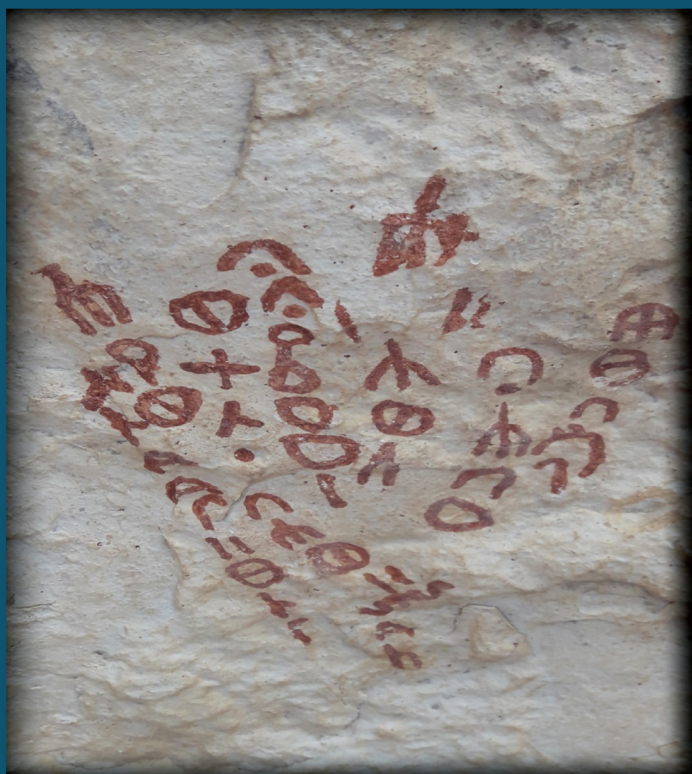


# An Annotated Corpus of Three Hundred Proverbs, Sayings, and Idioms in Eastern Jibbali/Šḥarēt

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## 2. PROVERBS AND LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

### 1.0. Al-Shahri Collection

(1)

ébsér b-egédém b-egédém xaróg<sup>i</sup>

*Gaidam came, Gaidam died*

ابشر بيحييدام ولكنه مات

This is said to describe a happy occasion which unexpectedly turns unhappy (al-Shahri 2000, 74, 242).

Egédém is a masculine personal name with no clear equivalent in Arabic, which can be compared with Jibbali/Šḥarēt *gōdām* ‘piece of bread’ (JL, 71), Mehri *godām* ‘id.’ (ML, 114), and Soqotri *gōdim* ‘morceau’ (LS, 103). As far as onomastics is concerned, we find *gdm* as a personal name in Safaitic (al-Manaser and Macdonald 2017, 1452, 4302), and perhaps in the Sabaic lineage name *gdmn* (Robin 1981, 326).

The verbal form *ébsér* is a perfective third person of a H1-stem meaning ‘to give good news’ (JL, 29). The /g/ phoneme in *xaróg<sup>i</sup>*, a perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to die’ (JL, 304) is realised with palatalisation, as it seems to be in most positions in the variety of Jibbali/Šḥarēt spoken by al-Shahri, while it seems to be realised without palatalisation in *Gedam*.

In view of the meaning of the first verb, a better translation for the proverb is ‘they gave good news about Egédém, and Egédém died’.

## (2)

ē bṣer ɔ yōxóf

*He who sees the reality of life, never settles*

من عرف وتحقق فانه سيغادر ولن يحل

If someone has been mistreated (or not treated well enough) by a host, they use this saying upon being asked why they are leaving (al-Shahri 2000, 74, 242). The verb transcribed here as *bṣer* is actually *ebṣér*, a perfective third person of a H1-stem < √*bṣr* meaning ‘to see’ (MLZ, 130: رأى (ابصر)), and is not recorded in JL. Therefore, *ε bṣér* is to be interpreted as \**ε ebṣér* = relativiser + third-person singular of a perfective H1-stem verb.

The verb *yōxóf* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Gb-stem < √*wxf* meaning ‘to come to a new place and settle’ (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 208–9). The prefixed negation *ɔ* without a suffixed *l* is unexpected here (Rubin 2014, 332–34).

## (3)

iblíš her ɔ šēš ŷiśa lɔ idhór šōt trut

*If the devil can’t find dinner, he lights two fires*

إبليس اذا لم يجد عشاء يوقد نارين

This proverb is used as a remark about those living beyond their means, and often serves as an encouragement to them to moderate their excesses (al-Shahri 2000, 74, 242).

The cleft structure of this sentence is, as will be seen below, fairly common in this collection of proverbs. The verbal form *idhór* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a H1-stem meaning ‘to make a big fire’ (JL, 36). The noun *šōt* ‘fire’ (JL, 258) is grammatically feminine, as shown by the agreement with the feminine numeral *trut* ‘two’ (cf. its masculine counterpart *trɔh*).

This can also be found as إبليس هس أشش عثئ لو دهر شوط ثرت in MLZ (342).<sup>1</sup>

(4)

ē bédār yəššək

*Who comes first, his animals drink first*

من سبق غيره على الماء يسقي حيوانه قبل الآخرين اي من سبق لبق

This is said to praise someone's promptness at carrying out an action and this person's subsequent gain, in contrast to someone else who did not act as promptly and effectively (al-Shahri 2000, 74, 242), in a similar fashion to *The early bird catches the worm*.

The relativiser appears here as a long vowel ē instead of the expected short vowel ε. The verbal form *bédār* is a perfective third person of a Gb-stem meaning 'to outrun' (JL, 23), or 'to precede' (MLZ, 118: سبق). The verbal form *iššək* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a weak III-y Ga-stem < √šky meaning 'to irrigate, to give a drink' (JL, 262), which exhibits the loss of the last root consonant in the imperfective that is typical of this verbal class (Rubin 2014, 202).

This expression is recorded by MLZ (118) as أبدر يشق.

The corresponding Mehri proverb is *dā-sbōk, yhäyk* 'Wer zuerst (an die Wasserstelle) kommt, trinkt (seine Tiere zuerst)' (Sima 2005, 72), whose German translation 'Whoever comes first (to the watering hole) waters (his animals first)' applies also to its Jibbali/Šḥarēt counterpart.

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<sup>1</sup> The use of *hes* 'when' (Rubin 2014, 368) in this variant of the proverb, instead of *her* 'if', is noteworthy.

## (5)

ɔ tʃetʃanan<sup>o</sup> ʃar báʃlæt ɣerún

*Only the one who has horns can butt*

لا تناطح إلا صاحبة القرون

This is used to refer to doing something beyond one's abilities (al-Shahri 2000, 74, 243).

The verbal form *tʃetʃanan* is an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a Š2-stem < √tʃn meaning 'to keep stabbing' (JL, 273). The suffix *-an* is found in the imperfective of H2, Š2, and T2 stems in the singular and plural forms, but not in the dual forms (Rubin 2014, 141–42).<sup>2</sup> Rubin further states that the vowel in this suffix is [ə]. However, Dufour (2016, 36) posits that there is a tendency to realise a secondary stress accent on the penultimate cv syllable in yes/no questions, protases, and topicalisation, which could result in a [ɛ] ~ [a]<sup>3</sup> instead of the expected [ə], and indeed, the speaker's intonation in the recording does argue in favour of topicalisation of the verb.

The feminine noun *báʃlæt* 'owner' (JL, 22) is one of the few terms in Jibbali/Šḥarēt that can be used in the construct state (Rubin 2014, 88). The Mehri counterpart of this proverb is *täšdahṛän ār d-bis ɣrōn* 'Es kann nur die (jenige Ziege) (mit den Hörnern) stoßen, die Hörner hat' (Sima 2005, 72), that is, 'Only the goat that has horns can strike', which also applies to the Jibbali/Šḥarēt proverb.

<sup>2</sup> It is also found in some unproductive and obsolescent verbal classes, namely: H3, H4, H5, <sup>o</sup>H2, and <sup>o</sup>N2 (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 180).

<sup>3</sup> It would be [a] in this case, due to the adjacent voiced pharyngeal fricative [ʕ].

(6)

ɔ tɕun ʕar ε ɪrɔ̄t

*Only the one who delivers the child can bring it up*

لا تربّي إلا من ولدت

This is a remark about situations where someone is supposed to take responsibility for something (chiefly parenthood and animal husbandry) but appears not to be up to the task.

According to JL (147), the first verbal form *tɕun* is an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a Ga-stem verb derived from the root  $\sqrt{k}nv$ ,<sup>4</sup> meaning ‘to rear, look after, bring up’. The second verb is a perfective 3.F.SG. of a Ga-stem verb derived from the root  $\sqrt{brw}$  ‘to give birth’ (JL, 28), which would normally emerge as *birɔ̄t*. In this case, [b] is elided because of the preceding relativiser  $\epsilon$ .<sup>5</sup>

(7)

ɔ tékən lhes ɔz ε nkɕót lɛ-ɛnuf e-skin<sup>o</sup> lɔ*Don't be like a goat who found the knife*

لا تكن كالغنمة التي نبشت على نفسها السكينة

This is used as a piece of advice to someone who is engaging in a dangerous activity that will likely result in trouble (al-Shahri 2000, 75, 243).

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<sup>4</sup> In the *Jibbali Lexicon*, the root consonant  $\nu$  represents an unspecified vowel (JL, xxxvi).

<sup>5</sup> According to Rubin (2014, 29), the bilabial consonant deletion process may operate across a word/morpheme boundary when the second term is a particle with a pronominal suffix, or when a word once had a dual suffix. This case seems not to fall within either category.

This proverb employs a rather everyday register of the language that does not call for a detailed grammatical analysis. However, it is worth noting the coalescence of the definite article  $\varepsilon$ - and the term  $\text{ʒ}$  ‘she-goat’ (JL, 5) into  $\bar{\text{z}}$ . The negative command is realised as a negated verbal phrase employing the subjunctive 2.M.SG. form of a G-stem  $\text{t}\acute{\text{e}}\text{k}\text{ə}\text{n}$  ‘to be’ (JL, 138), as expected (Rubin 2014, 154). The verbal form  $\text{nk}\acute{\text{s}}\acute{\text{o}}\text{t}$  is a perfective 3.F.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to uncover’.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the phrase  $\text{nk}\acute{\text{s}}\acute{\text{o}}\text{t } l\text{-}\varepsilon\text{-nuf}$  means ‘she uncovered against herself’: the use of this verb followed by the preposition  $l$ - ‘against’ is malefactive and is probably best translated as ‘she turned against herself’. The corresponding Mehri proverb is  $l\text{-}t^{\text{ā}}\text{k}\ddot{\text{a}}\text{'} h\ddot{\text{is}} h\ddot{\text{o}}\text{z } d\ddot{\text{ik}} d\ddot{\text{ä}}\text{-k}^{\text{ā}}\text{s}\acute{\text{o}}\text{t } l\text{-}h\ddot{\text{n}}\ddot{\text{ä}}\text{f}\text{s } sk\ddot{\text{in}} l\ddot{\text{ä}}$  ‘Sei nicht wie jene Ziege, die gegen sich selbst (d.h. zu ihrem eigenen Unglück) ein Messer ausgegraben hat’ (Sima 2005, 72).

(8)

ɔ təğórɔb her a-ʔásərək ed<sup>o</sup> laxálf ʔāš

*You never know how good your friend is until he leaves you*

لن تعرف قيمة صديقك حتى تستبدل به اخر

This proverb stresses the importance of good friends, and the regret of not recognising in time the qualities of someone who has left (al-Shahri 2000, 75, 244).

This is one of the 18 proverbs from al-Shahri’s collection that were transcribed and partially analysed by Rubin (2014, 642–45). Rubin translates ‘you don’t know (the value of) your friend until you move away from him’. However, the presence of

<sup>6</sup> MLZ (939) does not record the Ga-stem stem from this root.



her ‘if’ (JL, 98) renders this interpretation doubtful. The term *ḥaṣār* ‘friend’ is recorded by both JL (17) and MLZ (628) with a short vowel. The verbal form *laxalf* < √xlf ‘to change, to leave behind’, a subjunctive 2.M.SG of a H1-stem (JL, 299), exhibits the expected loss of the *t*- prefix typical of H1-stems and other verbal classes (Rubin 2014, 146; Testen 1992), and the vocalisation [a] triggered by the guttural first root consonant, in contrast to the open-mid front vowel [ɛ] in H1-stems of strong roots (Rubin 2014, 174).

This proverb is formally comparable with the Mehri proverb *tḡōrāb kīmāt q-ribā‘ak lä, är at-tä thaxläf mänh* ‘Du kennst den Wert deines Gefährten erst, wenn du dich von ihm trennst’ (Sima 2005, 73), that is ‘You don’t know the value of your companion until you part with him’, which translates the Jibbali/Šḥarēt expression in a more suitable fashion.

Interestingly, the Arabic translation of the proverb employs the form X verb استبدل followed by the preposition ب, meaning ‘to replace, substitute’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 46), and اخر ‘other’. Therefore, there is a possibility that the actual meaning of the proverb is ‘you don’t know the value of your companion until you replace him with someone else’.

### (9)

ɔ ttek šinīt ʕar mən a-ʕeṭélk

*The louse only bites you from your old clothes*

لا تأكلك القملة إلا من ثوبك البالي القديم

This is said when trouble is caused by family or close friends (al-Shahri 2000, 75, 244).

The imperfective 2.M.SG prefix *t-* and the first root consonant of the verb *t-te*, which is a G-stem < √*twy* ‘to eat’ (JL, 273), coalesce, so that they are realised as a geminate [t:]. The term *ṣetēl* actually means ‘rotten rag; old cloth, old clothing’ (JL, 8). Cf. the Mehri equivalent *attäywäk ār känmüt ḍa-xlākak* ‘Es frißt dich nur die Laus deines (eigenen) Kleides’ (Sima 2005, 73).

## (10)

ɔ tštékε ar ẽṣteḥót

*Only those who had breakfast, drink*

لا ترغب في الشرب إلا التي اكلت في الصباح

This proverb is used when evidence indicates that someone has eaten, despite that person affirming otherwise. The allusion to a milch animal is probably due to these animals being well fed (al-Shahri 2000, 75, 244).

The verbal form *tštékε* is an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a T1-stem < √*šky* meaning ‘to drink’ (JL, 262).<sup>7</sup> The term *ẽṣteḥót* < √*ṣbh*, a passive participle of a T-stem, \**e-meṣteḥót* ‘milch sheep’ (MLZ, 534) is not recorded in JL.

## (11)

e-giz<sup>a</sup>métk ṭer feg<sup>i</sup>ró

*You swore on the Bedu*

حنثك على عاتق البدو

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<sup>7</sup> The perfective third-person form of this verb is *šuṣi*, with the assimilation of [tk'] > [š'] (Dufour 2016, 404), instead of the expected *šutki*, which is attested with the marginal meaning ‘to be irrigated’ (JL, 262).

When someone wants to convince someone else to break an oath, the former may use this formula jokingly, as it is believed that the Bedouin take oaths lightly (al-Shahri 2000, 76, 245).

The word *giz<sup>ə</sup>mét* ‘oath’ is not found under the root  $\sqrt{gz}m$  (JL, 81–82). It is, however, found in MLZ (189), and in Rubin’s supplement to JL (2014, 661) as “*gəzmét* (def. *əgzəmét*) ‘swearing’.” The term *feg<sup>i</sup>ar<sup>s</sup>* ‘bedouin’<sup>8</sup> is a plural *nisbah* adjective from *fégər* ‘dawn, dawn-prayer, Nejd (in Dhofar)’ (JL, 53). The semantic connection finds an explanation in that the Bedouin groups with whom Jibbali/Šḥarēt speakers are in contact most often come from the Nejd, north of the Dhofar mountains.

(12)

e-gidrét ɔ lhes iyēn<sup>ə</sup> lə

*The land has no share*

ليس للارض قسمة اي حصة

This expresses idiomatically the concept that earth has no right to claim a share of food or drink, so victuals should not be wasted onto it (al-Shahri 2000, 76, 245).

The term *iyēn* ‘share’ <  $\sqrt{?}mn$  is a variant of *yēn* (JL, 3). Johnstone records this variant as typical of the eastern dialects of the language. This proverb corresponds to Mehri *arž his ḥaṭṭ lā* ‘Die Erde hat keinen Anteil’ (Sima 2005, 73).

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<sup>8</sup> The speakers of Jibbali/Šḥarēt use this term to refer to the Mahrah, and the singular *feg<sup>r</sup>i* ~ *feg<sup>r</sup>i* to indicate the Mehri language, alongside the terms derived from  $\sqrt{m}hr$ . The terms based on the root  $\sqrt{f}gr$  are perceived as a derogatory by the Mahrah (Watson p.c.).

## (13)

e-ged yəbīʿan bə ḥanufəh

*The valuable thing shows its own value*

الانسان الخلق يقيم نفسه

The language of this proverb is admittedly a mixture of Jibbali/Šḥarēt and Mehri (al-Shahri 2000, 76, 245), and indeed Sima records it in his collection of Mehri proverbs as *jīd yśōm ḥnāfh* (2005, 73–74).

Its meaning indicates that good things do not need to be advertised, as their worth shows itself. The term *ged* is Mehri for ‘good’ (ML, 128); cf. Jibbali/Šḥarēt *rahīm* (JL, 210). The verb *yəbīʿan* is the Arabic verb ‘to sell’ treated here as a II-weak H2-stem in the 3.M.SG. of the imperfective. The term *ḥanuf* reflects the Mehri word for ‘self’ *ḥanōf* (ML, 283); cf. Jibbali/Šḥarēt *nuf* (JL, 181). The Mehri term must not be confused with Jibbali/Šḥarēt *ḥanuf* which strictly means ‘to (one)self’ (JL, 181). The [ə] vowel following *ḥanuf* ‘self’ represents the 3.M.SG. personal suffix -əh in Mehri (Watson 2012, 72–73, 77).

## (14)

əxer<sup>o</sup> kəb sīr ʿar kəb rīʃ

*The moving dog is better than the dog which is lying down*

الكلب السيار خير من الكلب الرابض

This is said to encourage someone to act on a matter (al-Shahri 2000, 76, 246).

The participial form *sīr* < √*syr* ‘moving’ must be a Mehrism, as the root is very productive in Mehri, where it includes a verb meaning ‘to go’, as well as an array of additional meanings (ML,

355). Conversely, this root is significantly less productive in Jibbali/Šḥarēt (JL, 233). According to MLZ (466), the above-mentioned root does yield a verb meaning to ‘to follow’; cf. proverb number (82). Similarly to *sīr*, the form *rīš* is a participle, recorded by JL (203) as *rež* ‘lazy’ <  $\sqrt{rbz}$ . The Mehri counterpart of this saying is *kōb sōyār xayr mān kōb rōbāž* ‘Ein Hund, der sich bewegt, ist besser als ein Hund, der nur daliegt’ (Sima 2005, 74).

## (15)

ē xfet ar ē xfet bə ššfəl

*The one who can hide her pregnancy is the best at keeping secrets*

لم تخفي الا من اخفت الحمل

This is said of someone who is good at keeping secrets (al-Shahri 2000, 77, 246).

As in entry number (2) above, the long vowel in the relativiser  $\varepsilon$  must be interpreted as relativiser + third-person singular of a perfective third-person H1-stem verb:  $*\varepsilon$ -*xfet*. This verbal form is recorded in JL (299) as *axfe* ‘to keep hidden’ <  $\sqrt{xfy}$ . The term *ššfəl* ‘belly’ exhibits some interesting traits: it seems to be realised as such only in the eastern dialects of the language, whereas in the central and western dialects it is pronounced *ššfəl*. Moreover, according to JL (260), it is lexically feminine despite being grammatically masculine. It can, however, be used both as masculine and as feminine; cf. entry number (37) of this collection, and entry number (12) of the MLZ collection.

## (16)

$\varepsilon$  xaróǵ<sup>l</sup> ǵas<sup>3</sup>rē eǵiór k-ḥaṣaf

*The one who dies at night can be buried in the morning*

الذي يموت بالليل يقبر في الصباح

This is the second proverb of this collection analysed by Rubin (2014, 642) and means that everything must be done at the right time (al-Shahri 2000, 77, 246).

The term *gasʿre* ‘at night’ has a long final vowel here, which is recorded by neither by JL (89) nor by MLZ (667). The verbal form *ekīór* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a passive Ga-stem <  $\sqrt{kbr}$  meaning ‘to bury’, hence, in this case, ‘to be buried’ (JL, 140). This proverb corresponds to Mehri *q-mōt b-ḥalläyy, yaqbōr k-ṣōbah* ‘Wer in der Nacht stirbt, wird am Morgen begraben’ (Sima 2005, 74).

(17)

ε dirím gʿūlš yəṣḥḥāṣa ʿāl°gʿán

*The one whose camel is killed is only compensated by having a small camel*

الذي يعقر جملة الكبير يُعَوَّضُ بِجَمَلٍ صَغِيرٍ

This proverb is used as a comment on the fact that what is given as compensation might not be commensurate with the loss (al-Shahri 2000, 77, 247).

The semantics of the verbs *dirím* and *yəṣḥḥāṣa* are very specific to the local camel-raiding culture: the former <  $\sqrt{drm}$  ‘to cut (a camel’s) hocks, slaughter livestock (usually in a punitive raid); to hit someone hard’, is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem passive (JL, 41). The latter <  $\sqrt{kṣy}$  ‘to be paid, to receive blood money’ is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Š1-stem (JL, 158). The expected definite article does not occur in the term *gʿūl-š* ‘his camel’, as often happens after a sonorant. The term *ʿāl°gʿán* <  $\sqrt{ʿlg}$ , recorded as *ʿalgen* ‘2–4 year old camel’ in JL (12), is a di-

minutive form. It is noteworthy that the first vowel is long, contrary to the notation found in JL. MLZ (644) does not record this term. Cf. the Mehri proverb *ad-dirām b'irāh, yāšḳayž 'aylūj* 'Der, dessen Kamelhengst getötet wurde, erhält als Entschädigung Kalb' (Sima 2005, 74).

## (18)

e-diní ɔl ʕarʕ d āḥsar lɔ

*The width of the earth is not like the width of a cloth belt*

الدنيا ليست كعرض الإزار

This expression is used when someone does not know which way to turn, either physically or metaphorically (al-Shahri 2000, 77, 247).

The term *ʕarʕ*, whose lack of the expected definite article is likely due to the presence of the voiced pharyngeal fricative [ʕ], means 'width', which may lead one to suspect interference from Arabic, as only in MLZ (620) is the term recorded with the above-mentioned meaning, along with other meanings related to weaning and meeting, which are recorded also in JL (15–16). Likewise, the term *āḥsar* < \**a-maḥsar* 'cloth belt' is recorded in MLZ (236), but not in JL.

## (19)

e-défər xaʕm̥ ē nufʃ

*The bad person is the enemy of himself*

الانسان السيء عدو نفسه

The meaning of this proverb is self-explanatory.

The genitive exponent *ε* and the definiteness marker *ε* preceding *nuf* 'self' coalesce, and are pronounced as a single long

vowel *ē*. The Mehri counterpart of this proverb is *bnādām gamm xašm ḍa-ḥnāfh* ‘Ein schlechter Mensch ist der Feind seiner selbst’ (Sima 2005, 74–75).

(20)

e-défər əxer ʔāš mēl xəh

*The bad (person), a full mouth is better than him*

السيء أفضل منه ملاء الفم

This is a reminder that it is expedient to accept any payment from a person who is in debt, as doing otherwise might lead to bitter consequences (al-Shahri 2000, 78, 248).

It is noteworthy that no genitive exponent can be found between the terms *mēl* ‘fullness’ (JL, 171) and *xəh* (JL, 310), which could point to *mēl* being one of the few terms that can be used in the construct state, although it is not listed in Rubin (2014, 88). However, given the rarity of this term in the corpora, it is not possible to draw any conclusion in this respect. Alternatively, it is possible that the construct state was more widespread at the time when this proverb was coined, so that it came down the generations as it was, regardless of everyday language evolution. One must note, however, that the definite article, as has been pointed out above, may be omitted when following a sonorant. This proverb corresponds to Mehri *gamm xayr mānh mlē ḍ-käff* ‘(Auch nur) eine Handvoll (von irgendetwas) ist besser als das Schlechte’ (Sima 2005, 75), which translates as ‘(Even only) a handful (of anything) is better than the bad (person)’, a translation that applies also to its Jibbali/Šḥarēt counterpart.



## (21)

ɛḍilín ḥōl ēžed iz řiřyét<sup>9</sup>

*So-and-so has taken the labour pains of the bird*

فلان اخذ مخاض الحمامة البرية اي اناب عنها

This is a remark about someone who runs into trouble as a result of doing something, possibly unrequested, for someone else (al-Shahri 2000, 78, 248).

The verbal form *ḥōl* is a perfective third person of a G-stem < √*hml* meaning, among other things, ‘to load; to take; to carry’ (JL, 111). The plural form *ēžed* < \**e-mežed* ‘labour pains’ is not recorded, but, on the basis of similar CvCvC forms—for example, *merṭet/miṛéṭ* ‘instruction, message, parcel’ (JL, 173)—must correspond to a singular \**megdéṭ*. Its being grammatically plural is shown by the subsequent use of the rather uncommon plural relativiser *iẓ* (Rubin 2014, 68) as a genitive exponent. The term *řiřyéṭ* is from *řkb* ‘pigeon’ (JL, 11), with pre-pausal paragoge (Castagna 2018, 137). The term *ɛḍilín* ‘so-and-so’ (Rubin 2014, 64) corresponds to Arabic *fulān* ‘id.’, and functions as a proverbial affix, such as ‘as the saying goes’ (Norrick 2015, 24).

## (22)

ɛḍilín e-nfařš beř i-míh

*So-and-so’s helpfulness<sup>9</sup> is wet*

فلان عمله مبلول بالماء

This saying reminds the listener that some people’s help is harmful. The semantic connection is explained by the fact that dry things are preserved, whereas wet things tend to decay (al-Shahri

<sup>9</sup> Al-Shahri (2000, 78) writes *hefulness*.

2000, 78, 248). The segment *e-nfaʃ-š* ‘his help’ contains the term *nfaʃ*, which is not recorded under the root  $\sqrt{nfʃ}$  by JL (181). MLZ (929), on the other hand, defines it as ‘usefulness, help, aid’ (النفع. المساعدة. العون).

The concept ‘wet’ is expressed here by means of periphrasis: *b-eš i-mīh* ‘there is (the) water in it’ or ‘it has water’. Interestingly, the same periphrastic expression was used by a speaker of the insular (al-Ḥallāniya) dialect to express the same concept (Castagna 2018, 446). See also below, entry number (33). Furthermore, although not formally comparable, the meaning of this proverb can be compared with that of the Mehri proverb *flān mānfa‘tāh bīs ʔašrōr* ‘NN, in seinem Nutzen ist ein Körnchen Schmutz’ (Sima 2005, 75).

(23)

ɛḍilín ed-ešéke ʔer erʔkíb

*So-and-so has been given a drink whilst riding a beast of burden*

فلان يسقي على ظهر الدابة

This refers to someone being helped unwillingly, so that the help this person is offered is of little use. The situation depicted by the proverb can be elucidated by the fact that drinking whilst riding a beast of burden is difficult, and most of the water will be spilt (al-Shahri 2000, 78, 249).

The verb *ešéke* <  $\sqrt{šky}$  ‘to water, to give a drink’, passive 3.M.SG. imperfective Ga-stem (JL, 262), is preceded by the prefix (v)d-, which, in combination with an imperfective verb, marks a circumstantial clause or indicates a progressive action (Rubin 2014, 158–61), so that the overall meaning of this expression is

probably best translated as ‘So-and-so is being given a drink whilst riding a beast of burden’.

(24)

ɛdīlín ɔl kéləʃ be ʃiŋ dimʃtʰ lɔ

*So-and-so didn't leave any tears in the eyes*

فلان لم يُبقِ في العين دُمعة

This expression is used to describe someone who has done something perfectly (al-Shahri 2000, 79, 249).

The third root consonant of the verb *kéləʃ*, a third-person perfective of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to let, allow’ (JL, 144), is a /ʃ/ which is desonorised to [h], as there is a long pause after it. The segment *be* is to be analysed as the preposition *bə* + the definite article preceding *ʃiŋ* ‘eye’. The final /n/ is desonorised/pre-aspirated in the latter term, as expected (Rubin 2014, 37).

(25)

ɛdīlín ɔ kédəʃ b ɔ fédəʃ

*He doesn't harm and he doesn't help*

فلان لا فائدة منه ولا ضرر

This is used to describe someone who is completely neutral, or a good-for-nothing person (al-Shahri 2000, 79, 249).

The two terms *kédəʃ*, defined by MLZ (790) as ‘to disturb’ (يكدّر), and *fédəʃ*, defined as ‘relief, comfort’ (MLZ, 691: الفرج), are both third-person perfectives of Ga-stems not recorded in JL. MLZ (790) records this proverb under the former entry as أدبليئن أيكْدَغُ, and as أدبليئن أفدع بو كْدَعُ under the latter (MLZ 691). Cf. also the Mehri proverb *flän lä-kdāʿ w-lä-nfāʿ* ‘NN (macht) keinen Ärger, hat aber auch keinen Nutzen’ (Sima 2005, 75).

## (26)

εḍilín yəṣḥaróṭ ēṣfór

*So-and-so will argue even with the birds*

فلان يشاتم الطيور

This expression describes a short-tempered person (al-Shahri 2000, 79, 249).

The verbal form *yəṣḥaróṭ* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Š1-stem < √*xrṭ*, meaning ‘to curse and swear at; to be able to be stripped of leaves’ (JL, 305). The segment *ēṣfór* ‘the birds’ has an initial long vowel as a result of the coalescence of the definite article and the first vowel of the term, which, contra JL (16), does not exhibit an initial /ʕ/ (< √*ʕsfr*). Conversely, MLZ (546) lists the term under the root √*sfr* and defines it as ‘collective name for birds’ (جمع عصفور. اسم جامع للطيور).<sup>10</sup> This expression formally corresponds to Mehri *flän yaṣḥarṭan* ‘*aṣfēr* ‘NN sucht eine Auseinandersetzung (sogar) mit den Vögeln’ (Sima 2005, 75).

## (27)

εḍilín axnīṭ meš šəʕil

*So-and-so has taken all somebody else’s energy*

فلان أنهك أو أنهكت قواه وصبره

This expression, whose meaning is self-explanatory, may either be used by the victim of such an action or by an observer (al-Shahri 2000, 79, 250).

