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A POEM AND ITS NARRATIVE BY RIḌA IBN ṬĀRIF AŠ-ŠAMMARI

By Saad Abdullah Sowayan, Riyadh*

Introduction

I recorded the following poem and its narrative in the fall of 1978 from the archives of the radio station in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The poem and the narrative are told in the voice of the poet himself, RIḌA IBN ṬĀRIF AŠ-ŠAMMARI. RIḌA addresses his words to BRĀHĪM AL-YŪSIF, the host of the radio program *Min al-bādiyah*, knowing well that he will be heard by many people who tune in to this popular program.

RIḌA is a good example of the oral poet of the desert who not only composes poetry but also has stored in his memory many poems and historical anecdotes. He is a nomad with a distinctive Šammari accent and a resonant declamatory voice. He is a gifted raconteur of anecdotes and narratives, and both an original poet and a reciter of the poems of others. In this recorded example, RIḌA, prior to reciting one of his poems, relates the events which led to its composition. He has fallen in love with a bedouin lady who shares his feelings and expresses her willingness to marry him. But when he sends a messenger to her to confirm her pledge to marry him, the messenger instead asks for her hand himself. This leads to complications and misunderstandings. In the end, however, the treacherous messenger is found out. RIḌA and the lady make up, but by now it is time to break up summer camp and disperse into the desert; thus the marriage is postponed. The recounting of narrative and poem take up about fourteen minutes of recording time.

Notes on Translation

The difficulties of translating poetry are well-known and I need not dwell on them here. Poetic diction is very compact and highly specialized. The poetic message is conveyed not only through the denotative meanings of words but also through the images, echoes, connotations, and associations evoked by these carefully selected words. The affective properties and suggestive powers of a word are irretrievably lost once it is translated into another language. This makes exact word for word translation of poetry impossible, hard as one may try.

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The difficulty is compounded when we are dealing with languages, cultures, and poetic traditions so far apart. Not only are Arabic and English very different, but even more crucial, the aesthetic sensibilities and the world view of a nomad are quite different from those of an urban Westerner. Furthermore, the rendition of a poem in one language into a poem in another language is, like poetic composition itself, a skill which, alas, we do not all have. As a solution to this problem, the best I can do here is to give as faithful (though not word for word) a translation of RIDA's poem as I can, and supplement this translation with detailed lexical notes and explanations of each verse.

Although both narrative and poem deal with an actual event, each is cast in a traditional style and each constitutes an attempt to comprehend on a general level the impact of tribal migration on individual lives. In that sense, narrative and poem provide not only a linguistic corpus but also an ethnographic portrayal of desert life cast in artistic form. The prose narrative employs a diction no less polished and a style no less refined than those of the poem, although from the lexical point of view the narrative prose is not as hard to translate as the poem. The main difficulty here lies not so much in finding corresponding words and expressions in English; rather, it is in how to transform a dynamic oral performance into a static written text. The audio-visual effects of gestures, facial expressions, and dramatic changes of voice quality and intonation leave no traces on the written text. Unlike the poem, which is composed and memorized prior to delivery, the narrative is composed as it is performed. This is not to say that RIDA is inventing fictitious episodes. Rather he is arranging real-life events into a narrative sequence and making sure that the audience is following. Therefore, background information, exegetical remarks, clarifications, graphic details, hesitations, and repetitions are superimposed upon the narrative thread and interwoven with it. Many of the elements of the narrative are conventional, thus enabling the interviewer to anticipate the drift of the story.

The active participation of BRĀHĪM AL-YŪSIF (ABŪ YŪSIF), the host of *Min al-bādiyah*, adds further complexity to the linear development of the prose narrative. BRĀHĪM and RIDA exchange traditional expressions of courtesy which do not really contribute to the story, but which are expected in this situation since they serve to establish rapport between the narrator and the audience. BRĀHĪM often tries to direct the flow and wording of this recorded version of the narrative, not only because he has heard the story before and wishes to make this version conform to the one he heard previously, but because its traditional format makes it possible to anticipate what is coming next. Moreover, the active participation of an interlocutor is one of the constitutive elements in determining the

structure of this type of narrative. BRĀHĪM interjects comments and expressions of support and encouragement and asks for missing details. At times he becomes so involved that he assumes the character and role of RIDA and acts as his voice, and there are occasions when he literally puts words into RIDA's mouth. By so doing, BRĀHĪM is acting as a truly interested and genuinely involved audience.

As a result of these conditions which are characteristic of oral performance, the prose narrative as it is written down may appear somewhat loose in structure and hard to follow. The reader is advised to keep pretending, while reading the text, that he is not looking at it but listening to it - to imagine RIDA orally delivering the narrative and addressing his words to BRĀHĪM AL-YŪSIF, an eager and animated listener.

The narrative contains a few idiomatic expressions which cannot be successfully rendered into English and which merit some brief comments here.

1. *allah yastir* ^C*alēna w-^Calēk*. The literal meaning of *yastir* is "to cover, to hide, to veil, etc.", but it also refers to the concept of *sistir*, a concept which is lacking in English and which is related to honor and reputation. In using this expression, one asks God to protect the honor and reputation of someone and guard him from disgrace. The expression is used to indicate that the speaker, though he may not have harmonious relations with X, wishes X no harm. It may be loosely translated as "May God keep both me and you above reproach."

2. *allah xalag al-mağāzī wa-n-nikāyif*. The word *mağāzī* refers to the undertaking of a raid, *nikāyif* to the return from or the abandoning of a raid. The expression may be translated as "God ordains the going out on raids and the returning from them." This means that everything is in the hand of God; therefore, it should be no surprise that someone may think in one way now and in an altogether different way later. The expression is used in connection with someone who changes his mind about something.

3. *šarwa al-ḥḍur*. *šarwa* "like", *al-ḥḍūr* "those present". The expression is used by a narrator of a story whenever he pays a compliment to a character in the story. It is an expression of courtesy and it means that the assembled audience are no less worthy of praise than the character mentioned. The proper response to this expression is *šarwāk aṭ-ṭayyib* "the like of you is praiseworthy".

4. *b-al-gēḍ manāzil, yā ḥāl min dūnak bēt* ^C*iddak mēt*. *al-gēḍ* "summer" is the time when nomadic tribes congregate around tribal wells in large multitudes. Because there are so many people camped together, friends may not see each other for a long time, especially if their tents are separated by other tents. The expression may be loosely translated as "Summer

camps are crowded; if your tent is not right next to mine, you might as well be dead (i.e. I wouldn't see you)".

5. *fēdt allī yigūl*. *fēdat* is the feminine of *fēd* (pl. *fyūd*) which indicates possession and somewhat corresponds to *ḥagg* and *māl* in other dialects. It may be roughly translated as "as the saying goes". A similar expression is *sālft allī yigūl*.

6. *nāṭḥ as-ṣyāḥ bi-ṣyāḥ w-taslam*. *nāṭiḥ* is the imperative of *niṭaḥ* "to meet"; *ṣyāḥ* comes from *ṣāḥ* "to cry out", which in this context means to cry out complaints, abuse and accusations against someone. According to this proverbial advice, if someone comes to you and starts shouting complaints, abuse or accusations against you, you must hurl back at him similar shouts. By doing so, it is likely that you will come out exonerated and unscathed. I translate this expression as "Meet accusations with accusations and you will be safe".

7. *al-mgābal yaṭird an-nḥūs*. *mgābal* "meeting face to face", *yaṭrid* "to chase away, dispel", *nḥūs* "ill omens, calamities, evil thoughts, suspicions" etc. When misunderstanding arises between two people and their minds become full of rancor and suspicion about each other, it is best that they meet face to face to clear up the matter and prevent calamity. This expression is used by the lady in the narrative when she went to make up with RİDĀ; I translate it as "I decided to meet you face to face and clear up this matter with you".

8. *mitlāḥġīnin^c ala xēr*. *mitlāḥġīn* is from *laḥag* "to pursue, to catch up with", hence "to meet again". *xēr* "good, prosperity, happy circumstances" etc. The expression, used by people who wish to meet again, may be translated as "May we meet again in happy circumstances".

9. *ṣaḥḥ lsānik*. *ṣaḥḥ* is the optative form from *ṣiḥḥih* "health"; *lsān* "tongue". This is said to a reciter after he finishes reciting a poem. The proper response is *ṣaḥḥ bđinak* or *bidank* "May your body be sound".

