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THE HILALI POETRY IN THE *MUQADDIMAH*
ITS LINKS TO NABAṬI POETRY*

Nabaṭi poetry, the direct descendant of ancient Arabic poetry, is the vernacular poetry popular among the sedentary and nomadic inhabitants of Arabia, which they compose and transmit in their own colloquial idiom, *al-ʿāmiyyah* (Sowayan 1985). But how and when did the linguistic shift in the poetic idiom of Arabia take place, and what are the stages this shift went through? I tried to deal with the various aspects of this issue in some detail in other places (Sowayan 1985: 163-167; 2000: 93-110). Keeping in mind, of course, that this is a very gradual and imperceptible process, when did the vernacular become so pervasive in the speech of the Arabians that they started to compose vernacular instead of *fasīḥ* poetry? To answer this question, we need to glean from ancient sources those earliest verses of poetry, which we are certain to have come from the Arabian Desert, and which exhibit grammatical divergences from the *fushḥā* rules. It so happened that while this linguistic shift was in process, the Arabian Desert reverted to its pre-Islamic state of anarchy, making it too dangerous for field workers and scholars to venture there in order to document this shift. Furthermore, Arab grammarians and humanists have generally held vernacular speech and literature in disdain, never thinking that such “trivialities” were worth their scholarly attention and serious consideration. Scholarly pursuits of traditional speech and other traditional modes of cultural expressions have always been fraught with ideological and theological polemics in the Arab World (Sowayan 2000: 8-65). Ibn Ḥaldūn, true to his perceptive genius and liberal character, was a notable exception. He was the first authority to point out the existence and importance of the vernacular poetry in the Arabian Desert and to note its relationship to the *ḡābilī* poetry. His *Muqaddimah* and History remain the most important and most ancient source which is usually resorted to in order to bridge the yawning gap separating the latest orally composed and transmitted corpus of *fasīḥ* poetry and the earliest Nabaṭi corpus culled from the illiterate nomads of the Arabian Desert. Therefore, in our attempt to trace the emergence of Nabaṭi poetry and its relation to Classical Arabic Poetry, we usually turn to the *Muqaddimah* of Ibn Ḥaldūn and the poetic corpus he recorded from the Bedouin tribes of his time, especially the Banū Hilāl. Yet there are certain questions we need to

* Words and texts in classical Arabic are transliterated according to classical pronunciation, while colloquial words and texts are transliterated according to the colloquial pronunciation.

address before we can accept the reliability of this Hilali corpus as truly representative of Bedouin poetry in general and determine its value as a real sample of early Nabaṭi poetry of Arabia. Such questions include whether these poems were composed before or during the Hilalis' western migration or after they had settled in North Africa and severed their relationship with their ancestral homeland in the Arabian Peninsula? Who actually composed these poems? Is it the people to whom they are allegedly attributed or their descendants who wished to celebrate the heroic deeds of their legendary ancestors? Are the names to which Ibn Ḥaldūn attributed these poems real names of historical people or are they invented by rhapsodists and *sīrah* narrators? Did Ibn Ḥaldūn receive these poems from oral transmitters or from manuscript sources? Do they constitute the beginning of Nabaṭi poetry, or of *sīrah* Poetry or of *malḥūn* poetry? These are some of the questions we will raise in this paper. We shall also suggest that, based on the relationship between these Hilali poems and early Nabaṭi poetry, the editors of this section of the *Muqaddimah* could benefit from specialists versed in the diction of Nabaṭi poetry.

The Vernacular Corpus in the Muqaddimah

In the chapter entitled *fi 'aṣ'ār al-ʿarab wa 'ahl al-'amṣār li-hādā 'l-ʿahd* in the *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Ḥaldūn deals with the linguistic and literary features as well as the aesthetic merits of the vernacular poetry of the Bedouin tribes of his time. He presents some examples of this poetry, mostly from the Banū Hilāl Bedouin inhabiting the Western Desert in North Africa, al-Maghrib. He also gives further examples from the poetry of Banū Hilāl at the beginning of the 6th volume of his History. But our main focus in this paper will be on the poetic corpus in the *Muqaddimah*. The main thrust of Ibn Ḥaldūn's argument concerning the vernacular Bedouin poetry is that, unlike urban colloquial poetry such as *azḡāl* and *muwašṣahāt*, it constitutes the natural continuation of ancient Arabian poetry in structure, function, themes and spirit. Even in diction and prosody it is very close to the ancient poetry except for slight grammatical deviations which are due to inevitable linguistic changes over time. Ibn Ḥaldūn begins his argument by outlining the main literary features of this poetry and proceeds to establish its relationship to ancient Arabian poetry:

As for contemporary Desert Arabs of this time and age, who are no longer fluent in the tongue of their Mudhar ancestors, they still compose poems in the same various meters of their ancient Arab predecessors. They versify long odes dealing with diverse poetic themes and subjects including the erotic, laudatory, elegiac, and satirical. They employ extended metaphors and range from one motif to another. Or they might brusquely address their intended subject directly. Though, frequently they begin a poem by spelling out the name of its composer, then they pass on to the erotic section (Rosenthal 1967: 1125).

Then he goes on to defend the literary merit of this poetry:

These Arabs show an exceptional eloquence in this poetry. There are outstanding and less outstanding poets among them. Most of the professed scholars of this age, especially philologists, disapprove of this poetry when they listen to it and shun its composition when they hear it recited, claiming that their taste disdains it because it is not eloquent, since its language has lost case inflections. But the real reason is lack of competence in the dialect in which this poetry is composed. Were they to possess the necessary competence, their taste and natural feeling would testify to the eloquence of this poetry, provided that their disposition and perception be not warped. Case inflections have nothing to do with eloquence. Eloquence is the conformity of expression to the thing expressed and to the situation at hand, no matter how subject and object are marked, since these can be easily deduced through syntactic relations, as is the case in their [the desert Arab's] dialect today. As for meaning, it is based upon conventions agreed upon by the speakers. If the speaker knows these conventions and if the expression [he uses] conforms to these conventions and is appropriate to the situation at hand, then eloquence is achieved regardless of the grammarians' rules (Rosenthal 1967: 1126).

This analysis applies with equal validity to all the vernacular poetic samples alluded to and presented in the *Muqaddimah*. Although this whole vernacular poetic corpus is the direct descendant and the natural continuation of ancient Arabian poetry, as asserted by Ibn Ḥaldūn, it does not constitute a homogeneous corpus. It can be divided into three separate genres that we will now talk about in some details.

1. *Hilali Personal Poems from al-Maghrib*

Despite the apparent theoretical interest of Ibn Ḥaldūn in the vernacular poetry of the Arabian Bedouin of his time and its relationship to Ancient Arabian Poetry which flourished in the Arabian Heartland since pre-Islamic times, the great majority of the poetic texts he provides come from the desert Bedouin of North Africa, al-Maghrib, rather than the Arabian Peninsula.

The Hilali poems recorded by Ibn Ḥaldūn belong to Hilali poets composed after their migration to al-Maghrib. Banū Hilāl started their migration from Arabia in successive waves starting by the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century A.H. It is assumed that their language then was *fushā* and they composed their poetry in *fushā*. In their migration they passed through Iraq and Syria, then they settled in Egypt for a while before they passed on to North Africa during the middle of the fifth century A.H. This means that Ibn Ḥaldūn was writing about them no less than 400 years after they quit the Arabian Peninsula and 300 years after they settled in North Africa. Accordingly, one must conclude that the Hilali poems in the *Muqaddimah* came from a later date, long after the tribe had been settled in North Africa, and possibly more than two hundred years after their settlement there. It is certain that by that time the tribe had severed all relations they might have had with Arabia and their speech had

already diverged considerably from that of their Arabian ancestors. Most of the poems recorded by Ibn Ḥaldūn were composed either by people who were his contemporaries or people who lived not long before him. The attribution of some of these poems is in no doubt and it is certain that they were actually composed by real historical persons. The poems mention real historical people and deal with real historical events. Ibn Ḥaldūn attributes the poems to dignitaries and chiefs of the Hilali tribe and leaves no doubt in our minds regarding the veracity and historicity of these poems and their composers. He also spells out the occasions on which the poems were composed, the persons to whom they were addressed, and the events they celebrated. One of these poems comes right before the poem by the woman from Ḥawrān which was addressed by a Hilali prince to a certain Maṣṣūr Abū ‘Alī. The introduction of the poem goes like this: “This is a poem by ‘Alī ibn ‘Umar ibn Ibrāhīm, a contemporary chieftain of the Banū ‘Amīr, a subtribe of the Zuġbah confederacy, in which he reproaches his kinsmen who aspire to usurp from him the chieftainship”. Ibn Ḥaldūn introduces the poem preceding this one by saying “This is said by Ḥālid ibn Ḥamzah ibn ‘Umar, the chief of al-Ku‘ūb reproaching his close kinsmen for siding with the chief of al-Muwaḥḥidūn, Abū Muḥammad ibn Tāfrākīn... This happened at a time near our own time *fīmā qaruba min ‘aṣrinā*”. This clearly testifies to the historicity of these poems and their composers who lived during or near the time of Ibn Ḥaldūn. Before this poem, Ibn Ḥaldūn gives another one by the same Ḥālid ibn Ḥamzah whom he counts among the recent Banū Hilāl “*min al-muta’abḥirīna minhum*”. Ibn Ḥaldūn also cites a poem by Sulṭān ibn Muẓaffar ibn Yaḥyā from ad-Dawāwdah, the leading subsection of the Riyāḥ tribe. He composed the poem while he was in prison.

