown origin.
- brīsam (silk), 224, from Persian أبریشم (abrīšam)⁵
- kwandāt (women), 546, sing. kwandeh. It is likely that this word is adopted without its original meaning from Turkish خوانده (kānde) (to be called or invited).⁶
- anjar (anchor), 460. According to Ibn Manẓūr in Lisān al-'Arab, it is adopted from Persian.⁷
- 'Āb (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

- ¹ H.C. Hony, A Turkish-English Dictionary (Oxford, 1947).
- ² Ibid.
- ³ F. Steingass, A Comprehensive English-Persian Dictionary, 2nd imp. (London, 1947), pp. 110, 106 أنزروت and p. 870 عنزروت.
- ⁴ The Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford, 1969), vol. 3, p. 233.
- ⁵ Steingass, op. cit.
- ⁶ J.W. Redhouse, Redhouse Turkish Dictionary (London, 1880), p. 556.
- ⁷ Lisān (njr)

the proverbs of this collection.

- (a) Vocabulary which occur only in proverbs, fixed idioms phrases, and poetry as al-qayṭūn (the cat), 28; this word is not used in either classical Arabic nor this dialect; tḡuba (physicians), 18-- eṭebba 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 tefag (gun), 382; al-kwandāt (women), 546; zerbūl (boot), 359; seriḥ (a certain rope used in the process of drawing water by animals--as-sawāni), 1141. As this process has passed into disuse, this term is no longer used.
- (c) Rarely-used vocabulary, as retsiyyeh (fus., rakiyyah) (water well), 755; dīk (dog), 1039; j'ari (dog), 773; benn (coffee), 174; meṭṭarag (road, way), 98, the words ṭerīdz 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.

šelīl (shirt), 863, 1092: this word is common in bedouin speech. Settled people generally use tōb instead.

hawī (house), 629: this word is used in Riyad 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 Qaṣīm and Ḥayel, and not known in the south.

efem (mouth), 1085: this word becomes etm and tem in Sudair.

neṭūl (thief), 230 from neṭal (to steal). In southern Najd neṭal is used for a different meaning, "to throw away". The word neṭūl is not known there.

'abas (date-stones), 535: this word has a different meaning among bedouins and most southern Najdīs, "camel urine". For date-stones, the words feṣam, 'ajam, or feṣi are more common.

jeḥer (fuṣ., juḥr) (burrow), 217: this word is used by bedouins and only rarely by settled people (especially in al-Qaṣīm) who in this instance change the pharyngeal fricative ḥ 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-Qaṣīm and northern Najd, and in ah in southern Najd as well as in bedouin speech generally, thus: bgereh or bgarah (cow), 167; beezeḥ or beezah (egg), 180; dejājeḥ or dejājah (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 ʔ.s. suffix k or ts and then the suffix is geminated, as in sefīnakk and not sefīnatk (your ship), prov. no. 766; jeddats-ts and not jeddāt-ts (your grandmother), prov. no. 1133.

as šams (sun (~~547~~⁴²⁶)); nafs (soul, self), 702; 'arz (ground), 571; 'arnab (hare), 938; zaww' (fire), ~~644~~⁴⁶⁶. Some nouns are feminine because they refer to a female, as fāter (old she-camel), 710; 'anz (nanny-goat), 537.

Names of towns, countries, etc. are, on the whole, feminine, as Najd (193). But Maşer (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-denya (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; yenna (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,¹ the adjectives in the pattern of af'al² which denote colour and defects have the feminine adjectival pattern fa'ala, thus:

m.s. <u>kazar</u> (green)	f.s. <u>kazra</u> (307)
m.s. <u>hamar</u> (red)	f.s. <u>hamra</u> (643)
m.s. <u>'abyaz</u> (white)	f.s. <u>beeza</u> (866)
m.s. <u>'aṣṣah</u> (deaf)(936)	f.s. <u>ṣaḡha</u>

2.5 The Number of Nouns

In the Najd dialect, dual has ceased to exist in

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'al as in kazar (green); hamar (red); 'ama (blind); 'awar (one-eyed); 'araj (lame); hadab (hunchbacked).

adjectives. They have only singular or plural forms.¹

As in classical Arabic and the dialects of eastern Arabia,² substantives have singular, dual and plural.