The verb *axnīṭ*, a third-person perfective of a H1-stem meaning, among other things, ‘to take out, take off’, is listed in

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<sup>10</sup> Compare Soqotri *iṣfero* ‘oiseau’ (LS, 70), which similarly lacks the etymological /ʕ/.

JL (303) as *axníṭ*, with a short vowel. Al-Shahri's (2000, 250) Arabic translation of this saying points out that the verb can be understood as an active as well as a passive form: *أنهك أو أنهكت*. The nasal consonant [n] here neutralises the distinction between the active and passive vocalisations of the H1-stem verb in question (Rubin 2014, 42). The term *ṣəfil* 'strength' is not recorded in the lexica. However, MLZ (803) records the verb *kaṣal* 'to hit something solid with strength' under the root  $\sqrt{k\phi l}$ . The semantic connection is rather unproblematic, and given the high vocalic environment, a palatalisation /k/ > [ṣ], as is well documented, seems likely (Bellem and Watson 2017, 627).

## (28)

ḡḡilín eḡilík<sup>o</sup> leṣ ṣṣrót

*So-and-so has hung up the gall bladder against him*

فلان علقت ضده المرارة

This saying describes a forgetful person, on the basis of the folk belief that one can cause a person to forget something by hanging a gall bladder and speaking that person's name (al-Shahri 2000, 79, 250).

The verbal form *eḡilík* is a third-person perfective of a passive H2-stem, meaning 'to hang (transitive)' (JL, 12), and is attested here with a long vowel. The term *ṣṣrót* < *e-mṣṣrót* 'gall bladder' is recorded as *mṣṣrót* under the root  $\sqrt{mrr}$  (JL, 173).

## (29)

ḡḡilín yəṣṣgúm ḡḡlók

*So-and-so finds fault with gold*

فلان يعيب دنانير الذهب

This describes a fussy person who finds fault with everything and everyone (al-Shahri 2000, 80, 250).

The verbal form *yərəǧúm* is a 3.M.SG. imperfective of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to criticise’ (JL, 208). The peculiar vocalisation is due to allomorphy triggered by the guttural C<sup>2</sup>, which results in /ə/ instead of /e/ (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 187), and the sonorant C<sup>3</sup>, resulting in /u/ instead of /ɔ/ (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 183). The term *ʕɔlɔk* ‘fine gold’ (MLZ, 645: الذهب الخالص) is not recorded by JL. This is most certainly a plural form of a singular *ʕɔlɔk* = /ʕɔlɔk/ ~ /ʕulk/, provided by al-Shahri in his commentary on this saying (al-Shahri 2000, 250).

(30)

ɛḍilín ɔ fek idš berəkót ° lɔ

*He didn’t rub the talisman*

فلان لم يفرّك يده بالبركة

This is said when bad people eventually get what they deserve (al-Shahri 2000, 80, 250).

Al-Shahri (2000, 80) translates ‘he didn’t rub the talisman’ in English, and the same in Arabic (al-Shahri 2000, 250), and indeed, the verb *fek*, a third-person perfective of a G-stem deriving from the geminate root √*fkk*,<sup>11</sup> is listed with the meaning of ‘to rub’ in Morris et al. (2019, 79). However, this verb is reported to have the meaning ‘to release’ in both JL (55) and MLZ (714). As for the term *berəkót* ‘talisman’, it is not recorded as such by

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<sup>11</sup> According to al-Kathiri and Dufour (2020, 186), “no opposition between Ga and Gb exists in practice with anisomorphic... roots, and we are simply faced with a G hyper-class.”

any of the lexical sources. However, its morphology points to a diminutive form (Johnstone 1973) of *berekēt* ‘blessing’ (JL, 28). Cf. the Mehri expression *flān fukk ḥidāh ab-bārkēt lā* ‘NN hat seine Hand nicht mit Segen losgelassen’ (Sima 2005, 75). In view of the presence of the term *īdš* ‘his hand(s)’, the proverb can be interpreted as ‘so-and-so’s hands didn’t rub the talisman’.

## (31)

εḍīlín ḍaḡarót iyēñš

*His share has been spilt*

فلان انسكربت وفققد حصته

This expression is used to describe the circumstances of someone who has come to be deprived of a source of wealth, affection, or security, e.g., an orphan (al-Shahri 2000, 80, 251).

The verbal form *ḍaḡarót* is a perfective 3.F.SG. of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to spill, pour’. For the term *iyēñ* ‘share’, which appears here with an initial long vowel due to the presence of the definite article, see entry number (12) above.

## (32)

εḍīlín ḥa-yókrəm be-díni

*So-and-so will swallow the earth*

فلان سيبتلع الدنيا

This is used to describe greedy people (al-Shahri 2000, 80, 251).

The future marker *ḥa-*, which is currently less common than *a-* (Rubin 2012, 195), can be found in this proverb, attached to the subjunctive 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to have trouble swallowing, make a noise swallowing’ (JL, 149). This expression

can be compared to Mehri *flän yḥōm ytēh dʿnīyā* ‘NN will die (ganze) Welt ausfessen’ (Sima 2005, 76).

It is to be noted that the root  $\sqrt{krm}$  in Soqotri means ‘craving’ (Naumkin et al. 2014, 591), which could be a slightly more appropriate meaning in this case. However, the second meaning listed by JL, ‘make a noise swallowing’, is not unfitting.

**(33)**

ɛḍilín ɔl kéləʃ l-ɛḍilín ɔl tiri b-ɔ kəsʃun

*He abused everything of mine (or his or hers), wet and dry*

فلان لم يترك لفلان لا رطب ولا يابس

This metaphor describes a terrible insult. The one who is left neither the wet nor the dry is the insulted person. According to al-Shahri (2000, 80, 251), living people are believed to be wet, whilst the dead are believed to be dry.

For the verbal form *kéləʃ*, see entry number (24). The actual term for ‘wet’ *tiri* is used here, in the place of the periphrastic expression *b-eš i-mih*; see above, entry number (22). The Mehri counterpart of this expression is *flän l-ʿād kūlaʿ lä-flän l-täryit wa-l-kəsʿayt* ‘NN hat dem NN nichts übriggelassen, weder Feuchtes noch Trockenes’ (Sima 2005, 76), whose meaning ‘so-and-so has left nothing to so-and-so, neither wet nor dry’ applies equally to its Jibbali/Šḥarēt counterpart.

**(34)**

ɛḍilín əgəsʰré ʔer e-gédal

*So-and-so spent the night on (his) foot*

فلان ظل سهراً على الموقد طوال الليل



This is a remark about someone who spends sleepless nights thinking about his troubles (al-Shahri 2000, 81, 251).

The verbal form *əḡas<sup>3</sup>rē* is a perfective third person of a <sup>0</sup>N1-stem deriving from the fourth-weak root  $\sqrt{\text{gsry}}$ , meaning ‘to spend the night, sleep the night (at)’ (JL, 89). The term *ḡēdal* is, etymologically speaking, a diminutive of *ḡedəl* ‘foot’ of the pattern *CēCÉC* (JL, 71; MLZ, 180–81). The Mehri counterpart of this saying is *flān aḡasrūh ashēr aš-šīwōṭ* ‘NN ist die (ganze) Nacht wach geblieben beim Feuer’ (Sima 2005, 76).

(35)

ədīlín əl-féne

*This is the man of a face*

فلان على نيّاته

This is said of a gullible person, as mentally sound people are believed to see both sides of a given situation, whilst a gullible person is believed to see only the face, i.e., one side (al-Shahri 2000, 81, 252). The term *féne* means ‘face’ (JL, 59), but the preposition *l-* ‘for, to’ (Rubin 2014, 250) changes its meaning to ‘before’ (JL, 59). Therefore, in this case, the segment *əl-féne* should probably be analysed as a propositional phrase made up of *əl* and *féne*: i.e., ‘to (one) face’, meaning *على نيّاته* in Arabic, that is, *naïve, gullible, with good intentions*.

(36)

ədīlín xitīṭ<sup>3</sup> leš bə ḡum bə šendér

*He was given his share on a splinter of wood or (and) a seashell*

فلان أُعطي بالمحّارة وشرخ الخشب

This means that when something was shared, the person to whom this proverb refers was given so small a share that it could fit on a seashell or on a splinter (al-Shahri 2000, 81, 252).

The verb *xit̪t̪* is a third-person perfective of a passive G-stem (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 195) whose active counterpart is *xet̪* (*xet̪t̪* in the JL transcription) ‘to write; to make signs on the ground; to point out a route’ (JL, 308). The term *ḥum̪* is translated as ‘shell’ in JL (109) and in MLZ (269: الفحم النباتي). The term *šend̪ér* means ‘big splinter of wood’ (JL, 253). The overall meaning of this proverb is doubtful, as the English and Arabic translations are at variance with each other: whilst the Arabic translation would imply that both the ‘splinter of wood’ and the ‘seashell’ are in play, the English translation makes it clear that it is *either* the ‘splinter of wood’ *or* the ‘seashell’. The recording offers little help, as the second *bə* might be either a preposition or a coordinating conjunction.

(37)

ɛd̪il̪ín bə š̪ʃf̪əl t̪r̪əh

*So-and-so has two stomachs*

فلان بمعدتين

This expression is used to describe a person who is always worried about property or about people who are not within his or her sight (al-Shahri 2000, 81, 252). The use of the masculine numeral *t̪r̪əh* speaks to the fact that the term *š̪ʃf̪əl* can be either masculine or feminine (JL, 260). See also entry number (15) of this collection, and entry number (12) of the MLZ collection.

(38)

εḍilín ɔ yəṭəféf b-ɔ yənúḍk

*He doesn't float, he doesn't sink*

فلان لا يطفو ولا يرسب

Similarly to entry number (25) of this collection, this proverb describes a good-for-nothing person (al-Shahri 2000, 82, 253). The verbal forms *yəṭəféf* and *yənúḍk* are, respectively, an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a G-stem deriving from a geminate root √*tff* meaning 'to float' (JL, 274), and an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning 'to sink like a stone, go straight down into the water' (JL, 181).

(39)

εḍilín ɔl gīlt heš b-ɔl t̤ɔb

*He has false generosity and offends God*

فلان لا كرامة له ولا ثواب

This proverb describes a person whose bad behaviour averts generosity in the world and a reward in the afterlife (al-Shahri 2000, 82, 253). The term *gīlt* is recorded as *gīlat* by JL (76) and means 'generosity; strength to endure', and the term *t̤ɔb* means 'good deed requited in heaven' (JL, 285). This expression can be compared to Mehri *flān lā-krōmāt hēh w-lä-ṭwōb* 'NN hat keine Freigebigkeit und auch keine Dankbarkeit' (Sima 2005, 76): the German rendition can be translated as 'So-and-so has no generosity and no gratitude', which also fits the Jibbali/Šḥarēt proverb.

## (40)

εḍilín ger<sup>o</sup> beš e-núsub ε ttódɔ

*He has been affected by his mother's milk*

فلان أثر عليه حليب الثدي

This is used to describe a person who is (over)zealous about his mother's requests.

However, this is not necessarily a criticism, as the duty of a son towards his mother and her family is an important tenet of the society of the Dhofar mountains (al-Shahri 2000, 82, 253). The verb *ger* < √*grr* is a perfective third person G-stem from a geminate root, and is recorded with the meaning 'to drag' in JL (77) and a similar meaning in MLZ (184: سحب). The term *ttódɔ* is an unattested variant of the term recorded as *ttódε* 'bosom, breast; nipple and breast' (JL, 283) and 'breast' (MLZ, 164: [المرأ]: الثدي). Semantically, this saying may be interpreted actively as 'so-and-so, his mother's breast milk dragged him'.

## (41)

εḍilín ekaʃ leš šūš

*His name found him*

فلان طابق عليه اسمه او وافقه اسمه

This expression describes a person whose name and personality match each other, based on the folk belief that names become attached to people whose personality suits them (al-Shahri 2000, 82, 254).

The verbal class to which verbs like *ekaʃ* < √*wkʃ*, a third-person perfective meaning 'to find' (JL, 290), belong is discussed in Rubin (2014, 109–10): he examines the cases of *edaʃ* 'to know'

(JL, 286) and *égaḥ* ‘to enter’ (JL, 288), and affirms that their having a \*w as a first root consonant and a pharyngeal as a third root consonant obscures the differences between the Ga and Gb types. He further adds that *edaḥ* can be regarded as a Gb in Mehri, whereas *égaḥ* has no Mehri cognate. Therefore, it is likely that *eḡaḥ* is a Gb in Jibbali/Šḥarēt too, and this is confirmed by al-Kathiri and Dufour (2020, 210). Cf. the Mehri proverb *flān hummāh aṭōbāk lēh* ‘NN, sein Name paßt zu ihm’ (Sima 2005, 76).

## (42)

ɛḡilín ɔl diní heš b-ɔl axárt

*He has nothing in this life and will have nothing in the hereafter*

فلان ليس له دنيا ولا آخرة

This saying is similar in meaning to entry number (39) and describes a bad person who cannot expect any happiness or joy either in this world or in the hereafter (al-Shahri 2000, 83, 254).

JL (5) records *āxərt*, with a long vowel, but this is not confirmed by the present analysis. This is in all likelihood due to this term being used with a definite article in the vast majority of cases, and this usage being reflected in the JL data: *āxərt* < *a-axərt*. MLZ (93) does not record this term, despite recording the root √ʔxr.

## (43)

ɛḡilín bedərš ššɔt

*The one who runs fastest arrives first*

فلان سبقه العدؤون

Similarly to entry number (4), this expression underlines the fact that those who waste time are certainly going to be outdone by more zealous people (al-Shahri 2000, 83, 254).

The perfective third-person Gb-stem verb *bédar* ‘to outrun’ (JL, 23) agrees with šḥḥt ‘runner’, which is not recorded by JL, and is only recorded in its singular form by MLZ (478): شعاً: الركض. الجري.<sup>12</sup> Despite its being morphologically a feminine singular noun, it is treated as a plural. Furthermore, the Arabic translation of the proverb employs the masculine plural noun العدائون (al-Shahri 2000, 254). Compare the singular form عداء ‘runner, racer’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 599).

(44)

ɛdīlín məḵʳé ʃar ĩt

*That person should be hidden from death*

فلان يستحق بان يُخفي عن الموت

This expression may be used both to describe a very good person who is universally respected and cherished, and when someone recovers from an illness, or emerges unscathed from a dangerous situation (al-Shahri 2000, 83, 254).

The passive participle *məḵʳé* ‘hidden’ (MLZ, 744), is not recorded in JL (150), although it does record the verbs and other terms connected to the root √ḵry. The term *ĩt* comes from \**e-mit* ‘death’ (JL, 176). This participial form is used here to express deontic modality.

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<sup>12</sup> However, the term šḥḥt could also be the feminine of an active participle.

(45)

ɛdīlín ɔl t̤k̤iʃ mən šum ɛd g̤ʒfɔ lɔ

*No-one cares about him the smallest bit, not even the distance between the shadow and the sun*

فلان لا احد يهتم به بقدر المسافة بين الشمس والظل

This describes an unimportant and neglected person.

The semantic connection finds an explanation in the folk belief that there is a small distance between the sunlight and the shadow. Therefore, this small distance is treated here as a metaphor for belittlement (al-Shahri 2000, 83, 255). The verb *t̤k̤iʃ*,<sup>13</sup> a third-person perfective, must be the passive counterpart of the active H1-stem *et̤ka* ‘to look’ (JL, 276). It is noteworthy that here, as well as in other cases which will be discussed in the conclusions below, a long vowel *ī* appears in the vocalism of passive verbs. The term *g̤ʒfɔ* stands for *g̤ʒfɛ* ‘shadow’ (JL, 72) and, similarly to the term *t̤ɔdɔ* ‘breast’ in entry (40) above, exhibits an unexpected final [ɔ]. Moreover, it must be pointed out that al-Shahri renders this sound with ʌ in both cases.

(46)

ɛdīlín ɔl nuʒ b-ɔl r̤ɛk̤ʃat

*The dye and the quality of the cloth are both bad*

فلان ليس كالثوب ذو نيل كافٍ أو متانة

This proverb applies to someone who is both of displeasing appearance and of bad manners (al-Shahri 2000, 84, 255). The terms *nuʒ* and *r̤ɛk̤ʃat* mean, respectively, ‘indigo’ (JL, 200) and

<sup>13</sup> For *et̤k̤iʃ*, with vowel loss due to the phonological process described by al-Kathiri and Dufour (2020, 183).

‘patch, rag’ (JL, 212). Therefore, the literal meaning of this expression is ‘so-and-so is neither indigo nor a rag (patch)’.

(47)

ɛḍilín kse šēd māšxertót

*He has found an easy way to strip the leaves from the Christ's-thorn tree*

فلان وجد سدره سهلة الخرب

This is used to describe someone who took advantage of someone else's weakness or gullibility (al-Shahri 2000, 84, 255).

The verbal form *kse* is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to find’ (JL, 135).<sup>14</sup> The term *šēd* denotes *Ziziphus spina-christi* (Miller and Morris 1988, 242), or Christ-thorn tree, whose fruits are edible. The feminine participial form *māšxertót* ‘stripped of leaves’, deriving from a Š1-stem, is not recorded elsewhere. Notwithstanding al-Shahri's English translation, the literal meaning of this expression seems to be ‘so-and-so found a Christ-thorn tree stripped of its leaves’. The image of a Christ-thorn tree without leaves is used metaphorically to describe a mild and harmless person in Soqatra. The image itself can be traced back to the Qur'an (56.28).

(48)

ɛḍilín b-ɛḍilín lhes ē-ṭof bə-ḥabbərrédi

*So-and-so and So-and-so is like ‘Toph’ and ‘Habaradi’*

فلان وفلان كنبات الطوف ونبات الحبرّادي

<sup>14</sup> According to al-Kathiri and Dufour (2020, 203), this verb is typical of the central dialects of Jibbali/Šḥarēt.



The two plants mentioned in this proverb, namely *tof* ‘*Aloe dhufariensis*’ (Miller and Morris 1988, 182) and *habbærrédi* ‘*Kleinia saginata*’ (Miller and Morris 1988, 110), are very different from each other, and this expression is used to describe two very different individuals (al-Shahri 2000, 84, 256). The definite article preceding *tof* is realised as a long vowel (see also the following proverb). The term *habbærrédi* is recorded by Miller and Morris with /h/, but al-Shahri pronounces and transcribes /ħ/ instead. Al-Shahri’s pronunciation seems to be confirmed by MLZ’s (214) version of this expression: حبرادي ييطف.

(49)

ēdīlīn lhes ē-ṭiḵ ē-daṣān

*He is like a fig tree in the middle of a barren plain*

مثل التينة الفريدة في الارض الجرداء<sup>15</sup> فلا

This expression is used to describe a person who is more widely known than others, in spite of not being any better (or worse) than others (al-Shahri 2000, 84, 256).

Similarly to entry number (48) above, there occurs an unexpected long vowel [e:] in place of the definite article’s short vowel. This might lead one to postulate a vowel after the preposition, i.e., \**lhes* ε, perhaps through analogical levelling after the pattern of compound prepositions such as *ḥaṣ-ε* or *ḥaḵt-ε* (Rubin 2014, 361–63, 371–72).

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<sup>15</sup> فلا for فلان due to mistyping.

(50)

ɛḍilín ɔl d-ḥɔb b-ɔl d-rókɔl

*Not for milking, not for owning*

فلان لا للحلب ولا للكسب

This is said, similarly to entries (25) and (38), of a good-for-nothing person (al-Shahri 2000, 84, 256).

The *d-* prefix in this case is an allomorph of the preposition *ɛd* ‘up to, till, until’ (Rubin 2014, 228–30), which lacks the initial vowel due to the phonological process described in the commentary of entry number (45) above. The term *ḥɔb* is a verbal noun meaning ‘(one) milking’ (JL, 109). The term *rókɔl* is not recorded in JL, whereas MLZ (391) defines it as ‘cow pen’ (مريض الابقار). It is worth noting that the [ɔ] vowel in the unstressed syllable of the term in question, which occurs instead of the expected [ə], may be due to the same phenomenon described above in entries (40) and (45). In view of the terms used, this proverb would be best translated as ‘so-and-so is neither for milking nor for the cow pen’.

(51)

ɛḍilín ber feşğ ɛd šōt

*So-and-so has spat into the fire*

فلان قد بصق في النار

This is used to describe a person who talks too much and, for this reason, cannot be believed, on the basis of the folk belief that a person who spits into the fire becomes a liar (al-Shahri 2000, 85, 141, 256, 332).

The verbal form *feşğ* is a perfective third person of a G-stem meaning ‘to spit’ (JL, 64). The use of the auxiliary verb *ber*

conveys, in this case, the meaning of ‘just’ or ‘already’ (Rubin 2014, 165). The preposition *əd* ‘until’ is used here in place of *ʔak* ‘in’.

(52)

*ədīlīn axnīt e-līnit əl ḥārót*

*He had consumed all the white and black*

فلان أخرج السواد على البياض

This is an expression of reproach towards someone who has taken advantage of another person. The white and black should be regarded as metaphors for fat and meat, respectively (al-Shahri 2000, 85, 257).

The verbal form *axnīt* is a perfective third person of a H1-stem meaning ‘to take out’ (JL, 303). It appears here in the active voice with the expected short [i], in contrast with its passive counterpart in entry number (27), which has a long [i:].

The term *ḥārót* ‘black (F.SG.)’ is perceived as [ḥae<sup>l</sup>ɾɔt] in this and another recording,<sup>16</sup> which may be due to the articulatory transitional effect from [ḥ] to [ɾ]. This occurs also in the speech of an aged speaker of the Hallaniyah dialect (Castagna 2018, 447). The phenomenon described by Rubin (2014, 41), whereby /a/ is realised as [aj] after /ʕ/ and /ġ/, may be of some relevance, although the author does not mention its occurrence after /ḥ/.

The English translation is at variance with the Arabic translation, which, by contrast, literally means ‘So-and-so took out the whiteness upon the blackness’.

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<sup>16</sup> See proverb (43) of the MLZ collection.

(53)

εḍilín ɔl šen b-ɔl šokum

*So-and-so is not with us and not with you*

فلان لا معنا ولا معكم

This expression describes a braggart, whose actions are not useful to anybody (al-Shahri 2000, 85, 257). The preposition *k-* ‘with’ appears here in the form of an allomorph, or mono-consonantal base (Rubin 2014, 267), used with personal suffixes. The Mehri counterpart of this expression is *flān l-šān wa-l-šikām* ‘NN ist weder auf unserer noch auf eurer Seite’ (Sima 2005, 77).

(54)

εḍilín ɔl éḡ<sup>h</sup>eh b-ɔl kifé*So-and-so has no front and no back*

فلان لا وجه ولا قفا

This is a remark made about a person of loose morals who shows no regret whatsoever (al-Shahri 2000, 85, 257).

This is the third proverb of this collection analysed by Rubin (2014, 643). The term *éḡ<sup>h</sup>eh* ‘face’ (JL, 288) stems from the root √*wgh*, from which Arabic *وجه* stems too, and in view of the existence of the native term *kerfef* (JL, 134), the former may be suspected to be an ancient and/or phonetically well-accommodated Arabic borrowing. Compare the Mehri expression *flān l-bēh l-wajh w-lä-kfē* ‘NN hat weder ein Gesicht noch einen Rücken’ (Sima 2005, 77).

(55)

ɛdílín taʕśésén<sup>o</sup> beš yuršób

*A beast of burden can carry him*

فلان تنهض به الجمال

This expression, similarly to entries (35) and (47), alludes to someone's gullibility (al-Shahri 2000, 85, 258).

The H1-stem verb *taʕśésén* 'to rouse' (JL, 17) appears here in the 3.F.PL. of the imperfective. The term *yuršób*, which looks deceptively like a verbal form, is actually a plural whose singular is *erkīb* 'riding-camel' (JL, 211). The initial [ju] glide in this term is due to the conjunct effect of the /š/ lip-rounding and the regular retroflexion of /r/ before a coronal, so that the phonemic representation of this term should rather be /*eršób*/. This saying corresponds to Mehri *flān taʕśūsān bēh rīkōb* 'Auf NN sitzen die Reittiere auf' (Sima 2005, 77). A more faithful English rendition of this expression is 'So-and-so is carried by camels'.

(56)

ɛdílín aġ<sup>o</sup>míd ʕǝ́ ɔ yəššəḥ ḥaḳ<sup>o</sup> lə

*So-and-so owes God nothing*

لقد أمسى فلان وليس الله حق عليه

This is a comment made to praise people who work hard (al-Shahri 2000, 86, 258).

The verb *aġ<sup>o</sup>míd*, a perfective third person of a H1-stem, normally means 'to be, appear in the evening; to sheath' (JL, 86).

The term ʃḥ *‘God’* (JL, 22) is one whose etymology is not immediately transparent. Its Mehreyyet<sup>17</sup> cognate *bēlī* comes from the root  $\sqrt{b\ell}$  and is often used in its definite form *a-bēlī* (Watson 2012, 259), and the processes underlying the Jibbali/Šḥarēt form can be summarised thus: *\*e-baʃli* > *\*e-bɔʃli* > *\*ʃli* > *\*ʃḥzi* > ʃḥ. The verb *yəʃḥ* <  $\sqrt{ʃy}$  *‘bring water from afar’* (JL, 265; MLZ, 486: جلب الماء من بعيد) is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem with a 3.M.SG. personal suffix attached. Its final root consonant /b/ is elided between the preceding vowel and the vowel of the above-mentioned suffix (Rubin 2014, 28–29). The use of this verb to mean *‘have a right’* is puzzling. Overall, the interpretation of this proverb *vis-à-vis* its literal meaning is unclear, and the English translation provided by al-Shahri undoubtedly makes it more difficult to interpret it. However, al-Shahri’s Arabic translation لقد أمسى فلان وليس الله حق عليه might be of some guidance here, in that it literally means *‘so-and-so has become thus (at night), and God does not have any right over him’*, implying that God has tried the poor fellow in question so much during the day that, once he has made it to sunset, even God has no right to mistreat him further.

(57)

ɛdīlīn ɔl edaʃ ɔl iné ebḥer b-ɔl iné eṣḥer

*So-and-so doesn’t know who is on the sea and who is on the land*

لم يعلم فلان بمن سلك طريق البحر او طريق البر

<sup>17</sup> This is the native glottonym that designates the variety of Mehri spoken in the Sultanate of Oman, and is perceived as more correct than *Omani Mehri* by the speakers.

This is the fourth proverb analysed by Rubin (2014, 643) and describes a person who does not pay attention to the surrounding events (al-Shahri 2000, 86, 258). Both *εbher* and *εšher* are perfective third-person H1-stem denominative verbs meaning ‘to go by sea’ and ‘to go to the mountains’ respectively. JL does not record them, whilst they can be found in MLZ (114, 504) as ذهب باتجاه and صعد \ توجه إلى الجبل. The proverb is also recorded by MLZ (114), as اذيلين ألدع إنه ابهر بل ناشحتر. Cf. also Mehri *flän l-wīda‘ ḥābū häśān abḥayrām wa-l-häśān ašḥayrām* ‘NN weiß weder was die Leute am Meer noch was (die Leute) in den Bergen machen’ (Sima 2005, 77).

(58)

ədīlín ɔl šər<sup>ə</sup>kéb b-ɔl šənʕís

*He cannot ride and cannot be carried*

فلان لم يستحمل الركوب على الدابة ولا على النعش

This proverb describes someone who turns down every kind of advice and help (al-Shahri 2000, 86, 259).

The two verbs in this proverb are both perfective third-person forms of Š1-stems. The first form, *šər<sup>ə</sup>kéb*, is reported to mean ‘to be ridden’ in JL (211), with a similar meaning in MLZ (393: (رُكِبَ). However, al-Shahri’s Arabic translation of this verb as لم يستحمل الركوب على الدابة ‘he can’t bear riding on the mount’ implies that the subject is unable or unwilling to ride, rather than not ridden. The second verb, *šənʕís*, is recorded by JL (178) as ‘(patient, corpse) to be carried on a stretcher, bier’, which explains the Arabic translation ولا على النعش ‘...nor on a coffin’. The literal meaning of the proverb may therefore be given as ‘so-and-so can ride neither a beast nor a bier’. MLZ (393) records this proverb

as أذيلين أيشركب بيشعش. The last vowel in *šənʕíʕ* is [i], where one would expect [e]: this may be due to the raising effect of the nasal [n] taking place through the intervening [ʕ]. This proverb corresponds to Mehri *flän l-šärküb wa-l-šänʕūs* ‘NN (kann) man weder reiten lassen noch auf der Totenbahre trage’ (Sima 2005, 77–78), which translates to ‘So-and-so (can) neither be ridden nor carried on a bier’, a translation that also applies to the Jibbali/Šḥarēt proverb.

## (59)

ε-delé ibrérən

*The early morning makes everything clear*

بعد طلوع الشمس كل شي يُبان

This is said by someone who is accused of a misdeed but is actually innocent, and is also used when a disturbance occurs at night, to suggest that it is more convenient to wait until morning to look into it (al-Shahri 2000, 86, 259).

The term *delé* meaning ‘early morning’ seems to be a variant of *deléb* (JL, 46), which carries the same meaning. That *delé* is a full-status lexeme, and not a pre-pausal realisation of *deléb*, is proven by the fact that (1) the term is transcribed as ذيلاء by al-Shahri (2000, 259) and (2) Johnstone lists this term in the bilingual Mehri–Jibbali wordlist at the end of the *Mehri Lexicon* (ML, 560). The verb *ibrérən* is clearly a H2-stem, but neither JL (27) nor MLZ (123–24) lists it under the corresponding root  $\sqrt{brr}$ .

## (60)

εḍilín ʔrkot a-dánum e-kéṣər

*So-and-so trod on the lion’s tail*

فلان دعس او داس على ذيل الاسد



This is used as a warning that one should not look for trouble by provoking the anger of someone stronger than oneself (al-Shahri 2000, 86, 259).

The verbal form *rkət* is a perfective third person of a G-stem <  $\sqrt{rkt}$  meaning ‘to step, to tread upon, put a foot on the ground’ (JL, 211). The term *ḏānum* is unexpected for *ḏunub* ‘tail’ (JL, 47) and might be a characteristic of the speaker’s dialect. It must be noted that this term is subject to a good deal of variation among dialects: for example, it is often, but not invariably, realised as *ḏunúf* by insular speakers (Castagna 2018, 445), although in the case of the dialect of al-Ḥallanīyah, this may be viewed as part of a wider sound change /b/ > [f] in certain phonotactic environments (Castagna 2018, 116–18). At any rate, al-Shahri utters *ḏanum* but transcribes ذونوب. Cf. Mehri *axāh hēt rkātk aṭ-tār ḏnōb ḏ-ḵayẓar* ‘Als ob du auf den Schwanz des Leoparden getreten wärst’ (Sima 2005, 78). The use of ‘lion’ instead of ‘leopard’ in al-Shahri’s English translation is arbitrary.