All the poems mentioned above come from the *Muqaddimah*. Also, when dealing with the history of the Banū Hilāl tribe in the beginning of the 6th volume of his history, Ibn Ḥaldūn records many details about the tribe and cites other poems by them or about them, including a piece in praise of Durayd, the leading subsection of al-Atbaġ. The Chief of Durayd was Ḥasan ibn Sirḥān ibn Wabrah, the name mentioned in the *sīrah*.

These personal poems are historical and their attributions are in no doubt. They are not part of the *sīrah* poetry that will be considered in a moment but they might be the root from which sprang the *malḥūn* poetry in North Africa.

2. Hilali Epic Poems from al-Maghrib

But history sometimes blends with legend in the reports of Ibn Ḥaldūn on Banū Hilāl. In addition to the poems mentioned above, which are clearly historical, he cites legendary poems and stories that belong to the *sīrah* cycle. He introduces the first of these poems in the *Muqaddimah* saying: “This is a poem put into the mouth of al-Šarīf ibn Hāšim lamenting the departure of al-Ġāziyah bint Sirḥān”. Another poem is introduced thus: “This is one of their poems put into the mouth of al-Šarīf ibn Hāšim”. Here is another example: “This is one of their poems bemoaning the Amīr of Zanātah, Abū Sa‘dā”, and “This is one of their poems celebrating their migration to the West”. He also gives a poem bemoan-

ing the death of Zanātī Ḥalīfah. In other words, the Šarīf himself did not actually compose the poems attributed to him but anonymous rhapsodists forged them and put them into his mouth, just as they forged the other three just alluded to. In introducing these poems by using circumspect expressions such as “this is a poem put into the mouth of...”, Ibn Ḥaldūn is obviously disavowing any claim regarding the genuineness of these compositions or the veracity of their attributions. It is not possible to determine when, where, or by whom such poems were composed. Clearly they were part of the popular *sīrah* tradition that was widely circulating at the time. The claim that the *sīrah* was quite popular since the time of Ibn Ḥaldūn is attested by the following quote from the 6th volume of his history:

Those Hilalis have fantastic and strange tales to tell relating their entry into North Africa. They claim that the Šarīf Šakr Ibn Hāšim was then the ruler of al-Ḥiğāz and they call him Šakr ibn Abī al-Futūḥ. They say that he asked Ḥasan ibn Sirḥān for the hand of his sister and he gave her to him in marriage and she bore him a son whom he called Muḥammad. Then disturbance and sedition happened between them and the Šarīf, so they decided to quit Nağd and go to Africa. They contrived a ruse to retrieve this al-Ġāziyah from him. She asked him to visit her parents and he took her to them. When he took her to their camp, they moved accompanying him and her with them. They concealed their move and disguised their plan by pretending to him to be riding early every day to go for the hunt and the chase. In the evening they take him back to their tents, having been moved forward and advanced further to the west and struck again. He did not take note of their moving till he got way too far from his territorial domain where he no longer had any authority over her overriding theirs. So they took her and left him whereby he returned to his home in Mecca, feeling deep inside of him the pangs of his burning love for her. It is said that she was consumed by passions just as much as he was and she died of love.

They relate such romances about her that would eclipse the romances of Qays and Kuṭayyir. They recite so many well-constructed and highly polished verses attributed to her. Some are natural, some are affected and some are forged. These verses are not lacking in eloquence, only their case endings is faulty, though this has nothing to do with eloquence as we have pointed out to you in the first volume of this our book. But scholastic pedants of city dwellers disdain the recitation of such poems and scorn them because of the faulty case endings, thinking that case endings is the essence of eloquence, but it is not so. Many of these poems are forged and their transmission is not to be trusted and relied upon. Had it been genuine and accurate it would have preserved for us valuable information about their deeds and their battles and the events of their wars with Zanātah, as well as the correct names of their dignitaries and much of their affairs. But we cannot trust these transmissions. However, a one skilled in lin-

guistic (rhetorical) matters could perhaps detect the forged and suspect it, and that is the utmost that one could do. They (Hilalis) are all in agreement in so strongly believing the truth of al-Ġāzyah tale with the Šarīf, being transmitted from ancestors to descendants, generation after generation. They would dismiss as an utter lunatic and a complete fool anyone casting any doubt or expressing any disbelief in the story, because of its overwhelming popularity among them (1988, vol. 6: 25-26).

In the *sīrah* poems, we encounter the same names and same motifs that are still part and parcel of this popular epic. Take these three lines from the poem by the Šarīf Šakir in which the popular names of Diyāb ibn Ġānim, Mādī ibn Muqarrab and Ḥasan ibn Sirḥān are mentioned:

*w-nāda al-mnādi ba-r-riḥil w-ṭawwaraw // w-^carraġ^c āriha^c ala misti^c iraha.
w-sida laha l-arya dyāb ibin ġānim // ^cala ydēn mādi bin mgarrab emiraha.
w-ġāl lihum ḥasan ibin sirḥān ġarrbu // sūgu n-nū³ in kān ana hu ġafiraha.*

Or these two lines bemoaning the death of al-Zanātī in which the names of al-Zanātī and Diyāb ibn Ġānim occur:

*ya lahf kabdi ^ca z-znāti ḥalifah // ġid kān l-a^c ġāb al-ġyād silil.
qatilu fata al-ḥēġa dyāb ibin ġānim // ġrāḥih ka afwāh al-mizād tisil.*

In the following two lines from a poem “put into the mouth of al-Šarīf ibn Hāšim” the word used for “we” is “*nihna*” instead of “*hinna*” and the form used for the verb “to meet” is “*nišidfu*” instead of “*našdif*”: and at the end of the first line the letter *šin* is suffixed to the negated word. Such dialectical features which are specific to the speech of North African Arabs are clear indications that such lines are forged, for this is not the way the Šarīf of Mecca would speak:

*tibadda mādi al-ġabbār w-ġāl li // ašakir ma nihna ^calēk rdāš.
nihna ġadēna nišidfu ma ġdi lina // kima šādaf^cti^cm az-zibād tšāš.*

As such examples show, there is a noticeable difference in diction between these Hilali epic poems and the Hilali personal poems mentioned before. The epic poems were already beginning to depart from pure Bedouin diction and to be heavily influenced by North African dialects. This is a clear sign of the popular and oral nature of these poems. As for the Hilali personal poems, they seem to be much closer to the Bedouin speech and *fushā* Arabic. This could be the result of a semi-literary mode of composition and transmission. We should not forget that they were composed by tribal chiefs and dignitaries who, most likely, had a smattering of some form of elementary education. This could also mean that Ibn Ḥaldūn recorded these poems from written, rather than oral sources. Should this be the case, it might explain some of the difficulties encountered in reading and understanding these poems. It is possible that they were written in

such bad script that Ibn Ḥaldūn himself was not able to read them properly. Most likely, and especially among the educated, the vernacular poetic diction of the Bedouin was on the wane in North Africa at the time of Ibn Ḥaldūn as he indicates in the concluding remark at the end of this section where he states that some tribes still cultivate this poetry while others including “most of the contemporary chiefs of the Riyāḥ, Zuġbah, and Sulaym, and others, disdain it”. This is due either to theological and scholarly bias on part of those chiefs or to their thorough immersion in the North African scene and life style.

One may not be too wrong in assuming that the epic poems given by Ibn Ḥaldūn represent the very literary kernel from which the *sīrah* eventually developed, or they might be even taken as an indication that at the time of Ibn Ḥaldūn the *sīrah* was already well developed and had passed the embryonic stage. Dr. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Yūnis, in his book *al-Hilāliyyah fī al-tārīḥ wa al-adab al-ša‘bī*, claims that the poems in the *Muqaddimah* represent the pristine stage of strictly poetic recitation of the Hilali epic which was the prevalent mode before the 6th century A.H. This inchoate form was followed, after the 8th century A.H., with the narrative stage. Yūnis asserts that what Ibn Ḥaldūn says regarding Banū Hilāl might not be historically accurate but it shows clearly that the Hilali epic was popular and alive during the time of Ibn Ḥaldūn (Yūnis 1968: 138). One could even entertain the thought that the *sīrah* was taking shape as the Hilalis were on the move from the East to the West and that by the time they reached al-Maghrib it was already a full blown literary project. Whatever the case might be, the *sīrah* eventually became wide spread in the Arab World (and outside of it), narrated in many interrelated and interconnected versions and different forms, oral and written. For example, the story of al-Ġāziyah with the Šarīf Šakir, recorded by Ibn Ḥaldūn in the 6th volume of his history, is still told by oral bards throughout the Arabian Desert (‘Arīfī 1992: 74, Yūsuf 1992: 119-120, Fuhayd 1981: 45-47).