Linguistic Remarks

Here I shall give a few brief remarks on the phonology and syntax of the Şammari dialect (henceforth ŞD) and make some comparisons between it and the dialect of QaşIm (henceforth QD).

I. Phonological Remarks

1. When the vowel *a* in an open syllable is followed by *-wā-* or *-wē-* it tends to change to *e* (*imālah*); e.g. *jawāb* > *jewāb* "answer, words"; *nawēna* > *newēna* "we decided to". This tendency is inhibited when the preceding consonant is a guttural; e.g. *ḥawāšīš* "grass cutters". But if a

is followed by *-wa* + doubled consonant then the situation is a toss-up; e.g. *tawajjah* "to go in the direction of", but *mawaddt ar-ribī^C* > *mewaddt ar-ribī^C* "spring love".

2. Final *-at* becomes *-ay* in ŠD; e.g. *jat* > *jay* "she came".

3. In the 3 m. sg. pronominal suffix *-uh* the final *h* drops and, to compensate for this loss, the vowel is made slightly longer; e.g. *lu* "for him, to him" (vs. *luh* in QD).

4. The suffix *-ah* marking the fem. gender changes to a slightly long *-e*, or, less frequently, to *-ay* or *-at*; e.g. *zōje*, *zōjay*, *zōjat* "wife".

5. In ŠD, the position of the short vowel in the 3 m. pl. personal pronoun *hom* and in the pronominal suffixes of the 3 m. pl. *-hom* and the 2 m. pl. *-kom* is lower and more forward than it is in QD. Also, in ŠD the vowel which is inserted between the pronominal suffixes *-hom* and *-kom* and the base to which they are suffixed is *a* but in QD it is *i*; e.g. *giṣ-rahom* vs. *giṣrihum* "their neighborhood".

6. In ŠD a vowel *a* always appears between the 2 sg. pronominal suffix *-k* and the word to which it is suffixed. In QD a vowel *i* (not *a*) appears between this pronominal suffix and the word to which it is suffixed only when the word final is $\bar{v}C$ or vCC , but never when it is CVC ; e.g. a speaker of ŠD would say *šātak* "your one sheep", ^C*anzak* "your goat", *bdinak* "your body", *rkibak* "your knees", ^C*rifak* "he knew you", *ṭraḥak* "he threw you down", *rifīḡitak* "your lady friend", *miḡilyitak* "she loves you dearly". But a speaker of QD would say *šātik*, ^C*anzik*, *bidank*, *rkabk*, ^C*irifk*, *ṭaraḥk*, *rifīḡakk*, *miḡilyakk*. Notice that each of the last six words has a different syllabic structure as it is pronounced by the two speakers.

7. The 3 f. sg. pronominal object in ŠD is *-ha* but in QD it is *-ah*. This leads to divergence in syllabic structure between the two dialects. For example, if the verb *ḡayyar* "to change" is conjugated with 3 f. sg. the result is *ḡayyarha* and *yḡayyirha* in ŠD, but *ḡayyarah* and *yḡayyrah* in QD.

8. The active participles of forms V and VI have different syllabic structures in ŠD than they do in QD; e.g. *mitḡayyre* "she is changed" and *mitlāḡḡīn* "we shall see each other again" in ŠD, but *mtaḡayyrih* and *mta-lāḡḡīn* in QD.

II. Syntactic Remarks

1. The ethical dative *li*. This pronoun comes after the verb and agrees with it in number and gender; e.g. *arsalt li wāḡid* ^C*alyah* "I sent me someone to her". Sometimes this pronoun is repeated twice; e.g. *w-arsil-li li wāḡid*, *yōm inni arsaltu yammah gilt: ītah* "so I sent me this man, when

I sent him to her I told him: Go to her!" The ethical dative can be separated from its verb by other lexical items as in *tahāwēt ana w-ya li waḥ-de min banāt al-bādye* "a bedouin lady and I fell in love with each other".

2. The particle *mēr/mār*. This particle usually functions as a coordinating conjunction meaning "but", but it also has other uses as seen in the following two examples from the text: (a) *ant mēr mā jābak b-aṭ-ṭāri* "as for you he did not even mention your name"; (b) *ana ha-l-ḥīn mēr ma bi ar-rjāl* "I am not really interested in men right now".

3. The particle *ṭāri/tāri* (*tarīh, taryah, tarīk, etc.*). This particle indicates a sudden realization or a mild surprise, regret, or disappointment; e.g. *yigūl ma ^Cindi zōjat w-tāri ^Cindu zōje w-^Cindu wiḡdān* "He said, 'I have no wife', but I found out that he has a wife and has children."

4. The subordinating conjunction *yōm* (*yōm inn*). The verb of the subordinating clause introduced by *yōm* is generally (but not always) in the perfect.¹ If the verb of the following main clause is in the perfect, then no particles intervene between the two clauses; e.g. *yōm inni arsal-tu yammah gilt: ītah* "When I sent him to her I told him: Go to her"; *yōm inna tiṣālahna wāfigat ar-rḥale raḥalna* "By the time we had made up it was already time for me to move into the desert and I moved". But if the verb of the main clause is in the imperfect or if the main clause is non-verbal then it is separated from the subordinate clause by such particles as *tari, ilya, ilya mēr, ilya mēr tari*; e.g. *yōm sam^Cat jewābi inna nabi niḥūl lya wardt al-bill, taryah tiḡāyigay* "After she overheard my words that we shall go into the desert when the camels come back to drink, she became disturbed"; *yōm inni nahaḡt rāsi w-ilya hi msayyritin ^Cala hali* "When I raised my head I saw it was she who had come to our house"; *yōm abi ahūm asayyir yammakom ilya mēr bēni w-bēnakom ḥirwat miyyat šabbāb* "Whenever I make up my mind to come and visit you I am detained by the hundreds of hearths on the way"; *w-yōm inni nišadt ilya mār ṭāri ^Cindu zōje w-ṭari lu wiḡdān* "But when I inquired I found that he already had a wife and children".

1 See also T. M. JOHNSTONE: *Eastern Arabian Dialect Studies* (London 1967), p. 168.

The Text

1. BRĀHĪM: ḥayyāk' allah, ya-'axx riḍa.
RIDA: abgāk allah.
2. B: fīh giṣīdih - ṭāl^C imrik - a^C rif ana minha bēt allī tigūl fīha:
"ya-llāh la tarzig xaṭāt al-biṭūli * allī^C ala l-mislim ydawwir baxāšīš."
hāḍi aḍinn laha mnāsibih?
R: Ina^C am,² lah mnāsibe; min giṣāydi hāḍi.
3. B: adri innah min giṣāyidk. w-ant giṣāyidk wājid, w-ma-ša-llāh, taḥ-
faḍ ḡēr giṣāyidk.
R: w-allah wājib^C alēna.
4. B: w-ant ysammūnik šā^C r al-inšāf. ma^C indik tiḥiyyzātīn³ la l-šammar
wala ḡēr šammar.
R: ṭāl^C umrak - ana kill tārīx al-bādye-ftixir bu; jimī^C tārīx al-
bādye niftixir bu.
5. B: w-hāḍa - ṭāl^C imrik - hu al-wājib. liḍa sammōk šā^C r al-inšāf.
R: Ina^C am.
6. B: wiš mnāsbitah, al-giṣīdih?
R: lah mnāsibe, w-mnāsbitah ṭiwīle. w-lākin nixtiṣir b-al-mōjez⁴ ^Cala,
ya^C ni, la⁵ tiṭūl^C ala l-barnāmaj.
7. B: Ina^C am. hi aḍinn ant za^C ajt⁶ wāḥid yxaṭib lik, aw kiḍa.
R: tahāwēt ana w-ya⁷ li waḥde min banāt al-bādye. w-ana, txabar, kill
^Cīšiti⁸ b-al-barr ma^C al-bādye. bdiwi lya lān.⁹
8. B: wala tizāl, Ina^C am.
R: Ina^C am. w-yōm tahāwēt ana w-yāh ayyām ar-ribī^C. w-ja ayyām aṣ-ṣēf
- waḡt al-miḡātīn - w-nanzil^C ala ma, hom^C ala bīr w-ḥinna^C ala bīrin
ṭāni; ma ḥinna jimī^C ^Cala bīr wāḥid.
9. B: lākin mtigārbīn min ba^C aḍ.
R: Ih. mtigārbīn. killina^C ala jaww wāḥid.
10. B: ya^C ni ysayyir¹⁰ ba^C aḍkum^C ala ba^C aḍ.
R: Ih. ysayyir ba^C aḍna^C ala ba^C aḍ. killina^C ala jaww, killina^C ala

2 CA (Classical Arabic) 'ay na^C am.

3 LA (Literary Arabic) taḥayyuzāt from taḥayyaza "to take sides".

4 This expression is borrowed from radio parlance.

5 ^Cala la "so that it won't".