(61)

εḏilín e-nṭəfótš ε təgrér

*His shins are full*

فلان نخاع عظمه ملان

This is used to describe a person who is always eager to help (al-Shahri 2000, 87, 260).

The term *e-nṭəfótš*, a definite form of a feminine noun with a personal suffix attached, is found in JL (181) as *nəḏfót* ‘leg-bone of a slaughtered animal’. Rather curiously, the meaning of the verb *təgrér*, an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a G-stem <  $\sqrt{grr}$ , is ‘to deceive, to cheat’, according to lexicographic sources (JL, 87; MLZ,

663: (غش, دلس) as well as native speakers (p.c.). Al-Shahri's Arabic translation, which can be interpreted as 'So-and-so the marrow of his bone is full' is not helpful.

(62)

ɛḍilín yəḡɔtyɔṭ mən īdét

*So-and-so even gets angry with the breeze*

فلان يغضب حتى من النسيم

This saying describes, similarly to entry number (26), a short-tempered person (al-Shahri 2000, 87, 260).

The verbal form yəḡɔtyɔṭ is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a T1-stem < √ḡyṭ meaning 'to anger' (JL, 91; MLZ, 684: اغتاظ). Given that Arabic has a Gt-stem (measure VIII) with the same meaning, this could be an Arabic borrowing, and the use of the preposition mən reinforces this hypothesis (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 691). The term īdét < \*e-midét means 'south wind' (JL, 169). This saying is similar in meaning to Mehri *flän yaḡt<sup>ä</sup>yūṭ mən (ṭār) kār* 'NN wird schon zornig (, wenn er nur) auf dem Erdboden (steht)' (Sima 2005, 78), despite some lexical differences.

(63)

ɛḍilín yaḡér l-e-naṣrír

*When he hears a cry of fear he joins it*

فلان يتحرك لهتاف البقر

This is used to describe a person who is overly curious (al-Shahri 2000, 87, 260).

The verbal form yaḡér is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem < √ḡbr meaning 'to meet' (JL, 82). The term naṣrír 'wailing' is not recorded by JL. It is, however, recorded in MLZ (923:

[النحيب [في البكاء]]. Overall, the literal meaning of this expression can be more faithfully rendered as ‘So-and-so joins the wailing’.

(64)

ɛdīlín b̄er bēba (ber mēma)

*So-and-so is the son of his father (or mother)*

فلان ابن ابيه او ابن امه اي (الولد سر ابيه او سر امه)

This describes the commonalities between a person and his parents (al-Shahri 2000, 87, 260). The term *b̄er* ‘son’ (JL, 28) is one of the terms that can head a construct chain (Rubin 2014, 88). The terms *bēba* and *mēma*, apparently diminutives formed after the *CēCÉC* pattern (Johnstone 1973), are not listed in the written sources used in this study. However, they are reminiscent of Arabic بابا and ماما, and are widely used in Soqotri (Morris et al. 2019, 88). Cf. Mehri *flān bār ḥībāh aw bār ḥāmēh* ‘NN ist (wahrlich) der Sohn seines Vaters (oder: der Sohn seiner Mutter)’ (Sima 2005, 78).

(65)

ɛdīlín ʕɔd ɔ t̄ē še mən nísi iz xɔrf lɔ

*So-and-so has not yet smelled the first days of the monsoon yet*

فلان لم يكن قد شم شيئاً من أيام بدايات الخريف

This is said of someone who is accustomed to an easy life and does not know hardship (al-Shahri 2000, 87, 261).

The use of ʕɔd instead of *d-ʕɔd* to convey something that has not happened yet is rather unexpected (Rubin 2014, 168–71). The verbal form *t̄ē* is a perfective third person of a G-stem <

√*twy* meaning ‘to smell’ (JL, 50).<sup>18</sup> The term *níši* is the name of a star which can be observed at the beginning of the monsoon season (MLZ, 915) and is not recorded in JL. However, it is worth pointing out that the verbs listed in JL (195) under the root √*nsv* are related to the transhumance, which may be a viable semantic connection to the beginning of the monsoon. Indeed, it is in the wider sense of ‘beginning’ that this term is used here, as the Arabic translation أيام بدايات الخريف ‘days at the beginning of the monsoon’ would suggest (al-Shahri 2000, 261). The use of the plural relativiser *iz* is to be noted.

## (66)

ɛḍilín lhes širéft

*So-and-so is like a glow-worm*

فلان مثل الدودة اللزجة المضيئة

This is a comment about a nosy person whom it is difficult to get rid of (al-Shahri 2000, 88, 261).

The semantic connection is explained by the term *širéft*, meaning a sticky substance produced by a glow-worm (MLZ, 512). This term is not recorded under the root √*šrf* in JL (254).

## (67)

ɛḍilín ɔl məfkék<sup>ə</sup> beš iklét<sup>ə</sup> lɔ

*So-and-so is not rubbed with roasted millet*

فلان لم تُفرك به الذرة المقلية عند صغره

<sup>18</sup> Al-Kathiri and Dufour (2020, 195) state that the difference between Ga and Gb stems is obfuscated in doubly weak roots. However, they indicate that this verb exhibits some characteristics of a Ga-stem.

This is yet another proverb that, similarly to entries (28), (38), and (50), describes people who lack cleverness, on the basis of a folk belief according to which the mental faculties of an individual will be enhanced if he or she is rubbed with roasted millet as an infant (al-Shahri 2000, 88, 261).

The participial form *māfkēk* < √*fk* means ‘rubbed’; cf. *fekk* ‘to rub’ (Morris et al. 2019, 79). The long vowel is unexpected and might be due to a prosodic phenomenon. The term *īklēt* < \**e-mākālēt* is recorded with the meaning of ‘coffee-roaster, frying pan’ in JL (146). However, the meaning ‘roast dhurah’ is found in Rubin (2014, 665).

(68)

ēdīlīn mīṭəl 5-gʷor ε ṭāḥan ēkik

*So-and-so became like a slave who ground a ton of grain*

فلان كالعبد الذي طحن المكيك

This saying applies to those who work properly at the beginning of a task, but become less accurate towards the end of it. It is a reference to a local legend according to which a slave started to grind grains properly, but became so inaccurate towards the end of his task that he trapped his testicles in the roller (al-Shahri 2000, 88, 262).

The Gb-stem verb *mīṭəl*, which appears here as a perfective third person, means ‘to be like someone (but oftenest in curses)’ (JL, 176). The verbal form *ṭāḥan* is a perfective third person of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to mill, grind’ (JL, 276). The term *ēkik* < \**e-mekik* ‘measure of food’<sup>19</sup> (JL, 170) may be interpreted as ‘grain’

<sup>19</sup> To be precise, a mass measure (Watson, p.c.).

here. The use of ‘a ton’ in the English translation of the proverb is arbitrary, and does not reflect the Jibbali/Šḥarēt and Arabic text.

(69)

εḍilín ɔ yəḥēl ɔ šed<sup>ə</sup> b-ɔ maʃtēr

*He cannot carry the panniers or even the smaller load in between them*

فلان لا يتحمل حمولة كاملة ولا جزءاً منها

This proverb adds to the series of remarks about useless individuals, which includes entries (28), (38), (50), and (67) (al-Shahri 2000, 88, 262). The verbal form *yəḥēl* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to load; to take; to carry’ (JL, 111). The terms *šed* and *maʃtēr* indicate two different units of measurement, which are not recorded in the sources. This expression bears some similarities to the Mehri expression *la-ḥmōlāt wa-l-maʿtābīr* ‘(NN trägt) weder die (ganze) Last noch einen Teil davon’ (Sima 2005, 78).

(70)

εḍilín kéləʃ tun ḥag<sup>jə</sup>lɔ

*So-and-so left us in the open*

فلان تركنا وحدنا في العراء

This is a comment made when someone beloved and respected is temporarily or permanently absent from a community (al-Shahri 2000, 89, 262).

The verbal form *kéləʃ* is a third-person perfective of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to let, allow’ (JL, 144). The term *ḥag<sup>jə</sup>lɔ* ‘in the open’ is a masculine plural *nisbah* adjective with adverbial force,

which is not recorded in the lexica. However, the corresponding root  $\sqrt{hgl}$  pertains to the pasturing of animals (JL, 106; MLZ, 222), which is an outdoor activity *par excellence*. Therefore, the existence of a *nisbah* adjective  $*\dot{h}ag^{i\text{ʔ}}l\acute{i}$  (and its plural counterpart  $\dot{h}ag^{i\text{ʔ}}l\acute{s}$ ) related to this activity seems far from unlikely. Despite a marked lexical divergence, this expression corresponds in meaning to Mehri *flān šūtōmān m-ba‘dāh* ‘NN, wir sind nach seinem Weggehen Waisen geworden’ (Sima 2005, 78–79).

## (71)

ḡdīlīn xəlōṭ e-ṭīt l-e-rīyet

*So-and-so mixes the thirsty with those who have drunk their fill*

فلان خلط بين الظمأى والشاربة

This proverb describes someone who is not able to tell good from evil (al-Shahri 2000, 89, 263).

The verbal form  $xəlōṭ$  is a perfective third person of a G-stem meaning ‘to mix’ (JL, 300). The term  $\dot{t}\acute{i}t$ , meaning ‘thirsty (a cow, for example). This cannot be used for a human being’ (MLZ, 601: عطشى [البقرة مثلا] ولا تستخدم مع الانسان) is not recorded by JL (49), although it does record the root  $\sqrt{tmy}$ . Similarly, the term *rīyet* ‘quenched’ is not listed under the root  $\sqrt{rwy}$  in JL (218), but appears in MLZ (361) under the root  $\sqrt{rby}$ .<sup>20</sup> This is etymologically controversial, as evidence from other Semitic languages suggests that the above term should be derived from  $\sqrt{rwy}$ ; cf. the meanings connected to ‘drinking’ under Arabic روى (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 369) and Gəfəz 𐤂𐤓𐤕 (Leslau 2006, 478), as well as

<sup>20</sup> This term is the feminine form of رِيّ. It is recorded as رِيْتُ, which would suggest *rīyōt* rather than *rīyet*.

the cognate terms containing a /w/ as a second root consonant in Mehri (ML, 334).

(72)

ɛḍilín ɔ nfaɪ b-ɔ šfaɪ

*He is neither useful for work nor for playing*

فلان لا نفع منه ولا شفع

This is yet another remark about useless people (al-Shahri 2000, 89, 263). Cf. entries (28), (38), (50), (67), and (69).

The terms *nfaɪ* and *šfaɪ* are problematic in that they could be either H1-stem verbs (with initial vowel loss, as described in entry (45) above), or nouns deriving from the roots √nfɪ (JL, 181; MLZ, 929) and √šfɪ, an Arabic borrowing, *šfaɪ* < شفع ‘to mediate, use one’s good offices, put in a good word, intercede, intervene, plead’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 478), with /š/ for Arabic <ش>, as is common in Arabic loanwords; cf. *šéhi* ‘tea’ < south Arabian Arabic dialects *šahi* (JL, 265). Compare Mehri *lä-šfā w-lä-nfā* ‘(NN bringt) weder Hilfe noch Nutzen’ (Sima 2005, 79), whose meaning ‘So-and-so, no help and no benefit’ better renders the Jibbali/Šḥarēt expression.

(73)

ɛḍilín e-ɖɔrs mən šʔbɔts

*So-and-so, his blood is from his gums*

فلان دمه من لثته

This metaphor describes someone who causes trouble for relatives (al-Shahri 2000, 89, 263).

The term *šbɔt* ‘gums’ is recorded with a short vowel in JL (260). Interestingly, MLZ (469) lists this term with a long vowel,



as pronounced by al-Shahri, but with the totally different meaning of ‘skin that surrounds fingernails’ (الجلد المحيط بالأظافر).

(74)

ε *ḍirəfōt* təḥkék ḥanúfs

*He who feels the itch should scratch it himself*

من احست بالحكة عليها بأن تحك لنفسها

This saying underlines the importance of dealing with one’s own problems (al-Shahri 2000, 89, 264).

The verbal form *ḍirəfōt* (with a long vowel) is a perfective 3.F.SG. of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to itch, be itchy’ (JL, 47). The following verbal form *təḥkék* is an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a H1-stem reported to mean ‘to plane, level, smoothe’ (JL, 107). Interestingly, MLZ does not record either this form or the T1-stem recorded by JL (107) with the meaning ‘to scratch’. This is one of the few items in this collection in which the subject is feminine, although al-Shahri’s English translation has the pronoun ‘he’ (al-Shahri 2000, 89). However, the Arabic translation uses the feminine gender. This saying can be compared to Mehri *ḍärfōt taḥt<sup>ā</sup>kūk ḥnāfs* ‘Das Jucken kratzt sich selbst’ (Sima 2005, 79).

(75)

e-reš *delíl* b *ēšifirét*

*The head shows the skill of the hairdresser*

الرأس يدل على شخصية ومهارة الضافرة

This means that actions reveal the personality of the person who acts (al-Shahri 2000, 89, 264).

The term *delíl* means ‘guide’ (JL, 38). The long vowel in the segment *ēšifirét* is due to the coalescence of the vowel in the

preceding preposition *bə* and the definite article: \**bə-e-šifirét*. This noun is recorded by JL (324) as ‘plait, tress of hair’. However, MLZ (568) records it as ‘a woman who braids the hair’ (المرأة التي تقوم بضفر الشعر), which, *vis-à-vis* the Arabic rendition of this proverb, looks like a semantically more fitting interpretation.

## (76)

érxe i-nītk b-ɔ teʃʷm e-déħər

*Instead of fasting for your whole life, be happy*

إن تكن واسع الصدر صافي النية أفضل من صيامك الدهر كله

This is a piece of advice to a pious but unlucky person to stop fasting to please God and be happy (al-Shahri 2000, 90, 264).

The first verbal form is an imperative of a H1-stem meaning ‘to slacken; to let go (of a rope)’ (JL, 218), whilst the second one, *teʃʷm*, is a subjunctive 3.M.SG. of a G-stem deriving from a hollow root √*šwm* ‘to fast’ (JL, 243) and is part of a negative imperative. The term *nīt* ‘intention, determination’ (MLZ, 945: النية, القصد, العزم) is not listed in JL. In view of the above, the expression is probably best translated as ‘let go of your intention and don’t fast forever!’.

## (77)

erʃ xalé yəté kelé ɛ-bréš

*The area is deserted, the wolf eats his son*

الارض مهجورة لا قوت بها ياكل الذئب ولده

This saying describes a place which is devoid of any form of life (al-Shahri 2000, 90, 265).

The verbal form is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a G-stem deriving from the doubly weak root √*twy* meaning ‘to eat’ (JL, 273). The term *kelé*, which al-Shahri translates as ‘wolf’ and ذئب (al-

Shahri 2000, 90), is unattested. Interestingly, this term follows the same *CeCe* pattern as *ḍelē* ‘early morning’ (see also entry (59) of this collection), and shares with the latter the same apparent loss of /b/ as third root consonant, as well as semantics that match those of the /b/-final variant. This proverb is formally comparable with Mehri *arž xli kawb ytäyw ḥabrēh* ‘Wenn das Land öd ist, frißt der Hund sein Junges’ (Sima 2005, 79).

## (78)

ɛzd āḡ<sup>ʔ</sup>tēs ḡēs

*Let the quick-tempered person become worse*

زيد الأحق حماقة

This saying describes someone who is always in a bad mood (al-Shahri 2000, 90, 265).

The verbal form *ɛzd* is an imperative of a H1-stem listed in JL (321) as *ezed*. Both the participial form *āḡ<sup>ʔ</sup>tēs* < \**a-maḡtēs* ‘cross, frowning’ and *ḡēs* ‘trouble; unpleasant thing, person’ derive from the root √ḡyš (JL, 92). However, *āḡ<sup>ʔ</sup>tēs* is rendered in Arabic with *الأحمق* ‘dumb, stupid, silly, foolish, fatuous; fool, simpleton, imbecile’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 206), which provides an indication as to the meaning of this proverb.

This proverb is recorded by MLZ (683) as *أزد اغتأش غاش*. Also, cf. Mehri *azyäd mša‘mi ‘amūt* ‘Vermehre dem Zornigen noch den Zorn’ (Sima 2005, 79), notwithstanding the lexical divergences.

## (79)

ē šeš lob ɔ yətióḵ<sup>ʔ</sup> lo

*He who has the word no, is safe*

من يمتلك كلمة لا, لا تعيه الحيلة

This stresses the importance of saying ‘no’ when it is wise to do so (al-Shahri 2000, 90, 265). The term *lob* expresses anaphoric negation (i.e., ‘no!’) in Jibbali/Šḥarēt (JL, 166). Al-Shahri’s Arabic translation of the verbal form *yatišḥk* لا تعيه الحيلة ‘is not affected by cunning’, an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Gb-stem < √*twk*, is at variance with the meanings listed by JL (281) for this verb, namely ‘to be given a liability, be stuck with (b-) someone; to be at one’s wit’s end, unable to cope’. This form is not recorded by MLZ (595) under √*twk*, but semantically related terms can be found under √*tbk* (MLZ, 595, 576). With regard to this expression, one of the meanings listed by JL, ‘to be unable to cope’, seems the most fitting one.

(80)

ε šəfíd ɔ ɬilím

*He who has been promised something can expect that the promise  
will be kept*

من وُعد لم يُظلم

This is used as a remark on unpaid debts (al-Shahri 2000, 90, 266).

Al-Shahri in the first instance utters *šəféd*, the active voice of a perfective third person of a Š2-stem,<sup>21</sup> and then in the second instance uses its passive counterpart *šəfíd*, probably due to a slip. The use of a passive Š-stem is remarkable. However, given the

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<sup>21</sup> The I-weak root √*wfd*, from which this verb is derived, and the fact that only one Š-stem is recorded by JL, make the distinction between Š1 and Š2 difficult to determine. However, MLZ (978) records *شعد* and *شعيد*. The second form, corresponding to a Š2, seems to match *šəféd*.

basically active meaning of *šəfed* ‘to arrange a meeting, to swear, vow to do something’ (JL, 286), the use of its passive counterpart to convey the sense of ‘being promised something’ has a strong semantic motivation. The second verbal form is the passive perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to oppress, be unjust’ (JL, 49).

## (81)

ē šəš a-ğēg yədurēn

*He who has strong men at his back can show off in the arena*

من معه قوة الرجال يصول ويجول في الميدان

According to folk history, this sentence was uttered by a tribal leader who, at a tribal gathering, was marginalised by other tribal leaders on account of the small size of his tribe. He then ordered his people to have as many children as possible, so that twenty years later he attended another such gathering backed by a sizeable force of men. At present, it is used when a person in trouble is helped by family and friends (al-Shahri 2000, 91, 266).

The relativiser *ε* is realised as a long vowel here, as it is in entry (79) above. The verbal form *yədurēn* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a H2-stem deriving from a hollow root *√dwr* meaning ‘to return’ (JL, 43; MLZ, 344: عاد, آب, رجع). The semantics of this verb in this context are unclear. The stress falling on the *-(v)n* suffix of the imperfective is likely due to topicalisation, as described by Dufour (2016, 36).

## (82)

śom l-e-ššəfḵ b-ɔl (t)serʷš lə

*Sell to the bridegroom but do not accompany him*

بع على العريس ولا ترافقه

This proverb comments on the fact that, given the physical and mental strain entailed by a wedding, one can profit by selling overpriced goods to a bridegroom, who is too tired to bargain. Conversely, those who choose to stand by the bridegroom as he organises his wedding will share the strain (al-Shahri 2000, 91, 267).

The verbal form *šom* is an imperative of a G-stem meaning ‘to sell’ (JL, 244).<sup>22</sup> The term *šefk* ‘bridegroom’ (MLZ, 480: العريس; see also entry (115) in this collection) is not recorded in JL, although JL (260) does record the root  $\sqrt{šfk}$  as covering verbs and other terms related to marriage and weddings. The lack of a *t*-prefix in the subjunctive 2.M.SG. verb (*t*)*serʔš* ‘accompany’ (MLZ, 466: رافق وواكب) may only be explained if it belongs to the H2-stem class (Rubin 2014, 146; Testen 1992). The corresponding Mehri proverb is *šōm k-hifāk w-lä-ššäyräh lä* ‘Verkauf (etwas) an den Brautwerber, aber geh nicht mit ihm mit’ (Sima 2005, 79–80).

(83)

iz šélkum b-iz gʾūs fáxrɛ e-yɔ iʃɔh

*Those who leave early in the morning, while it is still dark, and  
those who leave a little before them, will arrive together in the  
morning*

الذين غادروا في منتصف الليل او اخره جميعهم يصلون صباحاً معاً

This means that those who start something earlier will not necessarily finish earlier (al-Shahri 2000, 91, 267).

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<sup>22</sup> This form is from the hollow root  $\sqrt{śʔm}$ , which has no distinction between Ga and Gb (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 210).

The verbal form *g'ūs*, a perfective third person of a H2-stem meaning ‘to go late at night’ (MLZ, 208: سار\ ذهب\ غادر في اخر الليل) is not recorded by JL.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, MLZ lists it under the root  $\sqrt{gwś}$ , but al-Shahri pronounces it with a clearly audible nasalised vowel, which would point to the root actually being  $\sqrt{gms}$ ; see also entry number (89) below. Compare the Mehri proverb *ḏä-syōrām fākḥ ḏ-‘āṣar (ḏ-ḥalläyy) yāṣabham käll faxrā* ‘Die um Mitternacht (oder: am Ende der Nacht) (los)gehen, werden am Morgen alle zusammen sein’ (Sima 2005, 80). Curiously, the actions described by the original Jibbali/Šḥarēt version of the expression and its Arabic translation are provided in reverse order in the English translation.

## (84)

ē ṣṛ šēš ʔz

*God is with the one who has patience*

إن الله مع الصابرين

This is a remark about those who eventually get what they wanted, after a long wait (al-Shahri 2000, 91, 267).

The relativiser *ε* is realised as a long vowel here, as in entries (79) and (81) above. The verbal form *ṣṛ* is a perfective third-person Ga-stem meaning ‘to be patient’ <  $\sqrt{ṣbr}$  (JL, 235). This proverb is also recorded by al-Ma’shani (2017, 84). Cf. Mehri *käll ḏ-ṣbōr bāli šēh* ‘Jeder der geduldig ist, mit dem ist Gott’ (Sima 2005, 80).

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<sup>23</sup> The initial vowel is lost because of the preceding sonorant (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 183).

## (85)

e-ṭerd yǝlhǝk her ɔl kun ɾerd<sup>o</sup> leš

*Only the skillful pursuer can catch his quarry*

الباحث عن ماله المسروق يستطيع اللحق به بسرعة إلا إذا كان كسولاً

This is used to underline the importance of catching an animal thief immediately. It is also used ironically if the animal cannot be retrieved before it is eaten by the thief (al-Shahri 2000, 92, 268).

The term *ṭerd* ‘pursuer’ (MLZ, 580: الذي يلاحق لصووص الماشية: ‘The one who tracks down cattle thieves’) is not recorded in JL, although the terms listed under the root √*ṭrd* are semantically related to this term (JL, 279–80). The vowel [ɛ] in the suffix attached to the preposition *l-* is unexpected (Rubin 2014, 268). The verbal form *yǝlhǝk* is a subjunctive 3.M.SG. of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to catch up with, overtake, run after’ (JL, 163) and is used here with optative force.

The literal meaning of this expression is problematic: notwithstanding the Arabic and English renditions, the Jibbali/Šḥarēt texts seems to mean ‘the pursuer will catch if there is no other pursuer against him’.

## (86)

a-ḡakar šerb

*The youth is spring (the season)*

النمو والفتوة هي الربيع

This is said of a person whose appearance and/or circumstances improved with age (al-Shahri 2000, 92, 268).



The term *faḳar* is reported to mean ‘size’ (JL, 11) and, additionally, ‘growth’ (MLZ, 639–40: النمو. الطول. الكبير), with the latter meaning probably to be interpreted here as ‘age of growth’ and, therefore, ‘youth’. The term *ṣerb* means ‘autumn (the period from October to December after the monsoon rains)’ (JL, 241).

## (87)

a-ḡásər ε-raḥīm əxer ar a-ḡa e-défər

*A good friend is better than a bad brother*

الصديق الجيد خير من الشقيق السيئ

This self-explanatory proverb stems from the awareness that friends are often closer than one’s own relatives (al-Shahri 2000, 92, 268). The term *ḡásər* means ‘husband; close friend’ (JL, 17). The adjective *raḥīm* has the peculiar meaning ‘beautiful, good’ (JL, 210; MLZ, 368: حسن) *vis á vis* its Arabic cognate *raḥīm* ‘merciful, compassionate’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 332).

## (88)

aḡḡər e-défər bə-tbaɸ ser šəfš

*Send an incapable man and follow him*

أرسل الأحمق وأقتفي أثره

This is said upon someone’s failure to carry out a task (al-Shahri 2000, 92, 268).

The imperative *aḡḡər* stems from a H1-stem verb < √ḡrr meaning ‘to send, send for’ (JL, 14). The term *šəfš* is used here in its original meaning ‘trace, track’ (JL, 246). However, it underwent a process of grammaticalisation in Mehri and Jibbali/Šḡərēt into a discourse particle meaning ‘it turned out’. This process is discussed in Watson and al-Mahri (2017, 95–96).

(89)

ōl ē-yɔ mug<sup>j</sup>ūs*You can own something belonging to another for only a few hours*

مال الناس ييقى معك صبحية او برهة فقط

This is a comment made upon re-gaining possession of something that had been lent sooner than the borrower expected (al-Shahri 2000, 92, 269).

The H2-stem participial form *mug<sup>j</sup>ūs* ‘gone at late night’ is unrecorded (MLZ, 208) and, similarly to the form of the same verb used in entry number (83) above, it is pronounced with a nasalised consonant, which would argue for a  $\sqrt{gms}$  root, despite its being listed under  $\sqrt{gwś}$  (MLZ, 208).

(90)

āṣtilīm mībdi

*The learner over-exaggerates*

الحديث الخيرة كثير المبالغة

This is a comment made about someone who, in new circumstances, claims to know how to act despite actually not knowing (al-Shahri 2000, 93, 269).

This proverb is made up of two participial forms: *āṣtilīm* < \**e-maṣtilīm* ‘educated’ from the root  $\sqrt{slm}$  (JL, 13), which is better translated as ‘learner’ in this case; and *mībdi*, which seems to convey the sense of ‘exaggerated’ (كثير المبالغة), and is, in all likelihood, connected to  $\sqrt{bdy}$  ‘lying’ (JL, 23; MLZ, 119–20), but is hitherto unrecorded.

This proverb is also recorded by MLZ (119) as أَعْتَلِمَ مَبْدِي.

(91)

ōl̥ yəslél̥ āfl̥š

*The property lifts its owner*

المال يحمل ويرفع صاحبه

This can be used either as an encouragement to be financially independent, or as a comment about someone who, in spite of not being liked by most members of a community, is wealthy (al-Shahri 2000, 93, 269).

The verbal form is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a G-stem meaning ‘lift up off the ground’ (JL, 252). Unlike in entry number (89) above, the devoicing/pre-aspiration of /l/ is clearly audible here. The segment *āfl̥š* is from *\*a-bafl̥-š*. This expression corresponds to Mehri *mōl yrōfaʿ baʿlāh* ‘Besitz erhebt seinen Besitzer’ (Sima 2005, 80).

(92)

a-ḡaró ə-gīd yəṭabri

*The good speech breaks me down*

الكلام الجيد يُحد ويُهْدئ من غضبي

This is used when someone tries to convince another person by means of heated arguments at first, and then calms down and uses more relaxed and friendly manners (al-Shahri 2000, 93, 270).

This saying features a mixed Mehri–Jibbali/Šḥarēt language, although, as al-Shahri explains in the Arabic commentary, هذا المثل مخلوط المهرية الشحرية إلا أنه يميل إلى المهرية أكثر من الشحرية مع العلم بأن اللغتين متقاربان جداً ‘This proverb is a mixture of the Mehri and Shehri languages, but it tends to Mehri more than to Shehri, notwithstanding the close kinship of the two languages’. The verb

*yəṭabri* ‘breaks me’, for example, is the normal form for ‘it breaks me’ in Mehri, with a 1.C.SG. personal suffix attached. That said, the Mehri version of this proverb, *grō jīd yṭōbār ḥaysi* ‘Eine gute Rede bricht meinen Zorn’ (Sima 2005, 80), features the additional segment *ḥaysi* ‘my anger’.

## (93)

ɔ ɡɔlɔb l-ōlš ɔ leš miṭɔr lɔ

*You cannot blame a person for keeping his own property*

من لم التهاون في ماله لا لوم عليه

This proverb is used when a person complains about not being able to obtain something for free (al-Shahri 2000, 93, 270).

In utterance-initial position, ɔ represents the relativiser *ε* having been influenced by the leftmost vowel of the following segment, as expected in the presence of an intervening guttural (JL, xxix–xxx). The verbal form *ɡɔlɔb* is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to refuse’ (JL, 85). The vowel in the pronominal suffix attached to the preposition *l-* is [e], unlike in entry number (85) above, which has [ɛ]. The term *miṭɔr*, which appears here with the meaning ‘blame’, is not recorded in the lexical sources used in this study. In light of the above, the literal meaning of this expression is ‘he who doesn’t refuse his wealth, there is no blame on him’.

## (94)

ε aɡad yəkɔʃ ɰɔɡət fəlɔ yəʃeʃɔfɔ

*He who travels about will gain wealth or knowledge*

من سعى يكسب مالاً أو معلومة

This is used either to encourage lazy people to seek adventure, or as a comment about those who have attained something valuable as a result of travelling (al-Shahri 2000, 94, 270).

The imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem verb  $y\acute{a}k\acute{o}\acute{s} < \sqrt{k\acute{s}y}$  is recorded in JL (158) as ‘to pay; to pay blood-money’, which, given the general meaning of the proverb, would not make sense. However, if we view this verb as an Arabic loan, we can find the meaning ‘to fulfil’, associated with the expression *قضى الحاجة* (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 212), which is consistent with both the English and the Arabic translation of this proverb. The final vowel in the verb  $y\acute{a}\acute{s}\acute{e}\acute{s}\acute{o}\acute{f}\acute{o}$ , an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Š1-stem  $< \sqrt{s\acute{f}v}$  meaning ‘to gather news, find out’ (JL, 237), is transcribed by al-Shahri (2000, 270) as *ء*, which normally indicates [ε]. It therefore exhibits the same phenomenon found in entries (40) and (45) above, where the term *tóde* ‘breast’ is realised as *tódo*, and the term *gófε* ‘shadow’ is realised as *gófó*. The Mehri counterpart of this saying is *d-yäsyūr, ykayž hōjät w-lī yäššayf* ‘Wer (aus dem Haus) geht, erledigt wichtige Dinge und eignet sich Wissen an’ (Sima 2005, 80–81)

(95)

*ε-ferdót tfōrd εd ēmítés*

*When an animal is frightened it takes flight and re-joins its herd*

*الجافلة تهرب إلى أمهاتها*

This sentence is uttered to comment on the faithfulness of certain people towards their families and tribes, so that they will always remember home regardless of how far they travel, and will not let hard feelings come between them and their loved ones (al-Shahri 2000, 94, 270).

The verbal form *tfōrd* is an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to stampede, panic’ (JL, 59) and, as is the case with entry number (21) of the MLZ collection, it is realised with a long vowel. The segment *ēmítés* ‘her mothers’ is the result of the plural *emátə* ‘mothers’ (JL, 3) with a definite article *ε* and a post-posed 3.F.SG. personal suffix attached. Compare the Mehri expression *q-fārdōt tfōrād tahwēl ḥāmutyās* ‘(Das Kälbchen,) das Angst bekommt, läuft vor Angst zu seinen Müttern’ (Sima 2005, 81). In light of the original text, its Arabic translation, and its Mehri counterpart, this expression can be more faithfully rendered in English as ‘the frightened animal runs to its mothers in fear’.

## (96)

*e-ffudún ɔ t-tōrəs ar e-ḡits*

*A stone only break his sister*

لا تكسر الحجارة إلا اختها

This means that stubborn people can only be made to see reason by someone more stubborn than them (al-Shahri 2000, 94, 271).

As in entry number (40), it is possible to observe here a term whose initial sound is a voiceless non-glottalic consonant with a definite marker: *e-ffudún*. The 3.F.SG. prefix of the imperfective Ga verbal form *t-tōrəs* < *ttōrəs*, meaning ‘to break’ (JL, 282) shows the effects of regressive assimilation. There is a 3.F.SG. personal suffix *-s* attached to it, referring to *fudún* ‘rock’ (JL, 51), which must, at least in this case, be regarded as lexically feminine. The corresponding Mehri expression is *šōwar att<sup>a</sup>kūkas är ḡits* ‘Ein Stein zerschlägt nur seine Schwester’ (Sima 2005, 81),

also recorded by ML (368) as a *šāwar*, *təbrīs ār aḡās* ‘only a stone can break a stone’.<sup>24</sup>

(97)

e-kiśét širík b ižirún

*The wolf is the partner of the goat-herder*

الدئب شريك برعاة الغنم

This is a remark about the clever taking advantage of the simple (al-Shahri 2000, 94, 271). It uses the terms *kiśét* ‘wolf’ (JL, 153; MLZ, 748: ذئب), and *īžirún* ‘shepherd’ (JL, 4; MLZ, 830: رعاة الغنم).

(98)

ε kizáf! ε kizáf! ɔl řásər heš b-ɔl beṭaḥ

*You, Kieza, wake up. You have no husband and no baydhah*

يا قيزاع يا قيزاع لا زوج عندك ولا بيضح

This is used to joke about daydreamers and is based on a folk tale in which a woman named *Ḳizaṣ* had been talking in her sleep about getting married whilst she was out in the wild with other women in order to harvest the *beṭaḥ* plant (al-Shahri 2000, 95, 271).

The vocative particle ε (JL, 1) receives a prominent stress within the utterance. The feminine personal name *Ḳizaṣ* seems not to be recorded elsewhere; however, cf. Arabic قُرْعَة ‘wind-driven, tattered clouds, scud; tuft of hair’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 761), and see also Castagna (2022b). The plant name *beṭaḥ* corresponds to *Gladiolus ukambanensis* (Miller and Morris 1988, 150), a plant whose corms are traditionally eaten.

<sup>24</sup> Literally ‘the stone, only its brother breaks it’.

(99)

e-kiśśét tšsərḥ

*The lone cow is always in danger*

الحيوان الذي يرمى منفراً يتعرض للخطر

This saying is a reminder that there is no safety in being alone (al-Shahri 2000, 95, 272).

The term *kiśśét* is an etymological cognate with *kiśét* 'wolf' (see entry number (97) above). Al-Shahri's Arabic translation الحيوان 'the animal', however, suggests this is the most fitting meaning in this case. The verbal form *tšsərḥ* is an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a Š1-stem meaning 'to be in danger' and is not recorded in the lexical sources used in this study.

(100)

ε kəšər ɛrgiéf! ed tak tak l-enúfk (l-enúf) b-ed kələŋk kələŋk  
ḥanúf

*You, the lion of Arjaff, if you save something, you save it for yourself. If you eat everything, you will be the loser*

يا اسد منطقة ارجاف إن أسرفت أسرفت على نفسك وإن وفرت وفرت لنفسك

This is a remark about someone who tends to be a spendthrift (al-Shahri 2000, 95, 272). According to al-Shahri, *ɛrgiéf* is a place where the Arabian leopard used to live. A place named *Arjef* can be found today in eastern Dhofar at 17°56'35.7"N 55°04'36.0"E.<sup>25</sup> The meaning of *ed* in this case seems to be that of 'if', normally *aḍə* (Rubin 2014, 349). Alternatively, this might be an allomorph of the preposition *ed* (Rubin 2014, 365–66). The segment *ḥanúf* 'for (your)self' is made up of the preposition *hər* 'to, for' and the

<sup>25</sup> No Jibbali/Šḥarēt speakers currently live in the area.



reflexive pronoun *enúf* (Rubin 2014, 64). The verbal forms *tak* and *kéləfk* are, respectively, a perfective 2.M.SG. of a G-stem < √*twy* ‘to eat’ (JL, 273) and a perfective 2.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to let, allow’ (JL, 144), which is understood to have the meaning of ‘eat’ here. The Arabic rendition of this saying employs the form IV verb أسرف ‘to waste, squander, dissipate, spend lavishly’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 408), and the form II verb وفر ‘to save’ (Wehr and Cowan 1978, 1083).

## (101)

ε k-e-défər iṣṣḥ dəfər

*The one who accompanies the bad becomes bad*

من عاشر السيئ يكون سيئاً مثله

This proverb is used as a warning of the consequences of being with people of ill repute (al-Shahri 2000, 95, 262).

The H1-stem verb *iṣṣḥ* is used here in the sense of ‘becoming’ (JL, 234), in a parallel fashion to its Arabic cognate, the causative verb *aṣbaḥa* ‘to become’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 500), which likewise exhibits a connection to the semantic field of ‘morning’. Although √*sbḥ* is not the native Modern South Arabian root for ‘morning’, one should not rule out a parallel development *a priori*, as this would offer a satisfactory explanation for the use of the verb in the sense of ‘becoming’ here. In Mehri, the expression *ḥayr yäsyūr k-ḥayr yäṣḥäyl žratyäh* ‘Der Esel geht (nur) mit dem Esel, der seinen Kot liebt’ (Sima 2005, 81) is similar in meaning, despite the profound lexical divergences.

A variant of this expression is *her aḡad-ək kə-rahūm tken rahūm / her aḡad-ək kə-misérʔd tken misérʔd* ‘if you go with the good, you will good. If you go with the evil, you will be evil’.

This comes from an elderly speaker from al-Ḥallānīya (Kuria Muria; Castagna 2018, 415).

(102)

ɔl bke tɔ ar sudʒi b-ɔl ʃhek tɔ ar ɣaʃ<sup>ə</sup>mi (xaʃ<sup>ə</sup>mi)

*He who makes me cry is a friend, and he who makes me laugh is an enemy*

لم ييكني إلا من صدق معي ولم يضحكني إلا عدوي

This may be said upon making an unpleasant, but necessary, negative remark, or upon being flattered (al-Shahri 2000, 96, 273).

Al-Shahri utters a [h] instead of a [x] in the first repetition of the term *xaʃ<sup>ə</sup>m* (JL, 306). A similar and more systematic phenomenon has been documented in the dialect of al-Ḥallānīyah in the vicinity of low vowels (Castagna 2018, 126–27). The verbal forms are imperfective third-person forms of two H1-stems meaning, respectively, ‘to cause to weep’ (JL, 25) and ‘to make laugh’ (JL, 325). The similarities to Mehri *raḥmāt Allah lā-d-bäkyini, w-naʿlat Allah lā-d-ḡahkīni* ‘Die Gnade Gottes für den, der mich beweint, und der Fluch Gottes für den, der mich verlacht’ (Sima 2005, 81) are hard to miss.

(103)

ɔl aʃtɔdɔ b-ɔl ʦolum

*He is not aggressive nor unjust*

لم يعتدي ولم يظلم

This is said when a son behaves like his father (al-Shahri 2000, 96, 273).

The verbal form  $\partial\text{ʔt}ód\partial$ , a perfective third person of a T2-stem  $< \sqrt{\text{ʔdw}}$ , is listed in JL (7) as *a'tede* 'to attack', and as 'assault'  $< \sqrt{\text{ʔdy}}$  in MLZ (614: أَعْتَدَى). The verb  $tólum$  is a perfective third-person form of a Ga-stem meaning 'to oppress, be unjust' (JL, 49).

## (104)

$\partial l \text{ } \partial léd \text{ } b-\partial \text{ } teléd$

*So-and-so, no sons, no daughters*

لا اولاد ذكور ولا أناث

This can be either a comment about someone who has not wanted to get married, or a sympathetic remark about someone who, in spite of being married, does not have children (al-Shahri 2000, 96, 273).

The term *teléd*, not recorded by JL, is listed in MLZ (156) with the meaning 'issue, posterity, legacy' (العقب \ الذرية. التركة). MLZ records this proverb within the same entry, giving a slightly different Arabic translation: *فلان ليس له ولد وعقب*: 'so-and-so has neither a son nor a legacy'. This expression is recorded as *أذيلين أل* by MLZ (156). The nearly identical counterpart of this expression in Mehri is *lä-wléd w-lä-tléd* '(Er hat) keine Kinder und (seine Frau) wird auch keine mehr zur Welt bringen' (Sima 2005, 82).

## (105)

$\partial l \text{ } te \text{ } he \text{ } \varepsilon \text{ } b\partial \text{ } M\partial\text{ʔ}^nín \text{ } l\partial \text{ } tte \text{ } ʕar \text{ } h\partial t \text{ } \varepsilon \text{ } b \text{ } e\text{-}Foru\text{ʕ}$

*I didn't eat here in Massneen, how can you eat in Foroush?*

انا الذي في مصنين لم أكل فكيف تأكل انت الذي في فوروش؟

This saying is uttered when someone cannot have something that someone else can have easily, and stems from a folk tale of two jinns, living in separate caves named *Məṣnún* and *Foruṣ* near Wadi Darbat. When the jinn in *Foruṣ* asked if there was anything to eat, the jinn in *Məṣnún* replied with this sentence (al-Shahri 2000, 96, 274).

The place-name *Məṣnún* is also recorded by MLZ (872). The use of *ṣar* ‘only, except’ with the meaning of ‘how come’ is idiomatic. Both verbal forms are derived from the Ga-stem < √*twy* ‘to eat’ (JL, 273): the first one behaves as an imperfective 1.C.SG., although it lacks the expected prefix (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 215).<sup>26</sup>

(106)

ɔl te dúɣur lɔ ɛštélkə ʕar e-míhéš

*I don't eat the beans but I drink their water*

لا اكل الفاصوليا وإنما أشرب ماءها؟

This is used when someone claims not to be doing something whilst doing something very similar to what he claims not to be doing (al-Shahri 2000, 96, 274).

The intonation of the speaker, as well as the Arabic translation, make it clear that this is a question. The imperfective 1.C.SG. of the G-stem < √*twy*, as in the preceding entry, lacks the corresponding prefix. The second verbal form *ɛštélkə* is an imperfective 1.C.SG. of a T1-stem < √*šky* meaning ‘to drink’ (JL,

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<sup>26</sup> This prefix is a short vowel, so that the preceding negation *ɔl* might have a role in neutralising it.

262).<sup>27</sup> The segment *e-míhēš* ‘its water’ indicates broth rather than water, as shown by a similar expression in Mehri involving meat instead of beans: *atäyw tiwyäs lä är mräkas* ‘Ich esse nicht ihr Fleisch sondern (trinke) nur ihre Brühe’ (Sima 2005, 82).

(107)

ɔl tīrót b-ɔl ġizyūt

*It has not been fractured and has not been sprained*

لم تنكسر ولم تنفك

This proverb is used in two ways: either as a comment about an action which, although frowned upon, has not caused any trouble, or about a problem whose solutions are all likely to have the same outcome (al-Shahri 2000, 97, 274).

The first verbal form *tīrót* is a perfective 3.F.SG. of a passive Ga-stem < √*tbr* meaning ‘to break’ (JL, 282). The second verbal form is a perfective 3.F.SG. of a Gb-stem *ġizyūt* meaning ‘to get a sprained joint’ < √*ġzm* (JL, 92). Compare the Mehri expression *l-täbrōt wa-l-ġazmōt* ‘Es ist weder gebrochen noch verstaucht’ (Sima 2005, 82).

(108)

ɔl ġībər nīki b-ɔl ħ-mu əntwáh

*The genitals were not clean and the water was not saved*

لا الفرج تنظف ولا الماء توفر

This is used when a big effort is made in vain. Additionally, it may be used as a comment about unsuccessful backbiting (al-Shahri 2000, 97, 275).

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<sup>27</sup> For a commentary on this verb, see entry number (4) of this collection.

Like entry number (13) of this collection, the language used is strongly influenced by Mehri: *g'ib̥ar* is 'vulva' in Mehri (ML, 113); compare Jibbali/Šḥarēt *zyeb* (JL, 69). The Mehri term *mu(h)* 'water' (ML, 274) is used in conjunction with the Mehri definiteness marker *h-* (Watson 2012, 63–64). The verb *antwah* 'to be plentiful', in the T-stem, rendered in Arabic as *وفر* 'to abound' (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 1083), is not recorded in the lexical sources used in this study. However, the presence of a [w] points to a non-native term (Rubin 2014, 33–35). Additionally, compare the Mehri verb *nəwo* '(rain-clouds) to pile up' < *√nw?* (ML, 305). Rather unexpectedly, Sima does not record any corresponding proverb in Mehri.

(109)

ɔl ḥaré ʕar ε egdéb b-ɔl beké ʕar ε taʕáb

*Only those in need ask for help, and only those in pain will cry*

لم يطلب إلا من أعدم ولم يبك إلا من تألم

This saying is used to reproach those who declare that someone apparently in need is, in fact, lying (al-Shahri 2000, 97, 275).

According to Rubin (2012), the Ga-stem verb *ḥaré* 'to beg' (JL, 115), which appears here in the perfective third-person form, is the source of the future markers *dḥa-*, *ḥa-*, and *a-*. The verbal form *egdéb* is a perfective third person of a H1-stem meaning 'to become poor and hungry' (JL, 70). The third verbal form *beké* is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning 'to weep' (JL, 25). Finally, the fourth verbal form is a perfective third person of a Gb-stem meaning 'to be weary' (JL, 269).

(110)

ɔl rɛʃ b-ɔl gʲɔd

*Neither head nor the skin*

لا رأس ولا جلد

This is used as a comment about an unsuccessful search (al-Shahri 2000, 97, 275). The Mehri counterpart of this expression is *la-hrēh wa-l-jōd* ‘Weder Kopf noch Haut’ (Sima 2005, 82).

(111)

ɔl Səʔad b-ɔl Masʕúd əxér

*Neither Saʕad nor Masaʕoud is better*

لا سعد ولا مسعود افضل

This saying is used when having to choose between two things that are equally unappealing (al-Shahri 2000, 98, 276). *Səʔad* and *Masʕúd* are two personal names of Arabic origin.

(112)

ɔl šerʕét b-ɔl farḥát

*I’m not attracted by him (or her), and I don’t even like him (or her)*

لا ميل ولا رغبة

This saying is used as a description of someone who is deemed not to be attractive in any way, either physically or in terms of personality (al-Shahri 2000, 98, 276). The two nouns appearing in this expression, *šerʕét* and *ferḥát*, mean, respectively, ‘physical desire’ (JL, 255) and ‘happiness’ (JL, 60). However, MLZ (695) renders the latter as رغبة ‘desire’, which seems more fitting in this context. Therefore, the overall meaning can be understood as ‘(I

feel) no (physical) desire and no longing (for so-and-so)'. Compare Mehri *flān l-šärgāt wa-l-färḥāt* 'NN—weder Leidenschaft noch Freude' (Sima 2005, 82). See also entry (176) of this collection.

## (113)

ɔl šʕnít b-ɔl xɔr

*He has neither a good appearance nor hidden qualities*

لا مظهر حسن ولا خفايا حسنة

The meaning of this proverb is similar to that of proverb number (112) above, although no physical attraction is necessarily implied in this case (al-Shahri 2000, 98,276).

The term *šʕnít* means 'sight' (JL, 253) and *xɔr* means 'analysis of the human being, his noble qualities (opposite of evident)' (MLZ, 313: [مخير الانسان \ صفاته النبيلة] عكس المظهر).<sup>28</sup>

## (114)

ɔl šɔrɔken tɛl ɬar her nənhágʃ

*We only made the music for dancing*

لم نطبل إلا من اجل ان نرقص

This is often said when someone asks why a certain event is taking place, and the reason is rather obvious (al-Shahri 2000, 98, 276).

The verbal form *šɔrɔken* is a perfective 1.C.PL. of a Ga-stem meaning 'to make' (JL, 267). The vowel between C<sup>1</sup> and C<sup>2</sup> is normally [e], but here it assimilates to the stressed vowel in an

<sup>28</sup> This term is not recorded by JL.



assimilatory process typical of the eastern dialects of the language.<sup>29</sup> The second verbal form *nənhágí* is an imperfective 1.C.PL. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to dance’ (JL, 186; al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 202). The term *tēl* < *√tbl* ‘drum’ (JL, 274) is used synecdochally here for ‘music’.

## (115)

e-lšín ē-ššefk

*The tongue of a suitor*

لسان الخاطب

This remark is used when someone’s actions, performance or general behaviour does not live up to one’s expectations (al-Shahri 2000, 98, 277).

The term *šefk* ‘bridegroom’ (MLZ, 480: العريس) is used here idiomatically for ‘someone whose words are persuasive’ and is translated as ‘suitor’ in English (al-Shahri 2000, 98), and خاتب in Arabic (al-Shahri, 277). This expression formally corresponds to Mehri *lšän d-hīfak* ‘(Er hat) die Zunge eines Brautwerbers’ (Sima 2005, 83).

## (116)

ɔl meššádəd šéfe b-ɔl tet šəbrót

*Don’t delay marrying a beautiful woman, and don’t delay using  
the freshly grown grass*

لا تأجيل للأرض الخصبة ولا للمرأة الجميلة

This is used to convince someone to act on a matter sooner rather than later (al-Shahri 2000, 99, 277).

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<sup>29</sup> See Introduction, p. 20. See also entry number (5) of the MLZ collection.

The participial form *meššádād* ‘late’ is linked to a Š1-stem verb *šāšded* derived from the root √šdd, meaning ‘to put something aside temporarily’ (JL, 6), and hence ‘to procrastinate’. JL does not record a participial form for this verb. However, MLZ (612) does: مذخور \ مؤخر لوقت الحاجة \ الشدة. It is noteworthy that this participial form is used as a predicate.

The term *šéfe* means ‘untouched, uncropped grass’ (JL, 246). The F.SG. adjective *šabrót* ‘perfect’ is not recorded in JL. However, MLZ (499) records it with the meaning ‘perfection’ (الاتقان).

**(117)**

ɔl ʕara b-ɔ šidád

*There is no guard and no door*

لا حراس ولا باب موصد

This saying may be used in three different circumstances: (1) when there is nothing to be afraid of, (2) when one is not afraid of someone else’s threats, or (3) as a comment on property being left unguarded at the mercy of thieves (al-Shahri 2000, 99, 277).

The term *ʕara* ‘vigil, sleeplessness’ (MLZ, 623: السهر, السهاد) is not recorded by JL. The term *šidád* is translated as ‘door’ in English (al-Shahri 2000, 99), and باب موصد in Arabic (al-Shahri, 277). However, MLZ (474) has سد ‘obstruction’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 403), to which *šidad* seems to be etymologically related.

**(118)**

ɔl kɔb b-ɔl kɪʃəʃét

*No dogs, no rats*

لا ذئاب ولا قوارض ولا...

This is said in response to enquiries about one's situation and means that everything is basically fine (al-Shahri 2000, 99, 278).

The term *ḵiṣṣet* 'rats/rodents' is not recorded as such by JL or MLZ. However, both publications do list verbs and nouns within the semantic field of 'biting' (JL, 157; MLZ, 755: قرض). The final ولا 'nor' in the Arabic translation of this proverb implies that other items may be (optionally?) attached to this proverb.

(119)

ɔl mušúr b-ɔl aḵṣát

*No sardines food and no winter winds*

لا علف للحيوان ولا رياح الشتاء

This is used when a person refuses to lend any kind of help (al-Shahri 2000, 100, 278).

The term *mušur*, not listed in JL, is translated as 'livestock fodder' by MLZ (868: علف الماشية). The term *aḵṣát* is from √ḵṣw 'strong, cold, rainless wind' (JL, 140; Morris et al. 2019, 76). Since sardines are indeed used as animal fodder in Dhofar during the dry season, and the fresh winter grass is similarly used to feed livestock, al-Shahri's translation makes sense.

(120)

ɔl mólɔk<sup>ə</sup> li i-defər ar bə xɔš

*The bad person cannot conquer me except by his mouth*

لم يهزميني السيئ البذي إلا بفمه (لسانه)

This is said when giving up an argument with someone evil (al-Shahri 2000, 100, 279). The corresponding expression in Mehri is *mlōk lī bḏi ār bā-lšānāh* 'Der Böse beherrscht mich nur durch

seine Zunge’ (Sima 2005, 83). The verbal form *məlk* is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to own’ (JL, 171).

(121)

ɔl yəʃáf e-dēh / ɔ ləʃəf e-dēh

*Even the very best person is not safe from misfortune*

لم ولن يسلم الانسان الطيب الجميل

This is said when a person who is generally successful falls into misfortune (al-Shahri 2000, 100, 279).

The interpretation of this proverb is problematic in view of some degree of ambiguity in the recording which could not be clarified through either the translations provided or the transcription given by al-Shahri. Consequently, the utterance may be segmented in two different ways. The verbal forms *yəʃáf* and *ləʃəf* are, respectively, an imperfective and a subjunctive 3.M.SG. of a Gb-stem deriving from  $\sqrt{wʃ}$  and meaning ‘to survive trials’ (JL, 293). The term *dēh* ‘misfortune’ <  $\sqrt{dbh}$  is not listed in JL. MLZ (349) records a H1-stem verb under the above-mentioned root, meaning ‘to distort, to seek/try to distort something’ (شوه, سعى \), (حاول تشويه الشيء), so this is likely to be a nominal form derived from this root.

(122)

ɔl edəf de bə de b-ɔl bə e-tek a həfəl

*No one knows anything about anyone, nor about the ripe figs*

لم يعلم احد بأحد ولا بالتينة ذات الثمار الناضجة

This is used to comment about one’s inability to give help, or to suggest that someone is under the wrong impression about someone (al-Shahri 2000, 100, 279).

The verbal form *edəʃ* is a perfective third person of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to know’ (JL, 286).<sup>30</sup>

The relativiser is realised as [a], probably because of the contiguity of a pharyngeal consonant.

The term *teḵ* means ‘wild fig’ (JL, 282).

The term *ḥéfəl* is not recorded as such by the lexical sources used in this study. However, the root  $\sqrt{hfl}$  is listed both by JL (104–5) and MLZ (249–50), and the terms listed fall within the semantic field of fruit ripeness. Given that the pattern  $C^1\acute{e}C^2\partial C^3$  often represents active participles (JL, *passim*), one is led to hypothesise that this term simply means ‘ripe’.

### (123)

ēnfī ɔl kéləʃ her ax<sup>ə</sup>rī še lɔ

*By saying everything our ancestors leave nothing for us to say*

لم يترك السلف للخلف شيء (حكمة)

This means that the ancestors, having said a lot, have not left anything for their descendants to say. This is used in response to other proverbs (al-Shahri 2000, 101, 280).

The term *ēnfī*, listed by JL under the root  $\sqrt{?nf}$ , and under the root  $\sqrt{nfy}$  by MLZ, normally means ‘first, ancient’ (JL, 4), but it can also mean ‘forbear, ancestor’ (MLZ, 931). The term *ax<sup>ə</sup>rī* usually means ‘late, later, last; second; behind’ (JL, 5) and is used here to contrast with *ēnfī* and convey the meaning of ‘descendant’. Compare the Mehri expression *ḥāw<sup>a</sup>lī l-‘ād kūla‘ hār āx<sup>a</sup>rī šī lā* ‘Der Vorfahre hat dem Nachfahren nichts übrig gelassen’ (Sima 2005, 83).

<sup>30</sup> See entry number (41) for further details about Gb-stem forms.

## (124)

in kəttəʃ kəttəʃ

*What has been paid is paid*

ما تم دفعه قد زال

This is said when paying off a debt (al-Shahri 2000, 101, 280).

The less common relative pronoun *in* ‘all that’ (Rubin 2014, 72) is attested here.<sup>31</sup> The verb kəttəʃ < kəttəʃ is a perfective third person of a T1-stem, and is listed as ‘to get cut’ (JL, 154). However, the corresponding participial form mekəttəʃ is listed by MLZ (758), and not by JL, as ‘compensation, or what is paid in exchange for the settlement of a debt’ (العوض او ما يسدد من متاع بدل) (الدين). From a paremiological point of view, this proverb exhibits a strong element of tautology (Norrick 2015, 18).

## (125)

e-nkel máǵ<sup>3</sup>reb mən ʔer šfret

*The good person is known even when he is in the cradle*

الذكي يُعرف حتى وهو لا يزال على فراش المهد

This saying is used to comment on the talents of a child (al-Shahri 2000, 101, 280).

The audio has *e-nkel*, with a short vowel (presumably a definite article). However, the meaning given by JL (190), ‘choice (livestock)’, does not fit. Conversely, what one would expect here is *ēnkel* < \**e-menkel* ‘active, energetic, heroic’, from the same root (JL, 190). This, however, would raise questions as to the missing initial nasalised vowel. The passive participle *maǵ<sup>3</sup>reb*

<sup>31</sup> It is also found in entry number (9) of the elicited proverbs.

means ‘famous, well-known’ (JL, 88). The term *šfrét* ‘cradle’ (MLZ, 478) is not recorded by JL.

## (126)

in hē mən šútum yōte b-e-gidrít<sup>a</sup>

*What falls from the sky will hit the ground*

ما يسقط من السماء يستقر على الأرض

This proverb means that actions have unavoidable consequences (al-Shahri 2000, 101, 281). The rare relativiser *in* (Rubin 2014, 72) is used here, as it is in entry number (9) of the elicited proverbs below. The verbal form *hē* is a perfective third person of a G-stem deriving from a doubly weak root  $\sqrt{hwy}$  meaning ‘to fall’ (JL, 100; al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 195). The verb *yōte* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Gb-stem from the root  $\sqrt{wty}$  meaning ‘to come, come upon; to happen to be; to fall upon’ (JL, 294; al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 194).

Additionally, MLZ (969) records this expression as *إن هي من شتم يوتى بجدرت*. Compare Mehri *l-hīn hwūh mən (hītām), ywōḳaʿb-ārṣ* ‘Wenn (etwas) vom Himmel fällt, landet es auf der Erde’ (Sima 2005, 83).

## (127)

ōl šīf lə yənxērg<sup>l</sup>ōl

*Who doesn’t hear, falls through the gap*

من لم يسمع يسقط من خلال ثقب المنزل المهترئ

This is said upon noticing that someone is not listening to what is being said (al-Shahri 2000, 101, 281).

The quadriliteral verb *yənxērg<sup>l</sup>ōl* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a <sup>Q</sup>N1-stem from the root  $\sqrt{xrgl}$  meaning ‘to decline, get into

difficulties' (JL, 304). Furthermore, JL (304) records a variant of this proverb: *ḡ-əl šīf lə', yənxargəl*. Sima (2005, 83–84) records a similar proverb, *aš-šāṣwūl grō lä, yänt<sup>a</sup>rāšh*, which is translated with a rather different (albeit not totally divergent) meaning: 'Wer die (eigene) Rede nicht genau prüft, bringt (alles) durcheinander'.

## (128)

ḡb yaṣrér iṣāṣḡəl

*The closed door stops those who are in a hurry*

الباب يوقف المستعجل

This is said upon giving up trying to get something from someone (al-Shahri 2000, 102, 281).

The verbal form *yaṣrér* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a G-stem from a geminate root  $\sqrt{\text{ṣrr}}$  meaning, among other things, 'stop something from going' (JL, 14). The participial form *iṣāṣḡəl* < \**e-meṣāṣḡəl* is not listed by JL. However, MLZ (610) lists it as 'hurried' (المستعجل).

## (129)

ḡ yaḥtéḡa ʔafór ar ɛd déhəḡ

*The clouds only gather on the high mountains*

لا يتجمع السحاب إلا على قمم الجبال

This is a comment about someone who turns out to be capable of sorting an issue which all others failed to sort. Therefore, the clouds are a metaphor for normal people, whilst the summit represents the wise person to whom the others turn (al-Shahri 2000, 102, 282).

The verbal form *yaḥtéḡa* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a T1-stem meaning, among other things, 'to come together' (JL, 106).



(130)

ɔ yəsɔkf l-ɔrəm ar ɛltɛṣ fəlɔh ɛgʔtɛl

*No-one lives beside the road except the unkind person or the generous person*

لا يجلس على قارة الطريق إلا البخيل أو الكريم

This saying is used to express appreciation towards a good person, or disapproval towards a bad person. Al-Shahri (2000, 102, 282) asserts that in the olden days roads were very few in Dhofar, and those who lived near them were either good people who wanted to help travellers, or bad people who established their dwellings by the road for the convenience of it.