3. Bedouin Poems from al-Mashriq

While Ibn Ḥaldūn gives more than 200 lines of Hilali Bedouin poetry from North Africa, he gives at the very end of the chapter only 16 lines of poetry from the desert Bedouin of the East, 6 lines by a woman of the Qaysi tribe from the Ḥawrān Desert and 10 lines by a man of the Halbā tribe from the Egyptian Desert. He introduces the first poem saying “This is a specimen from the desert tribes of Syria around the district of Ḥawrān It was composed by a woman whose husband had been killed and she dispatched these verses to his Qaysi allies urging them to avenge his death”. And introduces the second poem saying “This is by a certain Ġudāmī from the Bedouin of Egypt from the tribe of Halbā”. Ibn Ḥaldūn added the Egyptian poem to the *Muqaddimah* at a later time. It is a well-established fact that Ibn Ḥaldūn never stopped amending and adding to the original draft of his work throughout his life. He spent the last part of his life in Egypt where “he kept working on the *Muqaddimah*, improving it, and bringing his History up to date” (Rosenthal 1967: vol. 1: lxi). While there, he recorded a poem of 10 lines from an Egyptian Bedouin of the Halbā section of

the Ġudām tribe in which he vilifies those of his tribe who did not rise up to help him while praising those who did. The poem appears only in the manuscript located in the library of Orhan Cami in Bursa in Turkey under the designation Hüseyin Celebi 793 and in those copied later from it. The name of the scribe of this particular manuscript is given as Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥalīl as-Sa‘dī aš-Šāfi‘ī al-Miṣrī and dated Wednesday, Ša‘bān 8, 806, long after the arrival of Ibn Ḥaldūn into Egypt on Šawwāl 1, 784 (Rosenthal 1967: vol. 1: xc, xcvi-xcviii). As for published editions, the poem appears only in translation in Rosenthal (1967, vol. 3: 438-439) and in the oldest published Arabic copy of the *Muqaddimah* which was edited by Etienne Marc Quatremère in Paris in 1858 and printed by Firmin Didot Frères in three volumes and was reproduced in Lebanon in 1970 (Quatremère 1970: 388-389). Rosenthal utilised the Hüseyin Celebi 793 manuscript while Quatremère utilised a later manuscript copied from it.

Except for these two fragments, all samples of Bedouin vernacular poetry presented by Ibn Ḥaldūn come from the desert of al-Maghrib. This shows that he was building his case regarding such poetry mainly on his contacts with North African Bedouin, not Arabian Bedouin. Most likely his knowledge of the Arabian Bedouin was indirect and rather scant. At that time the Arabian Desert was practically inaccessible. Field trips in the Arabian hinterland were quite frequent during the Umayyad and early Abbasid periods, but later the desert became unsafe and such trips were discontinued and Arabia became isolated from the rest of the Arab-Muslim world. Ibn Ḥaldūn performed the pilgrimage only once, and it seems that he did not stay very long at the Holy Places, nor did he take the opportunity while there to do any research or make any scholarly contacts or visit other areas in the Ḥiğāz or Nağd. This is in contrast to his long and intensive association with the Bedouin tribes of northwest Africa and his intimate acquaintance with their affairs. As a matter of fact, his services in this area were sought after on so many occasions by various rulers of al-Maghrib who sent him on diplomatic missions to those tribes. Interestingly enough, he wrote the first draft of his *Muqaddimah* (a task he completed in the amazingly short period of five months) during a three years seclusion in Qal‘at Ibn Salāmah in the remote desert under the patronage of Awlād ‘Arīf, the leading house of the Suwayd section of the Zuğbah Arabs of Banū Hilāl. Before that he spent some time with the Dawāwdah Arabs. Those Bedouin friends must be the ones from whom he received the Hilali poems he included in his work.

Yet, it must be admitted that Ibn Ḥaldūn did his best to gather some first hand information and familiarise himself with the situation in the Arabian Desert. At least he knew some of the names used to refer to poetry there. However, the names he gave he did not get directly from oral, illiterate Bedouin bards. Nor were they his own invention. Most probably, they were names used by town literati and scribes who were interested in collecting and inscribing this kind of poetry. This is hinted at in the following quote from the *Muqaddimah*:

The urban Arabs of al-Maghrib call these poems *al-ʿašma‘ iyyāt*, after al-ʿAšma‘ī the renowned transmitter of Arabian poetry. The urban Arabs of the East call this type of poetry *baddāwi*, *ḥawrāni*, or *qaysi*.

They might intone it into simple melodies devoid of any artistic musical affectation, then they sing it according to various tunes which they call *ḥawrānī*, after Ḥawrān a district in the hinterland of the Iraqi and Syrian Desert, where Bedouin Arabs still abide to this day (Rosenthal 1967: 1125).

Ibn Ḥaldūn mentions these names very briefly and in passing without elaboration. This gave rise to various interpretations and some confusion as to the real significance of these names, which he said were applied by the Arabs in the East to this poetry. I would assume that the names *qaysi* and *baddāwi* were used when referring to this poetry as a literary product, as we would now use the names *nabaṭī*, *‘āmmī*, *ša‘bi*, etc. As for the name *ḥawrānī*, it seems to me that it was used when referring to it as sung poetry or in reference to one of the tunes in which it is sung, as we would now call the various *rabābah* tunes to which Nabaṭī poetry is sung, like *ṣḥari*, meaning the way it is sung by the tribe of Banū Ṣaḥar, or *ḥmeṣī*, relating to a subtribe by that name belonging to the larger tribe of ‘Anāzah, or *ḡōfi*, relating to the district of al Ġawf, or *hḡēni* or *sāmri*, etc. This seems to me obvious from the way Ibn Ḥaldūn employs the word *ḥawrānī* in the previous quote in saying that “They might intone it into simple melodies devoid of any artistic musical affectation, then they sing it according to various tunes which they call *ḥawrānī*, after Ḥawrān, a district in the hinterland of the Iraqi and Syrian Desert, where Bedouin Arabs still abide to this day”.

Hilali Poetry and Nabaṭī Poetry

Modern Arab scholars have not been in agreement as to the real nature and significance of the Bedouin vernacular poetic corpus presented by Ibn Ḥaldūn. The way he presented these poems in his *Muqaddimah* as if they constituted one homogeneous corpus belonging to one single genre is somewhat misleading. This is what prompted Yūnis to view the whole corpus as belonging to the *sīrah* cycle, as mentioned above. On the other hand, Naḡdi scholars familiar with Nabaṭī poetry see in these Hilali poems the transitional stage of the poetic idiom in Arabia from the *fūṣḥ* to the Nabaṭī diction. The first to point this out was Ḥālid al-Faraḡ in the introduction to his anthology *Dīwān al-nabaṭ: maḡmū‘ah min al-ṣi‘r al-‘āmmī fi Naḡd*. He says that “the earliest specimens to reach us of the vernacular poetry from Naḡd are the Hilali poetry and those Hilali verses given by Ibn Ḥaldūn in his *Muqaddimah* which exhibit no difference whatsoever from the poetry now current among the people of Naḡd” (1952, vol. 1: z-y). Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Aqīl pushed this hypothesis to its unreasonable limits when he asserted that the Hilali poems were exported from al-Maghrib to Naḡd to serve as models to be emulated by Naḡdi poets. He says:

During the time of Ibn Ḥaldūn, the speech of the people in al-Maghrib and other parts (of the Arab World) are the very start from which sprang the popular poetry in the vernacular of Naḡd. This poetic diction was not exported from Naḡd but imported to it, and the Naḡdi tribes were attracted to it due to the effects of epic and legen-

dary qualities of the Hilali literary idiom during the epochs of Arab chivalry. I consider this vernacular Hilali poetry the very beginning because it has linguistic deviancies that were not then to be found in the (purer) Nağdi language (1982: 51).

Then Ibn ʿAqīl goes on to say:

The forms and methods of these Hilali poems were the models which were emulated by the Nağdi poetry in the speech of the Nağdi people... A cursory examination of the Hilali poems which were recorded by Ibn Ḥaldūn or recorded in the *siraḥ* and a quick comparison of these with the Nağdi vernacular poetry in its incipient stage would lead us to conclude that the Nağdi vernacular poetry is the descendant of the Hilali poetry (1982: 51-52).

What prompted these scholars to entertain the illusion that all these Hilali poems represent the nascent stage of Nabaṭi poetry were the repeated assertions of Ibn Ḥaldūn that the contemporary Bedouin poetry was the natural continuation of the *ḡāhili* mode of poetic composition. The way in which he presents his case and advances his theoretical argument give the mistaken impression that he was actually dealing strictly with the poetry composed and recited by the Bedouin of the Arabian Peninsula. Note also the multiplicity of names Ibn Ḥaldūn culled from the East for this poetry (*qaysi*, *ḥawrāni*, *baddāwi*) compared to only one name from al-Maghrib (*al-ʿasmaʿiyyāt*).

Actually, the two poems by the Ḥawrān woman and the Halbā man are the closest representative of what we now call Nabaṭi poetry. These two poems could be taken as a good example representing the intermediate transitional stages of the poetic diction of the Arabian Bedouin in its early and gradual transformation from *fushḥā* to *ʿammīyyah*.