6 za^C aj "to dispatch (quickly)".

7 LA wa-'iyya (QD w-iyya).

8 kill ^Cīšiti = kill ^Cimri "all my life".

9 lya lān LA ilā l-'ān "till now" (QD ila ha-l-ḥīn).

10 From sayyar "to take a walk, to go visit".

The Translation

1. BRĀHĪM: May God grant you long life, my friend Riḍa.
RIḌA: May God preserve you.
2. B: There is a poem of yours - may your life be long - of which I know one verse in which you say: "May God bring no good to a vile man who deceives a trusting Muslim." I believe this poem has an occasion?*
- R: Yes, it has an occasion; this is one of my poems.
3. B: I know it is one of your poems. Your poems are many and, praise God, you have memorized other poems [besides your own].
R: By God, such is my duty.
4. B: You are called the just poet. You are not prejudiced either towards Šammar [your own tribe] or towards any other tribe.
R: May your life be long - I am proud of the whole history of the desert; I am proud of the history of all the tribes.
5. B: And so you should be, may your life be long. That is why you are called the just poet.
R: Yes.
6. B: What is the occasion for it, the poem.
R: It has an occasion, and that is a long story. But I will give a brief summary so that it will not exceed the time of the program.
7. B: Yes. I think you dispatched someone as a go-between, or something like that.
R: A bedouin lady and I fell in love with each other. As you know, all my life I have lived in the desert with the nomads. I am still a nomad.
8. B: Of course, you are still.
R: Yes. When we fell in love with each other it was the rainy season. Summer came - the time for making camp - and we camped by the same watering place, her people at one well and mine at another; we were not all camped by the same well.
9. B: But you were close to each other.
R: Yes. We were close. We were all camped in the same plain.
10. B: In other words, you could visit each other.
R: Yes. We could visit each other. We were camped in one plain, we

* The occasion (*mnāsibih*) of a poem is a narrative explaining the events which led to the composition of the poem.

jaww wāḥid bu ḥirwat¹¹ c aširt¹² abyār. arsalt li wāḥid^c alyah; ya^cni, arsaltu^c alyah aba-xaṭib.

11. B: tabi tšūf hu ma^c indah māni^c.

R: ašūf hi^c ala ḥačyah, jewābah, ya^cni, b-ayyām ar-ribī^c, aw mitḡayyre. w-ana^c indi šakk, l-ajil inn gibal¹³ mewaddt ar-ribī^c hāḍi - innah gibal allī me hi miḡilyitak, ḥēl¹⁴ miḡilyitak, xād^cah ya^cni al-maḥabbay, gibal yḡayyirha l-gēḍ, l-ajl inn al-gēḍ takṭar al-wjīh.

12. B: saḥīḥ.

R: takṭar al-wjīh.

13. B: saḥīḥ.

R: hāh. w-irsil li li wāḥid; yōm inni arsaltu yammah gilt: ītah,¹⁵ w-sallim li^c alyah; w-čān¹⁶ hi^c ala l-jewāb illi bēni w-bēnah, w-ana¹⁷ b-axaṭbah min halah.

14. B: na^cam. w-iḍa kān innah mtaḡayyrih, f-allah yastir^c alēna w-^calyah.

R: w-in cān hi mitḡayyritin, ^casa llah yastir^c alyah. hāh. w-la fīh lizūm. ḡāl: me yxālif.¹⁸ li aš-šaraf inni aḡḍi lak ḥāje; w-ha-l-ḥīn b-giṣr al-bēt. hu, txabar, y^carifhom¹⁹ w-yijīhom. w-lu riḥman bahom, lu riḥman bahom, b-ahalāh. w-hu mu hu min garābathom al-grayyib, allī yštakk mnu, ya^cni - bass innu ḥum xawālin lu.

15. B: xawālin luh.

R: yedde^c i hom xūlitu. hu b-giṣrahom ba^cad.²⁰

16. B: w-jārin lahom, īna^cam.

R: w-jārin lahom. wla^c indu mire hu. ysammūnu hak-al-wagt ṣimil. ^cind al-bādyat allī ma^c indu mire ysammūnu ṣimil; bēt ya^cni min dūn mire. w-nāzlin b-šanaghom.²¹ w-tištīḡil lu hi w-ya xawātah, w-hāḍa.

11 ḥirwat "about", same as ḥōl and ḥawālay. Cf. b-ha-l-ḥarāwi "within this range".

12 QD ^cširt.

13 gibal "always", same as dāyim.

14 ḥēl, b-al-ḥēl "very much". This is an intensifier and it also means strength as in ma bi ḥēl "I have no strength left".

15 From CA 'atā "to come, to go to".

16 čān, in čān, čān inn a conditional; see JOHNSTONE pp. 69, 151, 172.

17 wa-ana = f-ana

18 me yxālif "it does not matter, I have no objections, never mind". See JOHNSTONE p. 243.

19 ya^carifhum is also possible in QD.

20 ba^cad "also, furthermore".

21 šanag (pl. ašnāḡ) "flank, side".

were all in the same plain which had about ten wells. I sent someone to her; that is, I sent him to her to ask for her hand.

11. B: You wanted to see if she had no objection.

R: I wanted to see if she held to her word, her promise [made] in the rainy season, or whether she had changed her mind. I had some doubts, because spring love always - it is always the case that a woman who does not love you very dearly, love you madly, I mean, she will most likely change in the summer, because in the summer there are many [other] faces.*

12. B: True.

R: There are many faces.

13. B: True.

R: Hāh. So I sent a man; and when I sent him to her I told him: Go to her, give her my greetings; if she is still true to the vow we made, then I will ask her family for her hand.

14. B: Yes. And if she had changed her mind, then may God keep me and her above reproach.

R: And if she had changed, then may God keep her above reproach. Hāh. And there will be no reason [to pursue this affair any further]. He [the go-between] said: I have no objection. It is an honor to me to be of assistance to you; anyway, her family lives right next door to me. He, you know, is acquainted with them** [i.e., her family] and visits them frequently. He is even related to them, related to them, to her family. But his relationship to them is not a close one, I mean not so close that I would have any misgivings about him. They are his maternal uncles.

15. B: His maternal uncles.

R: He claims they are his maternal uncles. He also had his tent pitched next to theirs.

16. B: He was their neighbour, yes.

R: He was their neighbour. And he had no wife. At that time such a man was called *şimil*. Among the nomads a man with no wife was called *şimil* - a man who has no woman in his tent. He had his tent pitched next to theirs. She [the lady] and her sisters were helping him out, and so on.

* In the rainy season, members of every nomadic tribe disperse in small groups to forage their tribal territory. During this period there are so few people around that one cannot be choosy with regard to whom one makes friends with. But in the summer tribal sections congregate around their tribal wells in large numbers, and then one can be discriminating in choosing friends.