The term *ɛltɛṣ* < \*ε-məltɛṣ is not recorded by JL. MLZ (824) lists it as ‘heedless, mean’ (النطق. اللئيم). MLZ records this proverb within the above-mentioned entry as *ايسكف لورم عر ايلتاش فله ايجتيل*, and translates into Arabic as *يجلس \ يسكن بالقرب من الطريق اللئيم \* الكريم ‘no one lives near the road except the wicked/the generous’ (MLZ, 824). The term *fəlɔh* ‘or’ has an audible final [h], which is unexpected (Rubin 2014, 317). *ɛgʔtɛl* < \*e-məgʔtɛl < √gml ‘generous’ is recorded by JL (76) as *məgtɛl*.

(131)

ɔ yəsdíd b-ɔ yəbtidíd

*They don’t agree and they don’t separate*

لا يفتقون ولا يفترون

This proverb normally refers to children who are supposed to be friends, but have frequent disagreements (al-Shahri 2000, 102, 282).

The verbal form *yəsdíd* is an imperfective 3.M.PL. of a G-stem from the geminate root √sdd and means, among other

things, ‘to agree on terms’ (JL, 223). The verb *yəbtdíd* ‘to separate’ is a 3.M.PL. imperfective of a T1-stem derived from the root *√bdd*, which covers terms connected to the semantic field of ‘separation’ (JL, 22; MLZ, 117–18). The Mehri counterpart of this proverb is *l-yäsdíd wa-l-yäbt<sup>a</sup>díd* ‘Sie kommen nicht überein, (aber) sie trennen sich auch nicht’ (Sima 2005, 84).

## (132)

ɔ yəṣṣkɔṭɔrn a-ṣiśɔr

*What a pity friends fall out*

اللهم لا تتباغض الاصدقاء

This is used ironically when two evil individuals, who were friends, fall out with each other (al-Shahri 2000, 103, 283). The verbal form *yəṣṣkɔṭɔrn* is an imperfective 3.M.PL. of a Š2-stem meaning ‘to quarrel’ (MLZ, 729: خاصم).<sup>32</sup> MLZ (729) additionally records this expression as *أيشقوثرن أعشور*. The literal meaning of this expression is ‘Friends don’t quarrel’.

## (133)

ērɔt ɔ šḥalɔt gʷud<sup>a</sup> lɔ ɔ tṣḥalɔb ʃəb<sup>a</sup>lɔl lɔ

*The animal which doesn’t give milk after a birth will not give normal milk later on*

التي لم تدر الولادة الدسم، فانها لن ترد حليباً صافياً فيما بعد

This proverb conveys that if one does not succeed in easy times, then one will certainly not succeed in harder times (al-Shahri 2000, 103, 283).

<sup>32</sup> This term is not recorded by JL.

The term *erót* < \**ε berót* = relativiser + the auxiliary verb *ber* in the third-person feminine singular form (Rubin 2014, 164–68). The verbal forms *šhalót* and *tšhalób* are 3.F.SG. of the perfective and imperfective respectively, of a Š1-stem < √*hלב* meaning ‘to be able to be milked’ (JL, 109). The term *gʻud* means ‘colostrum; beestings’ < √*gyd* (JL, 81), and the term *šəbʻlál* is an adjective meaning ‘pure’, normally used for milk (JL, 243). Therefore, the literal meaning of this expression is ‘(she) who can’t give colostrum, won’t give milk’.

(134)

ērʰ ḥkum bə-gēš ʔl-ʔʔd a-ʔásər ē de

*The one who becomes old, no longer has any friends*

الذي قد تقدم بالسن واصابه الوهن لم يعد صديق احد

This sentence may be uttered by an elderly person to remark that with old age comes loneliness (al-Shahri 2000, 103, 283).

The initial segment *er* must be interpreted as < \**ε-ber* (see entry (133) above). The verbal form *ḥkum* is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to be old’ (JL, 107). The term *gēš* is not recorded by the lexical sources used in this study. However, following al-Shahri’s Arabic translation الذي قد تقدم بالسن, one would be tempted to postulate a noun meaning ‘age’ or ‘weakness’. Alternatively, one might posit a G-stem verb *gēš/yağǝšš/yağǝšš* meaning ‘to become weak’:<sup>33</sup> in the latter case, the segment *bə* would stand for the coordinating conjunction. Sima (2005, 84) records a proverb that, in spite of some lexical divergences, is

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<sup>33</sup> See al-Kathiri and Dufour (2020, 210–11) for a morphologically similar verb.

identical in meaning: *ḏ-bār wakkāth ḥakmōt, kullām ḥārba‘tyāh* ‘Bei wem schon das Alter eingetreten ist, dem werden seine Gefährten weniger’.

## (135)

*ēr sīni yum ε emšīn yəḥīl gʷub b-iššō*

*Who saw the day of yesterday, he must carry a shield and a sword*

من شاهد أحداث يوم امس يحب عليه ان ياخذ ترس وسيف

This is used as a comment about one’s (or someone else’s) over-cautious behaviour (al-Shahri 2000, 103, 284).

The first segment is to be interpreted as *\*ε-ber*. The verbal form *sīni* is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to see’ (JL, 253). The term *iššō* ‘sword’ is a feature of the eastern varieties of Jibbali/Šḥarēt. Compare the term *ištō* used in the central and western varieties (al-Shahri 2007, 78).

## (136)

*ērsēt ē-défər*

*Don’t rub up against a bad person*

تتلوث من تلوث السيئ

This is said when something bad happens as a result of the actions of a bad person (al-Shahri 2000, 103, 284).

The term *ērsēt* < *\*e-mursēt* ‘dealing with a bad person’ (MLZ, 861: التعامل مع الشخص السيئ) is not listed by JL, although the T1-stem verb *mutrās* ‘to be involved more and more in a problem thought at first to be small’, listed under the corresponding root  $\sqrt{mrs}$  (JL, 174), indicates that the above noun has a semantic connection to this root. The literal meaning of this expression is ‘dealings (of) the bad (person)’.

(137)

ēṭʾlím yaḥṣizíl

*The innocent person has the clear sound of a piece of metal being struck*

المظلوم يرن كصوت المعدن النقي

This is said of someone who is innocent and, hence, speaks out vehemently (al-Shahri 2000, 104, 284).

The term *ēṭʾlím* < \**e-metʾlím* ‘oppressed’ (MLZ, 601: المظلوم) is not listed by JL, and here it means ‘innocent’ in relation to being accused of something. The imperfective 3.M.SG. of the <sup>o</sup>H1-stem verb *yaḥṣizíl* means ‘to shake something, to drop it to make it ring’ (MLZ, 244: (هز الشيء \ أسقطه لإصدار رنين < √ḥṣll, with the first /l/ > [ɬ] (JL, xiv; Rubin 2014, 26).

(138)

elkét ε ε-défər

*The power of the bad*

قوة السيئ أو اللئيم

This proverb is used as a comment about bad actions (al-Shahri 2000, 104, 284).

The term *ēlkét* < \**e-melket* ‘dominance, prevalence, control’ (MLZ, 881: التغلب. الغلبة. السيط) is not recorded by JL.

(139)

ērét ε ṣammún

*The mirror of Damoon*

مرآة ضمّون

This is said as a comment about someone who wrongly feels physically perfect and is based on a folk story about a woman

called Šammun, who had a mirror that made everyone look perfect (al-Shahri 2000, 104, 285).

The feminine personal name Šammún is formally comparable with ḏmn in Safaitic (al-Manaser and MacDonald 2017, *passim*), where it is, however, recorded as a masculine name.

(140)

bə ʕakʔbéts xər

*I hope that the outcome will be better*

اللهم اجعل عاقبتها او عاقبته خيراً

When something good happens, people utter this formula to express a wish that things remain as good as they are (al-Shahri 2000, 104, 285).

The preposition bə heads a prepositional phrase whose dependent is the term ʕakʔbet, which seems to be an Arabic loan < عاقبة ‘end, outcome, upshot; issue, effect, result, consequence’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 627).

The Arabic translation beginning with اللهم ‘O God!’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 24) indicates an invocation.

(141)

ber te še fəlś teróktən

*If they don't eat it they tread on it*

أكلن شيئاً وإلا تدسن

This is said when someone ruins something, such that they are unable to take full advantage of it (al-Shahri 2000, 104, 285).

Rather unusually, this proverb uses the third-person feminine plural, which could be due to cattle being intended. The Gastem 3.F.PL. imperfective verb *teróktən* < √rkt means ‘to step, to

tread upon, put a foot on the ground' (JL, 211). Cf. Mehri *twūh w-lī trāktān* '(Die Kühe, Kamelinnen, Ziegen) haben (das Gras) gefressen oder werden drauftreten' (Sima 2005, 84).

## (142)

tɛ k-e-šinīt b-ɔ tɔɡad šes° lɔ

*Eat with a midwife but don't accompany her*

كل مع المربية ولكن لا ترافقها

This is used when a person takes advantage of another person being busy, to enhance his share of something to the detriment of the other (al-Shahri 2000, 105, 286).

The verbal form *tɛ* is an imperative of a G-stem from the doubly weak root  $\sqrt{twy}$  meaning 'to eat' (JL, 273). The term *šinīt* <  $\sqrt{knv}$  'nursemaid' is recorded by MLZ (774: المربية). The verbal form *tɔɡad* is a subjunctive 2.M.SG. of a G-stem <  $\sqrt{wgd}$  'to go' (JL, 288) followed by the preposition *k-* 'with' (Rubin 2014, 247–49), a combination that has been reported to mean 'to have sexual intercourse' (Rubin 2014, 386). However, in this case it is likely to mean 'to accompany'. The Mehri counterpart of this saying is *tēh k-ḵanyīt w-sēr šīs lā* 'Iß bei der Frau, die ein Kleinkind aufzieht, aber geh nicht mit ihr' (Sima 2005, 85).

## (143)

thēl e-dinī in ḥōlót b-tókləʃ in ɔl iʃizót

*The earth carries what she can, and leaves what she cannot*

تحمل الدنيا طاقتها وترك ما لا تطيق

This proverb is often used to teach children that they should do what they can and leave the things they are not able to do to someone else (al-Shahri 2000, 105, 286).

The general sense of the proverb seems to be ‘let the world carry its load and get rid of what it does not manage to carry’. The verbal form *thēl* is an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to load; to take; to carry’ (JL, 111). The term *hōlōt* seems to be a diminutive of *hīlāt* ‘load, camel-load’ (JL, 111). The second verbal form *tōklōf* is a subjunctive 3.F.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to let, allow’. The use of a subjunctive form here is unexpected, and points to a future meaning, with the future prefix *dha-*, *ha-*, or *a-* (Rubin 2014, 150–52) being either omitted or just inaudible. The third verbal form *išizōt* is a perfective 3.F.SG. of a Gb-stem < √wšl meaning ‘to arrive; to manage to shoulder a (physical or psychological) burden’ (JL, 293). The use of the relativiser *in* is noteworthy.

## (144)

təšgírér baflét ε-kun

*Only the one who has horns can scream*

تصرخ ذات القرن وتعلي صوتها

This is said when someone is successful in a physical or verbal confrontation, to the detriment of someone else. According to al-Shahri (2000, 106, 286), the semantic connection between screaming and being successful derives from the fact that a goat lets out a scream-like vocalisation before butting another goat.

The verbal form *təšgírér* is an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a quadriliteral <sup>o</sup>Y-stem meaning ‘to shriek, scream’ (JL, 324). The corresponding proverb in Mehri is *baʿlīt kōn ašš<sup>aa</sup>gīrūr* ‘(Nur) die (Ziege), die ein Horn hat, schreit laut’ (Sima 2005, 85).



(145)

təḵbéb fəló təṭṣx

*You either get it burnt or cooked*

تشوي أو تطبخ

This mean that there is a proper way to do something, and if it is not followed, the consequences can be unpleasant. This derives from the proper way to cook the *beṭaḥ* roots, *Gladiolus ukambanensis* (Miller and Morris 1988, 150), which is wrapping them in cow dung and roasting them (al-Shahri 2000, 106, 287).

The verb *təṭṣx* < √*tbx* is an imperfective 2.M.SG. of a G-stem meaning ‘to wrap *beṭaḥ* in cow pats and bake’ (JL, 274), whilst *təḵbéb* is an imperfective 2.M.SG. of a G-stem from the geminate root √*kbb* meaning ‘to roast’ (JL, 140; MLZ, 725: شوي (على الجمر \ في الرماد الساخن). The difference in the meaning of these two verbs corresponds to the difference between the right way and the wrong way to carry out the roasting of *beṭaḥ* roots, and, *mutatis mutandis*, any other task.

(146)

tənfaš a-ḡamit d ɔ kfe enúf

*A person who is not able to do something should not pretend that he can*

ثكلتة النخوة من عجز عن مساعدة نفسه

This is an expression that, according to al-Shahri (2000, 107, 287), is used when someone fails to complete a task that he was advised not to undertake beforehand.

The verb *tənfa* is an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a Gb-stem < √*nfw* and is reported to mean ‘to elegize; to keen over the dead’ (JL, 179). Al-Shahri translates this verb into Arabic as ثكل ‘to be

bereaved, to mourn' (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 105), which seems to be the most fitting translation in this case. The term *ṣamīt*, translated by al-Shahri into Arabic as نخوة 'haughtiness, arrogance; pride, dignity, sense of honor, self-respect; high-mindedness, generosity' (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 950) is unattested in the lexica. The verbal form *kfe* is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning 'to be enough' (JL, 128).

The literal meaning of this proverb may be tentatively rendered as 'The arrogance that cannot help itself bereaved him'.

(147)

ḥíki ṭržém l-ēkhált (l-ēkséft)

*The lid fits tightly on the mascara*

تطابق الغطاء على المكحلة او على المكشيف

This is said of people who are alike, and usually applies to unpleasant people (al-Shahri 2000, 106, 287).

The verbal form *ḥíki* is a perfective third person of a passive G-stem meaning احكم إغلاقه 'to fit' (MLZ, 254).<sup>34</sup> The term *ṭržém* < \**e-miržém* from the root  $\sqrt{rgm}$  means 'cover, lid' (JL, 207). The term *ēkséft* < \**e-mekséft* is not recorded as such. However, compare the term *kśaf* 'A small wicker vessel with a lid in which a woman puts her belongings' (MLZ, 802: سلة صغيرة من الخوص لها غطا تضع فيها: (المرأ حاجياتها), not recorded in JL. The term in question is translated into Arabic as مكشيف (al-Shahri 2000, 287), a term which, despite being undoubtedly connected to the root  $\sqrt{kšf}$ , conveying 'discovery' (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 828–30), is not recorded in

<sup>34</sup> Ga- and Gb-stems have exactly the same morphological characteristics in the passive voice (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 220).

the lexica. In Mehri, this proverb is recorded by Sima (2005, 85) as *hīki rījām l-ḥakḳath* ‘Es paßt der Deckel zu seiner Dose’.

(148)

ḥa-leṣ<sup>ə</sup>m heš a-ṯižīt

*I would make a continuous fast for him*

سأصوم له صوم الخرساء

This is used sarcastically, with the opposite meaning. Therefore, the person in question is deemed not to be worthy of any consideration (al-Shahri 2000, 106, 288).

The verb *ḥa-leṣ<sup>ə</sup>m* is a 1.C.SG. future form of a G-stem deriving from a hollow root  $\sqrt{\text{šwm}}$  ‘to fast’ (JL, 243). The preposition *her* ‘for’ appears here in its monoconsonantal allophone *h-*, to which personal suffixes are attached (Rubin 2014, 243). The adjective *ṯižīt* seems to be the feminine counterpart of *ṯigem* ‘dumb’, recorded in JL (9) as *ṯigem*. Such a definition, rather divergent from the English translation of the expression, finds an explanation in the Arabic translation *صوم الخرساء* ‘a silent fast’ (al-Shahri 2000, 288).

(149)

xɔbs əllah xalkét də āḥzíg<sup>h</sup>hum ɬad

*People of evil appearance are tied with the same hobble*

بئس او خابت من خلقة ذوي الرباط الواحد

This is said when giving up an argument with a group of related people who stand together (al-Shahri 2000, 106, 288).

The language of this proverb exhibits a strong influence from Arabic, as can be seen in the term *əllah* ‘God’, used in conjunction with the unrecorded interjection *xɔb*, which is rendered in Arabic

(al-Shahri 2000, 288) with بئس ‘how evil!’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 39). Similarly, the term *xalkét* ‘nature, creatures’ (JL, 300) is best viewed as part of a mixed formulaic language (Johnstone 1972). It must be pointed out that the participial form *āhzig* < \**a-māhzig*, recorded in JL (122) as *maḥzeg* ‘hobble’, is found here with [i] as the stressed vowel instead of the expected [e].

## (150)

xəbš əllah ɛɟəh d ɔ yəʃtedɔf

*The face which is never ashamed is a bad face*

بئس وجه ذلك الذي لا يئشني من الخجل

This is a comment that people make either when a person is convinced by others to act wisely, or when a person refuses to act wisely (al-Shahri 2000, 107, 288).

The verb *yəʃtedɔf* < √*ʃdf* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a T1-stem, not listed by MLZ, meaning ‘to dent, buckle’ (JL, 235). However, al-Shahri’s Arabic translation يئشني من الخجل ‘to give up out of shame’ suggests that this is the appropriate meaning in this case.

## (151)

xīltét tenúfəʃ

*The strange animal is useful*

الخلطاء تفيد او مفيدة

This is used when an animal that is not part of one’s herd suffers an accident, dies, or is stolen (al-Shahri 2000, 107, 289), which is made clearer in the Mehri counterpart of this expression *xaltayt tkūn* ‘*ašwēt d-kōb* ‘Das (fremde Tier, das) sich in die Herde hineinmisch, wird der Anteil des Wolfs’ (Sima 2005, 85).

The term *xilṭét*, feminine of *xalīt* ‘A person who dwells/settles down with a group of people who are not his people’ (MLZ, 305: الشخص الغريب الذي يسكن \ يحل بقوم بقومه), is not listed in JL. The verbal form *tenuḫ* is an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to be useful, of use’ (JL, 181).

## (152)

d-ɔl ḥez k-e-gīṭat<sup>o</sup> lɔ yənufś

*If you haven't slaughtered the stolen animal with the thief, you won't stay the night with them*

من لم يشارك اللصوص في ذبح المسروقة يعود إلى منزله في المساء

This is said about someone who is accused of wrongdoing, and eventually turns out to be innocent (al-Shahri 2000, 107, 289).

The verbal form *ḥez* is a perfective third person of a G-stem deriving from the geminate root  $\sqrt{hzz}$  meaning ‘to slaughter’ (JL, 122). The term *gīṭat* <  $\sqrt{gmṭ}$  is recorded in JL (76) as *gīṭat* ‘company, band of robbers’. The second verbal form *yənufś* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to go early in the evening’ (JL, 182).

## (153)

šaxber ε bédərek bi yuṃ

*Ask the one who is one day older*

أسأل من سبقك بيوم أي من هو أكبر منك بيوم

This proverb is quoted when a younger person, after pondering about a matter of concern, seeks the advice of an older person who, by virtue of experience, is able to sort out the problem (al-Shahri 2000, 107, 289). The verbal form *šaxber* is an imperative of a Š1-stem meaning ‘to ask’, whilst *bédərek* is a perfective third

person of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to outrun’<sup>35</sup> (JL, 23), with a 2.M.SG. personal suffix *-k* attached (JL, 296). Compare the Mehri proverb *šaxbār q-bār sābḳūk b-sānn* ‘Frag den, der dir schon an Alter voran ist’ (Sima 2005, 86).

(154)

šəŋīr ēṣḅór

*The sides of the wadi are far apart*

تباعدت اطراف الوادي

This is a comment about two things or individuals that have nothing in common (al-Shahri 2000, 108, 290).

The verb *šəŋīr* seems to be a perfective third person of a Š2-stem, listed by JL (6) as *š‘er* ‘(group) to think someone far away from you in position or opinion’. However, the vocalism of this verbal form differs from the norm. It would be tempting to posit a Š2-stem passive here. The term *ēṣḅór*,<sup>36</sup> likely to be the plural form of *ṣabər*, and recorded by MLZ (535) as *حد المكان \ طرفه. شق الوادي* ‘limit of a place, side, cleft’, is not recorded by JL.

(155)

ṣḅots kin ḥel fəló kin mišerḅd

*Take wisdom from a lunatic or a senile old person*

خذها من مسن حائل او من مجنون (الحكمة)

This can be used as a remark when a person who is old, or not of sound mind, speaks out. It can be used either straight or ironically,

<sup>35</sup> Compare سبق ‘to precede’ (MLZ, 118).

<sup>36</sup> The initial long vowel in the text is due to the coalescence of the definite article with the initial vowel of the term: \*ε-ēṣḅór.

depending on the nature of what this person says (al-Shahri 2000, 108, 290).

The verbal form  $\xi^a b\alpha t s$  is an imperative of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to hold; to capture’ (JL, 323) with a 3.F.SG. personal suffix -s. The term *mišerd* ‘mad, evil’ is listed under the root  $\sqrt{kwr d}$  by JL (138), and  $\sqrt{kbr d}$  by MLZ (784). In view of the Mehri cognate *mankəwrəd* (ML, 219) the correct derivation seems to be from  $\sqrt{kwr d}$ . This proverb has two Mehri counterparts: *ḡaṭs mən ḡaywal* and *ḡaṭ bāhlit mən mkawrät*, respectively ‘Nimm sie (d.h. die Weisheit) vom Narren’ and ‘Nimm das (weise) Wort von den Verliebten’ (Sima 2005, 86). In this expression, one can observe the use in context of the sparsely attested preposition *kin* ‘from (someone)’ (Rubin 2014, 249–50).

### (156)

$\xi ag^a z$  l- $\tilde{e}\tilde{s}\tilde{i}n$  fēḡar dā  $\xi \alpha n\acute{u}t$

*A little lazy, a year's poverty*

عجز قليل فقر سنة

This is used as a warning not to procrastinate on a given matter (al-Shahri 2000, 108, 290).

The term  $\xi ag^a z$  means ‘laziness’ (JL, 10). The term  $\tilde{s}in < \sqrt{\tilde{s}yn}$  means ‘for a time/while’ (JL, 268), but the adverbial phrase *l- $\tilde{e}\tilde{s}\tilde{i}n$*  is hard to explain on account of the long vowel between the preposition *l-* and the term. According to MLZ (497), the temporal meaning of this word is widespread in the *Jabal Qamar* (western dialects), whereas it means ‘truthfulness of speech’ (صدق الكلام) elsewhere in the Jibbali/ $\dot{S}h\acute{a}r\acute{e}t$ -speaking area. The term  $\xi \alpha n\acute{u}t$  is the most common term for ‘year’ (JL, 20) in Jibbali/ $\dot{S}h\acute{a}r\acute{e}t$ .

## (157)

ʕək ɔ́ sink mən e-kerah ʕar iduntēš

*So far, all you have seen of the donkey is his ears*

لم تر من الحمار إلا أذنيه

This is said upon an unexpected event by a person who knows the likely reason for that event, to another person who does not know it and is, therefore, surprised (al-Shahri 2000, 108, 290).

It is noteworthy that the particle ʕɔd, which in this case conveys doubt, seems here to behave like the etymologically related auxiliary verb *d-ʕɔd*, although Rubin (2014, 186) states that ʕɔd “has just a single frozen form.” The verbal form *sink* is a perfective 2.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to see’ (JL, 253). The term *iduntēš* is the plural definite form of *idēn* ‘ear’ (JL, 1), with a 3.M.SG. personal suffix -š attached. The corresponding Mehri proverb is ‘*ād l-sinak mən ḥayr ār ḥaydānt-yāh*’ ‘Bis jetzt hast du vom Esel nur seine Ohren gesehen’ (Sima 2005, 86).

## (158)

ʕōrōt a-ʕēbdōt ʕṭah bə xōhi

*The little sprat says, “the sand in my mouth”*

قالت العومة (السمكة) الرمل في فمي

This proverb is used as a comment about a person who does not want to take a side in an argument (al-Shahri 2000, 109, 291).

The verbal form *ʕōrōt* is a perfective 3.F.SG. of an idiosyncratic Ga-stem (see al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 200–1) meaning ‘to say’ (JL, 13). The term *ʕēbdōt*, translated by al-Shahri as ‘little sprat’ and العومة, seems to be a diminutive form related to *ʕad* ‘sardine’ (JL, 20). It is to be noted that Johnstone (1973, 101) lists the diminutive form of this term as *ʕadebēt*. The term *ʕṭah* is the



definite form of *bəṭḥ* ‘sand’ (JL, 30). A part of this saying is found in Mehri as *bäṭḥ b-xōhi ahōrāj lä* ‘Mit Erde in meinem Mund spreche ich nicht’ (Sima 2005, 86). This proverb may be regarded as a wellerism (see above, p. 22).

## (159)

ṣōrót e-ziginút əxer nur ṣar ṣor

*The butterfly says that light is better than disgrace*

قالت الفراشة النور افضل من العار

This is said as a warning not to disclose something that might spoil someone’s reputation. The meaning of this proverb is rooted in a folk tale according to which a butterfly was asked by God whether it would rather throw itself into the fire or do something dishonourable. The butterfly chose the former option (al-Shahri 2000, 109, 291).

For the verbal form *ṣōrót*, see the preceding entry (158). The term *ziginút* ‘butterfly’ (JL, 316) is morphologically a diminutive (Johnstone 1973). The terms *nur* ‘light’ and *ṣor* ‘disgrace’ are Arabic loanwords. The latter is related to the root √ṣwr, which conveys defectiveness and deficiency (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 656).

## (160)

ṣōr ɛnfí ɛ šəṣgél yəté nu

*An impatient person eats uncooked food*

من استعجل يأكل نيئاً

This proverb is mentioned upon a manifestation of inaccuracy due to being in haste (al-Shahri 2000, 109, 291). The first verbal form *šəṣgél* is a perfective third person of a Š1-stem meaning ‘to

hasten' (JL, 9), whilst the second one *yāte* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a G-stem from a doubly weak root meaning 'to eat' (JL, 273). Notwithstanding some lexical differences, the following Mehri proverb represents a semantically relevant counterpart: *aš-ša'jūl ya'tōr* 'Wer sich beeilt, stolpert' (Sima 2005, 87). The initial segment *ṣōr ēnfi* 'the ancestor said' (not translated into English by al-Shahri) is a proverbial affix (Norrick 2015, 24), like *ḡdīlīn* 'so-and-so' found above.

(161)

ṣōrōt ḥōt yot<sup>g</sup> tō enkél b-yōkbār tō ɔ-défār

*The snake said, "I hope that the good person will kill me and the bad person will bury me"*

قالت الثعبان يقتلني الشارط ويقبرني الذليل

This is said when someone turns out not to be able to carry out a task properly due to lack of accuracy. The reference to the burial of a snake stems from a folk belief according to which the bones of a snake are as venomous as its bite, and an evil person will bury a snake improperly on purpose, so that its bones will sooner or later cause harm to a passer-by (al-Shahri 2000, 109, 292).

The two subjunctive 3.M.SG. verbal forms, *yot<sup>g</sup>* and *yōkbār*, are respectively an idiosyncratic G-stem (Rubin 2014, 37) and a Ga-stem, and are used here to express an optative sense (Rubin 2014, 147). The term *ḥōt* 'snake' is recorded in the lexical sources with an initial /h/ instead of /ḥ/ (JL, 100; MLZ, 966). However, before postulating a variant of this term, one should take into account the following: (1) al-Shahri transcribes <ه>, not <ح>, (2) the presence of a definite article could be in play here, causing [h] to geminate, and (3) /h/ may sound slightly more on the

pharyngeal side when initial than when in other positions. As is the case with entry number (125) above, we encounter the term *enkel* ‘choice (livestock)’<sup>37</sup> (JL, 190) in the place of *ēnkel* < \**e-menkel* ‘active, energetic, heroic’, both < *√nkl* (JL, 190).

## (162)

ʕōr ēnfī e-kkəʕéb elʕīm

*The crockery can touch*

العفش يتلامس

This saying is quoted when dealing with a minor issue to emphasise that some small problems in life are to be expected (al-Shahri 2000, 110, 292). The sense of this saying may be conveyed as follows: ‘pieces of houseware are bound to knock each other’, i.e., people living in the same house are bound to experience conflict. The term *kəʕéb* means ‘pottery’ (MLZ, 803: الإناء, الوعاء), and the verbal form *elʕīm* is a perfective third person of a H1-stem meaning ‘to slap oneself, bewail’ (JL, 166). In light of the above, this expression is better translated as ‘The ancestor said: the pottery is prone to shatter’.

## (163)

ʕōr ēnfī e-ʕīṇ tšerḥók b-faʕm telḥók

*Our ancestors say that the eye can see things far away and the leg can make things close*

قال السلف: العين ترى البعيد والرجل تقرب البعد

This is used as an encouragement not to give up on a difficult endeavour (al-Shahri 2000, 110, 292). The verbal forms *tšerḥók*

<sup>37</sup> This form is presumably *e-nkel*, with a definite article.

and *telḥōk* are, respectively, an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a Š1-stem meaning, among other things, ‘to think (somewhere) is distant, far away’ (JL, 210), and a subjunctive 3.F.SG. of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to catch up with, overtake, run after’ (JL, 163). The use of a subjunctive here is unexpected. As in entry number (143) above, the future prefix might be omitted or inaudible. Compare the Mehri saying ‘*ayn tsäyn rähäk w-fa‘m thäkrōb* ‘Das Auge sieht das Ferne, und der Fuß bringt (es) näher’ (Sima 2005, 87).

(164)

ʕōr ēnfī mən gʾádəb tten ḥilēt

*In absence of anything else they can eat the dry leaves*

من العدم تأكلن القديم من أوراق الشجر

This is used as a comment about a change which will likely not result in any worsening of the current circumstances (al-Shahri 2000, 110, 293).

The verbal form *tten* is a subjunctive (with optative force) 3.F.PL. of a G-stem meaning ‘to eat’ (JL, 273); the use of the 3.F.PL. probably refers to cattle. The term *ḥilēt* (JL, 109) refers to the dry leaves of the *Anogeissus dhofarica* (Miller and Morris 1988, 102), called *sōgət* in Jibbali/Šḥarēt (MLZ, 444), a term not listed in JL. See also entry number (198) below. Also, compare the Mehri saying *mān xalsēt attawyän ḥallēt* ‘Wegen des Mangels (an Grünfutter) fressen (die Tiere) das dürre Laub’ (Sima 2005, 87).

(165)

ʕōr ēnfī skəf e-kḥə her ālš

*The breast-bone meat is waiting for its owner*

قال السلف: انتظر مقدمة الصدر صاحبه

This is said when someone turns down something of good quality and accepts something else of lower quality. This is based on the fact that the flesh around the breastbone of cattle is considered a delicacy in Dhofar (al-Shahri 2000, 110, 293).

