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**FURTHER NOTES ON THE DESCRIPTIVE IMPERATIVE
OF NARRATIVE STYLE IN SPOKEN ARABIC**

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I n t r o d u c t i o n

In an earlier article¹ the present author analyzed the descriptive use of the imperative, a stylistic feature typical of vivid narrative style in a number of Arabic dialects, thus far most frequently attested in Bedouin stories recorded in North Arabia and Greater Syria.

The instances, covering the main part of the material published so far, were arranged on formal grounds into four groups, the principal functions of which appeared to be as follows:

- (a) Asyndetic, repeated descriptive imperatives are used in a depictive manner not unlike that of the popular imitative words. The spontaneous break in the syntactic structure has an actualizing effect and is used to describe a dramatic situation seen through the eyes of the subject person.
- (b) Asyndetic, unrepeated descriptive imperatives are used as actualizing descriptions of sudden, unexpected, hurried actions, or, in some cases, of events implying rapid action or a quick succession of actions.
- (c) Descriptive imperatives used syndetically have been smoothly fitted into the syntactic structure, which reflects their less dramatic function. They do not necessarily imply the idea of suddenness or unexpectedness, and in some North Arabian dialects, at least in dialects of the Šammari type, the form has developed into a consecutive historical present used when the events described represent continuation or a quick succession of actions.²

1 The Descriptive Imperative of Narrative Style in Spoken Arabic. *Folia Orientalia* XVIII (1977), pp. 5-26.

2 Since my article on the descriptive imperative of narrative style was published in 1977, further instances of the feature have been documented in Arabic dialect material. These fit very well into the picture given in that paper. This is also true for the instance occurring in the Šammari text pub-

(d) Both asyndetic and syndetic descriptive imperatives are often preceded or followed by a direct addressing of the subject. The addressing is parenthetical, having no effect on the syntactic construction, and it is used to introduce the subject, which would otherwise remain uncertain.

As far as the diachronic question about the plausible point of departure for the use of the feature is concerned, it was suggested that the descriptive imperative was first used asyndetically in an exclamatory manner. When the form was used in several consecutive sentences, the idea of suddenness or unexpectedness was weakened, and this development finally resulted in a new, secondary function of the descriptive imperative, which in some dialect areas could be used syndetically in every position. The form thus became a special kind of narrative consecutive form expressing quick succession.

Among the examples discussed in the article there was one (d3, from Haim Blanc, *The Arabic Dialect of the Negev Bedouins. Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* IV:7, Jerusalem 1970, pp. 112-150; p. 140) displaying a natural sequence of an asyndetic imperative followed by a series of six consecutive syndetic imperatives. This example seemed to me to represent the most plausible point of departure for the development which had led to the use of the descriptive imperative as a 'consecutive tense' (my article in *FO* XVIII, pp. 23f.). Since the example was, however, the only one of its kind, I could not consider it justified that any positive diachronic conclusions be drawn from it.

lished by Bruce Ingham in his *North East Arabian Dialects*, London and Boston 1982 (= Library of Arabic Linguistics, Monograph No. 3), p. 132, l. 2. About this instance, A. F. L. Beeston writes in his review of Ingham's monograph in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 46:3 (1983), pp. 550-552, as follows: "The Shammari text contains (p. 132, l. 2.) the expression *u zaxxūh u ḥaṭṭaw na^caš* translated as 'And they picked him up and brought a stretcher', with the comment that *zaxxūh* is a 'narrative imperative'. This is a phenomenon which I do not find credible. It seems preferable to take the imperative as a piece of *oratio recta* with ellipse of 'they said'; i.e. 'Then, "Pick him up!", and they brought a stretcher'. This, furthermore, is a more natural sequence, since they are not very likely to have actually picked up the wounded man until the stretcher had been brought." Beeston's criticism is without any doubt unjustified. This particular case could, it is true, be explained in the manner cited above, but examined together with other Šammari narrative material, Ingham's explanation is definitely correct. As a matter of fact rather few of the instances documented thus far can be interpreted as elliptic pieces of *oratio directa*. Among the newly published material, cf., e.g., Judith Rosenhouse, *Texts in the Dialect of the ḲArāmsha Bedouins (Northern Israel)*, *Zeitschrift für arabisches Linguistik* 10 (1983), pp. 39-70; p. 68, l. 2, and note 130.