Two points are particularly worth noting about the poem by the woman from Ḥawrān. The first point is that it is composed by a woman from the tribe of Qays, *qaysi* being one of the names attributed by Ibn Ḥaldūn to this poetic tradition. The other point is that the woman is from Ḥawrān, the other name attributed by Ibn Ḥaldūn to this poetry in its sung form. The *Muqaddimah* asserts that the Ḥawrāni woman is a Bedouin and introduces the poem by saying, "this is from the poetry of the desert tribes (*ʿarab al-barrīyyah*)". This assertion makes of this poetic fragment a very valuable specimen with regard to the incipience of Nabaṭi poetry and its emergent stages. One of the most remarkable features to be noted about this text, which also applies to the Halbā text, is the fact that its language occupies a middle stage between *fushḥā* and *ʿammīyyah*. This closeness to the *fushḥā* could not be due to formal learning and education since the poem is composed by a Bedouin woman, and Bedouin do not usually attend schools, especially their women. On the other hand, since the text is said by a Bedouin woman from the Arab tribe of Qays, its vernacular features could not be due to any foreign or urban influences. We can confidently claim that we have on our hand a bona fide oral text composed by an illiterate Bedouin woman in her native mother tongue. The text reflects the true poetic idiom among the

desert Arabians of that period, an idiom that did not exhibit complete rupture with the *fushā*, yet certain vernacular features were already beginning to creep in, lexically and grammatically. For example, metrical and prosodic requirements would necessitate the pronunciation of certain words according to *fushā* vocalisation and other words according to *‘āmmiyyah* vocalisation. Not to mention some vernacular idioms such as “*kin as-sifā*”, “*ya hēf*”, “*bīd al-’ adāra*”, etc. Furthermore, the language of the text accords well with the colloquial speech of the Peninsular Arabians, unlike the other poetic texts in the *Muqaddimah* which are beginning to exhibit dialectical features specific to the North African Arabs.

We cannot tell when the husband of the woman from Ḥawrān was killed but this happened no doubt during or before the time of Ibn Ḥaldūn (732-808 A.H.) which would mean that her poem (not to mention that of the Halbāman) is the oldest specimen we have of vernacular poetry from the Arabian Desert. At that time, and most likely long before, the vernacular idiom had become well established as a medium of oral versification in the Arabian Desert. The circulation among the people of the East of diverse names such as “*qaysi*”, “*haw-rāni*” and “*baddāwi*”, as attested by Ibn Ḥaldūn, is a clear indication and an incontestable testimony to the pervasiveness of this poetry among the tribes of eastern and northern Arabia.

But what is the exact linguistic and literary relationship between the Hilali poems given in the *Muqaddimah* and the early Nabaṭi poetry? There is no indication whatsoever that there was any direct links or contacts between the tribes of Arabia and those of North Africa, or that the Arabians were at all familiar with the Hilali poetry of al-Maghrib. This, however, does not rule out similarities between the two traditions. If we were to compare the earliest samples we have of Nabaṭi poetry with the Hilali poems given by Ibn Ḥaldūn, we would find a great deal of resemblance in diction, themes, rhyming system and meters. All of them are composed in the classical *tawīl* meter which is called the *hilālī* meter by the people of Nağd, *hilālī* being a designation which they apply to anything ancient, or considered to be of great antiquity, exactly in the same sense that the adjective *‘ād* is used in classical times.

However, this resemblance should not be taken to mean that the Hilali poetry is the source from which Nabaṭi poetry originated, as some would assume (Farağ 1952, vol. 1: z-y, Ibn Ḥamīs 1958: 51-53, Ibn ‘Aqīl 1982: 51-52). What it means is that both were parallel descendants of one and the same older tradition, namely Classical Arabic poetry. At the earlier stages of their emergence, their two paths of development were quite close and parallel to one another. Gradually, their language, form, function and themes started to diverge till eventually they parted company. The one in Arabia came to be known as Nabaṭi poetry, a rather homogeneous tradition. The situation in North Africa is somewhat complicated. The Hilali tradition there seems to have split into two branches, an epic branch that gave rise to the *sīrah* and a subjective, personal branch from which probably sprang the *malḥūn* tradition.

Advancing such an argument is not meant to diminish the value of examining the Hilali poems recorded by Ibn Ḥaldūn in our search for the origin and

beginning of Nabaṭi poetry, as well as the social ambience and linguistic conditions in which such beginning was rooted, since the two traditions emanated from the same source and were quite close to one another in their earliest stages. Their resemblance to one another is illustrated by the fact that Ibn Ḥaldūn lumps them together and talks about them as if they were one single tradition. He places poems composed by a Bedouin woman from the Syrian Desert and by a Bedouin man from the Egyptian Desert next to the Bedouin poems from North African Hilalis. The formal and thematic remarks Ibn Ḥaldūn made which were quoted above apply equally to both traditions.

Now we come to the question of whether there is any relationship between the poems in the *Muqaddimah*, belonging to the *sīrah* cycle, and later poetic renditions of the *sīrah* orally recited and transmitted among the nomads in Arabia (for samples of such renditions consult Aşqah 1982: 169-174, 1984: 64-67, 128-131, 187-188, 202, 227-228, 232-235, Fuhayd 1981: 51-52, 1985: 11-25, 1992: 28-30, Ibn ‘Aqil 1986: 252-255, Ğunaydil 1981: 180-182, Lerrick n.d., Murayri 1987: 351-354, Suwaydā’ 1988a: 325-331, Yūsuf 1992: 76-85, 1996: 190-193). Others also wonder whether these orally transmitted renditions which are attributed to the ancient Hilalis and are circulating in their ancient Arabian homeland could shed any light on the origin of Nabaṭi poetry and the transition of the Arabian poetic diction from the classical to the vernacular.

Before addressing these issues, perhaps it is worth taking a brief digression to shed some light on the way the Hilali epic is recited in Arabia. There are noticeable differences between the epic lays orally circulating in Arabia and those recorded by Ibn Ḥaldūn, just as there are differences between the versions of the epic narrated in various parts of the Arab world. Among the nomadic tribes of Arabia, there is no special settings or occasions for reciting epic poetry. It is just poetry, like the rest of Nabaṭi poetry. After all, nomadic life itself is in a sense a living epic and the nomads actually live a heroic age, which is no different from that of the Hilalis. In a nomadic oral culture, the line dividing the historical from the epic and legendary is rather blurred. There is no Arabian written version of the *sīrah*. It exists as poetic fragments circulating in an oral mode only. There is no one complete and whole version but detrital bits and pieces, blending in diction and mode of transmission with Nabaṭi poetic tradition and other strictly local epics. The existence of other local epics (such as the Ḍayāġim epic, which is more coherent and complete and seems more recent and immediate than the Hilali epic), clearly indicates that epic poetry as a special genre is not totally foreign to the Arabian soil. As a matter of fact, there is something quite distinctive and different about the Hilali poems and episodes circulating in the Arabian deserts and hamlets, which would set them apart from those heard recited in the cafés of urban towns in Syria, Egypt and North Africa. Yet, some names and thematic elements do seem to be imported from such distant urban centers. It is quite possible that such elements were imported by the camel merchants called ‘*gēl*’ who would drive herds of camels and horses to be sold in the markets of Egypt and Palestine. While waiting for weeks, and even months, to sell their animal stocks and collect their money, those ‘*gēl*’ merchants would

frequent cafes where epics were recited and they would listen to them with relish. Back home in Arabia, they would recast and reversify whatever episodes they could recollect of such epics in a diction and a form that would suit the local taste and blend in with the already existing epic version.

Having dealt with *sīrah* lays orally circulating in Arabia and their relationship to the poems mentioned by Ibn Ḥaldūn and to other versions narrated in the rest of the Arab World, let us pause now for a moment to examine the value of these local fragments and what light they could shed on the early stages of Nabaṭi poetry. In tracing the early stages of Nabaṭi Poetry, Ḥālid al-Faraġ (1952, vol. 1: *h-t*) cites an orally circulating poem attributed to ‘Alyā, the lover of Abū Zayd al-Hilālī, as a representative sample of such early stages. His example was followed by Ibn Ḥamīs (1958: 52-53). But such poems connected with the *sīrah*, as well as those oral poems connected with other epics, like the Dayāġim epic (Aṣqah 1982: 1223-1228, Hāġirī 1992: 103-142, Ibn ‘Aqīl 1983: 36-71, Ġunaydil 1981: 105-107, Fuhayd 1992: 18-33, Lerrick n.d.) or Ṣāyi’ al-Amsaḥ (Montagne 1935, 1935-1940, 1935-1945, Suwaydā’ 1988b: 137-230) cannot be relied upon in determining the origin of Nabaṭi poetry or in tracing the various stages of its linguistic and thematic development, despite their supposed antiquity. The oral legendary character of these poems make them subject to constant, though imperceptible, shifts and modifications in rhythm with the unceasing historical flux and linguistic changes. The personalities of the presumed composers of these old poems are usually surrounded with legend, which cast a great deal of doubt concerning their historicity and reliability. The more a poem is temporally and geographically removed from its time and place of origin the more drastic are the linguistic changes and the more it is shrouded with legend and turned eventually into so many divergent and contradictory versions. It becomes very difficult to ascertain its attribution and to establish its original form. Even if we were to grant the accuracy of the attribution of an old oral poem, the linguistic and thematic instability of oral transmission would compel us to exercise caution in accepting it as valid linguistic evidence representing the linguistic and literary situation of the period in which it was supposedly composed. This is born out by the fact that we now have poems composed in the modern vernacular attributed to *ġāhili* poets like Kulayb, Ġassās, al-Muhalhil, and ‘Antarah (Suwaydā’ 1986, vol. 2: 57).

