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Heartbeat: Conventionality and Originality in Najdi Poetry*

Abstract

This article discusses the interaction between convention, as perpetuated by the oral tradition, and the artist's individual touch in vernacular Najdi poetry (also called Nabaṭi poetry). The focus is on the introductory verses—the equivalent of the classical *nasīb*—which picture the highly charged state of mind that induced the artist to compose his poem. Within these preludes the description of the creative process itself features as a distinct subtheme. Thus the conventional framework of the *nasīb* offers ample scope for the expression of the Arabian poet's personal feeling and sense of individuality. This paper gives particular attention to the imagery and extended similes that translate these surges of emotion into dramatic scenes from the life of the Bedouins and villagers of the Najd. This is illustrated with examples from modern Bedouin poetry based on taped records, and preludial verses by a generation of premodern Najdi poets taken from written Saudi sources. The article is rounded off with a conclusion offering some general thoughts on the interplay between the tradition and the poet's individuality within the wider context of the modern development of Saudi Arabia.

Key words: poetry — oral literature — Arabia (Saudi Arabia, Najd) — Bedouins — *nasīb* — extended simile

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Introduction

THREE years ago I had the good fortune of spending about six weeks with an old and penniless yet proud and defiant Bedouin who is one of the greatest living poets of the Duwāsir tribe in southern Najd. His name is ᶜAbdallah ibn Ḥzayyim of the Ḥarāršah (a subtribe of ar-Rijbān of ad-Duwāsir), but he is generally known by the nickname of ad-Dindān, an onomatopoeia derived from the verb *dandan* 'to tinkle, to hum a tune, to break into spontaneous verse'.

For Dindān and his colleagues, singing and humming in meter and rhyme is an activity pursued in a spirit of both deadly seriousness and playful contest. Like a group of camel riders traversing the desert, they toss at one another lines of chanted poetry that encourage their mounts to vie neck to neck for speed, as expressed in this verse of Dindān:

in dandanaw gimt ana alᶜab liᶜb dindāni	When others hum the tune, I strike up the merry melody;
w-in ġaṭrifaw bi-l-ğuwāriᶜ gimt ağaddīha[1]	When they ululate the song, I keep the rhyme going.

Indeed, he has identified to such an extent with his poetic gift that neither he nor anyone else calls him by any other name than ᶜAbdallah ad-Dindān. When he follows the custom of oral poets to inscribe their copyright symbol in the first line of a poem (as a painter would sign his name in one of the lower corners of the canvas), this is how he puts it:

šarraf aš-šāᶜir ad-Dindān rijmin l-ḥālih	The poet ad-Dindān ascended a mountain all alone
gāl šaffih b-kēfih min ḥasīn al-kalāmi[2]	And burst into exquisite verses made to suit his own taste.

As these two examples show, Dindān's lack of any formal educa-

tion does not prevent him from reflecting on his art. About half of the poems I recorded in the course of my sessions with him contain explicit references to his poetic tastes and to the creative process and include boastful passages about his preeminent position among his fellow artists. These references vary in length and elaborateness from one line to an entire poem of twenty-two verses. Taken together they present a fairly comprehensive picture of Dindān's conception of the nature of poetry and of his own relation to it. As we will see, these verses do not occur in isolation but are part and parcel of the introductory sections which may be taken to represent the equivalent of the classical *nasīb*.

As in the classical Arabic *qaṣīdah*, a melancholy, elegiac mood is predominant in the *nasīb* of Najdi vernacular poetry (also called Nabaṭi poetry). Also, in many poems the classical motifs are still present, such as the *aṭlāl* scene (the description of the poet's melancholy mood as he chances upon the traces of a deserted encampment once inhabited by the tribe of his beloved) and the complaint about the contrast between the poet's physical age and his young, amorous heart.[3] In the formal scheme of the poem the introductory verses describe or hint at the emotional impulse that sets the creative process in motion and provides, as it were, the justification for what follows. Thus the *nasīb* is at once an integral part of the poem and the statement of its raison d'être. But in reality this function of the prelude is less important than the fact that it offers a lyrical poet like Dindān ample scope to develop the motifs closest to his poetic soul.

In the Najdi tradition the highly charged state of mind in which the poet's inspiration wells up, like the ecstasy seizing an oracle, becomes itself a major dramatic theme in the poem. These passages often are remarkable for the richness of the imagery and extended similes that translate these surges of emotion into dramatic scenes from the life of the Bedouins and villagers. Therefore the *nasīb* presents itself as an obvious choice for an assessment of the interrelation between convention and the poet's individual genius.

The procedure I have adopted for the purpose of this article is the following. First, taking Dindān's work as a point of departure, the place of the *nasīb* in the overall structure and object of the poem is discussed. Then the main motifs featuring in the *nasīb* itself are illustrated with fragments taken from the work of Dindān and other poets. The core of the article is a discussion of the extended simile, a stylistic device that allows the Najdi poet to display his art to the full. Dindān's imagery in this and other parts of the *nasīb* are compared to that of other Najdi poets. Samples from their poetry show

the degree to which these poets draw on a common store of motifs, images, and phraseology on the one hand, and, on the other, illustrate the individual touches by which an accomplished poet seeks to distinguish himself within the context of the tradition. The article is rounded off with a conclusion offering some general thoughts on the subject.

For examples from the work of poets other than Dindān I have relied primarily on four contemporary Saudi collections of oral poetry, all answering to relatively high editorial standards and containing good samples of lyrical verse by illiterate poets of the generation preceding Dindān. One such predecessor is ᶜAbdallah ibn Sbayyil (d. 1938), a poet renowned in the entire Arabian desert, who lived in Nifi, a small town in the High Najd (*ᶜĀliyat Najd*) situated in the territory of the ᶜTēbah tribe.[4] Very similar in content and form is the poetry of Fhēd al-Mijmāj, a poor agricultural laborer and a contemporary of Ibn Sbayyil who lived in the village of al-Aṭlah, not far from Nifi. The same applies to Mašᶜān al-Htēmi, a Bedouin who wandered in the deserts of Najd about a century ago, and to ᶜBēd ibn Hwēdi ad-Dōsiri, an agricultural laborer who was born in the small town of aš-Šaᶜra, east of Nifi, and who lived in the same period and circumstances as the others just mentioned.[5] Finally, I have made use of an anthology of verse by poetesses of the Arabian desert.[6]

The *Nasīb* in Oral Najdi Poetry

Relation of the Nasīb *to Other Parts of the* Qaṣīdah

As a rule, the poems in Dindān's oral *dīwān* (collection of poetry) include a number of preludial verses, varying in length from a single line to sections of almost twenty verses, that correspond to the *nasīb* of classical Arabic poetry; only in a few poems devoted to a single theme, like war or the joys of camel riding, has Dindān dispensed with the prelude altogether. Leaving aside the single-theme poems, Dindān's collection of oral poetry numbers 503 verses spread over twenty-five poems. As a quantitative illustration of the *nasīb*'s position in the *dīwān*, this total number of verses can be subdivided as follows:

1) Sentimental introductory verses corresponding to the classical *nasīb*: 124.
2) Description of the camel's physique and qualities: 182.
3) Description of thunderstorms, rain and its effect on the parched desert: 50.
4) Supplications and praise to God: 36.
5) The remaining 111 verses are devoted to familiar themes like moralizing maxims, and conventional wisdom (*ḥikam wa-*

naṣāʾiḥ); glorification of his tribe (*mufākharah*); love poetry (*ġazal*); description of the itinerary the messenger has to follow (*ar-riḥlah*); greetings to the addressee and verses said in his praise (*madīḥ*); and riddles (*alġāz*).[7]

Before coming to the main focus of this article, the *nasīb*, the following brief remarks as to the interconnection of these themes may be in order.

Structure of the Poem

In Dindān's poetry the introduction, whatever its length, is usually well defined by its content and the formula of transition that sets it apart from the main theme.[8] In many poems this transition from one section to the other is marked by a form of address. Once the poet has concluded his introduction he turns to the immediate addressee of his words. If he addresses himself to God (as in eleven of the poems) with the vocative *ya-llāh*, this is usually followed by *ṭālibk lēlin* or *bilēlin* 'I request you to send a night [of clouds and rainfall]' and a description of clouds, thunder, rain, and torrents rushing through watercourses (as in eight of the poems). In the case of the poet turning to a messenger, the words *ya-rākbin* 'O rider [of a camel or a car of such and such qualities]' or *ya-nidībi* 'O messenger of mine' are invariably followed by a description of the mount or vehicle (as in twelve poems). Both *ya-llāh* and *ya-rākbin* occur in two of the poems.

Generally the description of the camel and the journey ends in a phrase beginning with *tanṣa* 'you head for', *naṣṣah* 'steer [the camel] towards', *lya jan, lya lifan* 'when [the she-camels] have arrived at' etc., followed by greetings to the final addressee, a terse indication of the message, and words of praise for its recipient and his tribe or kin.

In four poems the address to the messenger and the connected camel description separate the *nasīb* from the love lyrics of the *ġazal* section, in one case with the addition of words destined for the *mamdūḥ* to whom the messenger is to report on the lovelornness of the poet. In two poems the *ġazal* section immediately follows the *nasīb*, the transition being marked by the formula of transition: *min ᶜana* (*ġaḍḍ annahad*) 'all this because of [one with luscious breasts etc.]' and *ᶜalēk ya-* 'for your sake [O beauty of such and such traits]'.[9] In Najdi poetry a direct transition from the *nasīb* to *ġazal* is generally signaled by some formula of this kind.

In one poem Dindān speaks to his young riding camel (*bakriti*) and in another he asks God to punish a dove whose cooing renewed his pangs of love. Two poems consist almost entirely of a soliloquy by the poet. The shorter one, however, ends in an address to the censurer and claims that only a ride on a spirited camel will cool the

inflamed heart; the verse is reminiscent of Imruᵓ al-Qays' *fa-daᶜ ḏā wa salli al-hamma ᶜanka bi-jasratin* 'leave that subject and dispel your worries on the back of a strong she-camel'. Unlike most of Dindān's poems, which—apart from a few verses of *ġazal*—fall into two, three, four, or more sections separated by more or less standardized markers of transition, these two are mainly made up of only one section, the *nasīb*, but one that has grown into a full-fledged poem in itself.

Object of the Poem

A modern Western poet might raise his eyebrows in astonishment when asked why he expresses himself in verse, for in the West it is commonly assumed that a deep chasm lies between the mundane pursuits of the general public and the modern poetic sensibility that seeks to carve out its own truths for no other reward than the admiration or respect of the like-minded. In Arabia, however, this question is not considered rude at all. Many times I myself was asked what profit (*fāydah*) I derived from my endeavors. Even today the *qaṣīdah* in its most crude form—a stratagem to elicit financial reward or other favors—is still widely practiced in Saudi Arabia.

Dindān, as his sorry socioeconomic state testifies, never stooped to that level. The names that one finds in the sections of his poems corresponding to the classical *madīḥ* are those of fellow poets he is in poetic correspondence with and friends who are in jail or other sorts of trouble. The poems featuring the *aṭlāl* motif, as a prelude to memories of deceased friends, fall into the same category.

In six poems the sufferings of the poet are set in the *ġazal* context of unrequited love. In two poems he reacts to slights against his honor. In eight poems the charged emotional state described in the *nasīb* is directly linked to the disastrous effects a prolonged drought has for the Bedouins and their herds. The core of these poems is a request for rain. Some take the form of fervent prayers to God to send down his bounty and save the Bedouins from *ad-dahr*, the remorseless fate that oppresses them. This is a distinctly pre-Islamic concept, though it is not recognized as such by the naturally devout Dindān. The following example is from a poem that begins with a brief *nasīb* evoking the poet's agitated state of mind as he stands on a mountaintop and feels the verses stirring inside him:

1. *bida b-isim rabbih gabil mabdāh fi l-anšād*	1. He [the poet] pronounced in the name of the Lord before striking up his song,
w-ḏikir ṭalbit allah gabil badᶜ	And prayed to God before he

at-timāṭīli

began composing his verses.

2. *ṣḥīḥin w-aliḥḥih kiṭir ma yiḥṣy al-ᶜaddād*
ᶜala ḥājtin w-arji ᶜaṭāyāh tajri li

2. Truly, countless were the entreaties he sent up.
My need was great and so was the hope I placed in His munificence.

3. *ya-llah b-lēlin ma yxuffih nisam l-anwād*
ḥagūgin yšaǧǧiǧ māh ġūr al-ġamālīli[10]

3. O God, send us a night whose clouds are not dispersed by the winds,
Making good on their promise with floods that rip up the bottoms of the gulleys.