In the autumn of 1978 I quite unexpectedly received more material concerning this latter particular use of the descriptive imperative. Yehuda Katz, who had been recording Bedouin dialects in the Desert of Judah, the Negev and Sinai, kindly sent me valuable information about the dialects studied by him.³ The material included a story recorded among the ^CArab al-^CAzāzme (south of Beersheba), the dialect of which is very closely related to that of the Dullām described by Blanc.

Since the storyteller in this narrative makes unusually frequent use of the descriptive imperative, I prefer to publish the text in its entirety rather than only extracting the actual imperative forms. Thus it will be easier to consider the whole stylistic context and to compare the functions and the relative frequency of the different verbal and nominal predicates in different parts of the story.

The transcription used below is my own. As far as the consonant phonemes are concerned, it may be noticed that the dialect of al-^CAzāzme — like other Bedouin dialects of Sinai and the Negev as well as the dialects of the tribes al-Hwēfāt and Bani ^CAṭīye in South Jordan and northwest Saudi Arabia (according to my own observations) — lacks affricate variants of /k/ (kāf) and /g/ (qāf). The short vowel phonemes seem to be /a/, /i/ and /u/, as in the dialect of the Dullām (Blanc, Negev, p. 116). In order to illustrate the degree of neutralization of the phonemic contrast between /i/ and /u/ and to give some information about the main allophones, I have also used *e*, *o* and *ə*. The long vowel phonemes are the commonplace /ā/, /ī/, /ū/, /ē/, and /ō/, the last-mentioned two most often being reflexes of older diphthongs. When the monophthongization is not complete, I have written, e.g., *yowmen*, *gowter*. These transcriptions are, it must be admitted, phonemically ambiguous. Further cases

3 Mr. Katz generously supplied me with a copy of the tape, a careful transcription and a good Hebrew translation. I feel very much obliged to Mr. Katz for the material sent by him and for the permission to publish it. In Mr. Katz' unpublished M.A. thesis, *Ha-lahag šel ševeṭ ha-Rašāyda*, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1979, there are several instances of the descriptive imperative from the dialect of ar-Rašāyda in the Desert of Judah: *lamma šāl gāl: raḥīl yā ^Carab. gōm inzil ^Cen līnah* 'As he was loading, he said, "Onward o Bedouins!" They went and camped at ^CEyn Līnah' (p. 27); *ba^Cadēn nahār ilaggiy ^Calēhum ... gōmw ^Calēh ubōguh wīd^Cbaḥōh* 'Later in the day he came to them ... they turned on him, betrayed him and killed him' (p. 28); *ta^Cāliyy yā ha-ḥdayyah thūm, dalliy ^Cala-lkaffiyyah wudalliy ^Calēha ... udal-liy ^Calēha ha-ṭṭēr usudḥa, ta^Cāl ṭēr fīha* 'A kite circled above, pounced upon the *kaffiyyah* and seized it ... the bird seized it and carried it away; a bird came to it' (p. 28). There are further instances in Clinton Bailey, *The Narrative Context of the Bedouin Qasidah-Poem*, *Folklore Research Centre Studies* 3 (1972), pp. 67-105 (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

of non-phonemic transcription are writing final vowels — which all are phonemically long — as short when their phonetic realization is short, and marking the glottal stop whenever it occurs, because the use of pre-pausal glottal stop seems to be a typologically distinctive feature in some groups of Bedouin dialects. In some cases the transcription is morphophonemic; thus, I write *ṭagṭ ʔhsên* rather than *ṭagṭ ʔhsên*, because the former transcription is morphologically more transparent, whereas dropping one /g/ does not give any additional information. In some instances the advantage of the former transcription is apparent, cf. *lagatṭhen* vs. *lagatḥen*, *ṭāšš* vs. *ṭāš*.

The text is divided into short sections freely following the contents and the natural rhythm of the narration. In this particular case it has been important to mark the breath groups, which in the transcription are separated by dashes (-). This is necessary not only for stylistic observations concerning the tempo and the position of the descriptive imperatives, but also for observing pre-pausal features. Suspended utterances are indicated by three dots (...), liaisons with elision or assimilation over external junctures by ligatures (*⏟*).

A story in the dialect of the al-^cAzāzme tribe

1. *hāda fī wāḥad - zālamah⁴ leh walad wāḥad - w-bištəḡel⁵ ḡar f-as-sīsān⁶ - w-bādawi mən ḥāḡt al-badw awal - w-bištəḡel f-as-sīsān - w-bilagget sīsān - w-rabbna 'awad wada^cteh u-hū māt u-dall ḡar əl-walad šuḡleh.*

1. There was a man who had one son. The man worked as a fowler, and he led a nomadic life, as the Bedouin formerly used to do. He worked as a fowler and caught birds. Then our Lord reclaimed his due, the man died, and his job was left to the son.