The verbal form *skɔf* is a perfective third person of a G-stem meaning ‘to sit’ (JL, 227). The term *kħo* ‘breastbone meat’ is not recorded in Jibbali/Šħərēt but can be found in Soqotri *kħo* ‘poitrine’ (LS, 216).

(166)

ʕɔr ɛnfɪ ɔ yəʃér e-rumʰ ar l-a-ʕəkkóz

*The spearhead is useless without the shaft*

قال السلف: لا تقف الرمح إلا على سنها

This is a comment about a person who is not backed by a tribe or family, in spite of being good and/or strong (al-Shahri 2000, 110, 293).

The verbal form *yəʃér* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a G-stem deriving from the hollow root *ʕšwr* meaning ‘to stand up’ (JL, 243). The term *ʕəkkóz* سن الرمح ‘spear-head’ (literally ‘spear-tooth’; MLZ, 642) is not listed by JL. This expression is also found in MLZ (642) as أتصر أرمحت عر لعكُرس.<sup>38</sup> Cf. Mehri *yšūr ramḥ är la-kōzäh* ‘Die Lanze steht nur auf ihrem Schaft’ (Sima 2005, 87).

(167)

ʕɔr ɛnfɪ ɔ təʕin d ɔl ʕiní-k

*Don't interfere in something which doesn't concern you*

قال السلف: لا تعن من لم يُعِنَكَ

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<sup>38</sup> This variant in feminine in grammatical gender.

This is an encouragement to mind one's own business (al-Shahri 2000, 111, 294).

The verbal form *təfin* is a subjunctive (as expected in a negative command) 2.M.SG. of a G-stem from the hollow root √*syn* meaning 'to keep an eye on' (JL, 20).

**(168)**

ʕōr ɛnfí ɔ tɛʕər ʕar<sup>o</sup> bə-tekəlk

*Don't stop unless you are afraid of the consequences*

قال السلف: لا تتوقف إلا إذا خفت العواقب

This is said to someone who hesitates in an argument or in an action (al-Shahri 2000, 111, 294). The verbal form *tɛʕər* is a subjunctive 2.M.SG. of a G-stem deriving from √*šwr* 'to stand up' (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 212; JL, 243; see also entry (166) above); al-Shahri's translation of this verb with the Arabic verbal form توقف 'to stop' (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 1092) suggests that the latter sense is meant here. The verbal form *tekəlk* is a perfective 2.M.SG. of a Gb-stem meaning 'to be suspicious, worried' (JL, 284).

**(169)**

ʕōr ɛnfí bet təbáf

*They are only imitators*

قال السلف: قوم المقلدين

This is a comment about a group of people who show no initiative (al-Shahri 2000, 111, 294).

The term *təbáf* 'followers' (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 90) is likely to be a relatively recent Arabic loanword: the absence of the intervocalic deletion of /b/ (Rubin 2014, 28–30) would point

to a non-native origin. However, it is also possible that the first vowel [ə] in this term is an anaptyctic vowel by which the intervocalic deletion of /b/ is not triggered, in which case one cannot be certain as regards the etymological status of this term.

## (170)

ṣṛr ēnfī helk ɔl tbe

*You missed the good grazing*

قال السلف وبله من لم يأكل حيوانه

This is said by someone who has known a very good person in the past and implies that someone else has not known the person in question (al-Shahri 2000, 111, 294).

The verbal form *helk* is a perfective third person of a Gb-stem listed in JL (97) with two diverging meanings: ‘to miss (1-) someone great who has died; to be very tired and thirsty’. The verbal form *tbe* must be a H1-stem < √twy ‘to cause to eat, feed, allow to pasture’ (JL, 273).

In light of the above, it is difficult to reconcile the literal meaning of the expression with the English and Arabic rendition provided by al-Shahri.

## (171)

ṣṛr hun īḍenk ṣṛr bōh

*They asked, “where is your ear?” “Here” he said, reaching round his head to point to the ear on the other side*

قال اين اذنك ؟ قال : هنا

This is used when someone tries to complicate things, and is accompanied by the gesture of pointing to one ear using the opposite hand (al-Shahri 2000, 111, 295). The verbal form *ṣṛr* is a

perfective third person of an idiosyncratic G-stem meaning ‘to say’ (JL, 13).

(172)

ʕōr ɛḍilín yəgʔiblél ɛʕʔfōr

*So-and-so brings down the birds*

فلان يسقط الطيور

This is a comment that can be made about either a good poet or a skilled liar (al-Shahri 2000, 112, 295).

The verbal form *yəgʔiblél* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a <sup>o</sup>H1-stem meaning ‘to drop one by one’ < √*gbl* (MLZ, 175: أسقط (الواحدة تلو الأخرى), which exhibits reduplication of the last root consonant. The term *ɛʕʔfōr* = *ɛ-ɛʕʔfōr* is attested without the etymological initial /ʕ/, as in entry number (26) above.

(173)

ʕōr ɛḍilín bek əʕūʕ wēh

*I have heard ‘Boo’ before*

قال فلان: سبق وسمعت كلمة واة

This is used to show courage in the face of a threat (al-Shahri 2000, 112, 295).

The use of the auxiliary verb *ber* followed by an imperfective indicative to convey a frequent action/event is described by Rubin (2014, 167).

The verbal form *əʕūʕ* is an imperfective 1.C.SG. of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to hear’ (JL, 262). The interjection *wēh* is translated by al-Shahri (2000, 112) as ‘boo!’ in English and واة in Arabic (al-Shahri 2000, 295).



(174)

ḡaśé kēdr īti l-e-nṣeníti

*The big termite mound swallowed up the small one*

علت بيوت النمل الكبيرة على بيوت النمل الصغيرة

This is said of lowly people who improve their condition and start to despise those who are as lowly as they once were (al-Shahri 2000, 112, 295).

The verbal form *ḡaśé* is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to disappear behind (something)/to exceed the limits’ (MLZ, 669: تخطى الحط. تخطاه. تخطاه).<sup>39</sup> The term *kēdr*, a masculine plural corresponding to a singular form *šudar* ‘conical termite mound’ (MLZ, 489: بيت النمل المخروطي) is not recorded by JL.

(175)

ʕōr ɛḏilín ḡumd dā šīt

*So-and-so is a Seet set*

فلان مثل أفلو أي مغيب نجوم الشيت

This is said of someone who is very lazy and not useful to anyone. The metaphor stems from a constellation named *šīt* in Jibbali/Šḥarēt, whose presence in the skies for about 40 days is traditionally believed to mark a period of laziness and illness. Moreover, this constellation is not very bright, so that its only use for the traditional lifestyle of Dhofar is indicating the passing of time (al-Shahri 2000, 112, 296).

The term *ḡumd* means ‘sunset’ (JL, 86).

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<sup>39</sup> This term is not listed by JL.

It is to be noted that the name of this constellation is a cognate of the term *šīn* ‘for a time/while’ (JL, 268; MLZ, 497).

**(176)**

farḥāt tkin řašēš

*Desire becomes fat*

الرغبة تكون سمنة

This proverb serves as a reminder that people tend to see only the positive sides of something they want, and ignore the bad sides. It stems from a folk tale according to which a man who agreed to give his daughter in marriage to a suitor, on the condition that he brought a cow as the bride-price, later changed his mind when another suitor turned up, who was wealthier and more handsome. The father then rejected the cow of the first suitor, claiming that it was too thin and weak. The man then made his way back to his community, and as he was on the road, the wealthier suitor bought his cow to comply with the girl’s father request, whereupon the cow was accepted. The first suitor then attended the wedding of the wealthy man and the girl, and upon being asked why that cow was turned down when offered by him, and it was accepted when offered by the other man, he replied *farḥāt tkin řašēš* (al-Shahri 2000, 113, 296).

The term *farḥāt* is assigned the meaning ‘happiness’ by JL (60). However, as pointed out in entry (112) of this collection, MLZ (695) has ‘desire’ (رغبة), in agreement with al-Shahri’s (2000, 113, 296) translation. The verbal form is an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to be’ (JL, 138).

(177)

farḳét tənúkəf bə ššaḥ

*Panic brings flight*

الخوف يأتي بالسرعة

This is said when someone accepts advice out of fear (al-Shahri 2000, 113, 297).

The term ššaḥ ‘flight, race’ (MLZ, 478: الركض \ الجري) is not recorded by JL. A similar proverb in Mehri is recorded by Sima (2005, 88) as *fārḳāt tñōka‘ ab-bākḏ* ‘die Furcht bringt das Laufen’. The verbal form *tənúkəf* is an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to come’ (JL, 187). Its meaning changes into ‘to bring’ when followed by the preposition *b-* (JL, 187).

(178)

fə́lɔ́ məsé dūt fə́lɔ́ dəhé́b sáhək

*Either light rain or a torrential downpour*

يا مطر خفيف يا سيل جارف؟

This metaphor describes two extreme responses to an event, neither of which is satisfactory (al-Shahri 2000, 113, 297).

In this case, the term *məsé* ‘rain’<sup>40</sup> (Morris et al. 2019, 75) is feminine, as shown by its agreement with the verbal form *dūt*, which is likely a third-person singular feminine perfective of *dēm* ‘to have lasted for a long time; (rain) to come everywhere’ (JL, 42). However, Johnstone’s texts provide contrasting evidence with regard to the grammatical gender of this term: it is treated

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<sup>40</sup> In a second repetition, the speaker says *musé*.

both as feminine (Rubin 2014, 442) and as masculine (Rubin 2014, 446).

(179)

kəl šaʕb tegʕrér b-e-ḏəhēs

*A flood of water stays in its own wadi*

كل وادي يجري من خلاله سيله

This is said when a person behaves as expected, or when priority is given to tribal ties over friendship (al-Shahri 2000, 114, 297).

The term *šaʕb* ‘watercourse’ (JL, 244) appears to be grammatically feminine, as shown by the agreeing verb. The verbal form *tegʕrér* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. G-stem from the geminate root  $\sqrt{grr}$  meaning ‘to drag’ (JL, 77). The segment *e-ḏəhēs* is the definite form of *ḏheb* ‘flood torrent’ (JL, 45) with a 3.F.SG. personal suffix -s attached. Compare the Mehri proverb *käll šaʕb tjäyr bā-ḏhibās* ‘Jedes Tal führt seinen (eigenen) Wasserlauf’ (Sima 2005, 88).

(180)

lə-kəl erʕkīb letót

*Every beast of burden can only carry what he is able*

لا تحمل الدابة الا قدرتها

This is said about a person who never tries to better him/herself, or as a criticism of something s/he has done (al-Shahri 2000, 114, 297).

The segment *letót-s* is difficult to account for, as a definite article would be expected to appear to the left of it, because of the presence of a suffixed possessive pronoun. Alternatively, the segment could be analysed as *l-etót-s* < l + definite article + *etót*

+ third person singular suffixed possessive pronoun, but this would hardly shed any light on its meaning, and would make it even more difficult to justify it from a syntactic viewpoint. To complicate the matter further, the native speakers who could be contacted at the time of writing, and at a later time during the revision process, could not clarify its meaning.

However, its translation in Arabic (al-Shahri 2000, 114) is قدرة 'ability' (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 746). The Mehri counterpart of this proverb is *káll rkīb ṭhōmāl ār ḥmāltās* 'Jedes Lasttier trägt nur seine Last' (Sima 2005, 88).

(181)

*kəl kəṣerér b-e-ṭaṣmš*

*Every piece of grass has its own taste*

لكل نبتة او عشبة طعم خاص بها

This comment is normally used to counter a nasty remark about a person who has good but hidden qualities coupled with less-than-appealing looks (al-Shahri 2000, 114, 298).

The term *kəṣerér* 'plant' is recorded neither in JL nor in MLZ, although both record the root  $\sqrt{kṣr}$  (JL, 152; MLZ, 750–751). This term is translated into Arabic as نبتة 'plant' (al-Shahri 2000, 298).

(182)

*kəl mətḥbaṣír yəṣūne l-ēṭbaṣírš*

*Every mud can be built from the same mud*

كل طينة تُبنى من طينتها اي من فصيلتها

This is said of those who do not like to associate with people who are sharply different from them (al-Shahri 2000, 114, 298).

The participial form *məṭbašīr* ‘mud’ is not recorded. However, it is connected to *ṭṣor* ‘earth, clay’ (Morris et al. 2019, 75), and the root  $\sqrt{\text{ṭṣr}} \sim \sqrt{\text{ṭwṣr}}$ , under which both JL (273, 281) and MLZ (584) list several terms connected with ‘clay’ and ‘earth’. The verbal form *yəšūne* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Š1-stem  $< \sqrt{\text{bny}}$  meaning ‘to be able to be built’ (JL, 27).

**(183)**

*kəl nīṭáf yənúṭuf d-īnzélš*

*Every drop drops on its place*

كل قطرة تقطر في مكانها أي أسفلها تماماً

This is said when a person behaves as expected (al-Shahri 2000, 115, 298).

The term *nīṭáf* is a diminutive of *nuṭaf* ‘drop’ (MLZ, 921: قطرة), which is not listed in JL, although it does record the root  $\sqrt{\text{ntf}}$  and the term *ənṭəṣt* (plural *nṭəf*) ‘drop’ (JL, 197). The preposition *d-* is an allomorph of *əd* ‘to, until’ (Rubin 2014, 228–30). The verbal form *yənúṭuf* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to drip’ (JL, 197). The segment *īnzélš* is the definite form of *mənzəl* ‘place one lives at, homestead’ (JL, 200) with a 3.M.SG. personal suffix *-š* attached. In the current usage of the speakers of eastern Jibbali/Šḥarēt, this term simply means ‘place’. This proverb can be compared with Mehri *káll nātṣ ynōṭaf är nxalyäh* ‘Jeder Tropfen tropft nur auf das, was darunter ist’ (Sima 2005, 88). Al-Shahri’s use of ‘to drop’ instead of ‘to drip’ is an inaccuracy.

## (184)

kəl yum b-ēkīls

*Each day has its own angel*

كل يوم بوكيلها

This comment is made when talking about the events of a specific day, on the basis of the folk belief whereby each day has a specific angel, and angels can be either good or bad (al-Shahri 2000, 115, 299).

The term *ēkīl* < \**ε-ekīl*, derived from the root √*wkl*, is listed in JL (291) as ‘agent’, and as ‘helper’ in MLZ (980), and it is translated as ‘angel’ in English (al-Shahri 2000, 115), and وكيل in Arabic (al-Shahri 2000, 299).<sup>41</sup> Sima (2005, 89) lists a similar proverb in Mehri: *kāll hyūm ba-ḥsōbās* ‘Jeder Tag hat seine (eigene) Abrechnung’.

## (185)

k-ṣ̣ẓ ənhəŋ əb-bəʕél ūkún

*We are with God and the owners of the place*

نحن مع الله ومع اصحاب الملك

This is said by goat herders when they decide to move away from a place, and subsequently change their mind. According to al-Shahri (2000, 115, 299), the owner of the land has the power to protect those who are on it.

The term ṣ̣ẓ ‘God’ appears here in its variant lacking a /ʕ/ < √*bʕl* (JL, 22). See also entry number (56) above.

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<sup>41</sup> This term can be translated as ‘representative, attorney, proxy’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 1096).

## (186)

kun še d ɔ yənúgʲəh

*Is it as though dawn never comes*

كالشيء أو الليل الذي لا ينجلي

This is said to a person who asks the same thing all the time (al-Shahri 2000, 115, 299). The intonation of the speaker as well as the written version make it clear this is a question.

The verbal form *kun* is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to be’ (JL, 138). The term *še* ‘thing’ (JL, 259) also functions as an existential (i.e., ‘there is’): the compound expression *kun še* means ‘there was/were’ (Rubin 2014, 329). The verbal form *yənúgʲəh* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to dawn’ (JL, 183). JL states that this verb can only be used in the feminine and lists the corresponding forms. However, it appears here in the masculine, as it refers to *še*.

## (187)

kɔ he her séfʲk aʃʔr še

*When I’ve eaten my fill I don’t say anything*

هل انا اذا شبعت اقول شيئاً ؟

A person can use this expression after succeeding in convincing someone to do something in a certain way (al-Shahri 2000, 115, 300). The first verbal form is a perfective 1.C.SG. of a Gb-stem < √sbʲ meaning ‘to be satisfied’ (JL, 244). The second verbal form *aʃʔr* is an imperfective 1.C.SG. of an idiosyncratic G-stem meaning ‘to say’ (JL, 13). Compare the Mehri counterpart *wkōh hīn šībʻak*, *aʻōmār šī* ‘Warum, wenn ich satt bin, (soll ich noch) etwas sagen (d.h. mich beklagen)’ (Sima 2005, 89).



(188)

lhes ε d-yəṭḥól řak ṣṭəḥ

*Like the one who urinates in the sand*

كمن يتبول في الرمل

This is said when someone's good actions go unnoticed (al-Shahri 2000, 116, 300).

The verbal form *yəṭḥól* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a T1-stem 'to pass water out of fear' (JL, 48)<sup>42</sup> and is preceded by the prefix (v)d-, which marks a circumstantial clause or indicates a progressive action (Rubin 2014, 158–61). See also entry number (23) above. Cf. Mehri *axāh hēh ḍ-yäṣbūb brāk rāmāl* 'Wie der, der den Sand gießt' (Sima 2005, 89).

(189)

lhes bəḍḍorót təgʷéz

*She reaps like she sowed*

كما زرعت تحصد

This means that people have to live with the consequences of their actions, whether good or bad (al-Shahri 2000, 116, 300).

The first verbal form *bəḍḍorót* is a perfective 3.F.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning 'to sow, cultivate' (JL, 23). The second verbal form *təgʷéz* is an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a G-stem from the geminate root √gzz meaning 'to pluck (wild) fruit which comes once a year' (JL, 81).

Rather peculiarly, this proverb is expressed using the third-person feminine singular, which is mirrored in the corresponding

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<sup>42</sup> The root is recorded as √ḍhl by JL.

Mehri expression *l-hīs bāḍrōt thōṣad* ‘Wie sie gesät hat, so wird sie ernten’ (Sima 2005, 89).

**(190)**

məḥeréf kəb l-aʕlš

*I respect the dog for the sake of the owner*

يُحترم الكلب لأجل صاحبه

This saying is used when those guilty of a crime are pardoned on account of the social standing of their tribe or family (al-Shahri 2000, 116, 300).

The participial form *məḥeréf* is listed by JL (114) as ‘shy, reserved’, albeit in the form *moḥoruf*. The fact that it is used here to signify ‘respected’ offers a glimpse of the tribal culture of Jibbali/Šḥarēt speakers, where seclusion and privacy may be viewed as unusual and, hence, a privilege for those who are respected by the community.

**(191)**

mergʷe ērgīt yūnfəʃ

*It is always expected that the nephew will be useful*

من المُفترض من ابن الاخت ان يفيد خاله

This saying emphasises the importance of the relationship between a nephew and a (maternal) uncle and can be used sarcastically if the former fails to fulfil his obligations towards the latter (al-Shahri 2000, 116, 301).

The participial form *mergʷe* ‘expected’ is not listed in the lexical sources. However, it can be linked to the root  $\sqrt{rgw}$ , from which a number of verbs in the semantic field of waiting, delaying, and postponing are derived. The term *ērgīt* ‘nephew’ (i.e.,

sister's son) is attested here without a possessive pronominal suffix (Rubin 2014, 87). The subjunctive 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem *yúnfəʔ* < *√nfʔ* (JL, 181) is used here independently to convey deontic modality, i.e., 'should' (Rubin 2014, 147).

## (192)

*malhít ɬer ʕakərūt*

*The jawbone is on the coccyx*

فك على عصعص

This expression is used to describe an overcrowded place (al-Shahri 2000, 116, 301).

The term *mālhet* عظمة الفك 'jawbone' (MLZ, 829) is recorded by JL (163) as *məžhet*, which could point to dialectal variation. The term *ʕakərūt* 'pelvis' is from *√ʕkrm* (JL, 10). The Mehri counterpart of this expression is *ḥābū bārḥām gōṭi aṭ-ṭār gōṭi* 'Die Leute sind schon Nacken an Nacken' (Sima 2005, 89), in spite of some evident lexical divergences.

## (193)

*moğorōt a-ʕín ā-ʕósər*

*The eye of the lover is known*

تُعرف العين المحبة

This is said to describe someone who is in love and tries to deny it (al-Shahri 2000, 117, 301).

The participial form *moğorōt* 'known' < *√grb* must be the feminine counterpart of masculine *məğreb* (JL, 88). The long vowel in *ā-ʕósər* stands for the genitive exponent + a definite article. Compare the Mehri expression *yağrōb ʕjbūn* 'Der Verliebte ist leicht zu erkennen' (Sima 2005, 90), with the same meaning.

## (194)

mən fōk bess dəḥór a-aṣītək

*Either your grandfather or your grandmother*

من جدك لاقى جدتك ؟

This is a remark on a solution which is actually worse than the problem (al-Shahri 2000, 117, 302).

The use of the preposition *mən* to mean ‘instead of’ is undoubtedly related to its disjunctive function (Rubin 2014, 303–4). The verbal form *dəḥór* is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to find someone, befall’ (JL, 37).<sup>43</sup> This proverb is uttered as a question, as is evident by both the speaker’s intonation and its Arabic translation, and would be best translated as ‘instead of your grandfather only, did it find your grandmother (too)?’, probably implying that an illness (or something equally undesirable) which initially afflicted only one person subsequently spread to another one, possibly as the result of an ineffective attempt to treat it.

## (195)

mən bobéh bess dəḥór ʕazələt

*Either leprosy or the plague?*

من برص إلى جذام؟

Similarly to entry number (194) above, this is used as a warning not to opt for a solution that is worse or as bad as the problem (al-Shahri 2000, 117, 302), and it shares a similar sentential structure. The terms *bobéh* < √*bwb* (MLZ, 145), not listed in JL,

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<sup>43</sup> The vocalisation *dəḥór* is unexpected and may be due to a hesitation between the perfective *daḥár* and the imperfective *yəḍəḥór*.

and *ʕazələt* (JL, 21) are the names of two similar skin conditions related to leprosy. The former term, *bobéh*, attests the uncommon phoneme /o/.

(196)

mən təkəlúnk ġəfer ʕánən ɔ-ġɔk

*Instead of looking for the thaghloon, look after yourself*

من بحثك لنا عن نبات الثقلون. اكفي عنا غيطك

This is said to people who volunteer for tasks clearly beyond their abilities, and stems from a folk tale according to which a group of people were gathered to discuss who should go to look for the *təkəlun* plant, but could not reach an agreement, whereupon a sick man, who was barely able to stand, and was not able to use the privy by himself, declared he would go. The others then replied using this sentence (al-Shahri 2000, 117, 302).

The term *təkəlun* indicates *Glossonema varians* (Miller and Morris 1988, 44). According to Miller and Morris, there exist three variants of this plant name, namely *təkəlun*, *təkəlob*, and *fekelaw*. However, their distribution is presently unknown. The Ga-stem imperative *ġəfer* means ‘to hide, to pardon’ (JL, 84). The segment ɔ-ġɔk must be analysed as \*ε-ġɔb-ək. The use of the term *ġɔb* ‘excreta’ < √ġbb here makes it rather clear that al-Shahri’s English translation of this proverb uses a euphemism, and a more faithful, albeit rude, translation would be something like ‘Instead of looking for *təkəlún*, spare us your shit!’.

(197)

mən ɥagg<sup>j</sup> lək<sup>ɔ</sup>bór tel šeríf

*Instead of Haj I want to be buried close to the saint*

بدلاً من الحج أقبر عند السيد

This is used when accepting a small gift or a small part of what one really needs (al-Shahri 2000, 117, 303).

The Sharíf are held to be saints according to certain currents of Islam, so that when one cannot perform the Hajj within one's lifetime, one can be content with being buried in the proximity of a Sharíf. The use of a subjunctive *lɔkʰbɔr* expresses an optative meaning. The preposition *tel* means 'at, by, beside' (Rubin 2014, 263).

**(198)**

mən xalsét t-ten sɔ́ɣɔt

*If there is no other food they can eat the leaves of sughut*

من العدم تأكلن شجرة السوغوت

This is said to those who resolve to do the opposite of what they have been advised to do (al-Shahri 2000, 118, 303).

For the meaning of the plant name *sɔ́ɣɔt*, see entry number (164) above, which shares the same structure and Mehri counterpart.

**(199)**

mən maʕgíns leʃʰnax

*Instead of fat meat we need acceptable meat*

بدلاً من سميتها المفرطة نريد سمينة صالحة للاكل

The proverb refers to a cow, and implies that, instead of hoping for a very filling meal and being disappointed by the lack thereof, the person who utters this sentence declares that recovering little fat from the animal is acceptable, and it is a feasible endeavour. Similarly to entry number (196) above, this is said to people who

brag about being able to do something that is clearly beyond their abilities (al-Shahri 2000, 118, 303).

The term *maʕgín* <  $\sqrt{\text{ʕgn}}$  is listed in JL (10) as ‘stew of fat and meat’ and has here a 3.F.SG. personal suffix -s. The subjunctive 1.C.SG verbal form *leʕʕnax* derives from a H1-stem of the root  $\sqrt{\text{ʕnx}}$  and means ‘to find fat in a thin animal after slaughtering’ (JL, 240). This form is used here to convey optativity. See also entries (161) and (197). This expression can be more faithfully translated as ‘Instead of fat meat, I’ll be content with lean meat’.

(200)

her ē-rít ʕifʕt séhəl kəbkób

*If the moon is clear the stars are unimportant*

إذا صفت القمر فلا تههم الكواكب

This is said when misfortune strikes a group of people, but one of them manages to emerge unscathed (al-Shahri 2000, 118, 304). The adjective *ʕifʕt* appears to be the feminine counterpart of *ʕofi* ‘pure’ (JL, 237), whilst *séhəl* means ‘easy’ (JL, 225), and seems to be intended as ‘never mind’ here: i.e., If the moon is bright, never mind the stars.

(201)

hiε yəṭʕrd aǧəʕá

*Love drives away hatred*

الحب يطرد الكراهية

This is said of circumstances in which enmity between two groups is mitigated or overcome by the love or friendship between two individuals (al-Shahri 2000, 118, 304).

The term *hiε* means ‘love’, as its Arabic translation حب proves (al-Shahri 2000, 304). However, it is recorded neither in JL nor in MLZ, and one wonders whether it might be related to Arabic هوى ‘love’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 1040). The term *aḡaṣá* < \**e-baḡaṣá* ‘hatred’ (MLZ, 136: بغص) is not recorded by JL. For an analysis of a verb that is morphologically similar to *yəṭōrd* ‘to send away, drive away’ (JL, 279), see entries (95) of this collection and (21) of the MLZ collection.

(202)

her bek ḥa-lṣd d fōṭx əlōtəḡ

*Instead of wounding a person I will kill him*

بدلاً من أضرب الشخص لأجرحه أفضل ان أقتله

This is said when someone is making things more complicated than they actually are (al-Shahri 2000, 118, 304).

The first verbal form is a complex and problematic one. For *ḥa-lṣd*, al-Shahri writes حلولت, which leads one to interpret it as a perfective 3.F.SG. of a Ga-stem < √*hlb* meaning ‘to milk’ (JL, 109). In actuality, حلولت stands for the pausal realisation of حلوود *ḥa-lṣd*, a 1.C.SG future form from a Ga-stem < √*lbd* meaning ‘to shoot, strike hard, cut’ (JL, 159). However, this interpretation too is problematic, in that the subjunctive form accompanying the future prefix *ḥa-* should be *l-ṣlbəd* and not the imperfective *lṣd*. Nevertheless, S. al-Amri believes that the form is correct and in current use, which leads one to wonder about the function of *ḥa-* + imperfective. The whole verbal form *her bek ḥa-lṣd* means ‘if I’m about to strike’, as shown by the use of the auxiliary *ber*, conjugated in the perfective 1.C.SG. Regarding *bek*, when followed by the future, this auxiliary conveys a proximative or avertative



sense, i.e., to be about or to be nearly (Rubin 2014, 167). The term *fǝtɔx* means ‘blow, wound in the head’ (JL, 67). The verbal form *əlǝtǝg* is an imperfective 1.C.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to kill’ (JL, 165). Overall, the literal meaning of this expression is best interpreted as ‘If I were to wound (someone), I’d kill him instead’.

## (203)

her šktǝrək tǝš effǝrkǝš

*If it looks to be too much, divide it up*

إذا رأيتك كثيراً فرفقه

This is said when people brag about their possessions, when they are in fact poor (al-Shahri 2000, 119, 304).

The verbal form *šktǝrək* is a perfective 2.M.SG of a Š1-stem < *√ktr* and means ‘to think something is a lot’ (JL, 137), whilst the segment *effǝrkǝš* contains the H2-stem imperative *effǝrk* ‘share!’, listed in JL (61) as *efurk* ‘to frighten; to make a parting’.

## (204)

her šek a-ǧag<sup>1</sup> e-difǝr yǝlhǝk a-ǧaz<sup>3</sup>m

*Who has weak men, loses the bet*

من مع القوم الضعفاء تُثبت عليه التهمة

This is used when someone is unsuccessful in an endeavour, despite having done everything to succeed. The specific example comes from a folk tale according to which a woman who was accused of being a witch, and who was actually innocent, could not prove her innocence because her accusers were powerful in the community, whilst she had no one by her side. This sentence is said to be what she uttered upon being condemned (al-Shahri 2000, 119, 305).

The verbal form *yəlḥškk* is a compound of a subjunctive (with optative force) 3.M.SG. of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to catch up with, overtake, run after’ (JL, 163), and the 2.M.SG. personal suffix *-k*. The term *ƣazʾm*, besides meanings such as ‘intention, aim’ (JL, 21) and ‘ordeal by fire’ (a meaning not recorded by either JL or MLZ), has another meaning, as explained by al-Shahri (2000, 305): ويسمى بالشحرية (إغعزم) حيث إنه يأخذ ملتبهة بالنار ويحرق بها لسان المرأة ‘In Shahri *ƣazʾm* is the act of taking a red-hot iron and branding the tongue of a woman with it’. Overall, the literal meaning of this expression may be said to be ‘if you have weak men, may the ordeal by fire catch you!’.

## (205)

her ƣar kun xer ƣəššəʾ

*If there is rain the green will show*

إذا كان هناك فعلاً غيث ستخضر الأرض

This is said to those who promise to do something, but are strongly suspected to be either incapable of doing what they promise to do, or lying altogether (al-Shahri 2000, 119, 305).

The term *xer*, which is not reported by JL, means ‘(abundant) rain’ (MLZ, 315: الغيث),. The verbal form *ƣəššəʾ* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to become green’ (JL, 265).