And ends thus:

1. *šawāna d-dahar w-aġla ᶜalēna l-ḥaḍīr az-zād*
ṣakk ᶜalāna mṣarrift al-grūš ad-dalālīli[11]

1. Scorched by drought and villagers who raised the price of our staples,
We suffered at the hands of money-lenders and their cunning.

2. *ᶜasa llah yiḥīl al-ᶜisr minna w-min l-ajwād*
jizīl al-mdūd w-yinzil al-xēr tanzīli

2. May God free us and all noble souls from hardship.
He bestows His bounty lavishly and sends down to us His blessings.

3. *w-taftaḥ lha bābin mn al-ᶜarš ya-jawwād*
b-rizgin tlīn bh al-ǩbūd al-maġālīli[12]

3. O Beneficent One, open one of the gates of Your throne for the flow
Of sustenance that softens the hard, shrivelled livers.

4. *lih al-xēr b-amr llah lih l-mulk wa-l-mīᶜād*
w-minna bi-ᶜilm allah hu aṣ-ṣādig al-gīli

4. He decrees the good, His is the reign and the last day.
God's commands we must obey,
He who speaks the true words.

These poems, for all their vivid descriptions of scenery and Bedouin life, are primarily an attempt to communicate with the supernatural, and as such might be classed as being in the domain of rite and private devotion.

From this it becomes clear that Dindān sings his verses neither in the hope of immediate financial reward nor exclusively for enter-

tainment or art's sake. For him poetry fulfills many other functions as well: it conveys messages and greetings to friends and beloved ones, prayers to God, affirmations of both individual and tribal self-esteem, and words of retaliation for attacks upon his honor. In addition to these external functions, many poems also serve an internal, psychological purpose which is closely related to the feelings expressed in the *nasīb*. Like the classical *nasīb*, these introductory verses are characterized by their melancholy and emotional tone and their expression of a sense of loss and separation from an ideal state (be it the separation from the poet's sweetheart, kin, friends, or his own youth) and suffering (be it the effects of drought, want, a slight, a fellow poet's scoffing, etc.).[13] At the same time the *nasīb* makes clear that the verses that follow are the antidote for the disease, as when he says:

ana hāḍ ma bi ᶜūḍ bi-llah min aš-šayṭān	I was roused to speak my mind—with God I seek refuge from Satan
kalāmin yšālīni w-ana ḍāyiğin bāli[14]	In words that give relief from the heaviness of my heart.

It is entirely consistent with Dindān's Bedouin way of life that the therapeutical aspect of his poetry normally takes the form of an imaginary drenching, a description of himself or a *jēš* (a group of mounted men) riding fast camels at a lively pace, or a bitter diatribe against his satirizer. Thus the poem closes the circle of loss, grief, compensation, and restored mental equilibrium.

Parts of the *Nasīb*

It would be difficult to subdivide the *nasīb* into constituent parts that are as well defined as is the *nasīb* in relation to the other parts of the *qaṣīdah*. However, the following motifs may be bracketed together for the sake of convenience: a scene on a lonely mountain; a description of the process of poetic inspiration; the suffering of the heart and its adjunct, the extended simile belonging to the category of *ya-tall galbi* 'how the strings of my heart are being pulled'.

The Lonely Mountain Scene

Though the poet's ascent of an elevation in order to look out over the surrounding desert is a motif not unknown in classical poetry, it seems to be of considerably more frequent occurrence in the vernacular poetry of Arabia.[15] As the poetess Nūrah al-Ḥmūd said:

rāᶜi l-hawa dāymin fi rās mirgāb	The lovelorn can always be found on his lookout;
w-lya ᶜtala margibin tūḥi ǧinī-bih[16]	When he has climbed to its top you hear his wailing.

(RADDĀS 1984/85, I, 65)

But even among his fellows Dindān strikes one as a particularly assiduous climber of mountains, as no doubt he was before one of his legs became nearly paralyzed by arthritis. In the solitude of a mountain peak, its craggy rocks lashed by violent winds and dust storms and frequented by no other living beings except falcons, the poet can give free rein to his feelings. There the psychic forces raging inside him are brought into the more immediate presence of the supernatural and the awesome power of nature. Under such circumstances the poet must be prudent that his inspiration does not come from the wrong source:

ana bādyin fi margibin w-alᶜan aš-šayṭān	From the lookout post I climbed I curse Satan,
yġayyir ᶜalayy fi nāyfāt al-mišārīfi[17]	Feeling out of sorts on these lofty crests.

Two-thirds of Dindān's poems open with such a mountain scene. The poet states that he has climbed to the pinnacle, referring to himself in either the first or third person. In the latter case the subject of the verb is *an-naššād, aš-šāᶜir*, or his proper name. The ascent is made in the early part of the morning (*aḍ-ḍaḥa*).[18]

Once his tumultuous mood has subsided and the poet begins his descent, he is in a state of physical and mental exhaustion and wishes he had never embarked on the climb:

rijmin širīfin ᶜala l-amṭāl ṣāᶜūgih	A rock from where one has an unbounded view over the other landmarks;
hayyaḍ jidīd al-ᶜana margāh la ᶜādi[19]	There sorrow welled up in me with renewed force: Wish I hadn't climbed that peak!

He feels that the mountain has tricked him into this enterprise,[20] but his excuse is that he really had no choice:

ana bādyin fi rās rijmin m abi	I climbed the peak of a lofty

margāh	mountain against my wish,
ḥadāni ᶜala ᶜāli marāğībih al-ğīli[21]	Driven to that high vantage point by the poetic urge.

The Inspirational Process[22]

On top of the mountain the poet is overcome by conflicting emotions. His suppressed fury bursts forth and he is so agitated and desperate that his mind clouds over and he almost goes berserk.

ḍabbēt rijmin zād ġulli ġalīli	I climbed a mountain in a state of mounting fury,
lēn hu ḍāᶜ ar-rāy wi-ᶜmōmis al-ğīl[23]	Til my mind clouded over and I groped for words.

It is in this extreme condition that his inner self is stirred sufficiently for the verses to well up. In the *nasīb* of Najdi poetry the verb *hāḍ* 'to be stirred' and its derived forms *hayyaḍ* and *tahayyaḍ* commonly link the emotional state of the poet to the process of artistic creation:[24]

1. *ḍabb aḍ-ḍaḥa n-naššād ᶜāli l-amāṭīl* *rijmin yhayyiḍni ᶜala liᶜb al-afkār*[25]	1. After sunrise the poet climbed to a high ridge, A mountain that brought me into a pensive mood.
2. *w-agbal ᶜalayy min kull fajjin timāṭīl* *w-ḥabb al-wiliyy min kull šinn at-tigiṣṣār*[26]	2. From every nook and cranny the verses marched on me, Though the Lord loves moderation in everything.

The involuntary nature of this process is stressed over and over again:

bādyin rijmin ṭimānīn alf gāmah	I climbed a mountain soaring up 480,000 feet high.
w-afṭar illi min jimīᶜ al-gāf ṣāmi	There he who vowed to abstain from all rhyming broke his fast.

One verse calls forth the next and before long the poet is almost swept away by the flood of his own inspiration. From everywhere the verses come hurrying to him and press around him like camels crazed with thirst:[27]

aġanni b-gāfin lēn ja lli warāh nhāl	No sooner did I chant one verse, than others came like camels

rushing to a well

w-ṣakkat ᶜalayy jill al-ǧuwāriᶜ mahānīᶜi[28] And pressed around me, lowering their big heads to the water.

Or like hosts of young wingless locusts crawling, pushing, and riding on one another's backs, or grains of sand in the high dunes:

1. *at-thāmi jāk lih fi l-jaww ḥāmah*
   wa-š-šta gaṭᶜat slūmih min šmāmi[29]
1. Or swarms of Tihāmah locusts that darken the sky;
   No sooner than winter has turned its back,
2. *ar-riḥiyy mn al-Kwēt ila Thāmah*
   wa l-ᶜadad ᶜindik tara hāḍa kalāmi[30]
2. Their whirling columns are seen from Kuwait to Tihāmah.
   Count those numbers and you'll know how much I have to say.
3. *ᶜidd raml al-ᶜirǧ w-iḥḍar fi timāmih*
   w-iḥṣ ᶜaddih fi xadārīs aḍ-ḍalāmi[31]
3. Also, count the grains of sand in a dune, not skipping one of them,
   But make sure you do your counting right during a dark, moonless night.

Visions undreamt of unfold as the inspiration bursts forth. But in this crucial moment the poet does not let himself be overpowered, and thanks to his mastery of the art moulds his thoughts in eloquent verses that obey the laws of rhyme and meter:

al-galam hātih tara ᶜindi kalām Bring the pen, for I have verses to say;

la b-ġāwīha wala bi-mxōjilāt[32] I am not one to mangle them, nor do they turn out flawed.

Indeed, the verbs used for 'composing poetry' all imply a firm grip of the professional requirements.[33] Thus the emotions are brought under control and translated into verse (JUNAYDIL 1980/81, 105):[34]

yigūl Mašᶜān al-Htēmi tifalham This is the poetry said by Mašᶜān al-Htēmi

gāfin rijas bēn aḍ-ḍlūᶜ al-maġālīǧ Verses that raged between the walls of his ribs.

The result is as delicious as camel's milk,[35] true poetry that lends itself to being sung:

aš-šāᶜir ad-Dindān ġanna w-iftikir	The poet ad-Dindān set his thoughts to a tune,
bētin ᶜala l-maᶜna yruddih bi-l-fiṣāḥ	Moulding each verse so as to express its meaning with eloquence.

The Suffering of the Heart

The poet who stands brokenhearted on top of the mountain feels a surge of emotion pressing inside him, straining to be released. But his attempts at restraint only increase the fury of the emotions and the poet's mental pain:

1. *w-ḍāg aḍ-ḍimīr w-ja li-ṣadri tiḍārīb* *w-ǩannih yjurr ġṣūn galbi maḥājīm*[36]	1. Distress clouded my mind and palpitated in my breast, As if cupping glasses were tapping my heart's arteries.
2. *fi l-barr ǩanni fi miḍīǧ al-lahābīb* *lēn ixtalaft w-habb fi l-galb tansīm*[37]	2. In the open desert I felt as if hemmed in by walls, While the winds of moodiness tugged at my heart.

And:

1. *ᶜAbdallah ad-Dindān ḍabb al-mišārīf* *rijmin taġašwāh al-xyāl ar-rzāni*[38]	1. ᶜAbdallah ad-Dindān climbed the high cliffs Of a mountain soaked with rain by heavy clouds.
2. *afḍēt ma ǩannēt bēn as-sarājīf* *w-gāmat thišš al-ma l-ᶜyūn al-ḥzāni*[39]	2. There I gave free rein to the feelings pent up between my ribs, And, disconsolate, I burst out in tears.
3. *yāma b-ṣadri xāfyin ma baᶜad šīf* *w-in jīt b-aǩna gult ana l-mōt jāni*[40]	3. If only people knew what secrets I kept hidden: My attempts at restraint put me through the pains of death.

At the center of the forces unleashed during the creative process is the heart.[41] It is roasted by flames until it becomes cooked to perfection.[42] Violent, hot winds wither the heart's green sprouts. The heart is likened to the dry bed of a watercourse after a long drought or to a shallow pool of rainwater from which foam and dust are blown

by the desert winds. Sometimes it seems as if the heart is being plucked out of the breast by a pair of pincers. In the *ġazal* sections one also finds the familiar dialogue between the poet's heart and his common sense, with the latter upbraiding the former for its persistence in delusion.

In the end, the secret thoughts, worries, and sorrows the poet tried his utmost to suppress can no longer be contained in the cage between his ribs, and they pour forth.[43] This moment is heralded by the appearance of tears that stream from his sleepless and miserable eyes like water pouring from a bucket or gushing from a well after the sand and debris clogging it have been scraped away.[44]

The Extended Simile in the *Nasīb*

The comparison of a tearful eye to a bucket from which water splashes when it is drawn from a well by a camel was already dear to the early classical poets (Wagner 1988, I, 72, 97–98). Often this motif is amplified in an extended simile with detailed descriptions of the technique of irrigation. By far the most famous example is the seven verses on this topic by Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā, but there is no dearth of this simile in the work of other classical poets as well. Since socioeconomic conditions in Arabia remained largely unchanged until the second half of this century, including the methods used to draw water, it is not surprising that the vernacular oral tradition has retained and refined this motif.[45]

The extended simile is announced by formulas like *ya-tall galbi* 'ah, how my heart is being pulled', *ya-lajjiti* 'ah, how my heart clamors', *ya-mall galbin* or *mall galbin* 'how much suffering from a heart', *ya-wijūdi* 'ah, how I am pained', *ya-wanniti* 'ah, how I cry, lament'. In all these cases Dindān's poems open with a mountain scene. In other sources one also finds: *ya-jarr galbi* 'ah, how my heart is being tugged at', *ya-ḥann galbi* 'ah, how my heart is moaning and whining', *fariy galbi* 'how my heart is torn', *zōᶜ galbi* 'how my heart leaps, flutters'.