A poem that has been forged, for some reason or another, and attributed to a certain historical figure cannot be deemed of real historical value, except perhaps if we were to examine it in order to figure out the reasons and motivations behind its forgery. Neither can we consider it as a valid linguistic document reflecting the linguistic situation of the age during which its supposed composer lived, unless that happened to coincide with the time of its forgery. A forged text reflects the language of the age in which it was forged and this could very well be different from the language of the age in which its assumed composer lived, depending on the time span and geographical distance separating the two. Forgery robs the text of its historical validity but it remains as a valid linguistic document reflecting the linguistic and literary situation of the time in which it was forged.

The poems circulating among illiterate bards whom they attribute to pre-Islamic and early Islamic heroes and poets have nothing to do with such personalities; they are invalid historically and linguistically. They are linguistic specimens of the time of their forgery, or, to be more exact, the time in which they were committed to writing or tape recording, which could be different from the language of the time in which they were first fabricated. It is possible that a person who lived in pre-Islamic times and spoke classical Arabic would turn after hundreds of years into a folk hero and rhapsodists would start putting into his mouth poems which they would compose in the vernacular of the later ages, which is quite different from classical Arabic. Then, such forged poems would circulate orally for hundreds of years and pass on from generation to generation, thus being subject to linguistic and thematic changes throughout successive generations. At a later time, one might get the idea of recording these poems on tape or writing them down. The diction of these recorded versions would be different from the diction of those forged originally, which in its turn is different from classical Arabic, the original diction of their supposed composer.

All this dictates that we should always exercise caution and circumspection in accepting some of the material published in some popular anthologies and presented as old samples of ancient Nabaṭi poetry, especially in cases where the publisher does not indicate his sources and does not specify whether he collected his material through oral transmission or from written manuscripts, and whether these manuscripts were old or recent inscriptions of texts that have been in oral circulation for a long time and were subjected to all sorts of changes before they were taken down and committed to writing at a date much later than that of their original composition.

The Vernacular Poetic Corpus and the Problems of Editing

The Hilali poetic corpus in the *Muqaddimah* is the most difficult to handle for scribes, editors and translators. In the manuscripts and published editions I have examined, the poems were distorted to a degree that it has become difficult to read and understand them correctly and pronounce them in the proper manner that would shed light on their correct meters and how they should be scanned. It is hard to find a manuscript or a printed copy free of gross mistakes in the writing, translating and understanding of these poems. Some editors even skip altogether the chapter in which these poems are cited (e.g. Ibn Ḥaldūn 1926: 583; 1982: 583; 1986: 583; ed. Muṣṭafa Muḥammad n.d.: 583). In one edition we read "Ibn Ḥaldūn recorded in this chapter much vernacular poetry from al-Maghrib but we did not make use of it since we were unable to understand it, so we decided to delete it" (Ibn Ḥaldūn n.d.: 549). Not only editors of printed copies but also later scribes sometimes throw their hands up in the air in despair and declare their inability to read the Hilali texts and decline to copy them (Badawī 1962: 123). Without examining the oldest extant manuscripts of the *Muqaddimah*, which were inscribed by the hand of Ibn Ḥaldūn himself or approved by him, it is difficult to know where the problem lies and how much of this unfortunate situation could be attributed solely to scribes and editors. It is quite pos-

sible that Ibn Ḥaldūn received at least some of these poems in old and poor handwriting that was hard for him or any body around him to decipher. Also, one cannot rule out of hand (though this might seem to be far fetched) the possibility that Ibn Ḥaldūn, or at least his scribes and assistants, being literate urban settlers, were not as well versed in this vernacular diction as one would expect. Because of their urban and literary upbringing, they might have been too removed from the Bedouin's indigenous outlook and native worldview to master the subtleties of their poetic diction and the nuances of their idiom. One wonders whether some of the mistakes we encounter in the poems are not so much the result of later scribal or editorial errors "*tashīf*" but are original mistakes committed by the original author or original scribes. We should not forget that Ibn Ḥaldūn was an encyclopedist, a philosopher and a historian who was not expected to master fully and comprehend the minutest details of every subject he touched upon (after all, other specialists in other subjects have expressed similar reservations about him). His scholarly insight and profound intellect led him to appreciate the aesthetic quality and to perceive the scientific value of the poems he heard recited by contemporary Bedouin. But did he really understand them as a native would? This nagging doubt can be cleared up only by examining manuscripts written by Ibn Ḥaldūn himself or under his supervision. The problem of scribal errors is, of course, compounded by later scribes, editors and translators who were even much further removed than Ibn Ḥaldūn from the native composers and transmitters of this poetry; culturally, linguistically, and in every other way.

The earliest printed Arabic editions of the *Muqaddimah* appeared simultaneously in 1858, one is the Būlāq edition by Naṣr al-Wafā' al-Hūrīnī and the other one is the Paris edition by Quatremère. The manuscripts utilised by Hūrīnī and Quatremère, as well as other existing *Muqaddimah* manuscripts, printed editions and translations throughout the world, are ably identified and amply annotated and described by Schmidt (1927), Rosenthal (1967: vol. 1: *lxxxviii-cix*), Badawī (1962: 43-222) and Wāfī (1981 vol. 1: 11-24, 77-84, 107-9, 243-275). The last three authors also tried to give some idea on the various stages of emendations and additions the *Muqaddimah* went through at the hands of Ibn Ḥaldūn, as well as exhaustive lists of what has been written on the *Muqaddimah* and its author in various languages.

In the words of Rosenthal "the text of the Būlāq edition may usually be disregarded" (1967: *cii*). The Paris edition is not much better. Yet, the two served as the principal sources on which later Arabic reprints were based: Hūrīnī, mainly for the Egyptian reprints, and Quatremère, mainly for the Lebanese. Aside from the earlier editions of Hūrīnī, and Quatremère, none of the later reprints were checked against manuscript sources but relied on those two. Rosenthal wrote: "Editions of the *Muqaddimah* are as numerous as manuscripts. The work is studied in the schools and colleges of the Arab countries. At least in recent years, it seems that each year produces a new reprint of the text, but most of these editions are worthless. A constantly increasing number of misprints desfigures them" (1967: *c*). Some of these reprints are "outrageous insult to the noble art of

printing" (ibid.: *civ*). Wāfi gave examples of such kinds of errors (1981, vol. 1: 15-18). This is despite the claim printed on the title page of some of them that "the edition has been checked by a committee of scholars against a number of manuscripts" *rūḡi'at hādīhi 'l-ṭab'ah wa qūbilat 'alā 'iddat nusah bi-ma'rifat laḡnah min al-'ulamā'*, a cliché repeated on the title page of many reckless reprints (e.g. ed. Muṣṭafā Muḥammad n.d. and Ibn Ḥaldūn 1982). Rarely do these reprints indicate their sources and some are obviously exact photocopies of one another. For example, note that the reprints Ibn Ḥaldūn 1926, 1982, 1986 and ed. Muṣṭafā Muḥammad n.d. all are printed in the same type and font, all omit the Hilali poems and the omission appears on the same exact page in all of them, namely p. 583. The fact that many reprints have no date of publication makes it difficult to trace their pedigrees and know who infringed upon the right of whom.

For those who are unfamiliar with Bedouin poetic idiom, inscribing, editing or translating the Hilali corpus is made the more difficult by the absence of dots and diacritical marks in some of the old manuscripts, or the improper placement of such dots and marks whereby a dot or a vocalization mark is thought to fall on a different letter than the one intended which would give an erroneous reading. Unlike printed English, the words in hand-written Arabic are crammed together with no space left between them to separate a word from the one before it and the one after it. In reading a text in an unfamiliar dialect, this could easily lead to wrong division of words and, hence, to incorrect reading. In addition to all this, we have to consider the fact that Ibn Ḥaldūn was grappling with the problem of phonetic representation and proper rendition of the correct pronunciation of this poetic vernacular, and this at times would force him to depart from the conventional method of writing because Standard Arabic was not wholly suitable for this purpose. This is the reason he uses, for example, *'alifmamdūdah* instead of *'alifmaqṣūrah*. At times, it appears that he is doing the opposite, changing a colloquial word to a corresponding *fasīḥ* word of equal prosodic measure to make writing, reading and understanding easier for literate readers. Under such conditions, editing and translating simply turn into guesswork. Rosenthal states the problems of reading and understanding the Hilali texts in the *Muqaddimah* in the following footnote:

The poems are often difficult to understand. In contrast to the *muwashshahs* and *zajals* quoted below, which have often been studied by modern scholars, the epic poems have received little attention. They are a primary and invaluable source for the history of northwest African Arabic. A condition for their study – which this translator regrets not fulfilling – is an intimate knowledge of present-day northwest African dialects, such as can be acquired only through many years of daily contact with the people who speak them. Perhaps such knowledge might be less helpful than anticipated, but this can only be decided after experiment.