## (206)

her gī kkelṭ ɔl gī īšékəṭ

*Even if the speaker forgets, the listener doesn’t*

إذا نسي المتحدث لم ينس المتحدث إليه

This means that one should always remember who one is lying to, in order not to contradict oneself (al-Shahri 2000, 119, 305).

The term *kelt* is said to be the plural form of *keltʔt* ‘story’ (JL, 131; MLZ, 808: القصة, الأمثلة والحكاية), but is used here with the meaning of ‘speaker’. The first consonant [k] is geminated, perhaps because of the presence of a definite article. The participial form *l̥sekəlt* < \**e-mešəkəlt* ‘listener’ is connected to the Š1-stem verb *šəkəlt* ‘to listen to a tale’ (JL, 130). The perfective third person of the doubly weak G-stem verb *gī* meaning ‘to be wrong; to forget, loose, leave’ < √*gwy* is recorded by JL (91) as *gē*. The unexpected /i/ in the place of /e/ might be due to these doubly weak verbs often fluctuating between the two forms *C<sup>1</sup>i* and *C<sup>1</sup>ē* (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 216). S. al-Amri reports the variant *ɔl kəɬ yəgī ɛ yəšəkəlt*.

## (207)

her hōt ʕəzūt təkšēf yəhē bəs ɔʕz rém<sup>n</sup>nəm

*When the snake wanted to behave badly, God threw it in the sea*

إذا نوى الثعبان على الكفر والمنكر يرميه الله بحراً

This is said upon learning that a crime might have taken place, had the criminal not be hindered by circumstances (al-Shahri 2000, 120, 306).

The verbal form *ʕəzūt* is a perfective 3.F.SG. of a Ga-stem < √*ʕzm* meaning ‘to decide; to invite’ (JL, 21). The Ga-stem subjunctive 3.F.SG. form *təkšēf* is from √*kšf* ‘to do something very cruel; to uncover, examine; to be embarrassed (at something odd)’ (JL, 137). The verbal form *yəhē* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a G-stem from the doubly weak root √*hwy* meaning ‘to fall’ (JL, 100). Its use with the preposition *b-* to convey a causative meaning is hitherto unrecorded.

(208)

yəṣəḥɔk d śibir xəh b-yəntəḡs d śinifet

*Only the one with the nice teeth can smile and the one with the long hair can show it off*

يضحك ذو الفم الجميل وينفش الشعر ذو الشعر الكثيف

This is used either about someone who is very beautiful and loved by everyone, or someone who is not, but is unconcerned about the judgement of the community (al-Shahri 2000, 120, 306).

The verbal form *yəṣəḥɔk* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to laugh’ (JL, 325). The term *śibir* seems to be connected to the term *śabrēt* meaning ‘perfection’ (MLZ, 499: الإتيان), and is used in entry number (116) above as an adjective meaning ‘beautiful’. However, the lack of intervocalic deletion of /b/ might point to a non-native origin. The term *śinifet* seems to be related to a root √*snf*, which yields a Ga-stem verb that may be transcribed as *śonɔf*, meaning ‘to stand in one’s place frowning’ (MLZ, 527: وقف في مكانه عابسا مكفهر الوجه). The verbal form *yəntəḡs* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a T1-stem < √*ngs*, meaning ‘(water, food) to be thrown away because it is dirty’ (JL, 185). The abundance of doubtful forms raises the question as to whether we might be dealing with a formulaic, and hence mehrising and/or arabising, language (Johnstone 1972). The Arabic translation provided by al-Shahri, however, sheds some light on the literal meaning of this expression: ‘He who has a beautiful mouth laughs, and he who has thick hair ruffles it’.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Compare Arabic نفش ‘ruffles its feathers (bird)’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 986).

(209)

yébrəf d ɔl bəʕéʕ

*He who worries should support*

من لم يطمئن الى قدرة صاحبه عليه مساندته

This is an encouragement to act on something instead of simply worrying about it (al-Shahri 2000, 120, 306).

The verb *yébrəf* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a H1-stem meaning ‘to support something not to make it fall’ (MLZ, 125: (سند شيئاً حتى لا يسقط), and is not listed in JL. The verbal form *bəʕéʕ* seems to be a perfective third person of a H1-stem < √bʕʕ, meaning ‘to check something from a distance’ (MLZ, 135: اطمن الشيء: (من بعده). The initial vowel of the verbal form is lost due to the adjacency of a sonorant. This proverb is also recorded in MLZ (125) as يبرف أُل بعض. Al-Shahri’s Arabic rendition of this expression translates as ‘He who is not assured of his friend’s ability, should support him’, and may shed some light on its literal meaning.

(210)

yɔʕʕt ʕar ɛ kéré

*Only the person who has hidden something can find it*

ينبش من اخفى

This is said when someone suddenly solves a vexing issue, which can either be the search for something physical, or the search for an explanation for something (al-Shahri 2000, 120, 307).

The verbal form *yɔʕʕt* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Gb-stem < √bʕt meaning ‘to dig up’ (MLZ, 134: نبش), and *kéré* is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to hide’ (JL, 150).

## 2.0. *Mu‘ḡam Lisān Zufār*

### (1) MLZ, 156

ɛḍilín əntəkték lhes e-kāḥáf o g'ūdét

اذيلن انتكتك لھس قاحف اجوزات

٤٥ فلان يغلي مثل قدر البر

*So-and-so boils like a pot full of corn*

This expression describes a very impatient, short-tempered person. The verbal form *əntəkték* is a perfective third person of a <sup>Q</sup>N1-stem meaning ‘to boil’ (MLZ, 156: غلى على النار). The noun *kāḥáf* is a diminutive form of *kaḥf* ‘clay cooking-pot’ (JL, 143). *g'ūdét* means ‘boiled corn/barley’ (MLZ, 156: سليق البر \ الشعير). The relativiser is realised as [o] instead of the expected [ɛ]: this may be caused by the presence of a long rounded vowel in the leftmost position in *g'ūdét*. In the introduction to JL (xxix–xxx), Johnstone describes a similar behaviour of the (almost homophonous) definite article when adjacent to a guttural consonant. He seems, however, not to include /g/ among the guttural consonants, and lists *e-* as the allophone of the definite article when adjacent to /g/ (JL, xxix). See also above, p. 36.

### (2) MLZ, 217

ərđi bə ḥablétš ɾer ɛḍilín

ردي بحبلتش ظئر اذيلن

رُمي بحبله السري وراء فلان

*His umbilical cord has been thrown after so-and-so*

<sup>45</sup> MLZ does not provide an Arabic translation. This translation was devised by the authors.

People used to believe that if they threw a baby's umbilical cord at a person they admired, then the baby would take after that person. This expression is hence said in order to state that a person is very similar to another person. This tradition is described in al-Shahri (2000, 137, 327).

The verbal form *ərdi* is a passive perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning 'to throw' (JL, 204). According to S. al-Amri, *ḥablét* does not mean 'umbilical cord' in his dialect, in which the term *širáf* is used instead. However, JL (267) lists *širáf* as 'navel' and MLZ (490) follows suit.

### (3) MLZ, 301

əḍilín ɔ yəxéfər b-ɔ yaʔskór

اذيلن ا يخفر بأ يعسكُر

إن فلانا لا يؤمن الخائف ولا يحمى نفسه

*So-and-so doesn't give protection and doesn't offer shelter*

This is said of someone weak.

The form *yəxéfər* is a 3.M.SG. imperfective of a Ga-stem from the root  $\sqrt{xfr}$  meaning '(group) to give protection to a sick man by gathering and stating that he is given protection from ill health (as a counter-spell)' (JL, 298). The [e] vowel found between C<sup>1</sup> and C<sup>2</sup> in this verbal form instead of the expected [ɔ] is triggered by the presence of a guttural [x] (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 194). The 3.M.SG. imperfective of a <sup>0</sup>H1-stem derived from  $\sqrt{ʃskr}$  means 'to set up a temporary living quarter' (MLZ, 626: اقام) and is not recorded by JL.

**(4) MLZ, 304**

ɔ de yæxtelédən ʔer diní lɔ

أدئ يختلدن ʔر ديني لو  
لا أحد يتخلد في هذه الدنيا

*No one in this world lives forever*

This self-explanatory saying features an imperfective 3.M.SG. H2-stem verb < √xld ‘to be eternal, live forever’ (MLZ, 304: تجلد \ (عاش إلى الأبد), which is not recorded by JL.

**(5) MLZ, 314**

ɛḍilín xē mən mun o-śúrəʔ

اذيلن خي من مون أوشرع  
فلان لم يابه له أحد وتجاوزة الجميع

*So-and-so is a gap between the sails*

This is said of someone who is unimportant or uninfluential (especially within a family or a tribe).

S. al-Amri states that this expression is not typical of the dialect of his town. The term xē < √xwy means ‘interstice, space’ (JL, 311). The definite article before the term śúrəʔ ‘sails’ (JL, 254) is realised as [o]. As in item number (1) of this collection, this might be due to vowel harmony triggered by a rounded vowel in the leftmost position in the following segment. The pausal realisation of final /ʔ/ is [h].

**(6) MLZ, 328**

ɛḍilín lhes e-ddesós

اذيلن لهس ادسّس  
فلان مثل دسس

*So-and-so is like the desós lizard*



The *desós* is a small venomous lizard. S. al-Amri says this is a metaphor for a treacherous and disloyal person. According to JL (42), *desós* is a little venomous snake, an eavesdropper with bad intent, or a tiny mud snail. JL also lists, within the same entry, the similar proverb *ēbré ēdesós ḥa-yékən desós* ‘the son of a snake will be a snake’.

**(7) MLZ, 343**

ēdīlīn ṭerš ēšdihikētā

اذيلن طرش أشدهقتي

فلان تتوالى عليه الزيارات

*So-and-so, the visits are upon him*

This is said of someone whose health is deteriorating. The term *ēšdihikētā* is the definite form of *mešdihikētā* ‘abundance of visits to the ill’ (MLZ, 343: كثرة الزيارات للمريض). However, MLZ lists the term as *mešdihəkētā* (مشدهقتي).

**(8) MLZ, 366**

ṭ šeš ɔl ēḥel b-ṭ rgē

أشش أل إهل بوجي

ليس له أهل \ أصدقاء يرجو نفعهم

*He has no family, nor does he have hope*

MLZ states that this saying applies to those who have no friends. S. al-Amri, however, says that it applies rather to those who either don’t have family or are cut off from it.

This expression exhibits two terms, *ēḥel* and *rgē*, which may be suspected to be Arabic loans, meaning, respectively, ‘family’

(MLZ, 983: أهل),<sup>46</sup> and ‘the friends whose help is requested in the time of need’ (MLZ, 366: الأصدقاء الذين يرجى نفعهم عند الحاجة).<sup>47</sup>

**(9) MLZ, 427**

ɛḍilín ərde b səbṭāt

اذيلن رَدَّء بَسْبَطَت

استسلم للأمر ولم يعد يقدر على شيء

*So-and-so has thrown the belt*

The term *səbṭāt* refers to the belt worn with traditional dress, and the meaning of the expression refers to someone who is giving up on something because of old age or illness. According to MLZ (427), however, *səbṭāt* means ‘a stick used to hit grains’ (العصا (الذي تضرب به سنابل الحبوب). The verbal form *ərde* is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to throw’ (JL, 204).

**(10) MLZ, 434**

ɛḍilín məḥīk b səḥīk

اذيلن محق بَسَحَق

فلان يتسبب في إثارة إغاضة الناس وسخطهم

*So-and-so, annoyance and oppression*

According to S. al-Amri, this expression is used to describe an annoying and mean person. The semantics of the two terms *məḥīk* and *səḥīk* are not entirely clear. However, S. al-Amri suggests that they may be translated using the English terms ‘annoyance’ and ‘oppression’. JL (170) records *məḥīk* as ‘(person) tiresome, annoying’, and the Ga-stem verb *ṣḥāk* as ‘to crush, grind fine’ (JL, 226),

<sup>46</sup> This term is not listed in JL.

<sup>47</sup> This term is not listed in JL.

the latter's vocalism being altered in order to rhyme with the former.

**(11) MLZ, 444**

ɔ šek ɔ safi b-ɔ dafi

أُشِكْ اسِيعِي بَأْ دِيعِي

ليس معك من يسعي في حاجتك | من ينافح عنك

*You have neither someone to strive (for you) nor to speak out (for you)*

According to S. al-Amri, this is said of someone who does not have anybody on their side, and cannot count on any help or support. The two terms *safi* and *dafi* are clearly Arabic loan-words.

**(12) MLZ, 480**

šɔfɔlš dəfər

شُفْلَشْ دَفَر

إحساسه مرهف

*His feelings are bad*

The term *šɔfɔl*, besides its original anatomical meaning 'belly, entrails', also means 'feelings' (MLZ, 480). According to S. al-Amri, this describes someone who is ill-intentioned, judgmental, and cunning. He adds that the expression can be treated as either masculine or feminine, hence it can be formulated as *šɔfɔlš difirít*.

**(13) MLZ, 516**

denu b-denu menmunúhum šɔɬ

دَنُو بَدَنُو مَنْمُنُهُم شَطَاط

بينهما بون شاسع

*There is a big difference between this and this*

S. al-Amri believes this self-explanatory expression to be very old. The term *denu* is a singular masculine proximal demonstrative ‘this’ (JL, 47). For the last word in the expression, which is not recorded in JL, MLZ (516) records شطاط, which would be likely rendered as /štəṭ/, but S. al-Amri pronounces štəṭ.

**(14) MLZ, 539**

e-šərb beš ē flək, e-défər yəsənúd enúf

أَصْرَبْ بِشْ أَفْلَكْ اَدْفَرْ يَسْنُدْ أَنْفْ

الصرْب فيه الخيرات حتى الإنسان الخامل الكسول لا يحتاج فيه لغيره

*In the spring there are good things even for lazy people*

Literally ‘the spring has success, the bad (one) supports him-/her-self’. According to MLZ (717), *flək* means ‘success in trade’ (النجاح (في تجارة). The verbal form *yəsənúd* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to do something with help’ (JL, 230) and adding the reflexive *enúf* gives it the meaning of ‘to help oneself’.

**(15) MLZ, 582**

əḍilín ɔ yəṭúrḳən beš ší lə

اڏيلن اُ يَطْرُقْنْ بِشْ شِي لَو

لا يُوْثِرْ فيه شِيءْ

*So-and-so is not hit by anything*

S. al-Amri says this applies to someone resilient. Cf. the Arabic root √*ṭrḳ* ‘knock, pound’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 558–59), which in Jibbali/Šḥarēt produces a H2-stem verb that appears here in the 3.M.SG. imperfective.

**(16) MLZ, 584**

ṭaṣmēt ar diləmət

طعمت عر دلمت

العطاء أفضل من البخل (بالطعام)

*Generosity is better than being stingy*

The non-occurrence of the term *xar* ‘better’ is unexpected. The term *ṭaṣmēt* ‘giving food’ (MLZ, 584) is used here to mean ‘generosity’. The term *diləmət* means ‘stinginess’ (MLZ, 337: البُخل) and is not recorded by JL.

**(17) MLZ, 590**

tob ar šəṭalág

تُب عر شَطْلَغ

جَبْنَا سِيرَةَ الْقَطِّ جَاءَ يَنْطُ<sup>48</sup>

*“Speak of the devil...”*

Similarly to its English counterpart, this expression can be used when someone who is being talked about suddenly and unexpectedly shows up. The particle *tob ar* means ‘indeed, truly’ (Rubin 2014, 315). The verbal form *šəṭalág* is a perfective third person of a Š1-stem meaning ‘to arrive upon being mentioned’ (JL, 277; MLZ, 590: جاء عند ذكره).

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<sup>48</sup> MLZ does not provide an Arabic translation for this expression. This is very close in meaning.

**(18) MLZ, 591**

ɛḍilín ɬaməšét b-ɬabrét

اذيلن طمڤشت بعبرت

فلان أعمى البصر والبصيرة

*So-and-so lacks sight and insight*

The terms *ɬamšét* and *ɬabrét* mean, respectively, ‘lack of insight’ (MLZ, 591: قلة البصيرة) and ‘blindness’ (MLZ, 604: العمي). According to S. al-Amri, another similar expression, *ɬəmúš b ɬabór*, is a curse that means ‘may you go blind and crazy’.

**(19) MLZ, 608**

ɛḍilín šeš ɬaytót d serbét

اذيلن بشش عثث ذ سربت

فلان لديه عيال كثر

*So-and-so has the offspring of a ɬaytót and serbét*

This expression predictably describes someone who has a big family.

The term *ɬaytót* describes للماشية ‘a very prolific insect whose eggs can be found on dried sardines... abundance of offspring’ (MLZ, 608: حشرة تتطفل على سمك السردين المجفف والمخزن). The term *serbét* means ‘abundance of offspring’ (MLZ, 438: كثرة العيال). S. al-Amri pronounces *ɬaytót zerbét*, with the segment /t̪ds/ coalescing into [z].

**(20) MLZ, 624**

l-ɬazíz ɛḍilín

لعزير اذيلن

رحم الله فلان

*May God help so-and-so*

Said when grieving someone, to remark upon the good character of the person in question. The term *ʕazíz* is most probably an Arabic loan. This is also recorded by JL (20) as *l-ʕázíz...* ‘God help... (a departed one)!’.

**(21) MLZ, 633**

yəfōrd a-ʕiṭṭb

يفورد اعطب

يهرب عند رؤية شجرة العشرة

*He flees the ʕaṭṭb tree*

The term *ʕiṭṭb* is the plural form of *ʕaṭṭb*, a tree whose scientific name is *Calotropis procera* (Miller and Morris 1988, 42),<sup>49</sup> also listed in JL (18) as *ʕaṭṭb*. According to S. al-Amri, this tree looks like a human being in the darkness, so a person who flees it is a coward. The verbal form *yəfōrd* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to stampede, panic’ (JL, 59), not recorded by MLZ. S. al-Amri pronounces it with a long vowel, as al-Shahri does for the same verb in entry number (95) of the al-Shahri collection (al-Shahri 2000, 94, 270; Castagna 2022a, 41), and the long vowel in MLZ’s Arabic-script transcription, with a *و*, seems to confirm this.

**(22) MLZ, 634**

ɛd̪il̪ín ɔ̌ yaṣṭét̪ a-reš̪ɔ̌ lɔ̌

اذيلن ا يعطط رش لو

فلان لا يمرض

*So-and-so doesn’t rest his head*

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<sup>49</sup> Miller and Morris record the term as *ʕuṭṭeb*.

According to S. al-Amri, this means rather ‘so-and-so is a workaholic’ or ‘so-and-so never stops working’. The verbal form *yaṣṭēt*, an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a G-stem from the geminate root √*ṣṭt*, is said by MLZ to mean ‘to feel pain, to fall ill’ (تألم \ وجع \ مرض), but S. al-Amri affirms that it means ‘to rest’.

**(23) MLZ, 656**

ṣayún b-sūni b-ḥet lə ʔaṣbát ḍinú

اعين يسوني بهت لطبعت ذنو

طوال الأعوام والسنين وأنت على هذا الطبع (السيء)

*All these years, and you still have this (bad) habit*

This expression is used as a reproach towards somebody who has had a bad habit for a long time. The terms *ṣayún* and *sūni* both mean ‘years’ (MLZ, 656: الأعوام: اعين يسوني), but *sūni* may be an Arabic loanword. Also, the term *ʔaṣbát* ‘habit’ (MLZ, 576: العادة) looks like an Arabic loanword. The term *ḍinú* is a singular feminine proximal demonstrative ‘this’ (JL, 44).

**(24) MLZ, 663**

a-ḡarír ṣayér

اغرر عير

الغريب أعمى (لجهله بالناس والمكان)

*He who is foreign is blind*

MLZ states that this expression describes inexperienced young people. S. al-Amri, however, asserts that it applies to foreign people rather than young people, and the Arabic translation provided seems to agree with the latter meaning: note the Arabic meaning of the term *ḡarír* provided by MLZ (663), ‘strange, foreign’ (غريب).



**(25) MLZ, 667**

ləksés id gísót

لكسس غسوت

تقوت

*May I find it a wholesome hand*

This is used to congratulate someone who has done a good job. The verbal form *ləksés* is a compound of *ləksé*, a 1.C.SG subjunctive of a Ga-stem with an optative meaning ‘to find’ (JL, 135; al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 203) + a 3.F.SG personal suffix -s. The term *gísót* seems to be an adjective indicating strength and health. MLZ (667) lists it in the feminine and provides little explanation as to its meaning. The Arabic translation, an imperative of a form V verb meaning ‘to be or become stronger’, does, however, shed some limited light on the overall meaning of this expression.

**(26) MLZ, 698**

eśśəbbót eddiní bæ fərǵát

شيت اديني بفرغت

This is a formulaic expression: S. al-Amri affirms that the verbs are used only in this expression and are not found in any other context. Hence, its exact meaning is somewhat obscure, and MLZ does not give an Arabic translation. Nevertheless, it is used to comment on circumstances or situations that are worsening and becoming dangerously out of control. MLZ records شيت, but S. al-Amri reads *eśśəbbót* (H1-stem perfective 3.F.SG.), and remarks that the provided form is wrong. This form seems to derive from a III-weak root  $\sqrt{sbw\sim y}$ , although no relevant entries could be found at this time. However, MLZ (698) states that the Arabic

expression قامت الدنيا و لم تقعد 'the world was turned upside down' is comparable to the Jibbali/Šḥarēt expression.

**(27) MLZ, 713**

εḍilín beš fəkrét

اذيلن بش فُكْرَت

فلان أمره عجا

*So-and-so is behaving strangely*

This is said of a person who is visibly troubled at a given time but is otherwise normal. According to MLZ (713), this expression is used in bewilderment and confusion, but it does not provide further explanation. The term *fəkrét* is related to the root *√fkr*, well known across Semitic, which conveys the meaning of 'thinking'.

**(28) MLZ, 715**

εḍilín ɔ yəfólǵəš ǵəǵə ʕak ḥagərét<sup>ə</sup> lə

اذيلن أ يفُلجش غج عك حجرت لو

فلان لا يغلبه أحد في المرافعات القبلية

*So-and-so's arguments cannot be refuted by anyone*

This expression is used to describe someone who always seems to get his/her way in arguments. The verbal form *yəfólǵəš* is a combination of an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning 'to silence someone with superior argument' (JL, 57) and a 3.M.SG. personal suffix -š. The term *ḥagərét* means 'meeting to discuss (tribal) issues' (MLZ, 221: الاجتماع لمناقشة قضية ما).

**(29) MLZ, 748**

ɛḍilín ɔ ifferód kəssétə lɔ

اذيلن أ يفرد قشت لو

فلان لا يخيف \ ينفّر شاة قاصية وحيدة

*So-and-so doesn't (can't) stampede a lost goat*

This is said of a cowardly person. S. al-Amri asserts that it rather describes a lazy person. The verb *ifferód* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a H1-stem meaning 'to stampede (transitive), frighten' (JL, 59). The term *kəssét* seems to mean 'a lost goat' (MLZ, 748), although it appears also to mean 'crazy'.

**(30) MLZ, 774**

ēḵnī dáhar

أفني دهر

الإنسان يحتاج إلى تربية وتوجيه طوال حياته

*A child forever!*

The term *ēḵnī* is the definite form of *məḵənī*, which according to JL (147) means 'baby'. However, MLZ (774) defines it as 'in the process of being raised' (في طور التربية), which might be a synonym to an extent. *dáhar* here means 'forever' (JL, 36; MLZ, 342: أبد (لبدهر)). S. al-Amri states that this is used to describe someone whose attitude is childish. Therefore, the meaning provided by MLZ, 'the human being needs education and guidance throughout his life' (الإنسان يحتاج إلى تربية طوال حياته), is doubtful.

**(31) MLZ, 785**

titk elkobbí

تتك الكُبه

تأكلك (الكبه)

*May elkobbí eat you!*

This is a (mild) reproach against a greedy, gluttonous person. The term *elkobbí* (MLZ, 785) is unknown to the author of MLZ. S. al-Amri enquired with his community and found that it may mean some sort of illness, but none of those whom he consulted was able to tell exactly which one. The verbal form *titk* is a subjunctive 3.F.SG. with optative force, implying that the subject *elkobbí* is feminine, in combination with a 2.M.SG. personal suffix *-k*.

**(32) MLZ, 813**

εḍilín ekmíl

اذيلن اكمل

فلان سعى إلى حتفه \ جاءت ساعة موته

*So-and-so's time has come*

This self-explanatory expression features a H1-stem third-person verbal form meaning ‘to finish (transitive), to be killed, to meet one’s fate’ (JL, 131). The rightmost vowel, normally [e], is raised to [i] in adjacent position to a nasal consonant.

**(33) MLZ, 814**

εḍilín beš kámən défər

اذيلن بش كَمَنْ دفر

فلان به مرض خبيث

*So-and-so has a malicious illness*

According to S. al-Amri, this expression can also be used to describe someone who has been bewitched. The term *kāmān* means ‘shape, nature, temperament; deadly disease which is not precisely known’ (MLZ, 814: المشكل. المثل. الشبه. السجية. الطبع. المرض). The additional meaning of ‘being bewitched’ was suggested by one of S. al-Amri’s informants.

**(34) MLZ, 816**

kənʕəlót ē reš

كُنْعُلْتُ آرَشَ

الرأس المدبب إلى أعلى

*A peak of a nose*

This is said jokingly of someone who has a pointed head. The term *kənʕəlót* is recorded by MLZ (816) as ‘peak’ (قمة).

**(35) MLZ, 817**

khal yit ōl ʕtim

كَهَلْ يِتْ أُولْ آوْتُمْ

استحلّ استمراً أكل مال الأيتام

*It is distasteful to eat the wealth of an orphan*

This means that laying one’s hands on the wealth of a weakling is not a commendable behaviour. The verbal form *khal* is a perfective third person of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to be able to tolerate’ (JL, 128). The verbal form *yit* is a subjunctive 3.M.SG. of a G-stem from the doubly weak root  $\sqrt{twy}$  meaning ‘to eat’ (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 215). The segment *ōl* is to be interpreted as

< \*ε-mol ‘the wealth’ (JL, 176),<sup>50</sup> and the following segment *štim* results from a sequence made up of the relativiser ε- and the term *ótim* ‘orphan’ (JL, 314).

**(36) MLZ, 829**

məlḥát<sup>o</sup> d ġεg<sup>l</sup>

مُلَحَّت ذ غِج

رجل به بقية من شباب \ من قوة

*A jawbone of a man*

This idiomatic expression is used to describe a weak man. The term *məlḥát* ‘jawbone’ is recorded as *malḥít* in entry number (192) of the al-Shahri collection. Also, note the dialectal variant *məžḥet* (JL, 163).

**(37) MLZ, 831**

lóttəz əlhá

لُتْرُ الْحَى

تراحمت اللحاء

*(The) beards have crowded one another*

According to MLZ (831), this expression is a ‘metaphor for a stampede and intense crowding’. However, according to S. al-Amri, it rather symbolises an intense competition between two individuals or two groups, which can be either physical or intellectual. The beards symbolise manly strength and dignity.

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<sup>50</sup> The literal meaning is ‘livestock, capital’, which in the culture of Jibbali/Šḥarēt speakers amounts to wealth.

As for the verbal form, *lšttəz* is a perfective third-person form of a T1-stem < √lzz meaning ‘to shiver; to crowd one another; to have the jaws locked together’ (JL, 167). The noun *əlhá* is the plural form of *ləhyét* ‘beard’ (JL, 163).

**(38) MLZ, 891**

nbaʃ yenbaʃ ʔz be-kerəféfk

نُبْعُ يَنْبُعُ أَوَّلَ بَكَرْفَكَ

أُغْرِبْ عَنْ وَجْهِهِ أَبْعَدَ اللَّهِ وَجْهَكَ

*May God chase your face away*

This expression is used as a wish not to see someone’s face any more. According to S. al-Amri, it also carries the meaning of ‘may you fall from God’s grace’.

The use in sequence of the perfective and the subjunctive 3.M.SG. forms of a H1-stem meaning ‘to chase away the evil’ (MLZ, 891: طَرَدَ شَرَّ طِرْطَظَة) is noteworthy.

**(39) MLZ, 897**

ədilín ʔ šeš négʕəm səʕídʔ lə

اذيلنْ أَشَشْ نَجْمْ سَعِيدْ لَو

فَلان طالعُه (اليوم) ليس طالعُ سَعْد

*So-and-so doesn’t have a happy star*

This is said when someone is struck by bad luck. The use of the term *négʕəm* for ‘star’ is peculiar. However, according to MLZ, this can mean ‘star of destiny’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 566) in addition to the likely imported Arabic meaning of ‘star’ as a celestial body. MLZ (897) specifies that this saying is used in a spontaneous manner, without a belief in stars or horoscopes being necessary: يقال ذلك بشكل عفوي دون الاعتقاد في النجوم \ الطالع.

**(40) MLZ, 920**

ber nótɔb ɛ-dbér

بر نطُبْ إيدبر

فرش الجُعل جناحاه وطار

*The scarab brushed its wings and flew*

This expression is used as a metaphor for sunset. According to MLZ, it means ‘the scarab brushed its wings and flew’; however, S. al-Amri states that the insect in question is a wasp rather than a scarab, despite the fact that MLZ translates the Jibbali/Šḥarēt term *بر نطُبْ إيدبر* ɛ-dbér into Arabic as الجُعل ‘dung beetle; scarabaeus’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 127). One might legitimately suspect that the similarity between the above-mentioned root and the root *√dbr* in Arabic (as well as other Semitic languages), whose meanings include ‘wasp’, might be responsible for a degree of semantic overlap. The verbal form *nótɔb* is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to shoot an arrow; to drive away’ (JL, 196). According to MLZ (920), it can also mean ‘to take something out’ (أخرج الشيء). The presence of [ɔ] instead of the [u] expected adjacent to a nasal is noteworthy (Rubin 2014, 42–43). However, despite being very productive, the raising effect of nasals on adjacent vowels is not universal: for example, \**ḵɔnɔɔt* > *ḵɔnɔt* ‘to die suddenly’ (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 184).<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> This form is a third-person 3.F.SG. of a Ga-stem (JL, 147).



## (41) MLZ, 944

ε-kerʔféfš d-inyerən

اكرففش د ينيرن

وجهه يشيع نوراً

*His face spreads the light*

This is said of a good person.

The verbal form *d-inyerən* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a H2-stem meaning ‘(light) to glow’ (JL, 198), with a circumstantial *d-* prefix (Rubin 2014, 158–61) attached (see also entries (23) and (188) of the al-Shahri collection above).