In these, the most poetical sections of the *qaṣīdah*, each poet in his own way employs the standard repertory of images familiar to his audience in order to paint his heart's distress in the most vivid colors. An idea of this interplay between real emotion, the conventions of the *nasīb*, and the poet's ability to add individual touches might be gained from the following examples of Dindān's and other poets' use of the extended simile.

Labor at the Well

The strain on the poet's heart implied in the formula *ya-tall galbi* 'how severely my heart is being pulled' can be visualized in many ways. Thus one finds as the second part of the simile a description of a falcon flapping its wings in an effort to escape from the *sbūg*, the leather loops that keep it tied to its padded perch when it spies a flock of bustards.[46] Or, in a reversal of roles, the comparison is made with a falconer waving his arms in the hope of luring back a falcon that flew away to join its own brethren in freedom.[47]

However, as a motif in the *nasīb* of Najdi poetry nothing equals the popularity of the *sāni* and the *sānyah*, the laborer and his camel that draw water from the well. One can think of various explanations for this, but certainly the sight of a camel being urged on relentlessly as it paces up and down the same path and heaves mightily at the ropes must have struck the imagination as a powerful metaphor for the condition of one ridden by the devil of poetry. As ᶜBēd ibn Hwēdi said in a variation on the Arab adage *sayr as-sawānī safar la yanqaṭiᶜ* 'the course of the beasts that draw water is a journey that does not end':

yigūl al-mwallaᶜ wa-r-ruwābiᶜ tdīrih dēr	These are the words of one infatuated, as he's driven in circles by worry
ǩima dēr miᶜwādin ᶜala ma baġa s-sāni[48]	Like a camel drawing water from a well goes back and forth at the driver's directions.

(JUNAYDIL 1980/81, 151)

Unlike the classical poets, who compare the eye's tears with the water drawn in buckets from a well, Dindān builds his simile on a comparison between his torn heart (*ya-tall galbi*) and the strain on the bucket's rope, and hence on the camel, as a result of the driver's cruelty, indifference, or inexperience.

ya-tall galbi tall dalwin maᶜa jahhāl	Or is it torment like that of a leather bucket hoisted by clumsy youngsters,
ᶜala ġēr tasnīᶜin fiḍatha n-nuwāǩīᶜi[49]	And ripped open by sharp stones protruding from the sides of the well.

In a similar vein ᶜAbdallah ibn Sbayyil says:[50]

1. *ya-tall galbi tallat al-ġarb li-*	1. Ah, my heart is being pulled

ršāh
ᶜala zaᶜāᶜin ḥāylin ṣaddarat bih[51]
like a bucket by its rope,
By a vehement she-camel, barren of womb, that struggles down the path,

2. *sawwāgha ᶜabdin ḍarabha bi-miḥdāh*
imm amrasat bi-ršāh walla wiṭat bih[52]
2. Beaten with a stick by its driver, a slave:
Either the rope slips off the roller or she steps on it.

3. *ǩannik ᶜala sōgah thimmih w-tanxāh*
la ᶜawwad allah sāᶜtin ᶜarrifat bih[53]
3. He drives her as if you were encouraging him or shouting him on in battle;
Cursed be the hour she came to know him.

4. *ly agfa b-ha ǩann aṭ-ṭamāmīᶜ taščāh*
ǩann ad-daluw ṭērin lya nazzaᶜat bih[54]
4. When he chases her down the path like a camel hurried on by raiders,
She pulls so hard that the bucket comes flying up the well like a bird,

5. *lēn immazaᶜ ġarbih ᶜala ḥadd ᶜargāh*
w-jīlān bīrih bi-l-msūḥ lᶜabat bih[55]
5. So that its leather became torn at the wooden crosspieces over its mouth,
As it banged and scraped against the stones covering the well's shaft.

(Faraj 1952, 206–207 and Sbayyil 1988, 131)

There is a difference between the drawing of water for the purpose of watering the camel herds and for irrigation. The first is a relatively simple operation carried out with a minimum of equipment, as described in these verses of Ibn Sbayyil:

1. *ya-tall galbi tallatēnin mn agṣāh*
tall al-wrād illi ḥyāmin wrūdih[56]
1. Ah, how my heart is being pulled again and again from its roots,
Like the strain on the ropes of a well circled by camels crazed with thirst,

2. *yamm aṭ-ṭwāl illi ᶜdūdih mṭawwāh*
yrūᶜ jaḏḏābah mijāḏib ᶜdūdih[57]
2. Towards aṭ-Ṭwāl, deep wells with walls made of stone,
That pose a daunting challenge to those who draw the water,

3. *ᶜala giᶜūdin ma ysāniᶜ bi-mamšāh*	3. Let alone with a young male camel that does not obey directions,
mistaṣᶜibin ma yitbaᶜ illi yigūdih[58]	An unruly beast that does not follow the man leading it.
4. *la gāl ya-rāᶜi l-jimal zād bi-xṭāh*	4. If the man at the well shouts, "Halt the camel!" it only increases its pace,
imma ngaṭaᶜ walla tiṣarram ᶜamūdih[59]	Either cutting the rope or breaking the poles of the hoist.

(FARAJ 1952, 168–69 and SBAYYIL 1988, 120)

Two factors combine to put a severe strain on the rope: the depth of the well and the unruly behavior of the young male camel that has not gone through the kind of training (*ᶜsāf*) that a regular *sānyah* receives before being put to work. Also, unlike the trained *sānyah*, this camel pulls the rope toward an undefined point, only halting when the driver hears the shout of the man at the well who catches the bucket and empties it into the trough (*ḥōḍ*). This shout—*ya-rāᶜi l-jimal* 'O driver of the camel!' or *ᶜawwid* 'return!'—is a sign that the bucket has reached the top of the well, but in this case the wayward camel continues to pull despite all efforts to stop it and thus plays havoc with the equipment, either breaking the rope or one of the two stout poles that support the wooden roller (*maḥālah*) over which the rope (*ar-rša*) runs.

What especially captured the imagination of the poets is the terror felt by the *sānyah* for the slave who mercilessly drives her on. The fate of these camels—toiling like prisoners condemned to forced labor under the supervision of a camp bully—may have appeared especially gruesome to the poet when compared with that of camels pasturing freely in the desert. In any case, this master-slave relation, in which the master is himself a slave, is a recurrent motif in these sections. As described by Ibn Sbayyil, the driver's misguided zeal only results in the rapid exhaustion of the animal and damage to the equipment, thus necessitating time-consuming repairs. Similar scenes of cruelty captured the imagination of other poets like Mašᶜān al-Htēmi:

1. *ya-wanniti wannat ṯalāṯin halāyim*	1. My groans are like those of three gaunt she-camels,
min nasfihin xiḍr al-jmām ad-daġārīğ[60]	Worn from drawing the well's copious greenish-blue water.
2. *sawwāghin ᶜabdin maᶜa l-lēl yajham*	2. Their driver is a slave who starts working towards the end

of night,
w-anjaḥ miṣāxifhin b-rūs al-misāwīğ[61] Raining blows with his stick on their bodies' tender parts.
(JUNAYDIL 1980/81, 105)

And ᶜBēd ad-Dōsiri:

1. *o tall ḥabl as-sānyah ᶜigb l-iᶜlāg*
1. Or like the bucket's rope is straining at the she-camel after it has been joined to the saddle,

sawwāgha nāsin manāṭīğ dīnih[62]
A camel driven by a slave forgetful of his religion's prescriptions.

2. *lya jat maᶜa s-sanda f-la hīb tinsāg*
2. Doesn't he know that she should not be urged on as she makes her way back to the well up the tow path?

la šakk bāġin hēniha llah yihīnih
But he is bent on humiliating her, may God punish him!
(JUNAYDIL 1980/81, 143–44)

As Ibn Junaydil points out, on their return from the lower end of the tow path (*maṣabb*) after the bucket has been drawn from the well and emptied into the reservoir (*al-lza*) the camels are allowed to walk back up the slope (*sanda*) toward the turning point at the well (*mᶜaddal*) at an easy pace in order to let them recover somewhat from the exertion. Therefore the stick (*miswigah*) is only used to spur them on while they are drawing up the heavy bucket on their way down the slope. To beat the camel on its return towards the well is considered an outrage (JUNAYDIL 1980/81, 39, 99). And under no circumstances should the camel be hit on her tender parts—such unethical treatment is also likely to result in the mishaps described in Ibn Sbayyil's poem. Of course the likelihood that the slave loses his temper is greater if the camel has not been well trained, or for some other reason behaves in a recalcitrant way:

wa-tall galbi tall ġarb an-nuwāᶜīr
Ah, my heart is being torn like a bucket dangling from the wooden poles,

ᶜala ṭalāṭin ḥīl fi hinn zarga[63]
Drawn by three sterile she-camels, one of them an unruly white.
(RADDĀS 1984/85, I, 184)

Here the disturbing factor is the presence of a *zarga*, a white animal with a few black hairs that is notorious for its impetuousness and unruliness and for shying at the least thing (MUSIL 1928, 329–34; JUNAYDIL 1987, 168). These qualities make a camel unsuited for labor requiring docility and steady, regular effort.

Clamor of the Heart

Similes announced by the formula *ya-lajjiti* etc. generally refer to sounds, especially noises of distress, confusion, and anxiety, as in the following verses by Mašᶜān al-Htēmi:

1. *ya-min li-galbin sajj fi marbiᶜih lajj*
   lijlāj ahal sūgin tibīᶜ al-kisāwi[64]
2. *lajjat maḥāl al-bīr yōm ytidāraj*
   tiğbil w-tiğfi bih ṭalāṭin ᶜadāwi[65]
3. *sawwāgha ᶜabdin lya gām yanhaj*
   ᶜabdin ḥalāl al-gōm ma hūb yāwi[66]

1. What to do with a heart distracted by love and raging inside its breast,
   Like the clamor of market vendors selling cloth?
2. Or the screams of wooden rollers turning rapidly above the well
   As three sturdy camels pace back and forth towing the rope,
3. Once their driver, a slave, begins to rush them up and down:
   May that merciless fellow be captured and taken away as the enemy's booty!

(JUNAYDIL 1980/81, 100)

In this example a third element has been added to the motif of the slave driving three camels: that of the wooden wheel (*al-maḥālah*) over which rolls the rope that joins the bucket to the camel saddle (*ǩitab*) especially made for this purpose.[67] The *maḥālah*, together with the elongated bucket (*ġarb*), the wooden crosspieces tied over the mouth of the bucket (*ᶜarqāh*), and the rope (*rishāᵓ*), are part of the vocabulary that has remained virtually unchanged since the time of Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā.

In the period called *aš-šarbah*, when the wheat fields are in need of constant irrigation, the clamor of the sqeaking wooden water wheels used to sound almost all night long and disturb the sleep of the village folk.[68] In poetry this noise (*lajjah*, *lijlāj*) is compared to the mayhem of the stormy emotions inside the poet's heart, a connection made explicit in this verse by Fhēd al-Mijmāj:

ᶜalēh maḥḥāl aḍ-ḍimāyir zalāzīl	For her sake the wooden wheels of my inner self are shaking and squeaking,
tjūḍ min figdih w-min šidd fargāh[69]	Twisting about because of her absence and the pain of separation.

(JUNAYDIL 1980/81, 48)

Similarly Dindān says:

ya-lajj galbi miṭil ma lajlij al-maḥḥāl	My heart whined like the squeaking of the wooden wheels suspended above a well
tnazziḥ ǧilībih dārbāt al-marājīᶜi[70]	While well-trained camels briskly draw its water.

The simile is further enriched by the fact that the sound of the *maḥālah* is sometimes directly connected to the monotonous songs chanted by the camel-driving slave or laborer in order to stay awake at night and to relieve the tediousness of his work:

1. *ya-lajjiti lajjat maḥāḥīl ᶜab-bāb*	1. Ah, my screams are like those of the waterwheels turning above an abundant well,
saggāyhin b-aṣwāthin miᶜij-bātih[71]	Singing in voices that cheer up the man in charge of the irrigation.
2. *ṣaddar ᶜala ᶜirbin marājīᶜ w-ašbāb*	2. Down the tow path he leads camels, some of them old hands and some new to the job,
rasm aš-šaḥam bi-ḍhūrhin ǩāl-yātih[72]	The spring pastures having covered their backs with layers of fat.