** Here RIDA suspends the narrative to embed some personal information about the go-between.

17. B: ya^Cni ysawwin luh^C ašsauh w-yaxadminnuh.
R: ysawwin lu^C ašsauh, w-yixidminnu, wi-yrawwin lu ma; bi-jwārahom.
18. B: šif: ^Cala niga w-šaraf.
R: Ih, ^Cala niga w-šaraf, ina^Cam. Hāh. rāḥ. yōm innu rāḥ wla-dri
^Cād²² wiššu gāl, lākin aṭ-ṭāli^C li yōm innu wājahan, gāl: ya-flān,
rifīgitak mitḡayyre. gilt: mitḡayyre? gāl: na^Cam. gilt: wiš maradda
^Calēk? gāl: maradda ^Calay tigūl allah xalag al-maḡāzi w-an-nikāyif.
gilt: ṭayyb, ana lya²³ ha-l-ḥīn ḡazzāy, ma nkaft. gāl: hi minḥfe.
gilt: ma nišadtah gilt al-asbāb? gāl: bala. ma xallēt ^Cnah šīn. ti-
gūl: ana šaḥḥ inni ^Caṭētu jewāb šmām²⁴ biḡiyay, biḡiyat ya^Cni l-
uxūd, ma hūb ḡēru, wi-lekin yōm inni nišadt ^Cnu - ana ma-bxaš²⁵ wiš
ma^Cu -
19. B: Ih, w-ila ^Cindik zōjih.
R: - w-ilya ^Cindu zōje, w-ila šār ^Cindu zōje ma ywālman; ana lli
^Cindu zōje ma ywālman.²⁶ gilt: ṭayyib tadri inn ^Cindi zōje!
20. B: hi yimkin ta^Crifk gabl ar-rajjāl hāḡa.
R: t^Carfan. w-m^Callmah²⁷ in ^Cindi zōje w-ḡālt: ma ^Calayy mn az-zōjat;
ḡamlaḥ²⁸ ^Calēk. lo²⁹ ^Cindak ya^Cni ṭalāt niswān ašīr rāb^Catin lihin.
hāḡa hi tigūlu gabil.³⁰
21. B: hāḡa kalāmah šmām.
R: šmām. wa-lākin hāḡa jāb li ha-l-jewāb at-tāli. gāl innah tigūl:
ḡaššan šmām. yigūl: ana b-āxdīc, w-ana ma ^Cindi aḡad. w-yōm inni
nišadt ilya mār ṭāri ^Cindu zōje w-ṭāri lu wiḡdān. w-ana ma ywālman -
ya^Cni, ar-rajl allī ^Cindu zōje w-^Cindu wiḡdān! I-bi-llah la-bi-llah.
allah yastir ^Calēna w-^Calēh - zi^Cilt; txabar, ar-rajjāl aš-šidūg ilya
gīl lu al-jewāb yḡaddiḡ.
22. B: šaḥIḡ.

22 ^Cād interjective particle; see JOHNSTONE pp. 107-8.

23 lya, ila, la, ya: See JOHNSTONE pp. 16, 69.

24 šmām "immediately, right away, right then, at the time".

25 baxaš "to know well, intimately".

26 ywālīm: CA yulā'im?

27 ^Callam "to inform, to tell".

28 ḡimil "load"; ḡamlaḥ ^Calēk "the responsibility of caring for her is yours, she is no business of mine, she does not concern me".

29 lo "even if"; cf. JOHNSTONE pp. 159-60, 172. lo is related to wa-law "even though, still".

30 gabil "before, previously, in the past".

17. B: You mean they cooked his supper and did his chores.
 R: They cooked his supper, did his chores, fetched him water; his tent was pitched next to theirs.
18. B: Observe: in honor and good faith.*
 R: Of course, in honor and good faith, yes. Hāh. He [the go-between] went [to the lady]. I do not know what he told her when he went, but the next day when he met me, he said: You there, your lady friend has changed her mind. I said: She has changed her mind? He said: Yes. I said: What did she tell you? He said: She told me that God ordains the going out on raids and the returning from them. I said: Fine, but I am still on my way to the raid, I have not turned back. He said: But she is turning back. I said: Did you not ask her? Did you not say: What are the reasons? He said: Of course I did. I didn't leave anything out. She told me: It is true that I gave him [Riḍa] my word at the time that I was interested, I mean interested in marrying him, nothing else,** but after I inquired about him - I didn't know if he was married -
19. B: I see; she found out that you had a wife.
 R: - I found out that he had a wife, and someone who has a wife does not suit me; a married man does not appeal to me. I said: Fine; but she [already] knew that I had a wife!
20. B: Probably she knew [about] you before you sent this man.
 R: She knew [about] me. I told her that I was married and she said: I do not care about the other wife; she is your responsibility. Even if you had three wives I would become the fourth. That is what she said to me before.
21. B: Those were her words then.
 R: Then. But now this man brought me this last report. He said that she said: He [Riḍa] cheated me then. He said: I will marry you, and I have no wife. But when I inquired I found out that he had a wife and children. This does not suit me - I mean, a man with a wife and children! For God's sake, no. May God keep me and him above reproach.- I got angry; you know, an honest man is inclined to believe what others tell him.
22. B: True.

* BRĀHĪM is commenting upon an admirable bedouin trait. Unlike townspeople, the nomads allow people of opposite sexes to mix freely, although man and woman must both make sure that such free mixing does not lead to illicit sex and besmirching of tribal honor. The severe punishment accorded violators ensures conformity to this desert code.

** I.e., although she considered marrying him, she was not particularly in love with him.

- R: zi^Cilt. yōm inni zi^Cilt^C alyah tarakt al-māḏū^C.³¹ awwal kān asayyir yamm nāḥyathom; w-ata^Cadda lli min dūnahom w-arūḥ l-nāḥyathom. ya^Cni tajiḏban raḡbiti yammahom.
23. B: na^Cam, w-ha-l-ḥīn tarakt jihathom killah.
R: w-ha-l-ḥīn kill jihathom killah; ḡayyart al-mōje.³² ma-tawajjah yamm nāḥyathom, abad. xaqēt³³ ma xaqēt wagt ṣār al-ma atla l-wagt ridiy.³⁴
24. B: w-al-arḍ yimkin ma hīb^C ala awwal.
R: me hi^C ala awwal. w-jifāna ḥinna ya-hal al-bi^Cīr; wla ḏall b-al-arḍ ella hal al-ḡanam.
25. B: hal-al-ḡanam.
R: Ih, w-hom ḡannāme.
26. B: Ih, hum ahal ḡanam.
R: ahal ḡanam.
27. B: w-antm ahal ibil.
R: w-ḥinna ahal ibil. taḥaddaraw³⁵ jimā^Catna allī ana stānis³⁶ cinda-hom w-yistānsūn^C indi. taḥaddaraw; wēn taḥaddaraw hak-al-wagt? taḥaddaraw l-al-^Crāḡ, yhawwrūn.
28. B: jihat al-^Crāḡ.
R: l-jihat al-^Crāḡ.
29. B: yamm al-hōr.
R: yamm al-hōr, wagt aṣ-ṣfiri,³⁷ ba^Cd ṭlū^C shēl. hāḏa yiṣīr al-hōr bu miṣfār w-yiḡfi ḥirṣ al-^Crāḡ, az-zrēḡi, hāḏa lli yḏabbḥ al-bill ilya barad aḡfa³⁸ ṣarru. rāḥaw bigēt ana w-hali. w-asayyir^C alēhom hak-l-yōm. w-ilya mēr ixwin lah - ṣarwa al-ḥḏūr -
30. B: ṣarwāk aṭ-ṭayyib.
R: - rā^Ci ḡhawe. w-ana-sayyir^C alēh hak-al-yōm - kill allī min tlā-tina³⁹ w-altihi⁴⁰ bahom min ḡabil rḡalaw -

31 LA mawḏū^C.

32 ḡayyart al-mōje "I changed the dial, I switched channels"; borrowed from radio parlance. It should be pointed out that the radio is very popular among the nomads and it exercises considerable influence on their speech.

33 From xaqā "to take". Like kala "to eat" → kalēt "I ate". xaqēt ma xaqēt wagt "I took some time, after some time, some time passed".

34 ridiy "bad", but here it means "to dry up, to become meager".

35 taḥaddaraw. The literal meaning is "they went down", but here it means "they went in a north easterly direction", because the Arabian plateau is tipped towards that direction.