2.5.1. The dual

In this dialect, as in the dialects of eastern Arabia,³ the dual is formed by the affixation -een to the singular form, as in srājeen (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 -in to it, as

ṭayyib (good) > ṭayybīn (327, 482)

kayyir (good) > kayyrīn (332)

mṣalli (practising prayers) > mṣallīn (1024)

msālem (peaceful) > msālmīn (339)

A feminine singular noun is made a sound plural by replacing the f. singular endings ah or eh by -āt, as

geebah(-ah) (absence) > geebāt (338)

'ādeh(-ah) (habit) > 'ādāt (486)

kāleh (maternal aunt) > kālāt (594)

Šammarīs change the suffix of the feminine sound plural -āt to -āy, as in nkalāy for nkalāt (palm-trees),⁴ tāwlāy for tāwlāt (tables), and mdarrsāy for mdarrsāt (teachers (f.)).⁵

¹ This is also the case in most modern dialects. See, e.g., Johnstone, op. cit.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Cf. Musil, Northern Neḡd, p. 19.

⁵ Cf. P.F. Abboud, The Syntax of Najdī Arabic (Texas, 1964), p. 75. Cantineau notes that the Eanī Ṣakar change āt to ah as in bṣalāh and šjarāh for bṣalāt (onions) and šjarāt (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'ūl: njūm (stars), 104; tyūr (birds), 471.
3. fe'lān: 'erbān (bedouins), 711.
4. f'ela: šreka (partners), 621.
5. fa'all: jawādd (footpaths), 631.
6. fa'āyel: 'amāyem (turbans), 529.
7. fe'āyel: gešāyed (songs), 1197.
8. fe'āla: meṭāya (riding beasts), 867; sekāra (drunken people), 387.
9. fa'āla: 'atāya (gifts), 751; garāya (villages), 763.
10. fa'āli: 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: lawahīs (noxious insects), 204.
15. fa'alil: 'ašāfir (sparrows), 273; 'anādzīd (grape-bunches), 601.
16. fa'ā'il: sanānīr (cats), 63.
17. fe'ā'il: sekātsīn (knives), 754.
18. fe'ālel: zefāde' (frogs), 881.
19. 'af'āl: 'argāb (necks), 34; 'aṭrāf (edges, ends), 44.
20. 'efā'el: 'ebā'er (camels), 841; 'ešābe' (fingers), 41.
21. 'efā'il: 'ebālīs (devils), 542.
22. mefā'el: meṭāmen (low grounds), 896.
23. mefā'el: manāzel (homes, houses), 638.
24. mefā'il: mefātīh (keys), 856.
25. mfa'al: mhabbal (fools), 652.

The singular adjectives of pattern 'af'al 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 bīḻ (white), ḥemr/ḥemer (red), ṣufer/ṣefr (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 -ān to it, as bīzān (white), sūdān (black), ḥumrān/ḥemrān (red), 'emyān (blind), and 'ūrān (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; lgaṭ (pickings), 850.
4. fa'ul: badu (nomads), 398; gazu (raiders), 223.
5. fu'al: gubaṣ (grasshoppers), 483.
6. fe'el: geṭen (cotton), 224; hejen (camels), 308.
7. fa'el: namel (ants), 459; hazer (settled people), 1152.
8. fa'āl: jarād (locusts), 303.
9. fe'il: jerīd (palm-fronds), 20; yebīs (a type of dry date), 960.
10. fa'il: ḥarīm (women), 79.

(d) Anomalous Plurals

The following anomalous plurals occur in our material: 'ummahāt (mothers), 60; ba'ārīn (camels), 124; akwān (religious scholars), 770; 'īdeen (hands), 84, as plural as well as dual; rejlee (feet), 378, the n is elided which occurs frequently in this word and in 'īdeen when it is annexed (muḍāf), e.g., 'īdeek.

2.6 The Declension of Nouns

Nouns in all modern Arabic dialects are not inflected for case. This dialect is no exception.

The tanwīn 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.¹ 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; beezan (white), 866; yemnan (a right-hand), 'ašan (evening meal), 975.²

While in classical Arabic duals and sound masculine plurals cannot be nunated, they are nunated in this dialect, for example 'esfüreenen (two sparrows), 433; Meselmīnen (Muslims).