The printed editions are of no value so far as the text of the poems is concerned. The corrections offered by the MSS are too numerous

to be listed here, and have only occasionally been noted. With the help of the correct text, as indicated in the MSS, the task of translation is not as hopeless as de Slane once thought. However, the present effort – which often follows de Slane's pioneer one – is full of uncertainties, affecting many more passages than those where question marks have been inserted.

The text of the poems ought to be published in transcription by a specialist in the field. The transcription given here in the footnotes uses the forms of classical Arabic as far as possible, and does not try to prejudice the case for correct transcription of the dialectical forms (1967 vol. 3: 415-416, note 1631).

It would certainly help to establish an "intimate knowledge of present-day north-west African dialects". Moreover, I think that the editing of these poems would be improved considerably by first examining the manuscripts written by Ibn Ḥaldūn himself or under his supervision to rule out later scribal errors (the plate facing p. 434 in vol. 3 of Rosenthal's translation is a good example), and, secondly, by enlisting the help of experts in the diction and prosody of Nabati poetry, which is the closest extant tradition to these ancient Hilali poems, linguistically and artistically. Such familiarity would not only rectify errors made by later scribes and editors but even those possibly made by Ibn Ḥaldūn himself. I say "errors made by Ibn Ḥaldūn" because I peered through microfilm copies of manuscripts supposedly made by Ibn Ḥaldūn or by an authorised scribe and found some obvious misreadings that can be easily put right by appealing to commonsensical and intuitive knowledge of such poetic idiom.

I have in front of me photocopies of the pages containing the Hilali poems printed from microfilms of 6 different manuscripts of the *Muqaddimah*. Three come from the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (where they carry the numbers 1524, 1517 and 5136). These are the manuscripts used by Quatremère and designated by him as A, C and D respectively (Badawī 1962: 109, 115, 117). I shall keep these letter designations assigned by Quatremère when I refer to these manuscripts below. I obtained these three copies through the good services of the Manuscript Department at the Library of King Faysal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies in Riyadh. At the Centre these microfilms carry the numbers 20884, 20896 and 29718 respectively. The Centre also supplied me with photocopies of the required pages from a manuscript owned by them and deposited under the number 2111. It was copied by Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf in 1885. It consists of 236 ff. measuring 33×21 cm. The title is written in a different hand and it reads *al-ibar wa diwān al-mubtada' wa l-ḥabar fi' ayyām al-^l arab wa l-^l aḡam wa l-barbar 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥaldūn*. The writing is quite good but it is full of scribal errors, due, no doubt, to its late date. I shall refer to this particular manuscript as B. The Manuscript Department at the Library of Imam Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud Islamic University supplied me with photocopied pages from a microfilm of a manuscript they have under the number 10267F. The original manuscript is among the collection of Aḥmad III, which is deposited at the Library of Topkapı Saray in Istanbul under the number 3042. It con-

sists of 297 very large folios, each containing 25 lines written in very bold pen, with no date of copying. The title is written in a different hand and it reads *al-ğild al-ʾawwal min tāriḥ ibn ḥaldūn al-musammā bi-l-Muqaddimah*. Also, we read on the title page that it came into the possession of Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Dārib in the year 818 (Rosenthal 1967: xcvi-xcvii, Badawī 1962: 111-12). This is one of the manuscripts used by Rosenthal for his translation and according to him “it is the only old manuscript available that contains an early form of the text of the *Muqaddimah*” (1967: xcix). I shall refer to this manuscript as E. The Manuscript Department at the Library of King Saud University supplied me with photocopied pages from a poor photocopy numbered as 589Ş in their collection. The last folio is missing (f. 273, where the copy date and name of copiest should appear). The librarian put down the 9th century H. as the date of copying. It has 274 folios with beautiful handwriting and the number 888 appear twice in large Arabic on the front page. Having compared f. 266 of this manuscript with the plate facing p. 434 in vol. 3 of Rosenthal’s translation I became convinced that this is a copy of MS. Yeni Cami 888 used by Rosenthal and described by him as having 273 large folios, written by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ḥasan ibn al-Faḥḥār and dated Ğumādā I, 10, 799 A.H. (1967, vol. 1: xciii, Badawī 1962: 110). Unfortunately, the bad state of the photocopy did not allow me to make good use of this valuable manuscript which I shall designate as F. Both two manuscripts last mentioned carry on the front page the seal of waqf Sulṭān Aḥmad Ḥān ibn Ğāzī Sulṭān Muḥammad Ḥān.

By comparing these manuscripts, A ranks highest in quality and legibility and it has the added advantage of containing a text of the poem by the Bedouin from the Egyptian Desert which appears only in Quatremère. F is just as good, or even better, except for the bad photocopying. The handwriting in E is bold and quite accurate though not as beautiful as the two just mentioned. Also, much of the dots are left out, which also goes for A. The handwriting in B is beautiful *nash* but it lacks the accuracy of the three just mentioned and many words have been either left out or changed completely. D is written in very small Maghribi script. It is legible but many words are skipped. C is quite bad and carelessly executed. All in all, A, E and F could serve as good basis for editing. The other three are also helpful at certain few places where they clearly give better reading, especially C and D.

Examining these manuscripts has fortified my suspicion that Ibn Ḥaldūn did not have a good grip on this poetic material, or at least that his memory, if he were writing from memory, or his sources, whether written or oral, or his scribes did not serve him right. There are many lines that do not make good sense or are metrically irregular and must be wrong. This makes the task of rectifying the situation almost insurmountable. The problem is no longer a matter of scribal, editorial or printing mistakes but original defect. It is in such instances that we can appeal to the diction of Nabaṭi poetry to orient our sensibilities in our attempt to postulate and retrieve the authentic wording. The more we are steeped and immersed in the diction of Nabaṭi poetic idiom, the more we are able to conceive the indigenous vocabulary, imagery and metaphors of these Hilali po-

ems and make reasonable conjecture of their intended meaning and original casting. From the very beginning of this paper, I tried to stress the close relationship of these two poetic traditions to one another.

To sum up, the proper editing of the Hilali poems in the *Muqaddimah* would require consulting the earliest manuscripts originally written by Ibn Ḥaldūn or his official scribes (to minimise scribal errors), appealing to contemporary vernacular poetry of the Arabian Bedouin, and familiarity with the North African Bedouin dialects (as suggested by Rosenthal). I personally lack the last requirement. Still, the other two by themselves could yield some reasonably good results. Space here allows only for three examples to illustrate the utility of this method. I will take the poem by the Ḥawrāni woman and that of the Egyptian Bedouin, since the two are the closest to my turf. The Egyptian poem has the added advantage that its Arabic text does not appear in any of the published editions except in Quatremere. The third example is the opening lines of the poem addressed by Ḥālid ibn Ḥamzah ibn ʿUmar to Šibl ibn Miskiyānah ibn Muhalhil. These lines suffer from glaring scribal errors that, based on familiarity with Nabaṭi poetry, could be easily corrected and the corrections could be convincingly argued. Furthermore, unfamiliarity with the poetical style and the manner of poetic exchanges among the Arabian Bedouin led the Rosenthal's translation of these lines to stray way off the mark. The emended vocalized Arabic texts of these three examples are appended at the end of this paper.

The introduction to the Ḥawrān poem goes like this: *wa min* (underlined missing in C) *šīʿri ʿarabi l-barriyyati* (*nimir* in B) *bi-š-Šām tumma* (underlined missing in B) *bi-nawāḥi* (*nawāḥi* in C) *Ḥawrān l-imraʿatin qutila zawḡuhā baʿaṭat* (*fā-baʿaṭat* in B and E, *wa baʿaṭat* in C) *ilā ʿahlāfihī min Qays tuḡrīhim bi-ṭalabi* (*wa taṭlubu* in D) *taʿrihi* (add *taqūl* in B). Note how manuscripts differ even in this small straightforward introduction. The introduction translates: “This is a specimen from the desert tribes of Syria around the district of Ḥawrān. It was composed by a woman whose husband had been killed and she despatched these verses to his Qaysi allies urging them to avenge his death”. This is the poem and translation:

- 1/ *taqūlu fatātu l-ḥayyi ummu salāmah // bi-ʿaynin ʿarā allāh min la riṭa laha.*
- 2/ *tibit ṭūl al-lēl ma tālif al-kara // mwaḡḡʿ atin kinn al-sifa fi miḡālaha.*
- 3/ *ʿala ma ḡara fi dāraha wa-ʿana laha // bi-lahzati ʿēnin ḡayyar al-bēn ḥālaha.*
- 4/ *fiḡadtu šihāb ad-dīn ya ḡēs killikum // w-nimtu ʿan aḡdi t-taʿr ma da wifa laha!*
- 5/ *ana ḡilt ida raddu l-kitāyib tisirrini // w-tabrid min nīrān galbi dbālaha.*
- 6/ *aya ḥēf tasriḥ ad-duwāyib wa-l-lḥa // w-bīd al-ʿadara ma ḥamētu ḡimālaha.*

- 1/ The gallant lady of the camp, Umm Salāmah, proclaims // May God strike with fear those who do not have pity on her.
- 2/ She spends the night wide-awake, never taste slumber // feeling sharp pain as if awns prick the inside of her eye.
- 3/ Calamity befell her house, woe to her // In an instant fate turned against her.
- 4/ You have lost Šihāb al-Dīn, all you Qays // You neglected to avenge him, this is not the way to pay back (his favours).