36 From wanāsīh "to have a good time".

- R: I got angry. After I got angry with her I pursued this affair no further. Before, I used to visit her people; I used to go beyond all the tents close to mine and go over to their side of the camp. Love drew me to them.
23. B: I see; and then you decided to avoid their neighborhood entirely.
R: At this point I avoided their whole area completely; I switched wavelengths. I never went in their direction, never. Then time passed and the wells began to dry up.
24. B: And perhaps the pasture was not as good as before.
R: Not as good as before. We, the people who raised camels, began to suffer. Only the people who raised sheep remained in the plain.
25. B: People who raised sheep.
R: Yes; and they [her people] raised sheep.
26. B: I see, they raised sheep.
R: They raised sheep.
27. B: And you raised camels.
R: And we raised camels. My clan, who were close to me and to whom I was close, had already left. They had gone; where did they go at that time? They went to Iraq, to the marshes.
28. B: Towards Iraq.
R: Towards Iraq.
29. B: To the marshes.
R: To the marshes, at the beginning of fall, after the appearance of the star Canopus. There is good fall grazing in the marshes and at this time of year, when the weather begins to cool, the evil fever of Iraq, *az-zrēgi*, which is dangerous to camels, goes away. So my people left but I and my family remained behind. One day I went to visit them [the lady's people]. And there was this brother of hers who - like present company -
30. B: The like of yourself is praiseworthy.
R: - is a man whose coffee pots are always brewing [i.e. generous]. I went to see him that day - all the neighbors with whom I used to spend my time before had gone -
- 37 *aṣ-ṣfiri* "the beginning of the fall season".
38 From *agfa* "to turn back, to go away".
39 From *tala* "to follow, to be next to", hence *al-mitāli* "camels followed by their calves" and *tiliw* "a suckling camel".
40 From *laha* "to be busy, to be distracted, to be diverted, to be amused".

31. B: wala bigi lla-nt wi-hum.

R: wla bigi lla-na, w-hom, w-ahal al-ğanam allı mitxallıfe, hal al-ğanam ma yınħadrūn. w-asayyır ^Calēhom. gāl: āh, ya-bu-ṭārıf, ħayyāk allah, mibṭyın ^Cinna, wala ^Cımrak jītına. gılt: w-allah ana ıltıhi, w-fēdt allı yıgūl: b-al-geḏ manāzil; ya ḥāl min dūnak bēt ^Cıddak mēt. yōm abi ahūm⁴¹ asayyır yammakom ilyā mēr bēni w-bēnakom ħırwat miyyat šabbāb.⁴² al-yōm ^Cād jītakom; rħalaw jimā^Cati. gāl: int, wēn tabı tad-wı?⁴³ gılt: w-allah ma 'adri. ħınna yımkin lya minnah wardt al-bıll nabi niḥūl⁴⁴ natbaḥhom,⁴⁵ lajl inn rā^C al-bıll gām yištiki w-al-bıll tifallat w-anway w-al-gā^C maḥal.⁴⁶ w-yımkin natbaḥhom w-allah ħaṣbin ^Calēna. ēh. b-ha-s-sewālif; rıja^Ct l-ahali.

32. B: hi yımkin tasma^C al-kalām.

R: İh; b-al-bēt, bēt ša^Car - ṭāl ^Cımrak - w-b-ar-rıffe,⁴⁷ w-tasma^C al-kalām. yōm innı rıja^Ct l-hali w-jīt hali w-nımt b-al-gāyle, tagrıb aḏ-dıhir; w-ilyā mār tazhaman ıxtın li. "wiš fıh?" gālat: wāḥdin b-hāda msayyırın ^Calēna w-yabık. ana b-bāli innu rıjil, yōm innı nahaḏt rāsi w-ilya hi msayyırıtın ^Cala hali. kill ha-l-geḏ ma jatna, hi nōb; wla wajjahat yamm nāḥyatna. wa-lakin yōm sam^Cat jewābi inna nabi ni-ḥūl lya wardt al-bıll, taryah tiḏāyigay⁴⁸ w-wıddah innah tıttişil bi.

33. B: w-allı ant mwaşşı ma şār kalāmuh şaḥıh?

R: la, ma şār şıḥıh. lo hu şıḥıhın ma jay. sallamt ^Calyah yōm innı sallamt ^Calyah ħarıb jayyıtıç hādi! gālat: wallah lo ma⁴⁹ simı^Ct al-yōm innakom tabūn tiḥūlūn, inn ma niyyıtı iji, al-mūjib innı za^Clā-nıtın ^Calēk. gılt: hāda lli yıgūl "nāḥḥ aş-şyāḥ bi-şyāḥ w-taşlam". wiş mızı^Clıç? gālat: mızı^Clan innak ^Caṭētına jewāb şmām, w-ħınna lya lān w-ħınna narjık. wi-nşūfak aşaddēt⁵⁰ ^Cinna wla nadri wiş asbāb al-işdāde. w-ħınna ma nrıbaṭna b-al-^Cahad allı bēnna w-bēnak innak ya^Cni azyan an-nās aw aṭyab an-nās, lākin rıbaṭna al-kalām allı gılt lına w-gılna lik. w-al-yōm ^Cād nabi al-mgābal yaḥırd an-nḥūs. gılt: ṭayyib;

41 ahūm: CA 'ahımmu bi?

42 From šabb "to build fire, to make coffee and entertain guests".

43 From dāwiyyah (CA dawwiyyah) "desert".

44 niḥūl "go to the inner desert at the beginning of the rainy season".

45 < natba^Chom.

46 maḥal "barren, dessicated".

47 ar-rıffe "the women's section of the tent"; the men's section is called rab^Cah (pl. rbā^C).

48 tiḏāyigay: tiḏāyigat "she became disturbed, annoyed".

49 lo ma ... inn ma (also lān ma), a correlative conjunction.

50 aşaddēt = şaddēt "to turn away, to shun".

31. B: And no one remained but you and her people.

R: And no one remained but myself, her people, and the other sheep herders, for those who raise sheep never go into the desert. So I went to see them. Her brother said: Hail, Abu Ṭārif, may God grant you long life, you've been avoiding us, it's a long time since you came to see us. I said: I am really a busy man, and as the saying goes: Summer camps are crowded; if your tent is not right next to mine, you might as well be dead. Whenever I decide to come and visit you I am detained by the hundreds of hearths along the way. But today here I am with you; my people have gone. He said: And you? Where will you go? I said: I really do not know. Maybe I shall follow my people when my camels come back for water, because my camelherd is beginning to complain that the camels are restless and starving and that the plains are becoming barren. I am sure that I have to follow my people; I have no choice. We talked a while like this; then I went back home.

32. B: Perhaps she was listening to your conversation.

R: Of course; she was at home, in the tent - may your life be long - in the women's section, and she overheard our conversation. When I went home I took a nap in my tent, it was nearly noon; but my sister awakened me. "What is it?" She said: Someone is here to see you. At first I thought it was a man, but when I raised my head I saw that it was she who had come to our tent. The entire summer long she had never come to see us, except for this one time; she had never come to our neighborhood before. But after she overheard me say that we would go into the desert when the camels come back to drink, she became upset and was anxious to get in touch with me.

33. B: Then the man you had sent to her was not telling the truth.

R: No, of course not. Had he been telling the truth she would not have come. I greeted her and after I greeted her [I said]: I am surprised by your visit! She said: Believe me, had I not heard today that you were preparing to move into the desert, I would not have come, because I am angry with you. I said: There is a saying, "Meet accusations with accusations and you will be safe." What makes you angry? She said: I am angry because you gave me your word then, and I have been waiting for you until now. But I see that you have been avoiding me, and I do not understand the reason for this. I did not remain faithful to the pledge we made to each other all this time because I thought you were the most handsome of men or the most generous of men, but because of what you said to me and what I said to you. So now I want to meet with you face to face and clear up this matter with you. I said: I see; now that you have found out that I

*hāda yōm šiftīna nabi niḥūl, tabīn tšajj^Cini b-ha-l-čilme, w-ğadīc⁵¹
tḥaššlīn mni li gišīdtin⁵² anšir lič di^Cāyah,⁵³*

34. B: *w-illa-na mirslin likum flān.*

R: *w-illa-na mirslin likom, awal al-mubtida, mirslin likom mirsāl;
w-tigūlūn, "innu ġaššina flān. yigūl 'ma^C indi zōjat' w-tari^C indu
zōje w-^Cindu wiğdān." gālat: mirsālak, min hu? gilt: mirsāli flān.
gālat: mu hu šiḥīḥ. hu yijīna wi-yḥācīna,*

35. B: *l-nafsuh.*

R: *l-nafsu. yigūl, "čan ente minte čārhitān, xawāli ma yḥasdūni; w-
ana b-axaṭbič min xawāli." w-gilt, "allah yastir^C alēna w-^Calēk, ana
ha-l-ḥīn mēr ma bi ar-rjāl." w-int mār ma jābak b-aṭ-ṭāri - ma jābak
b-aṭ-ṭāri.*