## (42) MLZ, 950

kʔméz htəf

كمز هيتفف

اقفز واصرخ<sup>52</sup>*Jump and shout!*

S. al-Amri pronounces *htaf* for هيتفف. The meaning of this expression, made up of two imperatives of Ga-stems meaning respectively ‘jump’ (JL, 132) and ‘to call out for help’ (JL, 99), is ‘if you don’t agree, then jump and shout to see if somebody else will help you!’ and it can be used in the heat of an argument by one of the parties to intimidate their opponent and cut short the dispute.

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<sup>52</sup> Arabic translation by the authors. MLZ does not provide an Arabic translation of this expression.

**(43) MLZ, 958**

ɔl ġumúdk éhzəf ʕar ḥārót<sup>a</sup> lə

أَلْ غُمْدُكْ أَهْزَفْ عَر حَارْتْ لَو  
أَمْسَيْتْ لَا أَهْرَبُ مِنَ النَّارِ \ الْحَيَّةِ

*(Tonight) I'm not able to escape a black (snake)*

This is an expression used to describe a condition of extreme tiredness.

The verb *ġumúdk* is likely a perfective 1.C.SG. of a H1-stem recorded by JL (86) as *aġmíd* 'to be, appear in the evening', and the [u] between C<sup>1</sup> and C<sup>2</sup> is to be regarded as a phonologically neutral vowel which takes on the phonetic characteristics of the following stressed vowel, as is often seen in the eastern dialect of Jibbali/Šḥarēt. The absence of intervocalic /m/ deletion seems to argue in favour of this. The segment *ʕar* is pronounced *ḥar* by S. al-Amri, probably due to regressive assimilation to the *ḥārót* segment to the right. The latter term, normally 'black (F.SG.)', is said by S. al-Amri to mean 'a black snake'.<sup>53</sup>

**(44) MLZ, 963**

ɔ tkəs de xalí mən e-diní lə

أُتْكَسْ دَيِّ هَلْلُ مِنْ دِينِي لَو  
لَا تَجِدُ أَحَدًا خَالٍ مِنْ هُمُومِ الدُّنْيَا \ تَعْبَهَا

*You don't find anyone free from (the cares of) the world*

This proverb is uttered to remind oneself or someone else that life is hard for everybody. The verbal form *tkəs* is an imperfective 2.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning 'to find' (JL, 135; al-Kathiri and

<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the colour adjective *ḥṛ* is reported to mean 'black animal' among other things (JL, 120).

Dufour 2020, 203). S. al-Amri asserts that the term *xalí* ‘empty, free’ (MLZ, 308) should be used instead of هملل, as recorded by MLZ.

### 3.0. *Jibbali Lexicon*

#### (1) JL, 16

tob ʕar múʃʃam də gēg

*He’s a dull dog!*

This is said of a dull and serious person.

According to JL (16), the term *múʃʃam*, a passive participle, means ‘dull and serious (fellow)’. MLZ (631) does not ascribe to the term any meaning related to this semantic field, despite listing its other meanings related to tying/being tied tightly. S. al-Amri states that this expression should in fact be pronounced *maʕbʃím də gēg*: This could point to a \*/w/-infix variant of the root, which subsequently became obsolete (Castagna and al-Amri forthcoming).

#### (2) JL, 24

ehīt ʕáz

*God’s poor one!*

This is a way to express sympathy for a poor person. MLZ does not record this term. In S. al-Amri’s dialect, it is used in its diminutive form *mehīnút* ~ *ēhīnút*, without adding ʕáz. It has the same meaning as Arabic *miskīn* ‘poor, miserable; beggar; humble, submissive, servile’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 909).<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> The term *miskīn* entered Jibbali/Šhərēt as a loanword, and its semantics shifted to “‘I wish’ or ‘I hope’ (usually implying an unlikely

**(3) JL, 31** (also MLZ, 145)

ɛbóbne

*Please...*

This particle, whose origin is obscure, is used to introduce an emphatic request: *ɛbóbne hēt* ‘please (you)’ (Rubin 2014, 316). S. al-Amri states that the shorter form *bob* may also be used.

**(4) JL, 57**

fɔlfɔlót də ġeg<sup>55</sup>

*a short and strong fellow*

According to S. al-Amri, this expression describes someone who is strong and brave and can be relied on. JL (57) states that the term *fɔlfɔlót* means ‘strong but not tall’. MLZ (717) defines it as ‘a strong energetic man (regardless of height). This (term) applies to women as well’ (الرجل الربعة القوي النشيط [ليس بالطويل ظ القصير] (وتطلق ايضا على المرأة)).

**(5) JL, 61**

b-ĩfrókí!

*By my hairline!*

Said by women when swearing. According to JL (61), a woman’s hairline is ‘connected with honour and gentleness’, hence the expression *məfrók əd tət*, literally meaning ‘a hairline of a woman’, which describes a gentle woman.

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scenario), in which case it is followed by the relative pronoun *ε-/ð-*” (Rubin 2014, 321).

<sup>55</sup> S. al-Amri renders JL *ġeg* ‘man’ as *ġeg<sup>i</sup>* throughout the recordings.

## (6) JL, 70

ɔ iferɔk ar hegém ar ežédš défər

*No one fears attacks except one whose root is bad*

This is a proverb pointing to the fact that only the weak fear attack. The verb *iferɔk* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to be afraid, frightened’ (JL, 61). S. al-Amri pronounces *egédš* instead of the expected *ežédš* ‘his root’,<sup>56</sup> and renders *hegém* as *hegém*.

## (7) JL, 71

beš mən gədrét

*He has from the ground*

This idiomatic expression is said to mean ‘he is possessed (by an evil spirit)’ by JL. However, S. al-Amri disagrees with this, and states that the correct expression is actually *beš ənegdərét*, where the segment *ənegdərét* (probably to be analysed as *ə-negdərét*, with a definite article) is the name of an illness caused by sorcery. However, neither JL nor MLZ records this term.

## (8) JL, 86

yəgmór hətək

*May your fortune collapse!*

A friendly curse.

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<sup>56</sup> JL records numerous instances of dialectal variation involving a [g] ~ [ž] alternation.

Here the subjunctive 3.M.SG. of the Gb-stem verbal form *yəgmór* has an optative meaning. The segment *hátək* is a compound of *hát* ‘luck’ (MLZ, 246: حظ)<sup>57</sup> with a 2.M.SG. personal suffix *-k* attached.

**(9) JL, 98**

tədhǝfk həndét

*May a demon slap you between the shoulder blades*

A curse. As in expression number (8) above, the subjunctive form of the verb (in this case, a 3.F.SG. of a Gb-stem) has an optative meaning. According to S. al-Amri, the term *həndét* ‘Indian (woman)’ for ‘demon’ (JL, 98) stems from the popular belief that witches are from India.

**(10) JL, 110**

tehtéləḵ ɛ-lhyétk

*May your beard be shaved!*

A curse whose actual meaning is ‘may you be dishonoured!’. The verbal form *tehtéləḵ* is a subjunctive 3.F.SG. of a T1-stem < √hlk, and is again used optatively.

**(11) JL, 111**

he bǝḥǝkk edés ahyēri

*I've broken my string for her*

This is an idiomatic expression alluding to the act of taking off one’s clothes for the first time, which means ‘she is my first wife’: the term *ahyēri* ‘my string’ refers to the belt-string which kept a

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<sup>57</sup> This term is not recorded by JL. It may be suspected to be an Arabic loanword.

man's clothes on in traditional Dhofari dress. The verbal form *bəʃʒkk* is a perfective 1.C.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning 'to tear' (JL, 33). The segment *edés* is made up of the preposition *ed* 'to' (Rubin 2014, 228–30) and the 3.F.SG. personal suffix *-s*.

**(12) JL, 114**

ε zógum l-ɔħrɔf

*He who closes his mouth when full of gold coins*

This is an expression that describes a well-mannered person who speaks sparingly, politely, and always for a good reason. The preposition *l-*, whose peculiar semantics can be reconstructed to proto-MSAL (Kogan 2015, 468–69), is used here to express 'against, to the detriment of something' (Rubin 2014, 251). The term *ɔħrɔf* (SG. *ħarf*) means 'gold amulet; gold coin' (JL, 114). According to S. al-Amri, it can also be used with its Arabic meaning 'letter'. As for the verbal form *zógum*, it is a perfective third person of a Ga-stem, meaning 'to keep a closed mouth, keep absolutely quiet; to keep one's mouth shut' (JL, 316): S. al-Amri renders this form as *zóg<sup>u</sup>um*.

**(13) JL, 127**

ʕar káfuhn ed d-isɔt

*What a big paw to hit with!*

This is jokingly said to children who attempt to hit something with all their strength, but either miss their target or hit it clumsily. S. al-Amri's rendition is *ar kaffén ed d-isɔt*. The verbal form, an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem < *√sbɬ* meaning 'to beat, hit with a stick' (JL, 222), might be a variant in which the intervocalic /b/ results in a [əyṽ] sequence, instead of a plain long

vowel [v̄] (Rubin 2014, 28; al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 185). The diminutive form *káfuhn* or *kaffén* (as rendered by S. al-Amri) has a non-diminutive counterpart *kəf* ‘paw, claw; palm of the hand’ (JL, 127).

**(14) JL, 130**

keléb də ġeg<sup>58</sup>

*A little dog of a man*

This describes a ‘nasty, bad-mannered, whiskery, ugly, little fellow’ (JL, 130). The diminutive form *keléb* corresponds to the non-diminutive *kəb* ‘dog’.<sup>59</sup>

**(15) JL, 139**

ḵəteʃór mən défər

*May you be struck motionless for being a nasty fellow!*

A mild curse. It is reworded by S. al-Amri as *ḥa-ḵəteʃór mən défər*. The verbal form *ḵəteʃór* is a 3.M.SG. subjunctive of a T1-stem verb meaning ‘(man) to be paralysed by fear’ (JL, 139). The use of the future particle *ḥa-* (Rubin 2014, 150) and the vocalism (Rubin 2014, 130) suggest the verbal form is a subjunctive. However, there is no trace of the *t-* verbal prefix which is expected to appear in a T1-stem. This might be due to assimilation of the phonetically strenuous sequence \*[tk’].

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<sup>58</sup> ġeg<sup>j</sup> in S. al-Amri’s pronunciation.

<sup>59</sup> < √*klb* with the loss of /l/ before a consonant (Rubin 2014, 35–37; al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 185).



**(16) JL, 144**

yəḵəṭél ḥask

*May your brain shrink!*

A friendly curse, this expression features a subjunctive 3.M.SG. of a T1-stem meaning ‘to shrink; to feel dizzy after a knock on the head’ (JL, 144) < √ḵll used as an optative. The term ḥas (with a -k 2.M.SG. personal suffix) means ‘consciousness’ (JL, 116).

**(17) JL, 144**

(ε) ḵelébḵ!

*(O) little heart!*

This expression, meaning ‘poor fellow!’, is made up of the optional vocative particle ε<sup>60</sup> (Rubin 2014, 307) and the diminutive form ḵeléb < ḵelb + 2.M.SG. personal suffix: S. al-Amri, rather than ḵeléb, pronounces ḵēléb, which appears to be the correct form for this diminutive pattern, as reported by previous studies (Johnstone 1973; Dufour 2016, 44–45).

**(18) JL, 149**

fəṣṣór ḵeráh

*A hornless bull*

This is said of ‘a weak, harmless fellow’. Interestingly, the adjective ḵeráh ‘hornless; shaven-headed’ is also the word for ‘donkey’ (JL, 149).

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<sup>60</sup> Another vocative particle exists in some dialects of Jibbali/Šḥarēt: ṭə (MLZ, 575) ~ tə (S. al-Amri).

**(19) JL, 149**

kəbś bə-ḡayr ƙerún

*A ram without horns*

Similarly to the expression above, this is used to describe ‘a weak fellow, idiot’. S. al-Amri states that the correct form is *kəbś mən ḡayr ƙerún*, and *mən ḡayr* does indeed appear to be the most common way to express ‘without’ in Jibbali/Šḥarēt (Rubin 2014, 243). However, Rubin cites this very expression as the only occurrence of *bə-ḡayr* throughout Johnstone’s Jibbali/Šḥarēt texts (Rubin 2014, 243).

**(20) JL, 246**

ʔǝǝǝr ǝf

*Old baldy*

The literal meaning of this expression, ‘ten hairs’, is a clear reference to baldness. The plural term *ǝf* is based on a feminine singular *ǝfet* (JL, 246) and as such is counted by a grammatically masculine numeral (Rubin 2014, 277), in this case *ʔǝǝr* ‘ten’ (JL, 17).<sup>61</sup>

**(21) JL, 310**

bə-xilk

*By your uncle!*

The meaning stated by JL is ‘do as you please and don’t worry about me’. S. al-Amri pronounces *bə-xillək* and adds that this expression is a polite way to tell someone they may do whatever

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<sup>61</sup> This characteristic is widespread in the ancient Semitic languages, as well as in the other MSA languages (see above, p. 8).

they would like to do in a given situation, and not worry about the speaker. The use of the term for ‘maternal uncle’ in this expression is due to the cultural prominence of this figure. See also proverb number (191) of the al-Shahri collection, *merge ērgīt yun-fəʔ* ‘It is always expected that the nephew will be useful’.

**(22) JL, 310**

mən xək ed geśətk

*From your mouth to your side!*

This is said in retaliation for a curse. The term *geśətk* means ‘side’ (of the body). S. al-Amri affirms that, in his dialect, the formula used is *mən xək ed ēdénk*, the latter term being the definite form of *bedén* ‘body’ (JL, 23) in combination with the 2.M.SG. possessive suffix *-k*.

**(23) JL, 204**

ber ərđi b-e-ķélbəš řak erémnəm

*His heart has been thrown into the sea*

This idiomatic expression means ‘he has been bewitched’ according to JL. However, S. al-Amri believes it to be a description of a careless, dull, and insensitive individual.

The verbal form *ərđi* is a passive perfective third person of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to throw’ (JL, 204), also used in entry number (2) of the MLZ collection. The term *ķélb*, appearing here with a definite article and a 3.M.SG. personal suffix *-š*, means ‘heart’ (JL, 144) in a poetic sense, in contrast with the term *ub* (JL, 159) which refers to the physical heart. The preposition *řak* ‘in’ is likely the result of grammaticalisation of a term deriving from the root  $\sqrt{\text{řmk}}$ , which yields terms related to ‘middle’ in Jibbali/

Šḥarēt (JL, 13) and ‘depth’ in Arabic (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 644). The term *rémnəm* ‘sea’ (JL, 214) appears in this expression in the variant typical of the central and western dialects. S. al-Amri uses the variant *remrəb*. Furthermore, he states that this expression is not used in his dialect. Instead, he provides an alternative expression: *berót het iditš ε remrəb* ‘his medicine has fallen into the sea’, meaning that there is no hope of restoring someone’s health. This expression features the preposition *ε* ‘to, up to; until’ (JL, 1). According to Rubin (2014, 229), this preposition is an allomorph of the synonymous preposition *əd*. However, he states that it occurs only once in Johnstone’s field materials.

**(24) JL, 170**

e-défər yaṣḵór ṣaḵ āḥén

*The bad (person) falls short in hard times*

This proverb underscores the bad person’s lack of steadfastness, and their tendency to fail in critical times.

The verbal form *yaṣḵór*, not recorded in MLZ, is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to fall short of duty’ according to JL (11). The term *āḥén* is the definite form of the plural noun *maḥén* ‘troubles’ (JL, 170).

**(25) JL, 214**

ermés bes!

*Stick your hand in muck!*

This is a scoffing remark.

According to JL (214), the verbal form *ermés* is an imperative corresponding to a third-person perfective *rōs*, a Ga-stem de-

riving from the root  $\sqrt{rms}$  meaning ‘to put the hand in dirt, excrement’. There exists a variant *duhúm bes*, which exhibits an imperative form of a Gb-stem whose perfective third person is *dəhém* (JL, 36). JL (36) reports the meaning of this verb as ‘to come to visit at an appropriate time’. However, S. al-Amri states that it means ‘to lose’.<sup>62</sup>

**(26) JL, 283**

beš fúdət tīrín

*He is as mild (of as much use) as a hyena*

According to JL (283), this expression describes a gentle person by comparison with a hyena: “Although it figures prominently in magic, being the servant and the mount of sorcerers it is, nevertheless, regarded as a mild, gentle animal.”

In this expression, the term *fúdət* ‘benefit, usefulness, advantage’ (JL, 67) seems to be used as the first term of a construct chain *fúdət tīrín* ‘usefulness of a hyena’.

S. al-Amri affirms that this expression is unknown in his dialect, and provides an alternative version: *ədīlin hes tīrín* ‘so-and-so is like a hyena’, which, however, means ‘so-and-so is unreliable/useless’.

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. the Š1-stem from the same root, *šədhúm* ‘to lose (in a game such as heads-or-tails); to lose in a draw (between two things not equally good)’ (JL, 36; MLZ, 344).

#### 4.0. Elicited Entries

(1)

ēhlét erhīt axér ar īdét

آهليت ارحيت اخر ار ايدت

*A fair word is better than giving*

This expression stresses the importance of fair speech. The terms *ēhlét* < \*e-behlét and *īdét* < \*e-midét mean, respectively, ‘word’ (JL, 24) and ‘giving’ (JL, 168).

(2)

fēḵar ɔl ʕīb lɔ

فكر اول عيب لو

*Poverty is no defect*

This expression is used to exhort the listener not to mistake poverty for guilt. The terms *fēḵar* and *ʕīb* appear to be Arabic loanwords. In particular, *ʕīb* and the related verbal forms are recorded as having meanings related to oath-breaking (JL, 19–20), with only MLZ (654) recording the gloss ‘defect’.

(3)

axér aḥbét kiṭét ar aḥbét štəbét

اخر احبت قيظات عر احبت شتبات

*A summer dwelling is better than a winter dwelling*

This expression is used to state that something is obviously better than something else. This stems from the easier life that animal herders lead in the summer, versus the more physically demanding activities that are carried out in the winter. The two feminine denominative adjectives *kiṭét* and *štəbét* can be regularly derived

from *koṭ* ‘summer’ (JL, 157) and *śéte* ‘winter’ (JL, 257) respectively.

## (4)

i-míh her *dáṣar* ɔl ʔɔd *yəṣḥəféś* lɔ

ایمیه هر دعر اول عود یشحفش لو

*The spilt water cannot be collected*

The meaning of this proverb is close to English *cry over spilt milk*. The first verbal form *dáṣar* is a perfective third person of a Gb-stem meaning ‘to spill, pour’ (JL, 44). The second verbal form *yəṣḥəféś* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Š1-stem derived from *√ḥfš* ‘to be able to be collected’ (JL, 105). MLZ does not record this term.

## (5)

ɔ ikín *məndóx* ʔar bə *śɔṭ*

او یکن مندوخ عر بشوط

*There is no smoke without fire*

Like the similar English expression, this means that the presence of one thing implies the presence of another. The term *məndóx* ‘smoke’ (JL, 180; MLZ, 903) appears here in its non-definite form. It is not uncommon for this term to take a definite form even when syntactically indefinite: for example, *išerók ĩndóx* ‘it makes smoke’ (Castagna 2018, 303).

## (6)

ɔ ikín *məṣəṇóx* ar mən *śəḳé*

او یکن مشنوخ ار من شقا

*There is no rest but through toil*

This proverb reminds the listener that only those who work hard have the right to rest.

Rather curiously, neither JL nor MLZ records the term *māšənóx* as ‘rest’, although both record the root  $\sqrt{\text{šnx}}$  with meanings related to this semantic field (JL, 263; MLZ, 484–85). The term *śəkē* ‘toil’ is recorded by MLZ (522)—but not by JL—as ‘hardship’, among other meanings: شقاء، مشقة، العمل الشاق، ارهاق. الاعياء من شدة العمل.

## (7)

arah<sup>ə</sup>mún ɔl zum kərah<sup>ə</sup> kərun lɔ

ارحمن اول زوم قرح قرون لو

*God didn't give horns to the donkey*

This proverb serves as a reminder that those who are weak should not attempt to get involved in activities that require strength. The verbal form *zum* is a perfective third person of an idiosyncratic Ga-stem meaning ‘to give’ (JL, 295; al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 199–200). The term *arah<sup>ə</sup>mún* is, along with *ǰ*, one of the most used names for God (JL, 210; MLZ, 368).

## (8)

ɛḍilin ebšé ḍərbét

اذيلن ابضا ذريبت

*So-and-so has grown a hump*

This is said as a comment on a person of humble origin who attains success and power in life but becomes haughty and ruthless in the process. The hump in a pastoral society symbolises welfare and health. The verbal form *ebšé* is a perfective third person of a H1-stem derived from  $\sqrt{wšy}$  meaning ‘to grow (transitive)’ (JL,



296). The term *ḡarbét* ‘hump’ is not recorded in JL. MLZ (349), however, records it as سنام البعير ‘camel hump’.

## (9)

ɔ yəfɔsk ar in ḡɔtbər ɬerš edité

او يفسك ار ان غُتبر ظيرش اديتا

*It won't be accomplished unless hands meet upon it*

This proverb corresponds rather literally to English *Many hands make light work*. For the relative pronoun *in*, also used in entry (124) of the al-Shahri collection, see Rubin (2014, 72). The verbal form *yəfɔsk* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to finish (with a meeting, a problem, with something)’ (JL, 63). *ḡɔtbər* is a perfective third person of a T1-stem from  $\sqrt{\text{gbr}}$  ‘to meet one another’ (JL, 82). The term *edité* is the plural of *ed* ‘hand’ (JL, 313).

## (10)

ɔ ši ar tirɔk

او شي ار تيروك

*There is nothing like your soil*

The meaning of this expression is similar to the English saying *There's no place like home*. The segment *tirɔk* stands for *tirɔb* ‘soil’ in conjunction with the 2.M.SG. personal suffix *-k* ‘your soil’, which triggers /b/ intervocalic deletion.

## (11)

ε-rhím ɔ yəɬyūr lɔ

آرحيم او بشيور لو

*(Even) the good doesn't come to ripeness*

This expression means that even the best things in life have defects and must come to an end. The verbal form *yətyūr* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Gb-stem from the root  $\sqrt{tmr}$  meaning ‘to ripen, come to fruition’ (JL, 285).

## (12)

kəl še heš fərkét

كوشيء هس فركت

*There is a trick for everything*

This means that there is a way to do everything. Its meaning is similar to that of the Latin proverb *est modus in rebus*. The term *fərkét* ‘trick’ is not recorded in either JL or MLZ. Instead, the root  $\sqrt{frk}$  is said to relate to leaving one’s spouse or loading/polishing a gun (JL, 60–61; MLZ, 700).

## (13)

šfəḵə bə teṭ ɖ tfeṭún ḵṵr ε iṣo lə

شفق بتت ذو تفطن قور آيس لو

*Marry a woman who doesn’t remember her father’s grave*

This proverb underscores the importance of marrying a woman who is not under the influence of her father’s authority.

The verbal forms *šfəḵ* and *tfeṭún* are, respectively, an imperative of the Ga-stem *šfəḵ* ‘to get married’ (JL, 260), and an imperfective 3.F.SG. of a Gb-stem *fəṭən* ‘to remember’ (JL, 66). The use of the relativiser *ɖ*- instead of *ε*- is slightly unusual: some speakers regard *ɖ*- as a Mehrism, and *ε*- as the proper Jibbali/Šḥarēt relativiser (Rubin 2014, 68). However, *ɖ*- is not uncommon, and most speakers seem to use the two relativisers interchangeably. The segment *iṣ* is to be interpreted as *iy* ‘father’ (JL, 1) + a 3.F.SG.

personal suffix -s. An almost identical proverb exists in Mehri: *hām təḥōm təhārəs, hārəs bə-tēt d-əl təftōn aḳōbər dā-hāmēs əlā* (ML, 28).

## (14)

her a-tdəfá dəfá ḥanúf bə xar

هر اتدعا دعا حنوف بخر

*If you wish, wish yourself well*

This expression is an exhortation to self-respect and self-love.

The future form consists of the *a-* prefix + a 2.M.SG. subjunctive *tədfá*,<sup>63</sup> and the imperative *dəfá* is reminiscent of the verbal morphology of Gb-stems. However, this verb, which is used here to mean ‘to wish’, is likely to be an Arabic loan. Compare the corresponding entry in JL (34), which gives the meaning ‘to curse’ (JL, 34), whereas MLZ (330) gives دعا.<sup>64</sup> A similar expression is recorded in Mehri by the *Mehri Lexicon*: *āmōr ḥāwəlay: əmtōni ḥanáfik bə-xayr w-əl təmtōni ḥanáfik śarr əlā* (ML, 382).

## (15)

ε-ṭifér ɔ yəṣṣəxənót mən te lə

اظفار او ييشخنوط من تي لو

*Fingernails don't stem from the flesh*

The meaning of this expression is that kinsfolk should stick together in hard times, regardless of the disagreements they may have in daily life.

<sup>63</sup> This segment is rendered as [ddaʃ] by S. al-Amri.

<sup>64</sup> This highly polysemic Arabic verb means, among other things, ‘to call, to pray to God, to wish well’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 282).

The term *ṭifēr* ‘finger or toe-nail’ (JL, 48) is singular, although the meaning of this expression implies a plural. The verbal form *yāṣḥanōt* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Š1-stem deriving from the root  $\sqrt{xnt}$ , meaning ‘to come out, away from; to get out’ (JL, 303). The vowel [ɔ] instead of [u] after a nasal is noteworthy. The term *te* ‘meat’ (JL, 273) derives from the root  $\sqrt{twy}$ , which also yields terms in the semantic field of eating in the MSA languages at large.

(16)

ε d-šəḥṣér yərōṭəf

آدشعصير يروطف

*He who gives something (out of generosity) has it returned*

This saying encourages the listener to be generous, by reminding them that generosity will be rewarded sooner or later.

This meaning is conveyed in a rather idiomatic way: the verbal form *d-šəḥṣér*, which follows the ε relativiser, is a third-person perfective of a Š1-stem  $< \sqrt{\text{ḥṣr}}$  meaning ‘to be squeezed; to be pumped (subtly) for information’ (JL, 17), with a *d*-circumstantial prefix attached. The function of this prefix with the perfective is not as straightforward as it is with the imperfective. In this case, however, it seems to express a stative function (Rubin 2014, 163). The second verbal form *yərōṭəf* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to repeat’ (MLZ, 382: عاود الشيء \ كرره), not recorded by JL. Therefore, the literal meaning of the expression is ‘He who deprived himself (of his wealth/possession of out generosity), will have them repeated (returned)’. S. al-Amri confirms that the literal meaning of this expression is substantially divergent from its actual meaning.

(17)

aǧád h-e-gizǎréṭ, ōṭəl āḥṭəl b-e-gizǎréṭ

اغاد هاجزرات اوثل آحتل باجزرات

*He went to get horns and returned without ears*

This expression is very similar in meaning to entry number (7) of the al-Shahri collection, in that it exhorts the listener not to engage in a dangerous activity that will likely result in trouble and can be used also when the trouble has already happened.

The verbal form *aǧád* is a perfective third person of an idiosyncratic Ga-stem < √wǧd meaning ‘to go’ (al-Kathiri and Dufour 2020, 197). The term *e-gizǎréṭ* ‘the machet’ (JL, 82) has a *h*- prefix: this prefix is best viewed as the monoconsonantal base of the preposition *her* ‘for, to’ (Rubin 2014, 243), although this is normally only used before personal suffixes. The verbal form *ōṭəl* appears to be an unrecorded variant of *étəl*, a perfective third person of a I-weak Gb-stem meaning ‘to follow, chase’ (JL, 5). The term *āḥṭəl* must be the definite form of an unrecorded variant of *máḥṭəl* ‘chopper’ (JL, 119) \**a-báḥṭəl*.

In view of the above, the literal translation of this expression is ‘he went for the machet, he chased the chopper and the machet’.

(18)

ɔ kəníš izák iz šeš lo yəḵúnš ēḵəṭ

او قنیش إلأك إل شش لو يقونش آفت

*Experience is the best teacher*

This self-explanatory proverb is a near-equivalent of English *Experience is the best teacher*.

The verbal forms *keniš* and *yəḵúnš* are, respectively, a perfective third person and an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a III-weak Ga-stem meaning ‘to rear, look after, bring up’ (JL, 147), with a 3.M.SG. personal suffix -š attached. The idiomatic phrase *izák iz šeš* ‘his relations’ literally means ‘those of his’, and is recorded as *izók iz šəš* by JL (44). The term *ēḵat* must be analysed as \**ε-εḵat*, a noun meaning ‘time’ (JL, 291). The literal meaning of this expression is ‘he who is not taught by his family is taught by time’.

(19)

*yəḵúdum zāḥar əl-féne ε-ṭalṭayt*

يقدم زاحر لفانا اطلعات

*Cross your bridges when you come to them*

This proverb describes someone who worries about troublesome events before these events take place.

According to JL (141), the verbal form *yəḵúdum* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Ga-stem meaning ‘to come to someone’. However, considering its meaning in this context, this verb is probably best viewed as an Arabic loan deriving from the measure I verb *ḵadama*, whose meanings include ‘to get something’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976, 747). The term *zāḥar*, which is not recorded by JL, means ‘sediment that remains at the bottom of a pot after emptying what is in it’ (MLZ, 408: الرواسب والقذبي الذي يبقى في قعر الإناء بعد إفراغ ما فيه). S. al-Amri, however, affirms that it also means a sort of medicine or ointment that is used to treat animals for infections in their paws that cause them to limp. Accordingly,

the term *ṭalfayt*,<sup>65</sup> not recorded by JL, means ‘limp’ (MLZ, 600: العرج, كساح), and is preceded by the preposition *əl-féne* ‘before, in front of, ago’ (Rubin 2014, 242). All in all, the literal meaning of this proverb is ‘he gets the ointment before (the animal) limps’.

## (20)

e-défər ɔ yəʃterér ar e-dǫfərš<sup>o</sup> lɔ

ادفر او يعتير ار ادوفرش لو

*Nothing stops the bad person except his badness*

In a similar fashion to entry number (19) of the al-Shahri collection, this proverb is a comment on the self-destructive tendencies of evil people.

The verbal form *yəʃterér* is an imperfective 3.M.SG. of a Š1-stem deriving from the root √ʃrr, meaning ‘to be blocked, dammed’ (JL, 14). The particle *ar* ‘except’ (Rubin 2014, 312) is followed by the term *dǫfər* ‘badness’ (JL, 35) with a 3.M.SG. personal suffix -š attached.

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<sup>65</sup> According to Rubin (2014, 41), /a/ may be realised as [aj] after /ʃ/ and /g/. See also entry number (52) of the al-Shahri collection.