(ᶜBēd ibn Hwēdi in JUNAYDIL 1980/81, 167)

As Ibn Junaydil explains, the noise made by the *maḥālah* becomes louder as the bucket becomes heavier with water and the tension on the rope increases. Sometimes the driver of the camels on the tow path (*masna*) used to hammer a small, tapered piece of fig-tree or desert-plum (*sidr*) wood into one of the cracked ends of the axis on which the roller turns. As a result the *maḥālah* did not turn as smoothly as before and a bucket of smaller size had to be attached to the rope. But

the advantage gained was a sound that, though far from melodious, was regular enough that the laborer could tune into it with his own chanting and thus find some distraction from the boredom of his work. Such a roller was called *maḥālat al-jāhūš* (JUNAYDIL 1987/88, 76). Another enlivening touch was added by the gay colors painted on the *maḥālah*:

lya garribat Ḏirwah wa-bint al-Jahāmah — When Ḏirwah and bint al-Jahāmah were brought to the tow path,

maḥḥālha miṯl al-bniyy al-maxāḍīb[73] — The turning waterwheels resembled the hands dyed with henna of gesticulating young ladies.

(Mḥammad ibn Salmān in JUNAYDIL 1987/88, 75)

One rare adaptation of the *maḥālah* motif appears in these verses by the poetess Waḍḥa al-Mašᶜān of Ḥarb, a tribe through whose territory the Mecca-Medina stretch of the Ḥijāz railroad ran:

1. *al-galb ǩannih bi-l-misāmīr masmūr*
   sumr al-ḥadīd mjawwdīn fi ḍbābih[74]
2. *walla ǩima lajjat maḥāḥīl bābūr*
   tsūgih al-kiffār sōg ar-ribābah[75]

1. My heart squirms as if it has been spiked with nails,
   As if the dark iron were riveted onto its arteries;
2. Or like the rattling sound made by a steam engine's wheels,
   Driven by the infidels as one plays a one-stringed fiddle.

(RADDĀS 1984/85, I, 339)

Sound of Distress

A different kind of *lajjah* is that of suffering camels. The *xalūj*, a she-camel bereft of her young, is an obvious example:

ya-lajjiti lajjat xalūj al-miṣāġīr — Ah, my moans are like those of a she-camel bereft of her young,

illi ᶜala bawwin tizāyad ḥnāha[76] — As she stoops again and again over the stuffed skin of her slaughtered calf.

(Siᶜīdah aṯ-Ṯaᶜliyyah in RADDĀS 1984/85, I, 369)

The groans of thirsty camels suffering the torments of Tantalus

as they crowd around a desert well, unable to reach its water in the absence of a herdsman, provided the poets with another simile for the anguished voices inside them. Take this scene of sheer terror that a pure Bedouin like Dindān may have derived from his own experience:

1. *ya-lajjiti lajjat giṭīᶜ al-miḍālīf* *sabᶜ ijbatin fōg al-misāği ḥwāni*[77]	1. I moan and groan like a herd of camels standing with bent necks, Looking over the brink of the well for more than three days,
2. *tahajjifat min ᶜugib riᶜiy l-xazārīf* *samᶜat ṣyāḥ al-wird lēlat ṭi-māni*[78]	2. Their humps sagging, gone whatever remained from grazing on the *xazārīf* plants; And then, on the fourth day, heard the shouts of the herdsmen.
3. *ᶜugb aš-šaḥam ǧid hi ǧidīd al-manāšīf* *mann aḍ-ḍma miṣyāfha yōm zāni*[79]	3. Once covered with fat, they now look like shriveled thongs: Cruel thirst robbed them of the strength they gained from spring's pastures.
4. *ǩanha hašīm aṭ-ṭalḥ tamši gifāgīf* *ḥazzat miġīb shēl wa-l-gēḍ dāni*[80]	4. Like a bundle of dead acacia wood they trudge along At the time of Canopus' eclipse when the great heat sets in.
5. *ṣabbaw lha min mašrabin xallaha tᶜīf* *jarrat ḥanīnin šayyab al-miṭribāni*	5. Disgusted by the foul smell of the water poured into the trough, The animals groaned so pitifully as to make a happy fellow turn grey.
6. *māha ġamīrih ṭawwarath al-maġārīf* *w-mayyāḥha hajrih ṭuwāh al-wsāni*[81]	6. When he stirred the filth on the water with a ladle, The man scooping up the water inside the well fainted, overcome by the stench.

For *lajjah* the poetess Waḍḥa al-Mašᶜān al-Ḥarbiyyah substituted *ya-ḥann galbi*, a formula closer to the sound usually associated with camels, but otherwise the simile is the same:

1. *ḥann galbi ya-ᶜAli ḥannat*	1. My heart, ᶜAli, groans like

al-xūr
tawāridan ᶜēnin ǧilīlin šarābah[82]
2. *ila ṣifaghin ya-ᶜAli tāyih aš-šōr*
tijāwiban yašdin ginīb aḍ-ḍyābah[83]

camels rich in milk,
When they come to a well holding but a little water,
2. Because, ᶜAli, some half-wit has led them astray [from the road to the right well],
Their moans mingling like wolves responding to one another's howls.

(RADDĀS 1984/85, I, 339)

With these verses Waḍḥa began a poem lamenting a loved one who had fallen victim to smallpox. Dindān's more playful comparison with the sound of a mortar as the coffee beans are being pounded shows that the poet's complaints about his grieving heart need not always be taken as literally:

1. *mall galbin ṭāyilin ġullih w-ǩāni*
miṯl nijrin kull ma ḥassōh danni[84]
2. *in ṣigaᶜ l-aṣbār yašhar biᶜwiyāni*
w-in rikad daggih ḳlūᶜih lajlijanni[85]
3. *in jaġar bi-ṣ-ṣōt ṣakkih miṭribāni*
w-in ᶜawa bi-l-hōl min samᶜih ywinni[86]

1. Woe to a heart that struggled to conceal its bitterness!
Like a mortar made of copper it rings out when beaten.
2. When its rim is struck with force it screams and whines,
And when its bottom is pounded its ribs raise a clamor.
3. If it begins to purr, then knock it merrily,
But if it howls in terror, the company groans in sympathy.

Terrors of the Chase

Whereas the previous similes dealt with more or less static scenes, descriptions taken from the repertory of raiding, war, and perilous desert crossings add a measure of excitement, terror, and anguish, as in the following opening of one of Ibn Sbayyil's poems:

1. *ya-tall galbi tall rakbin l-šimšūl*
rabᶜin mišāǩīlin ᶜala kinnasin ḥīl[87]
2. *šāfaw warāhum mišᶜal aš-*

1. Ah, my heart is straining like mounted men hurrying a small camel herd,
A group of proud warriors riding strong, barren she-camels.
2. Looking behind them they

šēx maš^{c}ūl

saw that the sheik's torch had been lighted,

yōm ibrahazz al-lēl šāfaw rijājīl[88]

And when the night sky paled they descried warlike men chasing them.

3. *šāfaw warāhum zōl w-agfaw ǩima l-jōl*

3. They saw the men's silhouettes behind them and flew away like a flock,

jōl an-na^{c}ām illi tigāfan mi-ḍālīl[89]

A flock of fleeing ostriches stepping on one another's shadow,

4. *yōm ixṭafōhin rawwaḥan ṭıf-faḥ jfūl*
ǩannih yramma min taḥathin hadāmīl[90]

4. A herd snatched and driven away in a mad, panicky gallop,
As if scared by someone throwing rags under their legs.

5. *o tall ḥiṣn msarrib al-gēḍ bi-ḥlūl*

ǩaṭḥ an-njūm w-fāxatōh az-zimāmīl[91]

5. Or is it like the strain felt by horses in the quivering heat of full summer
And the dust stirred up by the heavenly constellations, while the men leading the camels with the supplies missed the rendezvous?

6. *fi māgi^{c}in ma bēn gātil w-magtūl*

ṭāḥat ḥḍāha wa-l-mawārid midāhīl[92]

6. In a dangerous land where an encounter means a battle for life or death,
They lost their horseshoes, whereas the enemy was camped in force around the wells.

7. *xamsin misīrathin wala ṭāla^{c}an zōl*

w-hādann ^{c}igb mlāfaḥ al-^{c}irf wa-ḏ-ḏēl[93]

7. Their fourth day without water and without seeing a living soul,
Until they became strangely quiet and no longer shook their manes or waved their tails.

8. *tišāwaraw ma bēn ^{c}āḏil w-ma^{c}ḏūl*
wa-l-^{c}idd l-adna ḥāl dūnih maḥāwīl[94]

8. Reproaches flew back and forth as the men took counsel,
And, knowing that a waterless desert separated them from the nearest well,

9. *taxayyaraw min ṭayyib al-fōd zi^{c}jūl*

9. Each of them took a strong animal from the best of the

booty

wa-l-mingaṭiᶜ xallōh miṯl al-maxāyīl[95] And the rest were left behind like so many scarecrows in the desert.

(FARAJ 1952, 198–99 and SBAYYIL 1988, 110–11)

The first part of this *nasīb* likens the pull at the heartstrings to that felt by a group of camel rustlers who have snuck up to another tribe's camp at night, unfettered a number of camels, and made off. As they rode off in the darkness and looked around they saw the light of a flame in the distance, telling them that the inhabitants of the camp had discovered the theft and were on their trail with the help of a big torch. At the time Ibn Sbayyil composed this poem his audience was as familiar with the "technical" vocabulary of raiding as it was with that of the *sānyah*, and therefore the poet could afford economy of detail: a few deft strokes on the canvas were sufficient to evoke in the mind of the listeners all the associations required to fill in the background. What these associations were one can glean from the available sources, such as the information given by Mūhiğ al-Ġannāmi al-ᶜTēbi to the German scholar J. J. Hess (Mūhiğ's account of such a nocturnal chase bears an uncanny resemblance to another poem by Ibn Sbayyil that opens in a similar fashion [HESS 1938, 41–42; FARAJ 1952, 213]). Here are Dindān's variations on the motif of the hot pursuit:

1. *ya-tall galbi tall rakb al-manāǩīf*

   rawwaḥ maᶜa girdūb ḥazmin biyāni[98]

1. Ah, the pull at my heart is like that felt by mounted men returning from a raid,
   As they plunge over the ridge of a low hill.

2. *samᶜ aṣ-ṣyāḥ w-ṭayyarōh aṭ-ṭuwāḥīf*

   wakkad ᶜajāj mlāwyāt al-ᶜnāni[97]

2. They heard the alarm cries and the sound of shots fired at them,
   And, no mistake, they saw clouds of dust thrown up by snorting steeds.

3. *laḥğat b-ahalha yalᶜabūn al-ġaṭārīf*
   kullin yigūl al-ḥagg ᶜindi na-ḥāni[98]

3. The horsemen overtook them, singing war songs,
   While vying for their kill, everyone saying "My quarry!"

4. *waṭṭaw ᶜala nūṭ ar-rğāb al-muwājīf*
   w-haffaw maᶜa girdūb ḥazmin

4. The raiders kicked the necks of their fleet camels,
   And helter-skelter rushed down

ṭimāni[99]

5. *lāla simār al-lēl ġabba l-maxālīf*

ma rāḥ minhum min yimiss al-bṭāni[100]

6. *taxāṭifōhum fi nḥūr al-mizāġîf*

waṭṭaw ᶜalābīhum bi-ḥadd as-snāni[101]

7. *lēn istiṭāᶜ aš-šarh minhum ᶜala l-kēf*
w-rāḥ aṣ-ṣaᶜab minhum ǩima l-mirjaᶜāni[102]

from the crest of the stony hill.

5. Were it not for the dark of night that covered the winding trails,
None of them ever would have touched his camel's belly girths again.

6. The pursuers outflanked the raiders, then took them in their horses' breasts,
And stabbed them with the points of their spears in the neck,

7. Until the fiery among them became as meek as lambs,
And the intractable as tame as camels trained to draw water.

The second motif in Ibn Sbayyil's introduction, marked by a repetition of the *tall* formula, involves another risk connected with raiding: that of getting lost in the desert. On major raids over long distances the men owning horses used to detach themselves from the *zimāmīl* (the men leading the camels transporting the water, fodder, and other supplies) as they neared the enemy camp in order to carry out the attack and seize the booty. The purpose of this tactic was to forestall the possibility of the slower pack camels falling prey to a counterattack on horseback by the other tribe. The *zimāmīl* would take a different route and, at a predetermined location, await the return of the fighting men with the captured herds. As described in great detail by SOWAYAN (1992), it often happened that one or the other of the two parties went astray and missed the rendezvous. If this happened the horse riders were in immediate danger, especially in summer, since horses are not able to go for more than a few days without water. The poem tells us that in this case the horses had not been watered in four days and thus their fate was sealed. Accordingly the men, after some deliberation and quarreling over who was to blame for the error in desert navigation, decided that only a forced march to the nearest well on the fittest of the captured camels offered them any chance of survival. The horses and the rest of the camels were left behind to face certain death.[103]

The Pain of Defeat

A related motif is that of the pain and terror felt by a man who has fractured a bone on a raid or journey, or by one wounded in war and abandoned in the desert. The formula marking the beginning of the simile is either *wannah* 'crying, moaning' or *wajd* 'pain, suffering':

wannēt ana wannat illi ṭaggih aṭ-ṭāyif	Ah, my cries are like those of one suffering from a bout of anxiety,
walla kisīrin ᶜala l-ᶜērāt tūmi bih[104]	Or one who has fractured a bone and is swaying back and forth on the back of hardy camels.