36. B: *wala gāl "mirslan flān."*

R: *wala gāl "mirslan flān." wala jābak b-aṭ-ṭāri, mūliyyah. ana hak-
al-wagt tar zōjiti me hi b-bēti. w-illa maḥḥa⁵⁴ wiğdān lākin^C ind
halah. halah ma^C indahom malfa,⁵⁵ w-sāmḥin lah^C ind halah.*

37. B: *w-ant^C indik ixtik.*

R: *w-ana^C indi ixti mwallyitin⁵⁶ li b-al-bēt. wle hi^C indi ba^C ad zō-
jiti; ^Cala manin⁵⁷ ṭāni, me hi^C ind hal al-ma lli^C indina. al-mrād,⁵⁸
tišālahna-na w-yāh. yōm inna tišālahna wāfigat⁵⁹ ar-rḥale. raḥalna.
w-illa bān li-al-māqū^C.*

38. B: *ant gilt lah ha-l-ḥīn ḥinna wagt...*

R: *giltuh...*

39. B: *inni wā^Cadt...*

R: *gilt innina ha-l-ḥīn...*

40. B: *ila jat al-bill, nabi...*

R: *innina iltizamna^C ala r-riḥīl...*

41. B: *na^Cam, nabi niḥūl...*

R: *w-ila jat al-bill nabi niḥūl, ġašbin^C alēna, w-lakin in-ša-llah...*

51 *ğadīc = ağadīc "perhaps you..." Cf. HEIKKI PALVA: Studies in the Arabic Dialect of the Semi-Nomadic al-Ġāḡarma Tribe (al-Balqā' District, Jordan). Göteborg 1976 (= Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis. Orientalia Gothoburgensia no. 2), p. 40.*

52 *gišīdtin = gišīdih "poem".*

53 *di^Cāyah "propaganda", borrowed from radio parlance.*

54 *< ma^Cha.*

55 *malfa "someone to come home to", from lifa "to alight, to come back from a journey".*

56 *From wala "to oversee, to take care of".*

57 *manin is ma "water" with double tanwīn.*

am about to go into the desert, you tell me these fair words in hope of rekindling my heart, so that I may compose a poem about you and make you famous.

34. B: But on the contrary, I sent so-and-so to you.

R: But on the contrary [i.e. to prove my serious intentions], I sent you, in the first place, I sent you a messenger; but you told him, "So and so [Riḍa] lied to me. He said 'I have no wife', but I found out that he has a wife and children." She said: Your messenger, who is he? I said: My messenger is so and so. She said: This is not true. He did come and ask for me...

35. B: For himself.

R: For himself. He said to me, "If you are not averse to marrying me, my maternal uncles wish me no evil; I shall ask for your hand from my uncles." I said, "May God keep me and you above reproach; but I am not really interested in men right now." As for you, he did not even mention your name - did not even mention your name.

36. B: He did not say, "So and so sent me."

R: He did not say, "So and so sent me." He did not mention your name, ever. At that time it happened that my wife was not with me in the tent. She had taken the children and gone to her parents' tent. Her parents had no one to help them with the chores, so I gave her permission to go to her parents.

37. B: But your sister was with you.

R: My sister was with me to take care of household matters. My wife was not with us; she was at a different watering place, not the same one I was camped at. At any rate, the lady and I made up. However, when we made up it was time for me to move to the desert, and I moved. But now the matter had become clear to me.

38. B: You said to her that now it was time...

R: I said that...

39. B: That I promised...

R: I said that now I...

40. B: When the camels come back from pasture, we will...

R: That I had made up my mind to move into the desert...

41. B: Yes; we shall move...

R: And when the camels come back I shall leave, I have no choice; but, God willing...

58 *al-mrād* "anyway, what I want to say is...".

59 From *wāfag* "to meet with, to happen at the same time".

42. B: fīma ba^Cad...

R: fīma ba^Cad mitlāḥḡīnin^C alā xēr. gālat: allah kirīm. Hāh. tawaḍḍa-
ḥat li al-imūr. as-sawālif⁶⁰ ḥiwīle, ya-bu yūsif, lākin^C ad nbayyin
al-giṣṣe w-ma jara. ḥilna w-yōm inna ḥilna jibt⁶¹ hādī al-giṣṣīde.⁶²
awwal mubtida l-giṣṣīde mhājimtin l-ad-dīre allī jifatna w-farrigat
al-aṣḍiga.

43. B: farrigat ṣitātikom, īna^Cam.

R: w-farrigat ṣitātina w-ab^Cadat bi^Can hawiyiyiti.

(1) yā ḍāg bālī gilt dannu ḍilūli *

ḥiṭṭu^C alēha kūrāha w-al-garāmīš⁶³

(2) ḥiṭṭu^C alēha kūrāha w-irxšu li *

nabi nmaḍḍi waḡtina b-al-miṭārīš.⁶⁴

(3) ḥinna newēna w-intewēna niḥūli *

min fōg giṭṭā^C al-fraj b-al-maḡābīš⁶⁵

(4) min fōg naggālay ṭiḡīl al-ḥmūli *

ḥirš al-mewāṭi mibi^Cdāt al-manāṭīš.⁶⁶

(5) giḥḥ aḍ-ḍlū^C msahlāt al-xlūli *

yaṣḍin riṭīn allī^C alēhom ṭarābīš.⁶⁷

(6) yā ṣānt ad-dīrat l-ḡērah nijūli *

tajwīl ṣēdin yiṣṭifiḡ ma^Cnišānīš.⁶⁸

60 Sg. sālfih "a narrative about an actual event which happened in the past".

61 jibt "I brought", but here means "I composed".

62 The first hemistichs of the poem rhyme in -ūli and the second hemistichs rhyme in -īš. The meter of the poem is mustaf^Cilun mustaf^Cilun fā^Cilātun - - - - - - - - - - .

63 ya = ḡla. ḍāg "to become crowded, to become constricted". bālī "my mind, my temper". ya ḍāg bālī "when my mind becomes crowded (with anxieties)"; the same as ya ḍāg ṣadri "when my breast becomes constricted (with distressing thoughts)". dannu "bring (m. pl.) close!"; dann "bring (m. sg.) close", but idin "come (m. sg.) close!". ḥiṭṭu "put (m. pl.)!". garāmīš (pl. with no sg. form) "small accessory objects", here referring to the rein, the stick, the cushions, etc.; cf. garmaš "to strip someone of all his possessions, to win (in a game) everything one has".

64 irxšu li "give me (m. pl.) permission! excuse me!". nmaḍḍi, from maḍḍa "to spend the time". miṭārīš "travels", also the pl. of ṭārīš "a traveller"; ṭaraš is "to travel", and ṭarraš is "to send something to a distant person or to send someone after him". The poet wants to dispel his anxieties by mounting his camel and travelling in the desert. This theme appears also in the classical poetry, as in the following line from the mu^Callaḡah of ṬARAFĀH: wa-'innī la-'umḍī l-hamma^Cinda ḥtiḍā-rihī * bi-'awḡā'a mirḡālīn tarūḥu wa-taḡtadī.

42. B: In the future...

R: In the future we shall meet again, under happy circumstances. She said: God is gracious. Hāh. Things had become clear to me. It is a long story, O Abū Yūsif, but I only wanted to tell you the story and what happened. I moved into the desert and after I moved I composed this poem. In the first part of the poem I castigated the land which had become barren and caused friends to be separated from each other.

43. B: Had dispersed you, yes.

R: Had dispersed us and took me away from my lady love.

- (1) When gloomy thoughts invade my mind, I say: Bring forth my graceful mount; put on her saddle and her trappings,
- (2) Put on her saddle and grant me leave [to go]; I must seek relief on the desert roads.
- (3) It's time to strike camp and move out, on spirited beasts which march on by day and by night.
- (4) We load up and leave on sturdy camels with great hooves, fleet and enduring.
- (5) Their ribs are broad, their gait is smooth; they groan and growl in foreign tongues.
- (6) We quit the barren land and seek the verdant steppe, like a flock of birds in a gusty wind.

65 *newēna* same as *intewēna* from *niyyih* "intention". *giṭṭā^c* from *giṭa^c* "to cut, to traverse". *al-fraj* "great distances". *maḡābiš* "dark rainy nights". The poet now begins to praise the camels on which they will load their luggage and migrate to the inner desert. These camels do not tire from ceaseless marches even when the night is dark and rainy.