There are no diptotes in this dialect, that is, all nouns can be nunated, for example 'ašāfiren (sparrows); ašfaren (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:³

¹ See, e.g., nos. 14, 15, 23, 37, 71, 76, 80, 110, 140, 146, 154, 177, 179, 183, 200, 210, 218, 228, 238, 246, 268, 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 Ḥāyel northwards) and the Syrian and Iraqi deserts, however, preserve the ending -an. See I.G. Wetzstein, "Sprachliches aus den Zeltlagern der syrischen Wüst", ZDMG, 22 (1868), p. 74, rajjālan (a man) and šōran (advice); and cf. Landberg, op. cit., p. 70, jamīlan (a favour), ihbālan (ropes), and p. 91, rakban (a riding party). This nunation ending occurs also in Oman, as in the words gažzan (a raw thing) and nažījan (a ripe thing) in the proverb gažzan byadak wala nažījan byad geerak (Better a raw thing with your own hands than a ripe one with the hands of another)--Jayakar, no. 187.

³ The cardinal number arba'ūn (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.) wāhed (proverbs 66, 1100); 2 (m.) 'atneen (proverbs 66, 845); 3 (m) talāteh (or -ah) (proverbs 66, 845); 10 (m.) 'šereh or 'šarah (prov. no. 784); 10 (f.) 'ašr (proverbs 221, 701),¹ 70 (c.) sab'in (prov. 598); 90 (c) tes'in (prov. 196); 100 (c) myat² (proverbs 584, 797); 1000 (c.) 'alf (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 kamsin which is used for both masculine and feminine.

(b) Ordinal Numbers

Only the following four ordinal numbers occur in our material:

- 1st (m.) awwal (prov. no. 140);
- 2nd (m.) tāni (prov. no. 140);
- 2nd (f.) tānyeh (prov. no. 144);
- 3rd (m.) tālet (prov. no. 140).

2.8 The Personal Pronouns³

2.8.1. The Independent Personal Pronouns

The independent or detached (munfaṣilah) personal pronouns are:

1 c.s.	'ana	1 c.pl.	ḥenna
2 m.s.	'ant (Ḥāyel: ent)	2 m.pl.	antum, antom, antu
2 f.s.	'anti (Ḥāyel: enti)	2 f.pl.	anten (Ḥāyel: enten S.Najd: antum)
3 m.s.	hu	3 m.pl.	hum
3 f.s.	hi	3 f.pl.	hen(n) (S. Najd: hum)

¹ In other contexts it can be articulated 'ašer.

² When this word is not a mudāf, it is pronounced myeh or myah.

³ 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 zlu'i (my ribs), 119; baṭni (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, wajhek (your face), 62.¹
- 2 m.pl.: -kum as in 'ādekum (he came to you again), 1033.²
- 2 f.s.: -ets, -ats, -ts, as in hōfets, 276; gṭeebats-ts, 36.
- 2 f.pl.: -ken(n) as in leken(n) (for you). However, in Riyad, -kum is used.
- 3 m.pl.: -hum as in sab-ḥat-hum (their rosary), 127.³
- 3 f.pl.: -hen (except in Riyad and some southern Najdi parts where -hum is used) as in jawwzūhen wa a'īnu 'eleehen, 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 -nī 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, a, 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'arfuh (you know him), 1106. If the word to which this pronoun is to be suffixed has the ending a, then the semi-vowel, wāw, is introduced to replace the short vowel u which is then dropped and the short vowel a is lengthened as in kallāwh (he left him), 8; balāwh, 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 a or ā is elided. The pronoun then becomes -ah as in bah (in it), 173, for baha (class. bihā); 'edānah (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 a as in kalla (to leave), then the short vowel e in the suffix is dropped and the short vowel a 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

	this/these	that/those
m.s.	<u>hāda</u> (101, 1090) ¹ <u>da</u> (583, 1090)	<u>hādāk</u> <u>dāk</u>
f.s.	<u>hādi</u> (1094) <u>di</u>	<u>hādīts</u> <u>dīts</u>
m.pl.	<u>hādōla</u> (bed. <u>hādāla</u>) <u>dōla</u> (bed. <u>dāla</u>)	<u>hādōlāk</u> (bed. <u>hādālak</u>) <u>dōlāk</u> (bed. <u>dālāk</u>)
f.pl.	<u>hādōli</u> (bed. <u>hādalli</u> , <u>hādann</u>) <u>dōli</u> (bed. <u>dallen</u>)	<u>hādōlīts/hādūlīts</u> ² <u>dōlīts/dūlīts</u> (bed. <u>dallīts</u>)