- 5/ Had a detachment of you turned around (to defend him), this would have gladdened me // This would have extinguished the burning fire in my heart.
 6/ Shame on you letting loose your long locks and beards // yet your fair ladies find no protection from you.

In old manuscripts the word *al-sifa* السفا in the second hemstitch of the second line is written correctly but it has been mistaken by later scribes (especially when copying from undotted manuscripts) as *al-šifa* الشفا or *al-šiga* الشغا. Obviously *al-sifa* is the word which yields the intended meaning, namely that the eyes of the woman were hurting from loss of sleep as if they were pricked by awns “*sifa*” of wheat inside of them. Nabaṭi poets use this metaphor frequently to express pain in the eyes which comes from loss of sleep caused by grief. In the third line, the last phrase in the first hemstitch is not dotted in some of the old manuscripts. The cognisance that the woman is lamenting the death of her husband, the father of her children, led some later scribes to misread it as *wi-bu* ^{‘yālaha} وابو عيالها or *wi-*^{‘yālaha} وعيالها. The reading adopted here *wa* ^{‘ana laha} واعنا لها is justified and supported by familiarity with the formulaic diction of Bedouin parlance. It is derived from ^{‘anā} عناء *i.e.* misery and suffering caused by the death of her husband. Word order in the second hemstitch of the same line reads in the older manuscripts as adopted here, which is sound and metrically regular reading (^{‘ēn} عين is missing in C), but later manuscripts (*e.g.* B) read *bi-lahzati* ^{‘ēn al-bēn ḡayyar ḥālaha} بلحظة عين البين غير حالها. The last phrase in the fourth line is misread in all printed edition, save that of Quatremère, as *ma da miḡālaha* ما ذا مقالها and in B as *ma li w-ma laha* ما لي وما لها. We can illuminate the intended meaning by rephrasing it thus: *ma hāda bi-wafā’ in minkum laha*, the pronoun in *laha* refers to the gallant deeds of her husband and the hospitality he bestowed upon his people during his life time. The first hemstitch of the fifth line is understood universally as referring to a letter “*al-ktāb*” the poetess expects to receive (perhaps from Qays tribe promising that they will avenge her husband or that they have already done so). Above, I have adopted a rather bold reading (on which I do not insist) suggesting that the intended word is not *al-ktāb* الكتاب but *al-kitāyib* الكتابيب, a detachment of horsemen who should have turned around to defend their leader, her husband. We have to imagine that he was killed in a raid he led against another tribe (may be to lift camels, as is the custom among the Bedouin). This reading and the reading of *ma da wifa laha* are based on my readings of and listening to several poems composed in more recent times by Bedouin ladies who suffered the same adverse situation, most famous among them is the poem by ^{‘Abṭa} lamenting the death of her father Bnayyih al-Ġarba who was killed in the battle field by ^{‘Anazah} horsemen after his own men fled and left him. The first word in the last line of the poem reads *ya ḥēn* يا حين, but it would make better sense to read it *ya ḥēf* يا حيف, a well known Bedouin expression meaning “what a shame!”. The woman is putting her tribesmen to shame for failing to avenge the killing of their leader, her husband. In reading the line we should remember that long locks, beards, and the hair in general, especially that of the face, are the symbols of man’s dignity and honour in the traditional Arab culture.

ومن شعر عرب البرية بالشام ثم بنواحي حوران لامرأة قُتل زوجها فبعثت إلى
أحلافه من قيس تغريهم بطلب ثأره: قُتل

- ١ / تقول فتاة الحَيِّ ام سلامه بعين أراع الله من لا رثا لها
٢ / نبت طول الليل ما تالف الكرى موجعة كرن السفا في مجالها
٣ / على ما جرى في دارها واعنا لها بلحظة عين غير البين حالها
٤ / فقدتوا شهاب الدين يا قيس كلكم ومنتوا عن احد الثار ما ذا وفالها
٥ / أنا قلت إذا ردوا الكتابي تسري وأنا قلت من نيران قلبي ذبالها
٦ / أياحيف تسريح الذوايب واللحي وبيض العذاري ما حمتوا جمالها

The introduction to the Egyptian poem is quite short. It goes: *wa li ba^c di³ l-ğudāmiyyin min³ a^c rābi mişr min qabilati halbā³ a* "This is by a certain Ġudāmi from the Bedouin of Egypt from the tribe of Halbā". Line 8 is not clear in the manuscript and the reading I propose here is rather tentative:

- 1/ *yigūl ar-rdēni wa-r-rdēni šādīg // yhayyi byūtin miḥkimātin tarāyif.*
2/ *ala³ ayyuha l-ğādi^c ala^c edihiyih // ġmāliyyitin malw al-nṣā^c al-liṭāyif.*
3/ *alēha glāmin la yara n-nōm magnam // azīm al-ğna naddbin ba-l-aḥbār^c ārif.*
4/ *ila ġit li min ḥayy halba ġimā^c ih // barāziyyitin³ ašraf la-l-ḥarb zāyif.*
5/ *w-li min bini darrād kill mğarrīb // kifābum ilābi mi^c zimat at-talāyif.*
6/ *atāni ma^c al-ḥiṭār^c ilmin mṭawwiḥ // w-tafrīg sibbātin w-rāyin mḥālif.*
7/ *w-ana kef aḡirr az-zēm w-antum ġimā^c ih // ala^c kill ṣabhālin ṭiwil al-ma^c ārif.*
8/ *awayy law inn rāyin yidimmikum // w-law in fiḥ al-māl wa-r-riḥ tālif.*
9/ *w-li min walad^c alya^c bēd ibin mālīk // baha šarafin^c āli^c ala^c n-nās šārif.*
10/ *w-ḥillān šidgin min dara āl mislim // emīrin bihum ḥimlih ġimī^c at-ṭuwāyif*

- 1/ Listen to ar-Rdeyni speak, ar-Rdeyni tells the truth // He is forging well constructed exquisite verses.
2/ Halt, you rider on a fleet mount // strong boned like a male camel, the sleek saddle girths can hardly go round her bulging sides.
3/ Mounted by a young lad who does not cherish sleep // A spirited youth who sings at the top of his voice and knows all the tales.
4/ When you alight by the camp of my kin the Halbā // Bold, noble men who fear not wars.
5/ Dear to me also are the Bani Darrād, men of experience // May God protect them from all calamities.
6/ Travelling guests brought me news that is being spread everywhere // Abusive verses on every tongue, and dissensions.

- 7/ How could I bear oppression and here you are in multitudes // Each riding a spirited horse with a well-groomed long mane.
 8/ Oh would that a good word of council bring you together // For that I would sacrifice my soul and all my positions.
 9/ As for the sons of 'Alyā, scions of 'Ubayd ibn Mālik // The noble kind, surpassing all others in nobility.
 10/ As for my true friends, the descendants of Āl Muslim // Their chief shoulders the loads of all his kin.

I have made certain additions that are required to straighten the meter. I am almost certain that they were inadvertently dropped out from the original because they constitute parts of frozen formulaic expressions in Bedouin poetry, e. g. the conjunctive *wa* in *wa-r-rdēni* والرديني and *ana* in *w-ana kef* وانا كيف. Also, in line 2 I changed *ēdihyyih* ايديه which makes no sense, to *'ēdihyyih* عيدهيه, a very common adjective describing a fine riding camel in Bedouin poetry. In the same line I also changed *al-lsā'* اللساع to *an-nsā'* النساع the plural of *nis'* نسع "saddle girth". In line 3 I changed *al-yōm* اليوم to *an-nōm* النوم because this is the way a Bedouin poet would describe his deputy, as alert and wide awake, not a sleeper. I suspect that the first word in line 6 was originally *lifāni* لفاني but Ibn Ḥaldūn changed it to its more familiar synonym *'atāni* أتاني which has the same meaning and same prosodic measure. *al-ḥittār* الخطار is the plural of *ḥātīr* خاطر a travelling guest. *'ilm* علم information, news. *mtāwīh* مطوّح from *tāh* طاح to drop, then from *tawwāh* طوّح to throw away, toss around, *'ilmīn mtāwīh* علم مطوّح news that are spread around in every direction as if thrown here and there and tossed around everywhere. *sibbāt* سبّات, plural of *masabbah* مسبّه "vilification".