(ᶜAmša al-Mašᶜān in RADDĀS 1984/85, I, 354)

And Ibn Sbayyil:

1. *ya-wanniti wannat ṭiᶜīn aš-šiṭīrah*	1. My moans are like those of one wounded by a sharp blade,
fi sāᶜtin yūxaḏ ṭimaᶜha ᶜšāwah[105]	When the robbers are despoilt of their booty by one stronger than them,
2. *xilli nahār al-kōn wasṭ al-kisīrah*	2. Left behind on the field of battle amidst the fallen,
ma lih walad ᶜammin wala lih danāwah[106]	Without a kinsman or a relative anywhere near,
3. *w-la yiᶜarf aṭ-ṭāliᶜ min ayyah ᶜašīrah*	3. And no way to know from what tribe hails the man approaching him
min kill badwin nawwhum bil-ᶜatāwah[107]	From among the Bedouins who make oppression their trade.

(FARAJ 1952, 182 and SBAYYIL1988, 58)

Again, the feelings of animals are treated with no less sympathy than those of man, as in the following verses by Ḥwēd ibn Ṭihmāj al-ᶜḎyāni al-ᶜTēbi about an unfortunate wolf:

1. *o wajd sirḥānin jara lih ᶜaṭābīr*	1. Or like the pain of a wolf whose luck ran out,
min al-hajaf wa-l-jūᶜ jarr al-ginībi[108]	And howls from hunger and exhaustion.
2. *ma yimriḥ al-maḏhūb yaṭᶜa d-duwāwīr*	2. Instead of lying down for the night he is on a rampage around

w-ᶜaddōh ḥirrās al-ᶜarab wa-l-ǩlībi[109]

the tents:
In spite of the resistance put up by the Bedouins' guards and dogs,

3. *yalwi b-hum lēn aṣbaḥ aṣ-ṣibḥ ya-Mnīr*
ṯumm inhazam sāriḥ ḍiᶜīf an-niṣībi[110]

3. He kept circling around them until the new day dawned;
Only then did the wretched animal scamper away.

4. *w-ᶜitānih at-taffāg b-umm al-misāmīr*
wa-hwah maᶜa l-mixwāᶜ yihḏib haḏībi[111]

4. The gunman took aim at him with his rifle,
While he ran down a patch of low ground at a fast trot.

5. *w-ṭārat w-ǧaddāha wiliyy al-migādīr*
wi-lya ann ᶜaḏm as-sāg ġādin ḥaṭībi[112]

5. The gun fired and, guided by the Lord of Destiny, the bullet hit home,
And behold, the bone of the wolf's leg was smashed to pieces.

(JUNAYDIL 1980/81, 229–30)

These fragments offer no more than a glimpse of the rich imagery displayed by the representatives of the oral Najdi tradition. The number of examples illustrating their virtuosity in describing the dog's life of the poet's heart could be expanded *ad infinitum*. In the hands of a poet like Ibn Sbayyil these similes are moulded to suit the delicate and playful mood of his work. Others find in the convention the means to express in a personal manner a true sense of loss, like the ᶜTēbah poetess ᶜAmša al-Mašᶜān who weeps over the death of her first infant son in a dirge opening with this complaint:

1. *ya-jarr galbi maᶜ Ḍḥayyim yijirrih*
jarr ar-rša min fōg ᶜūj al-luwāḥīf[113]

1. Ah, how my heart is being pulled because of Ḍḥayyim,
Like the rope is pulled over the roller between the slanting poles.

2. *wa-s-sadd minni bāḥ wa-š-širb murrah*
wa-l-murr ma yibri l-glūb al-muwālīf[114]

2. The emotions I tried to repress have burst forth; bitter is my cure,
But bitter herbs do not cure the hearts of those who love.

(RADDĀS 1984/85, I, 360)

The traditional similes offer a vehicle for the expression of a wide range

of emotions and moods, from this mother's lament captured in meter and rhyme to the jocular verses of poets who merely wish to frolic in the playground of convention.

Conclusion

Though this survey presents only a very incomplete picture of this vast and largely unexplored subject, one can nevertheless draw some conclusions from the foregoing.

The Nasīb

Within the *qaṣīdah*, as it has developed in the oral tradition of Najd, the *nasīb* (the introductory section) still represents a distinct segment that is set apart from the other sections by its emotional content and recurring motifs and similes, as well as by certain stylistic markers. Some of the motifs, images, and vocabulary proper to the classical *nasīb* have been retained virtually unaltered. But whereas a melancholy, plaintive mood continues to be characteristic of the prelude, the tendency in Najdi poetry is towards greater self-reflexiveness; to a degree unknown in ancient times, the inheritors of the classical tradition dwell on the creative process itself and its accompanying psychological condition.

The Tradition

In composing, the poets make use of a common store of themes, motifs, stock images, phraseology, and prosodical options that together constitute the heritage of Najdi poetry. That this living tradition encompasses many "archaic" elements should not be surprising, for due to its natural barriers Najd remained virtually sealed off from the outside world until the early part of this century. As a result its socioeconomic situation remained virtually unchanged for more than a thousand years. Thus the sense of alienation an eighth-century *muḥdath* poet in Baghdad might have already felt regarding his early models was not experienced by the Najdi poets until the first part of this century: for them the inherited repertory continued to correspond to the facts of their daily life. Indeed, the Najdi poets cited in this article are much closer to the spirit and imagery of pre-Islamic poetry than were the urban poets in the early centuries of Islam.

Art and Nature

Of course one can only speak in relative terms about matching art and nature. Literature often tends to play by its own rules, with a sovereign disregard for facts outside its domain. In Arabia this tendency

has become even more pronounced as the modern development of the country rapidly widens the gulf between the literary reality of Najdi poetry and the socioeconomic environment in which the poets live. Nowadays the old vocabulary of war, raiding, animal husbandry, and agriculture mainly survives through the continuing popularity of pre-modern poetry. Also, the later poets, especially those living in the conservative tribal society, have been slow to respond to the changed situation. The work of Dindān, for example, is remarkably close in expression and imagery to that of Ibn Sbayyil, though the two men are separated by a three-generation gap that coincided with the modern transformation of the country. This can be explained in part by the fact that Dindān remained wedded to the life-style of his ancestors and preferred to pay the price of economic marginalization rather than give up his nomadic existence in the desert with his small herd of camels. Yet it is true that even a Bedouin like Dindān only knows from hearsay many poetic elements of which Ibn Sbayyil and his contemporaries had (or might have had) firsthand experience. For instance, Dindān and other poets continue to compare the speed of fleet camels to that of fleeing ostriches, an animal that had already been hunted to extinction in Arabia by the time they grew up. This speaks for the fact that, as in the classical period, the tradition perpetuates itself and continues to hold sway over the poets long after the conditions in which it originated have fundamentally altered.

Like most of the imagery in the similes, the survival of the ostrich in modern poetry is surely an archaism, but matters are sometimes less clear-cut. For example, an established motif both in ancient Arabic poetry and in its linear descendant, the oral tradition of the Najd, pictures the poet standing on top of a mountain or hillock and watching in desperation as the caravan carrying his beloved disappears in the distance. In Dindān's case this is not a stereotyped prelude, but part of the reality he lived. When he felt the urge to compose a poem he did indeed climb one of the rocky ridges and conical basalt peaks in the desert around Wādi ad-Duwāsir. In doing so Dindān followed in the literary traces of countless Najdi poets before him, but not all of his predecessors necessarily matched poetry and reality as neatly as did Dindān. It seems likely that most of them composed their mountain verses in more comfortable quarters. And even Dindān's poetic mountaineering may have been another example of nature following literature.

The same holds true for Dindān's use of the *aṭlāl* motif. There can be no doubt that he felt genuine sorrow about the passing away of fellow tribesmen and was reminded of the happy hours he had spent

in their company when he came across the traces of one of their former camps.[115] Nevertheless, his verses on the subject are distinctly literary and traditional in character. Yet another example is the cooing of the dove that awakened the poet's nostalgic memories of his former romancing. No doubt he often heard the cooing of a dove while slumbering in the shade of a tree, but the poetic tradition was no doubt the determining factor in his choice of this particular motif rather than that of the warbling of a lark or other bird found in the desert.

Convention and Originality

In a traditional society like that of the Najd, the concepts of convention and originality cannot be applied in the same way as they are in the West. Outside the circles of the urban literate elite, poetry in Arabia is still an art to be enjoyed orally and collectively. Therefore poetry must answer to certain expectations of the audience, based on the audience's previous experience, in order to be understood and appreciated. For the poet to step too far outside the bounds of tradition would be tantamount to poetic suicide. The Najdi poet is imbued with this tradition from the first day he sits in the *majlis* (the circle of men assembled on the carpet to discourse freely on any subject of common interest while sipping tea and coffee), and feels the lure of rhyme and meter when listening to the poetry that is routinely declaimed on such occasions.

Yet within the bounds of tradition there is ample room for each Najdi poet to choose and elaborate in order to imprint his work with the stamp of his own individuality. As the samples presented in this article demonstrate, originality in this type of poetry can be understood as the incorporation of individual touches to the treatment of any given theme or motif (such as raiding, drawing irrigation water with the help of a camel, and, in the case of Dindān, the life of a nomad in the desert). Only an artist with a sound knowledge of the traditional environment underlying these themes and motifs, and a keen eye for its possible application in poetry, will be able to do so. Craftsmanship and originality in this sense are the qualities most highly regarded by the audience. Thus the interaction of the poet, the audience, and the environment sustain the vitality of the tradition.

Originality?

Nevertheless, the material in the existing collections and my own data certainly show departures that seem highly original and innovative. But even in these cases the Western concept of artistic originality cannot be applied without qualification. For instance, the poetess who

replaced the screaming of the wooden water wheels suspended above the well with that of the iron wheels of a steam engine, both called *maḥāḥīl*, may have borrowed this innovation from another poet in her own tribe or any other located in or near the area crossed by the Ḥijāz railroad. One poet or poetess must have been the first to introduce this image, but it is in the nature of oral poetry that one will never know for certain who was the "inventor."

Some of these departures raise even more complex questions, as in the following intermediate section wedged between a traditional *nasīb* (a complaint of the heart) and an equally traditional camel description in a poem by Dindān:

1. *ana wēn adawwir li maᶜa ḏa l-lsān lsān*

   yᶜāwin lsāni la yibīn al-xalal fiyyah

2. *ana b-aḥmid allah yōm ja li ᶜala ma zān*
   thiḏ al-ᶜibār illi min al-ᶜām makniyyah[116]

3. *tifahhamt fi gāfin wmarni bih r-riḥmān*
   talāḥat mizāmīrih w-ġārat marākiyyah[117]

4. *ṭara li jimīᶜ illi yṭarra wuhu ma kān*

   lya fāḥ ṣadri miṯl fōḥ al-ḥasāwiyyah[118]

5. *kalēt as-sima w-arḍih wala waggat al-liḥyān*

   maᶜ l-ᶜarš killih ma yiji lugmitin liyyah[119]

6. *širibt al-bḥūr w-jīt mit-ġānimin ḍamyān*
   jimīᶜ al-mišārib ma tiji rišfitin liyyah[120]

1. Where can I turn for a tongue, other than the one I already have,
   To help me express what this one is incapable of saying?
2. God I praised the day I recovered my poetic bearings,
   And my heart broke out in sobs after suffering in silence for a year.
3. The verses dictated to me by the Merciful I understood,
   As they responded to one another's melody and marched on me in battle array.
4. Everything imaginable occurred to me at once, strange as it seems,
   While my breast boiled over like a coffee pot made in al-Aḥsāᵓ.
5. Earth and sky I gobbled up, but for me it was not even chicken feed,
   With the throne of heaven thrown in it's but a poor chunk.
6. Gulping down the seas didn't quench my thirst,
   But then I'd drain the oceans in one sip.

7. *saḥant al-jbāl dwan wala takḥil al-burmān*

w-jimīᶜ aš-šijar ma mayyal al-ᶜēn hāḏiyyah[121]

7. If all mountains were ground into kohl it would not even cover the corners of my eyes,
Nor would all trees provide enough sticks to smear it with.