If any of the demonstrative pronouns denoting nearness precedes a synarthrous noun (mu'arraf bi al) then only the first syllable hā remains of it. hā is not inflected for gender or number,³ as hāljamāl (this camel), 611; hāl-mesmār (this nail), 612; hāt-tweerāt (these little birds), 1118.⁴

In southern Najd da is used instead of ha or hā as in dal-hīn (now, at present) instead of hāl-hīn in northern Najd.

hak--in Ḥāyel hāk⁵--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-rjāl (those men).⁶

The demonstrative pronoun hāts (this/these) is used in Ḥāyel and its neighbourhood.⁷

¹ hada and hadah are also used by some bedouins.

² Cf. P. Abboud, op. cit., p. 15.

³ In Ḥāyel its vowel is short. Cf. ibid., p.28, halwalad (this boy) and p. 31, harrajil (this man) and not hālwalad and hārrajil as elsewhere in Najd.

⁴ According to W. Fischer, hā is used by 'Utaibah and Šammar of al-Jazira. But most other dialects have ha and not hā. Cf. W. Fischer, Die Demonstrativen Bildungen der Neuarabischen Dialekte (The Hague, 1959), pp. 42-43. In Basrah ha is used; see 'Abd al-Laṭif ad-Dalīsi, al-'Amtal aš-Ša'biyyah, p. 5.

⁵ See P. Abboud, op. cit., pp. 24, 32.

⁶ hak al-'ajīn (that dough) occurs in prov. no. 1083.

⁷ See P. Abboud, op. cit., p. 17.

The demonstrative pronouns hāda and hādi when suffixed with personal pronouns become hadā as in hadāy (here I am) and hadāk (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.

m.s.	<u>hādāy</u> ya	<u>hādāy</u> yāk
f.s.	<u>hādāy</u> yay	<u>hādāy</u> yeets
m.pl.	<u>hādāy</u> ōla	<u>hādāy</u> ōlāk
f.pl.	<u>hādāy</u> ōli	<u>hādāy</u> ōlīts

(The hā 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), alladīn (m.pl.) (they who), allāti or allā'i (f.pl.) (they who).

2.11 Diminution

Diminution² is very common in the dialect. It occurs in some 54 nouns in our material.

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

1. f'eel: dimin. of the patterns: fa'al, fa'l, fe'l, 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'eeleh (or -lah): dim. of the patterns: f'eleh, fe'leh, fu'leh, fa'leh, as šjeereh (a little tree), 606; fleedzeh (a little head scar), 1130.
3. f'ayl: dim. of fa'l, as šwayy (a little thing), 425-427.
4. f'ayyil: dim. of f'āl, fe'īl and fa'īl, as jdayyir (a little wall); hmayyir (a little donkey), 999; sgayyir (very young), 464; gdayyir (a little rain pool).
5. f'ayyleh (or -lah): dim. of f'āleh, fe'īleh, and fa'āleh, as hmayyreh (a little ass), sgayyreh (very young (f.)), 725; šrayyreh (a little spark), 725.
6. fwee'el: dim. of fā'el as Sweelem. The fem. fā'leh(-ah) is diminuted fwee'leh as rweebzeh (194), or fwee'ileh(-ah) as sweelifeh(-ah) (a little tale).
7. fwee'il: dim. of fā'ūl, as 'weemīd (a little pillar).
8. f'eelān: dim. of fa'lān as breedān (feeling cold), jwee'ān (hungry), Rmeezān (510).
9. f'eela: dim. of fa'la as mleeha (dark she-camel), 82.
10. afee'el/efee'el: dim. of af'ai (or fa'al as hamar (red)) which denotes colours and defects as aheener (red), akeezer (green), ešeefer (yellow), ezeeredz (blue), a'eerej (lame), aheedeb (hunchbacked).
11. f'ee'el: dim. of fe''al, as skeetsar (sugar)
12. f'ee'il: dim. of fa''āl, fe''īl, and fa''ūl, as dkeekin (little smoke), skeetsin (little knife), 306, and tneenir

¹ 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.