ولبعض الجذاميين من أعراب مصر من قبيلة هلبا منهم:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----|
| يُهمّي بيوت محكمات طرايف | يقول الرديني والرديني صادق | 1/ |
| جمالية ملو النساع اللطائف | ألى أيها الغادي على عيدهيه | 2/ |
| عظيم العنا ندب بالاخبار عارف | عليها غلام لا يرى النوم معنم | 3/ |
| برازية أشراف للحرب زاييف | إلى جيت لي من حى هلبا جماعه | 4/ |
| كفاهم إلهي معظمت التلايف | ولي من بني دراد كل محرب | 5/ |
| وتفريق سبّات وراي مخالف | أتاني مع الخطار علم مطوّح | 6/ |
| على كل صهال طويل المعارف | وانا كيف اقرّ العظيم وانتم جماعه | 7/ |
| ولو ان فيه المال والروح تالف | اوي لو ان راي يضمكم | 8/ |
| بسها شرف عالي على الناس شارف | ولي من ولد عليا عبيد ابن مالك | 9/ |
| أمير بسهم حمله جميع الطوايف | وخلان صدق من ذرا آل مسلم | 10/ |

It is clear that this poem, as well as the one by the lady from Hawrān, are truncated versions of longer texts. They would have made much better sense and much better impressions on us had we received them in their full versions.

Now we go to the last example. The introduction reads: *wa min 'aš' āri l-muta' abhirina minhum qawlu Ḥālidin bni Ḥamzatin bni 'Umar šayhu l-Ku' ūbi min 'Awlādi 'Abi l-Layli yu' ātibu 'aqbālahum 'Awlāda Muhalhilin (muhallilin in C) wa yuḡibu šā' irahum Šibl ibni Miskiyānata bni Muhalhilin (halal in C) 'an 'abyātin faḥura 'alayhim fiha bi-qawmihi* (underlined missing in C). (The introduction in B departs significantly from the original. It reads: *wa min 'aš' āri l-muta' abhirina minhum qawlu Ḥālidin bni Ḥamzatin bni 'Umar šayhu al-'arabi min 'Awlādi mawlāhum ahli t-talli yu' ātibu 'aqbālahum 'Awlāda Muhalhilin wa yuḡibu šā' irahum Šibl min Mikhāsata bni Muhalhil 'an 'abyātin faḥura 'alayhim fiha li-qawmihi*). In printed editions, 'aqbālahum أَقْبَاهُمْ reads 'aq-tālahum أَقْتَاهُمْ, but 'aqbālahum is the correct reading from *qabil* قبيل meaning an equal adversary one meets on the field.

We can translate the original introduction as follows: "A specimen of the more recent poets amongst them is the composition of Ḥālid ibn Ḥamzah ibn 'Umar, the headman of al-Ku'ūb, a section of Awlād Abi l-Layl. In it, he censures their adversaries, the Awlād Muhalhil, and responds to verses by their poet Šibl ibn Miskiyānah ibn Muhalhil in which he boasted claiming that his tribe is superior to them". This is the poem and translation:

- 1/ *yigūl w-da gōl al-mšāb allidi niša // gawāri' a gīfūnin y' āni š' ābaha.*
- 2/ *yirih baha gīl al-mšāb ila ntiga // fnūnin mn inšād al-gawāfi ' dābaha.*
- 3/ *muhabbaratin muhtāratin min inšādina // taḡidni lya nām al-wša(h) miltaha baha.*
- 4/ *muḡarbalatin ' an nāḡdin fi ḡdūnaha // muḡakkamat al-gīfān dābi w-dābaha.*
- 5/ *tahayyada tidkāri baha ya duwi n-nida // gawāri' a min šiblin w-hāda ḡuwā-baha.*
- 6/ *ya šibil ḡatna min ḡdākum tarāyif // garāyih yirih al-mūḡ' in al-ḡna baha.*
- 7/ *faḡartā wa-lam taḡsir wa-la ' ant ' ādim // suwa ḡilt fi ḡimḡūrahā ma ' a' ābaha.*
- 8/ *l-gōlik fi damm al-msamma bin ḡamzih // ḡāmi ḡmāha ' ād bāni ḡarābaha.*

- 1/ Listen to the composition of a tormented soul // Fervent rhymes, arduously hewed.
- 2/ To soothe my great calamity I saviour // Choices of beautiful rhymes, sweet to recite.
- 3/ Embellished and carefully constructed song of mine // when the censors sleep I intone it to myself.
- 4/ I sift it lest the critic find fault in it // I stay up alone repeating it to straighten its rhymes.
- 5/ All this labour was pressed on my mind, O gallant men // To answer the forceful verses by Šibl.
- 6/ O Šibl we heard the exquisite verses coming to us from your direction // Rhymes the singing of which soothes aching souls.

- 7/ You boast and you are deserving, not lacking in merits // Though some things you mentioned blemished your verses.
 8/ The satirical verses lampooning the renowned Ibn Ḥamzah // Protector of our land, builder of what enemies destroy.

Rosenthal understood the word *nīša* نشا in the first verse to mean “smell” which is related to the colloquial word *intiša* انتشا meaning *šamma* شَمِّ , but here it means to compose *’anša’ a* أنشأ. He also read *qawāri’ a* قوارع in the same line to mean blows but it means poetic verses (from the word *qara’ a* قرع to beat rhythmically, hence rhymes). After that in the same line comes *gīfān* قيفان, a word not dotted in most manuscripts and read in all published editions as *gī’ ān* قيعان, a word that makes no sense here and has to be read *gīfān* from the classical word *qawāfi* قوافي meaning rhymes, i. e. poetic verses. Also *garāh* قراح should read *garāyih* قرايح meaning also poetic verses, from the classical *qariḥah* قريحة. All three words, *qawāri’ a*, *gīfān* and *garāyih*, are technical poetic words quite commonly used in Nabaṭi poetry. Rosenthal understood *ṭarāyif* طرايف to mean she camels while in fact it refers to the “exquisite” verses composed by Šibl (cf. the last word in the first verse of ar Rdeyni, the Halbā poet). In the decorum of such poetic exchanges, even when the purpose is caustic, one should treat his rival with a certain degree of reverence, and that is how Ḥālīd starts his riposte poem. To get the jest of these lines one has to be familiar with the techniques of the genre of *al-murāsālātu ’l-šī’ riyyah* which is quite popular in Nabaṭi poetry. In the first hemstitch of the second line, there is the word I read *gīll* in *gīll al-mṣāb* جل المصاب as in the saying *muṣābun ḡalal* مصابٌ جَلَل because every other alternative reading I found in the manuscripts or in the printed editions make no sense. I also read the word *al-wṣa(h)* الوشا(ه) to be in the plural with the final *h* • (sign of the plural) suppressed in the manuscripts to give the colloquial pronunciation of the word. Also, in preference to every other reading, I took the liberty of choosing to write the word in line 6 *ḥdākum* حَذَاكُمْ because this is the only word which seems fit in this place and it means “your side, your direction”. In the first verse of the last line I imposed the daring reading *damm al-mṣamma* in preference to *’umm al-mutayyamīn* (in all manuscripts), because this last expression would assume that the person referred to is a woman and we know this is not the case; also, we do not know what *al-mutayyamīn* means. I replaced the word *’umm* أم with *damm* دَمَّ “lampoon” and *al-mutayyamīn* المتيمين with *al-mṣamma* المسمى “the renown” which would yield a much more sensible reading.

ومن أشعار المتأخرين منهم قول خالد بن حمزة بن عمر شيخ الكعوب من أولاد ابي
 الليل يعاتب أقبالهم أولاد مهلهل ويحيب شاعرهم شبل بن مسكيانه بن مهلهل عن
 أبيات فخر عليهم فيها بقومه:

١/ يقول وذا قول المصاب الذي نشا قوارع قيفان يعاني صعابها

٢/ يريح بها جل المصاب إلى انتقى فنون من انشاد القوافي عذابها

- ٣ / محبرة مختارة من نشادنا تجدين ليا نام الوشا(ه) ملتهى بها
 ٤ / مغريلة عن ناقد في غضوننها محكمة القيفان دابي ودابها
 ٥ / تهيص تذكاري بها ياذوي الندى قوارع من شبل وهذا جوابها
 ٦ / يا شبل جتنا من حذاكم طرايف قرايح يريح الموجهين العنا بها
 ٧ / فخرت ولم تقصر ولا أنت عادم سوى قلت في جمهورها ما أعاها
 ٨ / لقولك في ذم المسمى ابن حمزه حامي حماها عاد باني خرابها

Rosenthal's translation of the above 8 verses goes like this:

- 1/ Thus speaks –and this is said by an unfortunate person who has smelled //
The blows of abuse of critical pundits, having had to deal with the hardest of
them,
- 2/ Which smell to him like the stench of drainage areas [?] // who, however, (on
his part) has selected the sweetest kinds of rhymes for recitation,
- 3/ Well-embroidered, choice ones, of our own composition [?], // With which
you will find me amusing myself, when my detractors are asleep.
- 4/ Sieved ones (separated) from him who might criticize them as to their stanzas,
// Whose ways, as well as mine, have been well established by the critical
pundits.
- 5/ My mentioning them (here), O noble people, serves the purpose of breaking
// Blows from a young lion (Shibl), with a lamb-like answer:
- 6/ O Shibl, there came to us from among nice pregnant (she-camels) // Several
full-grown ones, whose possession is reassuring to those in pain,
- 7/ But you appropriated them and took all you could, though you were not in
need. // However, you said, of the people who own them, things that make
those (camels) blameworthy.
- 8/ Your statement concerning the mother of . . . , the son of Ḥamzah // The
protector of their grounds, . . . the rebuildler of their ruins, (is wrong).

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