8. *kalēt al-gumar wa-š-šams w-amsēt ana jāᶜān*

wala ᶜād bih šinn āklih ᶜizzita liyyah[122]

8. After supping on sun and moon my stomach still rumbled with hunger,
And now there is nothing else left to eat, poor me.

9. *kalēt as-snīn w-kāsirin bērag aš-šayṭān*
w-širibt al-habāyib wa-l-jnūn sjidat liyyah[123]

9. I swallowed the years and smashed Satan's banner;
I imbibed the winds and the jinnees prostrated themselves for me;

10. *libist an-nahār ṭwēb xāmin ᶜala l-amtān*

w-suwād al-liyāli li bšūtin šimāliyyah[124]

10. As a cloak of coarse wool I threw the day around my shoulders,
And I wrapped myself in the dark of night as in a furred mantle;

11. *w-jimaᶜt an-njūm w-niyyat al-xubṭ li-l-ᶜidwān*
ᶜala šān abīhum yaskinūn al-ḥarāmiyyah

11. I gathered the stars, as well as all spite I could muster,
With the intention of silencing them for good, that rabble!

12. *w-tarāni dixīl allah wiliyyi ᶜaḏīm aš-šān*
w-bāǧ al-xalāyiǧ ma lhum ᶜindi dᶜiyyah[125]

12. To God, the mighty Lord I entrust myself,
And as for the rest of mankind, I don't give a damn.

13. *ya-rāǩib illi ġaffalōha min al-migṭān*

fiṭīrin yšādinn al-buwāǩīr maḥniyyah[126]

13. O rider of mounts left unimpregnated since the summer,
Full-grown she-camels, so lean as to resemble the curved grip of a cane;

There can be no doubt as to the great poetic force of this passage. That, however, was not the issue at stake in the Wādi. These particular verses scandalized public opinion in the local community and, according to popular belief, brought upon Dindān divine wrath in the form of the partial paralysis of one of his legs. The poet (and the poem itself) say that the lines were spoken in response to a verbal assault by a rival poet. Unfortunately, I never learnt which poems

elicited this and other furious eruptions of hyperbole from Dindān. The lack of comparable material makes it impossible to tell at this stage whether they are truly original departures or fit into a local convention. One possibility is that these verses are part of more or less established patterns of local poetic exchange in which each poet tries to overwhelm his opponent by making fantastic claims for his own poetic prowess. If this is true, then either Dindān took unusual freedoms with the rules of these contests or this particular circuit of poets itself operates in some respects on the margins of local society.[127]

This example also shows that published materials alone cannot provide a basis for well-founded judgments on these questions, since verses that are likely to jar on religious or other sensibilities do not appear in print. If anything, the conclusion must be that our understanding of the interrelationship between the individual poet and the tradition of which he partakes will remain sketchy until further research fills in the white spots of what is still very much a huge *terra incognita*.

NOTES

* The source of inspiration for this article was S. A. SOWAYAN's landmark contribution "Al-muᶜānāt wa-l-ibdāᶜ fī naḍm al-qaṣīdah an-nabaṭiyyah" [Suffering and creativity in the composition of Nabaṭi poetry] (1987). For a comprehensive introduction to the subject of the Najdi tradition in poetry see SOWAYAN 1985. Sowayan's chapter on prosody and language is a breakthrough in the search for solutions to the problems of scansion in vernacular Najdi poetry. It would exceed the scope of this paper to repeat Sowayan's set of rules for prosodic analysis, but it should be noted that—for reasons I am unable to explain—the fragments from poems by Dindān included in the text of this article are metrically much more varied than those by others. The meters of the poems by Dindān quoted here correspond to the following meters in classical poetry: *aṭ-ṭawīl* in six of the fragments; *ar-ramal* in four; *al-basīṭ* in two; *ar-rajaz* in one; *al-mumtadd* in one; the long meter --v---v--v-- in four. The latter meter is used in sixteen of the nineteen fragments by other poets (and in all of the four fragments chosen from Ibn Sbayyil's *dīwān*), the remaining three being *al-basīṭ* (two) and *aṭ-ṭawīl* (one).

The system of transliteration used for lexicographic items, titles, and names in Classical Arabic is that of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, with the modification that *dj*, *gh*, and *ḳ* have been replaced by *j*, *ġ*, and *q*. I have rendered Dindān's poetry phonemically on the basis of taped records. Verses cited from written sources have been transliterated in a way that I hope more or less approximates the result that would have been obtained if the material had been recorded from a transmitter.

1. *liᶜb* in poetry usually has the meaning of "song, poetry, dancing movements"; *ġaṭārīf* 'the boastful songs and cries of men returning from a successful raid' is close in meaning to *zaġārīt* (CA *taġaṭrafa* 'to magnify oneself, be proud, to walk in a haughty manner'); *ǧuwāriᶜ* 'verses of poetry' (cf. CA *qawāriᶜ al-qurᵓān* 'the verses of the Quran one recites for protection from evil spirits, etc.'); *ǧida*, *ǧadda*, imp. *yǧaddi*

'to direct, lead, show the way'.

2. *šarraf* 'to climb, ascend'; *rijim* pl. *rjūm* 'cairn, peak, heap of stones [made into a shelter or an observation post]' (cf. the glossary of SOWAYAN 1992; hereafter references to this glossary are abbreviated as *Glos.*)—here it has the more general meaning of 'hill, mountain, mountain peak' (like CA *rijm* pl. *arjām*); *šaff* 'wish, desire'.

3. Already in the classical *nasīb* complaints about the poet's old age had developed into an independent theme (WAGNER 1988, I, 99–100).

4. See SBAYYIL 1988 and FARAJ 1952. The latter is one of the earliest and best collections of Najdi poetry, including the *dīwāns* of other, predominantly lyrical, poets as well. The former is a more recent collection by one of the poet's grandsons. Where the text of both editions varies slightly I have generally followed the former edition. For my interpretation of the verses I am indebted to the poet's cousin Ḥmūd ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz ibn Ḥmūd ibn Sbayyil, a retired judge living in Riyadh.

5. Samples of the latter three's poetry are taken from JUNAYDIL (1980/81). Ibn Junaydil is an authority in the field of geography and popular culture whose intimate acquaintance with these subjects stems from the fact that as a young man he used to travel widely on camelback as a trader in agricultural equipment.

6. RADDĀS 1984/85. Ibn Raddās (born in 1924 or 1925) collected these poems in the course of his travels as an inspector for the Ministry of Labor. See AL-BILĀDĪ 1984, 271–72. He is now retired and lives in Riyadh.

7. Sowayan informed me that the vernacular tradition of the Najd uses the following technical terms: *fakir* for maxims and conventional wisdom, *al-irǩāb* for the description of the itinerary, *ġaṭuw* for riddles.

8. Only two of the twenty-five poems discussed here do not begin with such an introduction: one opens with *ya-rāǩbin* (O rider), followed by one line of camel description, and the *naṣṣah* (steer her to) immediately ushers in the *mufākharah*. Similarly, the second one opens with *ya-nidībi* (O my messenger) and one verse of camel description, followed by *naṣṣah* and one line of *madīḥ* addressed to the recipient. The remaining twenty verses of this last poem describe the poet's construction of an unassailable fortified palace guarded by the angel of death, which can be read as a highly original metaphor for Dindān's own art. See SOWAYAN 1987, 87, on building as a metaphor for composing poetry.

9. This marker *min ᶜana* frequently occurs in the poetry of the Duwāsir in addition to such formulas as *ᶜalēk ya-* or *ᶜala allaḍi* 'for one who', commonly used by poets who lived in central Najd.

10. *xaff, yxuff* 'to disperse, to chase away' (when the wind blows, the rain is believed to come down in smaller drops, cf. CA *khaffa* 'to diminish, decrease, to become deficient', said of rain); *nūd* pl. *anwād* 'wind, breeze'; *ḥagūg* 'a violent downpour, clouds that do not deceive by their appearance, but truly deliver on their promise of rain'; *ġamlūl* pl. *ġamālīl* 'a rather narrow valley with dense vegetation' (CA *ġamlūl* pl. *ġamālīl* 'a narrow valley with many trees and luxurious vegetation, low tracts of land covered with herbage').

11. *dahar* 'fate, misfortune, drought'; *ḥaḍīr* i.e., *ḥaḍar* 'inhabitants of the settled land, village folk, those who dwell in permanent houses', contrary of *baduw*, the Bedouins; *ṣakk ᶜala* 'to lock, to surround, encircle, press around'; *dallāl* pl. *dallālīn* 'middleman who establishes contact between buyer and seller for a fee (*dalālah*)' (HESS 1938, 147).

12. *ǩabd* pl. *ǩbūd* 'the liver' believed to be a seat of feelings, especially hatred and spite, and also means 'the entire area of the stomach' or 'the entrails' (HESS 1938, 149 and MUSIL 1928, 115, 575); *maġlūl* pl. *maġālīl* 'very thirsty; furious' (CA *maġlūl, ġalīl*

'burning of thirst, burning inside from thirst or anger and vexation').

13. Cf. WAGNER 1988, I, 85, 87.

14. *šāla* 'to suit, be of help or convenience to someone'; *ašla=afḍal* 'better, more suitable' (CA *iṯtalā* 'to save from harm').

15. On this motif see SOWAYAN 1987, 96–100. Verbs used for 'to climb' are *ḍabb, riga, bida, šarraf, naṭṭ, taᶜalla, ᶜadda*. Sowayan also mentions the mountain or lookout (*rijim, nāyif, mašraf, margab, mirğāb, ḥaja, majdūr* etc.) and adjectives indicating its shape (*mdamlaj, mgawwir, maḍrūb, malmūm*, etc.).

16. *ōḥa, yūḥi* 'to hear, perceive; to listen' (cf. CA *awḥā; waḥy* 'sound, voice'); *ginīb* 'barking, howling' (CA *qānib* 'a howling wolf').

17. *ġayyar ᶜala* 'to bring in a bad, angry mood'.

18. Similarly a Dōsiri poetess: *ana bādyah wagt aḍ-ḍaḥa rās rijmin bān* (RADDĀS 1984/85, II, 147).

19. *ṣāᶜūg* 'summit, pinnacle' (perhaps the association is with thunderbolts striking the peak, cf. CA *ṣaᶜaqa*).

20. *min ġarrih* 'because of his deception'.

21. *baġa, yabġi* or the contracted form *yabi* 'to want, desire, covet' (CA *baġā*).

22. See SOWAYAN's chapter "Composition: The poet's viewpoint" (1985, 91–100) and SOWAYAN 1987.

23. *ġalīl, ġull* 'fretting, brooding anger, rancor, spite, unsatisfied love'; *ᶜmōmis* 'to become obscure, unclear, recondite'; *ᶜmōmis ar-rāy* 'the mind became clouded, shrouded in darkness, confused' (CA *ᶜamasa*).

24. CA *hāḍa* 'to renew the pain' as in *hāḍa al-ḥuzn qalbah* 'his heart was afflicted by grief time and again'.

25. *amṭāl, amāṭīl* 'landmarks, elevations' (CA *amṯāl* 'mountains resembling one another').

26. *šin=šayyin* 'anything, something'; *tigiṣṣār* 'moderation, taking things in modest portions'.

27. See also SOWAYAN 1987, 76.

28. *nhāl* 'thirsty camels when they have arrived at the well and start to gulp down the water' (CA *ibl nawāhil, nihāl; nahal* 'the first drink'); *mahnūᶜ* pl. *mahānīᶜ* 'bent, bowed' (CA *baᶜīr mahnūᶜ* 'a camel standing with its neck lowered').

29. *jāk*: the pronominal suffix refers to the listener or the audience in general, in the sense that *jāk* means 'he comes for you' (SOWAYAN 1992, 53). Sowayan therefore calls this feature of the narrative style the *-k* of courtesy. *ḥāmah* 'flight, whirl'; *salm* pl. *slūm* 'customs, manners, established norms' (*Glos.*); *šmām* 'instantly, in a twinkle' (*Glos.*).

30. *riḥiyy* 'the lower end of the column-like swarm of locusts' (CA *raḥan* pl. *ruḥīy* 'millstone').

31. *ᶜirğ* 'a long spur of sand' (MUSIL 1928, 677).

32. *tara* a presentative article, functioning in almost the same manner as CA *inna* (see *Glos.*); *tarāni=innanī. mxōjilāt* (pl. fem.) 'flawed' (cf. CA *mukhjil* 'confounded; rent, worn out'). 'Bring the pen' etc.: an appeal to an imaginary scribe is a stereotyped motif in oral Najdi poetry.