66 *naggālay* = *naggālat* from *nigal* "to carry". *ḡirš* pl. of *ḡaraš* (m.), *ḡarša* (f.) "coarse, rough". *mewāṭi* pl. of *maṭāt* "hoof"; cf. *wiṭa* "to step on" and *al-wiṭa* "the ground". *mibi^cdāt* from *bi^cīd* "far away, distant". *al-manāṭīš* "travelled desert highways leading to distant territories". *mibi^cdāt al-manāṭīš* are camels which travel great distances between one stop and the next.

67 *giḡḡ ad-ḡlū^c* "their ribs are bulging", from *gaḡḡ* "to become inflated, to blow up, to spring up and dash away". *msahhlāt* "to make easy to cross". *al-xlūḡi* pl. of *xalḡ* "a highway through sand dunes". *yašdin* "to resemble". *riṭīn* "foreign speech". *alli^c alēhom ṭarābiš* "those who wear fezes", i.e. Turks and foreigners. The growling of camels is compared to foreign speech.

68 *yā šānt ad-dīrat* "when the land becomes barren". *nijūli* "migrate like a flock of birds (or a herd of gazelles)". The noun *jāl* refers to a flock of birds or a herd of gazelles on the move. The verb *jāl* refers basically to constant motion like bangles on the hand, hence *mijwal* (pl. *mijāwil*) "a bangle, a bracelet". *šād* "hunted birds (or animals)". *tiṣṭifiḡ* "to fly unsteadily". *nišānīš* "winds".

- (7) *dārin jifay sikkānaha b-al-mḥūli **
miṣālḥah ṣārat ^Calēna tanāwīš. 69
- (8) *wā xānt ad-dinya ḡada bah nzūli **
hassay manāzil mibi^Cdīn al-manāṭīš. 70
- (9) *alli nahār al-kōn miṭl az-zmūli **
rab^Cin ^Cala l-mōt al-mṣaffa midāhīš. 71
- (10) *yā dār wiš nōḥi^C ^Calēna zi^Cūli **
talḥēnina laḥḥat rōāb al-ḥawāšīš. 72
- (11) *yā dār farragti šitāt an-nuzūli **
hal ar-rbā^C mdallhīn al-ganāṭīš. 73
- (12) *^Cāfaw mn al-wajla garāḥ aṭ-^Cūli **
w-min lu janāḥin yanhaḡu ṭār b-ar-rīš. 74
- (13) *mirḥānahom gāmat ^Calēha tiḡūli **
taḥājā al-ḡirbān miṭl al-garāfīš. 75
- (14) *wi-xlāf ḡā ya-lli tijībūn gōli **
min fōg ^Cērātīn tiḡibb al-ma^Cāṭīš. 76
- (15) *giṭm al-fxūḡ m^Carriḡāt al-iṣūli **
min nasil hiršin markizu jēš ^Can jēš. 77
- (16) *ya-hl ar-rōāb rōābakom w-igharu li **
yā-mintiwīn dyār ḡāf al-^Cačārīš. 78

69 *jifay* = *jifat* "to shun, to cause to suffer". *mḥūli* pl. of *maḥal* "barrenness, dessication". *miṣālḥah* "its benefits, its good", here referring to grazing. *tanāwīš* from *tanāwaš/tanēwaš* "to reach out for something but hardly touch it" (same as *tanāwaṭ*); here it refers to the meagerness of pasture.

70 *wā xānt ad-dinya* = *wiš xānt ad-dinya* "what is the use? how treacherous is *ad-dinya*!" *xānih* is use or benefit as in *ma lu xānih* "it is of no use, it is of no importance". *ḡada* "to be lost". *ḡada bah nzūli*, i.e. the tribes left and were lost touch with and never heard from, or the campgrounds were obliterated beyond recognition. *nzūl* may refer either to the camping ground or to the camped people. *hassay* = *hassat* "gone, lost". *mibi^Cdīn al-manāṭīš* [cf. n. 66] here refers to people who are so powerful that they could raid distant tribes and graze distant pastures.

71 *nahār al-kōn* "day of battle". *zmūl* are strong male camels which are specially bred to carry heavy loads and they are famous for their stamina and endurance. *al-mōt al-mṣaffa* "pure (or sure) death, dire danger". *midāhīš* "lost their minds, confused", i.e. they attack the enemy on the battlefield courageously like mad men who fear no death.

72 *wiš nōḥi^C* "what is the matter with you?" This is an idiomatic expression from the verb *nāḥ* "to wail, to bemoan"; the literal meaning is "what are you moaning about?" *talḥēnina* "prod us, press us hard". *ḥawāšīš* "grass cutters" from *ḥašīš* "grass". Grass cutters press their heavily laden camels very hard.

73 *mdallhīn al-ganāṭīš* "the entertainers of weary guests".

- (7) The barren wastes drive us on; the scanty pastures suffice no more.
- (8) Oh, so uncertain is fate; many a camp has become deserted; obliterated are the camps where once resided gallant men.
- (9) The stalwarts who roar on the battlefield like camels of burden, intoxicated by the sight of death so near.
- (10) O land, why do you drive us so hard? You press upon us as the grass cutters prod their loaded beasts.
- (11) O land, you dispersed the camps; you scattered the large tents wherein lodge weary guests.
- (12) The tribesmen moved and left behind the sweet water in the wells; whoever had a wing to fly, took off.
- (13) The black ravens circle their deserted camps, like the little lambs which roamed there before.
- (14) Leave that; carry my verses, ye riders on stout mounts which travel the highways of waterless wastes.
- (15) Thoroughbred camels with muscular thighs whose male progenitor was of a noble line.
- (16) Hail, well-mounted riders; halt and listen to me, since you are going to her camp - the lady with thick, long hair.

74 *cāf* "to refuse something, to loathe, to abandon". *wajla* "anxiety, worrying, restlessness". *garāḥ* "fresh, sweet". *t^cūl* pl. of *ta^cal* "a water hole". *min lu janāḥin yanhaḍu tār b-ar-rīš* "he who had a wing to lift him up flew via his feathers", i.e. anyone who has the means to go to the interior of the desert has done so.

75 *mirḥān* pl. of *mrāḥ* "the place where camels spend the night". *tiḡūl* "circle, crowd, invest". *taḥājal* "walk with a hop". *ḡirbān* pl. of *ḡrāb* "a raven". *garāfiš* "little black lambs".

76 *wi-xlāf ḡa* "and aside from that". This is an ushering phrase similar to *da^c canka hādā* in classical poetry which signals thematic transition. *cārāt* "strong camel mounts", from *cār* "a male wild ass". *tiḡibb* from *ḡabb* "to cast, to toss, to throw away". *al-ma^cāṭiš* "waterless wastes", cf. *caṭaš* "thirst". The camel mounts are as strong as male wild asses, and they are so fleet that they traverse waterless wastes swiftly and leave them behind as if they had tossed them away.

77 *giṭm* from *giṭam* "to clip". The thighs of the camels are so round and muscular they look like they are clipped. *m^carribāt al-iṣūli* "thoroughbred, selectively bred". *nasil* "progeny, descendant". *hirš* "a stud camel kept for breeding". *markizu* "its origin". *jēš* "camels selectively bred for their fine qualities for riding". *markizu jēš^c an jēš* "its pure ancestry can be traced back a long way".

78 *igharu* "restrain, hold back with the reins". *mintiwīn* "going in the direction of". *ḡāfi* "ample". *ca^cārīš* "long black wavy hair".