(little oven).

13. f'eelel: dim. of fe'lal, as dreehem (little derham), 592.

14. f'eelil: dim. of fa'lūl, fe'lūl, fe'lāl, and fe'līl, as jreebī' (a little jerboa), 'seefīr (a little sparrow), fneejīl (a little cup), and dreewiṣ (dervish, simpleton).

15. f'eeli: dim. of fe'li and f'eli, as hṣeeni (little fox), 257 and hzeeri (a townsman), 49.

16. mfee'el: dim. of maf'al and mef'al, as mkeeteb (a little office) and mreefedz (a little elbow).

17. mfee'il: dim. of mef'al, as mfeetiḥ (a little key).

2.12 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 (ṣamsiyyah) l and lunar (qamariyyah) l are used in the same way as in classical Arabic.

2.13 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 warāk 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. weeš 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 'ayy (m.) (which),
'ayyat (f.) (which).

3. Particles

3.1 Prepositions

All prepositions in classical Arabic are used except ب and ك. fī, however, is very common in southern Najd but only rarely used in the north as is fa as in fa-l-beet (in the house). The preposition ف 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 ل also takes several shapes (l, le, lu, la) as in lek (for you)(871), l-Maḥmūd (for Maḥmūd), luh (to/for him)(90), laha (for her).

The preposition من becomes mn when it is followed by a vowel as in mn al-berrān (from the desert)(235).

The classical preposition 'ila changes to 'ela (see proverb no. 282). It is used less than in classical Arabic as it is often replaced by ل as in rāḥ l-Abha (he went to Abha) and not rāḥ ela Abha. In bedouin speech 'ela generally becomes 'elya or lya.

The prepositions leen, eleen (from classical 'ilā 'an), lama or elama (bed. lyama), and lamann (until) are also used.

While in southern Najd and in bedouin speech generally, the first person suffix -ni is retained in the prepositions men (fuṣ., min) and 'an, in most northern parts it is dropped, thus menn (from me), 'ann (off me) (see proverb no. 1). In a few northern areas such as 'Yun al-Jaw in the north of al-Qaṣīm, this suffix is not dropped but the gemination of the n in both

¹ See e.g., proverbs 592, 610, 611, 615.

prepositions is abandoned, thus 'ani and meni.¹

3.2. Adverbs

Adverb	Meaning	Adverb	Meaning	Adverb	Meaning
been	between	fōg	above, over	hōl	near, around
'end	at	yamm	towards	gabel	before
taḥat	below, under	lamm	towards	'egub	after
ḥader	below, under	yemīn	right- wards	gebal	always
<u>dzeddām</u>	in front of	yesār	leftwards	dāyem	always
wara	behind	mendākel	inside ²	hna	here
bass	only	mentāle'	outside ²	hnayya	here (dim. of <u>hna</u>)
hnāk	there	taww ³	just	wājed	much
hālḥīn	now	'ād	then	elāmenn (prov.401)	when
mendzelīl	a little while ago	ṭawwāli	straight	yōm ⁴	when
menšwayy	a little while ago	balḥeel	very much		

We may also add another adverb which is used in Riyad, 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. Abdallah 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 jīna (يو جينا) (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: lā (if); ela (if); tsān (if);¹ lō or law (if); 'u, wa, we (and); 'umma . . . wella² (either . . . or); lā . . . wala (neither . . . nor); tsenn (as if . . .); dām or adām (so long as; while, as in proverb no. 307); hetta (even); wala (and not; is better than (as in proverb no. 221)); meer³ or mār (but); ella (except), geer (except, other than); mā geer (except, only); hda (except)--this particle is often preceded by the negative mā (the equivalent of mā hda) but it is rarely used (proverb no. 1143); lōla (but for); māhna (there is not) (proverbs 891, 892).

¹ See, e.g., proverbs 743, 744, 644, 645.

² 'umma . . . wella variantly occurs as yumma . . . wella.

³ Proverb no. 818. This conjunction was originally mā geer (except). This is supported by the fact that ma 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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