33. Examples are *ysanniᶜ, yfaṣṣil, yğaddi*. SOWAYAN (1987, 87 and 1985, 94): *yᶜaddil, ywallif, yāzin, yᶜasif, yanḥat, yṣaxxir, yanjir, yabni, yiṣūġ*.

34. *gāf* (lit. 'rhyme'), *ğīl, timāṭīl, nišīd, giṣīd*, etc.

35. E.g., JUNAYDIL 1980/81, 101:

1. *wi-bdaᶜt gāfin fāhmih ma taᶜarwaj* 1. My verses do not limp, for they were

composed with skill;

w-killin ᶜala gāf al-Htēmi šifāwi — My poetry is popular with audiences everywhere:

2. *yišdi l-darr illi waladha ydarrij* — 2. Sweet as the milk of one that gently nudges on her calf,

lya jāt min nabt aš-šiᶜīb al-frāwi — When she returns from grazing in a broad valley.

36. *ǩannih*<CA *ka-annah*; *ġuṣn* pl. *ġṣūn* 'twig, branch'.

37. *lahābīb*, pl. of *lahbūb* 'a ravine, a gap between two mountains' (cf. CA *lihb*, pl. *alhāb*, *luhūb*, *lihāb*); *ixtalaft* 'I became confused, bad-tempered'.

38. *taġašwa*, energetic form of *ġaša*, 'to cover completely' (CA *taġashshā* to cover, conceal'); *xyāl*, *maxāyīl* 'black rainclouds' (HESS 1938, 67) (CA *makhīlah* pl. *makhāyil* 'cloud showing signs of rain'); *rizīn* pl. *rzān* 'heavy, resting solidly on the ground' (CA *razīn* 'heavy, motionless', said of a cloud hanging in the sky).

39. *afḍa* 'to allow to stream, let go'; *ǩann* 'to hide', *ǩinīn* 'what one hides inside his breast, the feelings and thoughts one dissimulates' (CA *kannana* 'to hide, veil'); *sirjūf* pl. *sarājīf* 'side of the breast, the soft spot of the side under the ribs' (CA *shursūf* 'the extremity, head of the rib next the belly'); *hašš*, *yhišš* 'to leak, ooze out, seep; to flow copiously [tears]'.

40. *b-aǩna* 'I want to conceal, suppress it; to endure, bear it' (similar in meaning to *aǩma*, *aktim*). The prefixation of *bi-* to the imperfect gives it a future meaning.

41. *galb al-ᶜana*, *al-galb al-mᶜanna*, *galb al-xaṭa*, 'the unreasonable, enamored, afflicted heart'.

42. *nijāḥ* 'the state of being well-done, completely cooked'.

43. *huwājīs*, *ruwābiᶜ* 'worries, concerns one tries to keep to himself'; *bēn as-sarājīf*, *ṣindūg al-ḥaša* 'the room between the ribs' that is pictured as a cage imprisoning the emotions; *sadd*, *ǩinīn* 'what is hidden there, contained by the walls'; *bāḥ*, *bayyaḥ*, passive *bīḥ*, 'to appear, to become exposed to public scrutiny', said when the poet is forced to give himself away.

44. *fōḥ figr al-bīr la ḥirrik difīnih* 'like a well whose sand-filled bottom is scraped up'; *fawwaᶜat bi-l-jamm l-azrag ma tmāḥ* 'the limpid water came gushing to the surface and did not require someone to tug at the rope in order to make sure that the bucket was full or to descend in the well in order to scoop it up in case the well was almost dry'.

45. For the extended simile in *nabaṭi* poetry, as the vernacular poetry of Najd is called, and some beautiful examples see also SOWAYAN 1985, 113–17.

46. E.g., RADDĀS 1984/85, I, 58.

47. E.g., FARAJ 1952, 210.

48. *ǩima*<CA *kamā; mᶜīd*, *miᶜwād* pl. *maᶜāwīd* 'a camel trained to draw water'.

49. *jaḥhāl* sing. *jāhil* 'young, reckless men; a gay youth between his fourteenth and eighteenth years, who is imprudent and will be neither advised nor remonstrated with' (MUSIL 1928, 536). *sannaᶜ* 'to steer in the right direction, to do something right'; *ᶜala ġēr tasnīᶜ* 'clumsily, incompetently, wrongly': *nuwāǩīᶜ* 'sharp stones jutting out from the inside of a well' (CA *nakaᶜa* 'to strike, hit').

50. JUNAYDIL (1987/88) contains much relevant information on this and other poems dealing with the technique of drawing water.

51. *zaᶜāᶜ* 'a strong, vehement camel' (CA *zaᶜzaᶜa* 'to shake, agitate'); *ḥāyil* pl. *ḥil* 'sterile, not impregnated and hence fat and strong animals' (CA *ḥāʾil* 'not conceiving, not becoming pregnant during a year or some years'); *ṣaddar* 'to hoist the bucket by

moving away from the well while pulling the rope'. See also JUNAYDIL 1987/88, 37, 79, 94.

52. *miḥda=miswigah* 'stick used to prod the animal'. JUNAYDIL (1987/88) gives *lya razz miḥdāh* 'when [the slave] raises his stick'. *amras* 'to slip off the waterwheel' (said of the rope holding the bucket; JUNAYDIL 1987/88, 100 [cf. CA *imrās*]). *wiṭa* 'to tread, step on'. See also JUNAYDIL 1987/88, 31, 38, 99.

53. *naxa* 'to invoke someone's honor in an appeal for his assistance' (*Glos.*).

54. Sbayyil has *tanxāh* and Faraj *tanḥāh* instead of *taščāh*, which is given by JUNAYDIL (1987/88, 38). *agfa*, inf. noun *igfa* 'to turn back, move away; to make an escape, retreat'; *ṭimiᶜ* 'to hope for, desire gain'; *ṭamāmīᶜ* 'raiders craving booty'.

55. *ᶜargāh* 'the wooden crosspieces fastened over the mouth of the elongated bucket to which the rope is attached'; *jāl* pl. *jīlān* 'wall made of rocks or stone like the steep side of a mountain or a well covered on the inside with stones'. See also JUNAYDIL 1987/88, 38, 83–84, 100.

56. *mḥīm, ḥāyim* pl. *ḥyām* '[a thirsty camel] circling around [the water trough, waiting to be watered]' (cf. CA *ḥāᵓim*).

57. *aṭ-ṭwāl* 'the long ones', the name of some wells on the caravan road from Kuwait (JUNAYDIL 1987/88, 38). Obviously these are the *ṭwāl* wells in the possession of the Muṭair tribe (see INGHAM 1986, 23–24, 32); *ᶜidd* pl. *ᶜdūd* 'a well with plenty of water'; *mṭawwa* '[a well] covered on the inside with stones'.

58. *giᶜūd* pl. *ǧiᶜdān* 'young male camel [until its fourth year]' (HESS 1938, 76); *ysāniᶜ* 'to perform something well'.

59. This verse is explained later in the text on the basis of JUNAYDIL 1987/88, 41–42. *xaṭwah* pl. *xṭa* 'step, pace'.

60. *halīmah* pl. *halāyim* 'a starved, emaciated camel' (SOWAYAN 1981, 66); *nisaf* 'to throw vigorously, toss; to push aside' (*Glos.*); *jamm* pl. *jmām* 'the water of a well that has collected after it has been drawn from'; *daġarīǧ* (pl.) 'copious' (CA *daġraqa* 'to pour, splash a fluid').

61. *jaham* 'to rise early in the morning, at the end of the night' (*Glos.*); *anjaḥ* 'to saturate with, to give something the full measure of; to overcook'; *miṣāxif* 'tender parts' (cf. CA *saḵẖîf* 'thin in texture'; the substitution of *ṣ* for *s* in the vicinity of gutturals is a common feature of the Najdi dialect); *miswigah* pl. *misāwīǧ* 'stick used to urge on an animal'.

62. *iᶜlāg* 'the fastening of the noose at the other end of the rope holding the bucket to the *ǩitab*, the saddle of the *sānyah*' (JUNAYDIL 1987/88, 97).

63. *nāᶜūr* pl. *nuwāᶜīr*, also *markūz* pl. *marākīz* 'two stout poles planted in the ground at the sides of a well that has not been covered on the inside with stones in in order to support the roller on which runs the rope' (JUNAYDIL 1987/88, 71).

64. *hal*<CA *ahl*.

65. *ᶜadāwi* 'camels having pastured on good herbage, fat camels' (CA *ᶜudwīy*).

66. *nahaj, yanhaj* 'to hurry, hasten'; *ḥalāl al-gōm* 'may he be the *ḥalāl* (possession of) *al-gōm* (enemies, raiders), may he be captured and taken away as booty by the enemy'; *ma hūb yāwi* 'he has no mercy, consideration for' (CA *awā, yaᵓwī l-* 'to be compassionate for, feel pity for'); *ma hūb* 'he is not' (followed by the predicate), the particle of negation *ma* and a contraction of the personal pronoun *hu* and the emphatic *b-*.

67. *ǩitab* pl. *ǩitbān* (CA *qatab* 'pack-saddle') (JUNAYDIL 1987/88, 45–46).

68. *aš-šarbah* 'a period of one month and ten days in late spring when water for the irrigation of the wheat fields has to be drawn day and night' (JUNAYDIL 1987/88, 105–107).

69. *jāḍ, yjūḍ* 'to toss about (e.g., someone ill with fever), to move in an agitated

manner'.

70. *nazzaḥ* 'to exhaust, empty a well' (CA *anzaḥa al-biʾr* 'he drew water from the well until he had emptied it'); *ǧilīb* pl. *gilbān* 'a well' (CA *qalīb* pl. *qulbān* 'a well in the desert'); *mirjāʿ* pl. *marājīʿ* 'a *sānyah*, a she-camel trained to draw water for irrigation purposes brought back from pasture', i.e., one with previous experience in the *masna*, hence: 'lean, emaciated camel'.

71. *ʿabbāb* 'a well with plenty of water'.

72. *ʿirb* 'good and strong camels but not of a thoroughbred race' (HESS 1938, 75); *ǩālyāt*<*CA kalaʾa* 'to find grass, green fodder'.

73. *bint* pl. *bniyy* 'daughter, girl'; *maxḍūb* pl. *maxāḍīb* 'dyed [with henna, paint]'.

74. *mjawwid* 'tying, fastening firmly'; *ḍbāb* 'brass rings which hold something together'.

75. *ribābah* 'one-stringed violin' (see SOWAYAN 1985, 138–40 on singing and musical accompaniment).

76. *xalūj* 'a she-camel whose calf is killed immediately after birth and who notices it' (MUSIL 1928, 194); *baww* 'stuffed skin of the slaughtered calf'. "If a strong she-camel, which gives milk long and abundantly, gives birth to a weak male cub, the owner removes it from its mother, kills it, and ties a portion of its skin around the neck and throat of another young camel. The mother of the animal which has been killed sniffs at the skin, thinks that this is her cub, and lets it suck. Thus she does not lose her milk with fretting, while the mother of the living camel continues to treat it in the same way" (MUSIL 1928, 22).

77. *miḍālīf* '[camels or cranes that] remain standing in a fixed position with their necks curved downward'; *ḥāni* pl. *ḥwāni* 'stooped, bent downwards', i.e., *taḥannat arǧābha* 'they stood with lowered necks'; *ijbah* for *wijbah* pl. *wjāb* 'half astronomical day, the unit used by Bedouins in their calculation of time; five *wjāb* is two times twenty-four hours plus one night' (HESS 1938, 70).

78. *tahajjaf* 'to become thin, worn, exhausted'; *xazraf* pl. *xazārīf* 'a kind of plant that grows in southern Najd'.

79. *ǧidīd* 'leather thong, strap'; *mann* 'to take away'; *ḍma* 'the day on which the camels get thirsty' (*Glos.*); *miṣyāf* 'period of pasturing on the green produced by the *ṣēfi* rains', here, metaphorically, 'the fat accumulated during that period'.

80. *tamši gɪfāgīf* 'they trudge along, walk with a faltering gait' (CA *taqafqafa* 'to shudder, tremble'); *ḥazzah* 'about the time of'; *shēl* 'Canopus'—the disappearance of Canopus in June signals the beginning of the *gēḍ*, the hot and dry season, extending over four months to about the first days of October (CA *qayẓ*).

81. *ġamīr* 'the scum, algae, and dirt floating on stagnant, warm water'; *maġrafah* pl. *maġārīf* 'big, wooden spoon or ladle for scooping up water or food'; *mayyāḥ* 'the man who climbs down into the well to scoop up the water if there is only a little of it at the bottom, or to pull the rope of the bucket to ascertain whether it has filled with water' (JUNAYDIL 1987/88, 98–99); *ṭuwāh al-wsāni* 'the stench did him in', i.e., he almost fainted (CA *asana* 'to become altered for the worse in odor when it has stood too long', said of water).