- (17) *inn jītu allī yiṭirbih šōf zōli **
allī yfattiš bisrit al-galb taftīš. ⁷⁹
- (18) *wiš ^Cād lo tāxiḍ ṭalātīn ḥōli **
ma nsāh kūd al-badu tansa l-miṭārīš. ⁸⁰
- (19) *w-illa ar-ri^Cīle ^Cin miḥilla tizūli **
wi-yǧazz lah bi-jbāl salma šewābīš. ⁸¹
- (20) *allī ša^Catni w-istigēt al-ǧīlūli **
xaddah mn al-mōt al-ḥamar bih nigārīš. ⁸²
- (21) *yā ^Cēn šēhānin ^Caṭa lih b-jōli **
ašgar ydammi mixlibih yanṭr ar-rīš. ⁸³
- (22) *^Cadl al-manācib l-al-ḥabāri yišūli **
w-in šāfu al-ḥibrum libad ^Cigib taṭnīš. ⁸⁴
- (23) *w-sīǧānaha yazhan jidīd al-ḥjūli **
hi nagwiti min nāgḍāt al-^Cacārīš. ⁸⁵
- (24) *yā ^Cūd rēḥānin ḡaḍannih ṭlūli **
bi-fay ḡīdin yišṭifiḡ fōgu al-hīš. ⁸⁶
- (25) *mithazz^Cin nabtu ^Caḍiyy aš-škūli **
yal^Cab bu al-ǧarbi ^Cala sāḥl al-gēš. ⁸⁷
- (26) *w-arsalt l-allī b-al-maḥabbah šifo li **
ǧēr as-salām mn aryaš al-^Cēn mā-bīš. ⁸⁸
- (27) *mirsāli allī miṭil jard as-smūli **
jītu yjaddi^C fi ṭirīǧi ḥanāfīš. ⁸⁹

79 *yiṭrib* "gladden the heart, cheer up". *zōl* "the indistinguishable figure of a person". *yfattiš* "to search, to inspect, to scrutinize, to examine thoroughly". *bisrit* pl. of *bisir* "the dates when they turn yellow or red but before they become soft *rṭab* and *tamir*", but the word also refers to the core, hence *bisrit al-galb* "the innermost part of the heart". The hemistich means that the lady is in full possession of the poet's heart.

80 *wiš ^Cād* "so what". *kūd* "until, unless"; cf. *ēuud* in JOHNSTONE pp. 106f.

81 *yǧazz* "to be erected". *šewābīš* "protruding summits".

82 *ša^Catni* "to cause me madness, to enchant me". *istigēt* from *asgā* "to give to drink". *ǧīlūli* pl. of *ǧīl* "sadness, sorrow". *nigārīš* "speckles". The hemistich means that her fair cheeks are fatal to lovers.

83 *yā ^Cēn* "your eye is like the eye of...". *šēhān* "falcon". *Caṭa bi* "to pillage, to despoil thoroughly". Her eyes are as sharp and her glances as piercing as those of a hunting falcon when it sights its prey among a flock of bustards. In this and the next line the poet develops the image of the hunting falcon in an extended metaphor. *ašgar* "reddish". *ydammi mixlibih yanṭar ar-rīš* "its sharp claws tear off the feathers of the prey and spill its blood".

- (17) When you alight by the camp of the faithful lady, the lady whose love has penetrated my heart,
- (18) Tell her that even if she were to stay away from me for thirty years, I should not forget her unless the nomads quit migrating.
- (19) Or unless the Ri^CIlih ridge is moved amongst the peaks of the Salma chains.
- (20) Her love is causing me so much suffering; her red cheeks are painted the color of death.
- (21) Her eyes are the eyes of a falcon swooping over a flock of birds: a hunting bird of reddish color; its talons tear off the feathers and spill the blood of the prey.
- (22) Its broad wings strike the bustards; when the male bustard sees it, he leaves the sky and seeks the ground.
- (23) Her legs are seemly, wearing new anklets. She is my choice among all fair maidens when she unplaits her wavy hair.
- (24) She is the branch of a sweet basil bush nurtured by the dew in the shade of a palm garden.
- (25) A supple branch with beautiful fragrance; its perfume is spread by the gentle breeze as it grows beside the running water.
- (26) I sent an emissary to my faithful lady, wishing only to hear from her a word of greeting.
- (27) My messenger proved useless as an old discarded garment; I found him putting obstacles in my path.

- 84 *cadil* "straight, erect". *manācib* pl. of *mancib* "shoulder". *cadl al-manācib* "broad-shouldered". *ḥabāri* pl. of *ḥbāra* "a bustard". *yiṣūl* "to chase and cause to flee in confusion". *ḥibrim* "male bustard". *libad* "to cling to the ground and hide quietly". *taṭnīs* "spirited flight".
- 85 *yazha* "looks seemly in". *ḥjūl* pl. of *ḥijil* "anklet". *nagwiti* "my choice", from *tanagga* "to choose, to select". *nāggāt al-cačārīs* "the ladies who undo their long black wavy plaits", from *nigaḍ*, the opposite of *fital* "to twist" and *jidal* or *jaddal* "to plait".
- 86 *yā cad rēḥānin* "you are the stem of a basil tree". *gaḍannih* from *gaḍa* "to nourish". *ṭlūl* pl. of *ṭall* "dew, moisture". *fay* "shade". *ḡīd [ḡīn?]* "palm garden". *yiṣṭifiḡ* "to rustle or move from the effect of the breeze". *al-hīs* "the thick palm fronds".
- 87 *mithazzi*^C "swaying". *caḍiyy* "fresh, fragrant". *škul* "fruits of different kinds". *al-ḡarbi* "the Western breeze". *al-gēš* "running water".
- 88 *b-al-maḥabbah šifo li* "no one shares with me her affections". *aryaš al-caen* "the lady with thick eyelashes".
- 89 *jard* "old, shabby". *smūl* pl. of *simil* "shabby garment". *ḥanāfīs* "obstacles".

- (28) *wla jāb min nāb ar-riḍāyif wṣūli **
*ḡād al-baxay saddad ^calay al-manāṭīš.*⁹⁰
- (29) *yā rabb la tarzig xaṭāt al-biṭūli **
*alli ^cala l-mislim ydawwir baxāšīš.*⁹¹
- (30) *alli za^cajtu yammahom tarjimo li **
*jān al-xabar min dūn jēš w-miṭārīš.*⁹²
- (31) *gālaw taḥādḡar w-intibih la-tigūli **
*ma min wara ^caḡm al-halīmat ^carāmīš.*⁹³
- (32) *w-tamm al-jewāb w-kammal al-ḡīl gōli **
*ḡarāybin mā wallifōhin tahālīš.*⁹⁴
- (33) *hāḡi meḡay w-al-xātmat l-ar-risūli **
*ṣalāt rabbi ^cidd wabl an-nišānīš.*⁹⁵

44. B: ṣaḡḡ lsānik.

R: ṣaḡḡ bḡinak.

- 90 *nābi* "protruding, erect". *riḍāyif* pl. of *riḍf* "buttock". *nāb ar-riḍāyif* "her buttocks are erect". *wṣūl* pl. of *waṣil* "news, a communication". *baxay* = *baxat* "luck, fate". *ḡād al-baxay* "the ill-omened one".
- 91 *xaṭāt* (also *xaṭw*) "some, a one". *biṭūl* "he who does *bāṭil*, a vile one, untrustworthy". *baxāšīš* in this context means deception, fraud, and duplicity.
- 92 *tarjimo li* "informed me"; i.e., the lady to whom the go-between was sent told the poet that the messenger was lying. In other words, the poet received this information directly from the lady, and he did not have to send couriers to obtain this accurate report.
- 93 *taḥādḡar* "be careful!" *intibih* "be alert". *al-halīmat* "a starved camel". *Carāmīš* pl. of *Cirmūš* from the verb *Carmaš* "to gnaw on a fleshy bone". *mā min wara*, an idiom meaning that something cannot be expected from something or someone, as in *mā min wara ^caḡm al-halīmat Carāmīš* "do not expect flesh on the bone of a starving camel", i.e. do not expect any good from such a base man.
- 94 *jewāb* "poem", as in *xōš jewāb* "what a wonderful poem!" Poetry is also *ḡīl* and *gōl* "a contemplated utterance". *ḡarāyib* "rare, precious verses". *wallaf* "to compose". *tahālīš* "lies, vain talk"; cf. *yhalīš* (also *yhalis*) "to tell lies".
- 95 *miḡay* = *miḡat* "gone, finished". *wabil* "rain". *nišānīš* "clouds impregnated by winds".

- (28) He brought me no word from the fair maiden of lovely figure;
that ill-omened messenger, he closed all doors in my face.
- (29) May God bring no good to a vile man who deceives a trusting
Muslim.
- (30) The lady told me the truth; I heard it from her own lips, not
from mounted couriers.
- (31) She warned me not to trust that man again; she said: Do not seek
flesh from the bones of a starved camel.
- (32) Thus ends this poem and I conclude the rhymes, my rhymes; pre-
cious verses which I did not compose in vain.
- (33) I close with an offer of prayers on the soul of the prophet, like
the rain which falls from laden clouds.
44. B: May your tongue be sound.
R: May your body be sound.