82. *xūr* 'she-camels abounding with milk' (CA *ḵẖawwārah* pl. *ḵẖūr*).

83. *ṣifag, yaṣfiǧ* 'to strike, slap, hit' (*Glos.*)—here it means 'to push in the wrong direction'; *yašda, yšādi, yšād* 'he resembles, he is like' (CA *sẖadā* 'to assimilate, liken to').

84. *ǩāni* 'long-suffering'; *nijir* 'mortar made of copper in which the coffee is pounded, a sound that is carried over a great distance and is considered an open invitation to all who hear it'; *ḥassōh* 'they touched it, hit it'; *dann, dandan* 'to make a buzzing sound'.

85. *ṣiga*^{c} 'to hit, strike with force'; *ṣibir* pl. *ṣbār* 'the rim of the mortar' (CA *aṣbār* 'the sides of a vessel'); *rikad* 'to pound softly on the bottom of the mortar'; *dagg* 'beating, pounding'.

86. *jaġar* 'to grumble, grunt'; *ṣakk* 'to strike from all sides'.

87. *rakb* 'a group of men mounted on camels'; *šimšūl ḏōd* 'a small herd of 15–20 camels' (HESS 1938, 62); *rabi*^{c} 'fellow tribesmen, company of men'; *mišāǩīl* 'men enjoying prestige, having great self-esteem and high aspirations'; *kinnas* 'strong camels'.

88. *miš*^{c}*al* 'torch', used by the Bedouins to follow the traces of robbers at night. It consists of a kettle filled with firewood carried by two men holding the chains fastened to the kettle's handles while the fire is kept burning by a third man who picks up dead wood on the way (HESS 1938, 102); *ibrahazz* 'to pale' (said of the darkness of night); *rajjāl* pl. *rijājīl* 'manly, courageous man'.

89. *zōl* '[dimly perceived] silhouette'; *jōl* 'flock'; *tigāfa* 'to move away, one following the other'; *miḍālīl* 'one's shadow touching that of the other'—hunters approach their prey in the late afternoon with the low sun in their back, so that the ostriches step on one another's long shadows as they flee in one line.

90. *xaṭaf* 'to catch one unaware'; *ṭiffaḥ* (pl.) 'running fast as if floating over the ground, flying' (CA *ṭāfiḥ*); *jfūl* (pl.) 'in a panicky gallop'; *hadmūl* pl. *hadāmīl* 'rags, pieces of cloth' that scare camels if they are thrown at them (CA *hidmil*).

91. *ḥṣān* pl. *ḥiṣin* 'stud horse'; *msarrib* 'creating the *sarāb*, the mirage'; *ḥill* pl. *ḥlūl* 'time, period'; *ǩaṭḥ an-njūm* 'the time marked by the position of the stars when the hot winds of summer begin to blow and stir up *ǩaṭḥ* [CA *kaṯḥaḥa* 'to blow something away'], clouds of dust'; *fāxat* 'to miss the right direction, take a wrong turn, go astray from'.

92. *ṭāḥ* 'to fall, to fall off'; *midhāl* pl. *midāhīl* 'places frequented by man or animals', i.e., the watering places were crowded with enemy tribes and were inaccessible to them.

93. *ṭāla*^{c} 'to spy, see and notice, look out over'. Bedouins of ^{c}Tēbah described to me the stages of the *ḍma*, the days the camels pasture in the desert without being watered, as follows: At night the camels are watered at the well (*al-bill txammar* ^{c}*ala l-bīr*); the next morning they are watered again (*tiṣbiḥ*), and then driven to the pasture (*nahār aṣ-ṣidir*); the next day is *nahār al-ġibb*; then *nahār ar-ribi*^{c}; then *nahār al-xams*, the fourth day of *aḍ-ḍma*.

94. ^{c}*idd* 'a water well with plenty of water' (*Glos.*); *maḥāl* pl. *maḥāwīl* 'waste, waterless desert' (*Glos.*).

95. *fōd* 'booty'; *zi*^{c}*jūl* 'strong, lively animal'; *maxyūl* pl. *maxāyīl* 'a stick on which the shepherd hangs his cloak as a stratagem to prevent his flocks from wandering off in his absence'.

96. *ankaf* 'to return from a raid'; *manāǩīf* 'returning raiders' (MUSIL 1928, 642); *girdūb* 'the highest point of a *ḥazim*, stony hill'.

97. *ṣyāḥ* 'cries of alarm'; *ṭayyar* 'to scare, send away fleeing'; *ṭuwāḥīf* = *bwārdiyyah* 'gunmen'; *wakkad* 'to become certain of something; *mlāwyāt al-*^{c}*nān* 'moving, tossing the reins back and forth', i.e., spirited mares.

98. *ġaṭārīf* 'boastful songs of successful warriors'; *naḥa* 'to go or come in the direction of'.

99. *waṭṭa* 'to step upon, kick'; *nūṭ* 'long'; *nūṭ ar-rǧāb* 'having long necks'; *muwājīf* 'fast, fleet'; *mūjfāt* (pl. fem.) 'fast she-camels' (CA *wajīf* 'a fast, agitated pace of camels'); *haff* 'to rush over the crest and plunge downhill'; *ṭimān* = *ṭāmin* 'sloping downward'.

100. *lāla* < CA *law lā. ġabba* 'to cover, conceal'; *mixlāf* pl. *maxālīf* 'a path between two *ḍil*^{c}s, two low, isolated mountains'; *bṭān* pl. *biṭin* 'girth; a camel's-hair rope forming a belly girth' (MUSIL 1928, 353); *min yimiss al-bṭān* 'those who pull the belly girth', i.e.,

all the raiders would have been killed.

101. *taxāṭifaw* 'they rushed ahead of them, cut off their escape and attacked the enemy'; *mizġāf* pl. *mizāġīf* i.e., *sābiǧ*, 'a horse that outruns other horses', *an-naᶜām al-mizāġīf* 'ostriches fleeing at great speed'; *ᶜalābi* 'the tendons, sinews of the neck; neck'.

102. *šarh* 'one who entertains an ambition or hope' (*Glos.*); *mirjaᶜāni=mirjāᶜ* (see note 70).

103. See RADDĀS 1984/85, I, 59, 303 for a similar treatment of the motif.

104. *ṭagg* 'to hit, strike'; *aṭ-ṭāyif* 'the spectre; depressive mood'; *ᶜērāt* (always used in the plural and often in conjunction with *al-inḍa*) 'strong camel mounts' (*Glos.*; MUSIL 1928, 156 [CA *ᶜayrān* 'camel resembling the wild ass (*ᶜayr*) in quickness and briskness; hardy']); *ōma* 'to sway back and forth, to flutter' (CA *awmaᵓa* 'to make signs with the hand or the head').

105. *ṭiᶜīn* 'wounded by the thrust of a weapon'; *šiṭīrah* '[a weapon] with a sharp point or blade'; *ṭimaᶜ* 'gain, coveted object' (*Glos.*); *ᶜšāwah* 'by sheer force' (CA *ᶜashiya ᶜala* 'to wrong someone').

106. *kōn* 'battle'; *danāwah* 'relatives' (CA *daniyya* 'he was *ibn ᶜamm* [son of a paternal uncle, closely related]').

107. *ᶜašīrah* 'tribe, tribal section'; *nawwᵊ* 'intention, ambition' (CA *an-nawā*); *ᶜatāwah* 'oppression, arrogant and lawless behavior'.

108. *ᶜaṭābīr* 'mishaps, problems'; *hajaf* 'thinness'.

109. *amraḥ, yimriḥ* 'to lie down, rest at night'; *maḍhūb* 'cursed one'; *yaṭᶜa* 'he makes mischief, rampages' (<CA *ᶜaṯā* by transposition of the root consonants); *ad-duwāwīr* 'the tents pitched in circles'; *ǩlīb* 'dogs' (CA *kalb*).

110. *ya-Mnīr* i.e., the person to whom the poet addresses himself; *ṭumm* 'then, thereupon' (<CA *ṯumma*); *inhazam* 'to flee, to run for it'.

111. *iᶜtān* 'to take aim at; to catch sight of'; *taffāg* pl. *tiffāg, tifāfīǧ* 'gunman' (*Glos.*); *umm al-misāmīr* lit. 'mother of the nails' i.e., a gun; *mixwāᶜ* pl. *maxāwīᶜ* 'a low tract of land, a plain, depression'; *haḍīb* 'a fast trot'.

112. *ǧadda* 'to steer in the right direction; to take aim, to hit the target'; *ġādi* 'gone, lost'; *ġada* 'to be, to become'.

113. Dḥayyim is a pet name for ᶜAbdu r-Raḥmān; *ᶜūj al-luwāḥīf* 'the slanted poles supporting the draw wheels suspended above the well'.

114. *murrah* 'bitter and burning herbal medicine' (CA *murrah* 'myrrh; a certain medicine for scorpion stings, intestinal disease, etc., that is sucked, applied as a plaster or swallowed in a dry state'); *biri, yibri* 'to be restored to health, be cured'; *al-glūb al-muwālīf* 'the affectionate, tenderly loving hearts' (CA *maᵓlūf*, in the Najdi dialect the initial glottal stop of the first radical of the root *hamzah* usually changes to *w* [see SOWAYAN 1985, 151]).

115. One of the early developments of the *aṭlāl* motif was that the classical poets extended it to include a lament about the forced departure of their own tribe due to war (WAGNER 1988, I, 99).

116. *ᶜibār* 'wailing, sobbing'; *maǩniy* 'suppressed, concealed'.

117. *gāf* pl. *ǧīfān* 'rhyme', generally used with the metonymical meaning of 'rhymed verse, poetry'; *talāḥa* 'to sing, hum a tune to one another, strike up a tune in response to another singer'; *mizmār* pl. *mizāmīr* 'reed-pipe'; *marǩiy* pl. *marāǩi* 'a sizable body of armed camel riders', i.e., *al-jēš*.

118. *ṭara* 'to occur to one's mind, to think of'; *ṭarra* 'to mention'; *fāḥ* 'to boil over, bubble up, to flow, said of a well' (CA *fāḥa* 'to pour forth, to boil'); *fōḥ* 'the bubbling up, welling forth'.

119. *la waggat al-liḥyān* literally means 'there was nothing between the jaws, nothing

that prevented the jaws from touching', i.e. the morsel was so small that it could not even be chewed (CA *waqā*).

120. *mitġānim, ġānim* pl. *ġānmīn* 'having obtained, gained, acquired; taker of spoil, successful raider; able, worthy man' (*Glos.*). *ḍamyān* 'thirsty' (CA *ẓamʾān*).

121. *dwa* 'medicine, remedy' (CA *dawāʾ*); *burmān* 'the angles of the eyes'; *mayyal* 'to apply kohl with a *mīl*, also *ġaṭrūf*, a small knife for rubbing on the eye black'.

122. *ʿizzāh, ʿizzi likum* 'O, what a pity!' (*Glos.*); *wa-ʿizzāh, ya-ʿizzāh* 'alas!; O, dear me!'.

123. *habāyib* 'the winds' (CA *habūb* 'wind that raises the dust').

124. *ṯwēb* dimin. of *ṯōb* 'garment, piece of cloth' (CA *thawb*). *bišt* pl. *bšūt* 'a cloak'.

125. *tara* is a presentative article, functioning in almost the same manner as CA *inna* (*Glos.*); *tarāni=innanī*. *dixīl* 'one who places himself under the protection of someone'; *bāǧ*<CA *bāqī*.

126. *ġaffalōha* 'they did not attend to it', i.e., 'they left the she-camel sterile, not impregnated' (CA *ghafala* 'to neglect intentionally'); *migṭān* pl. *migāṭīn* 'a place where the Bedouins make a prolonged stay in summer time' (MUSIL 1928, 24); *fāṭir* pl. *fiṭīr, fiṭṭar* 'a she-camel older than twenty years' (MUSIL 1928, 334) or 'older than fourteen years' (HESS 1938, 74). Nowadays, however, any she-camel older than nine or ten years is called *fāṭir. yašda, yšādi, yšād* 'he resembles, he is like' (MUSIL 1928, 177, 482 and *Glos.*) (CA *shadā* 'to assimilate, liken to'). *bākūr* pl. *buwākǐr* 'a staff; a stick provided with a cord at one end, the other being bent in a semicircle' (MUSIL 1928, 127); *maḥniy* 'bent, curved'.

127. In the sectional sequence of the poem this passage occupies an intermediate position between the *nasīb* proper and the camel section introduced by the marker *ya-rākǐbin*. It could be considered both as a prolongation of the self-reflexive motif describing the creative process and as an independent section of *mufākharah*, viz. a celebration of the composer's poetic skills.

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