4 There are noticeable fluctuations in stress in some cases. The situation is most probably the same as in the dialect of the Ḍullām: "I have noted some hesitations in common nouns with two *a*'s in open syllables: *walādah* and *wā-ladah* 'his boy', *zālamah* and *zālamah* 'a man', *faṣāsah* and *fāṣasah* 'his horse'", Blanc, Negev, p. 121; cf. *bādawi* (next line).

5 The main functions of the imperfect with the prefixed morpheme *b-* in this dialect seem to be indicative and non-past, i.e., the same as in the sedentary dialects of Greater Syria. The use of this morpheme in the Bedouin dialects of the Negev and Sinai is one of the major features distinguishing this dialect group from the dialects of al-Ḥwētāt and Bani ^cAṭīye in South Jordan and northwest Saudi Arabia (own observations); cf. Blanc, Negev, p.139.

6 The vowel of the definite article is preserved, and the *i/ī* of the preposition is elided. The same observation was made for the Ḍullām by Blanc, Negev, p. 143.

2. *gâl yâ yumma*⁷ *wæddki t^callminî*⁸ - *kêf* - 'abûy - *yəlaggeṭ sīsân* - *wæddi 'atba^cah* - *w-aš-šaḡlah allî bîštəḡel fîha nâ štəḡel*.

2. The boy said, 'Look, Mother, you must teach me how my father used to catch birds. I want to follow him, and I'll be engaged in the trade he was engaged in.'

3. *gâlat ammah* - *yâ waladî* - *šuḡl abûk mâ-lak ḥîleh fîh* - *w-dawwərlak šaḡlah ḡâr šāḡəlt abûk* - *šāḡəlt abûk məhi nâf^cah* - *lâ ya-yumma 'ana wæddih ...*
âstəḡel zayy šuḡl abûy - *gad(r)-ma*⁹ *ykûn ^cayš*¹⁰ *abûy ana ba^ciš zayyeh*.

3. His mother said, 'Look, my son, your father's trade is something that you cannot manage. Find yourself another trade and not that of your father. Your father's trade doesn't pay.' 'Oh no, Mother. Look, I want to work as my father did. I'll earn my living as well as my father earned his living.'

4. *w-ala*¹¹ *ḡa*¹² - *gâlat abûk biylaggeṭ ḡâr as-sīsân* - *w-iybî^c as-sīsân* - *w-iy...bî^c w-iydabber nafseḥ u-^cayš əbhənn*.

4. Well now, she said, 'Your father used to catch birds and to sell birds. He sold the birds, got by, and earned his living by them.'

7 'amm, vocat. *yumma* [yummɑ] 'mother' as in the dialects of al-Ḥwēṭāt, Bani ^cAṭīye (own observations) and the Ḍullām, Blanc, Negev, p. 147.

8 According to Blanc, Negev, p. 131, the long stressed *-ī* of the pronominal suffixes *-ī*, *-nī* is a salient feature of the dialect of the Ḍullām. I have noticed the same feature in the dialect of Bani ^cAṭīye, who have *-i/-î*, *-ni/-nî* side by side, e.g. *ḡámali/ḡamalî*, *máratî/máratî*, *ḡarábni/ḡarabnî*, the last-mentioned forms probably being more frequent in isolated words and in pre-pausal position; cf. *waladî* 3, 21 and *walḡî* 10 below.

9 The *r* is here practically inaudible.

10 Short-form for ^cāyeš.

11 *w-ala* is an exclamatory demonstrative particle which introduces a nominal clause; cf. Blanc, Negev, p. 145; historically it is probably the same as the Classical Arabic '*idā* (*bi-*)', but based on its old variant '*ilā*', cf. M. Bravmann, *Vulgärarabisch ILÄ* 'wenn', *Islamica* 6 (1934), pp. 338-340.

12 The variants *ḡa'* and *ḡâ* are conditioned by position: they occur in the pre-pausal position and in context, respectively; cf. Blanc, Negev, p. 122: "Another feature of pause is the abrupt shutting of the voice (viz. an unreleased glottal catch) that occurs after final stressed *a*. It occurs regularly and in pause only: [lha'] 'to her', [mɪša'] 'he went', [ḡadá'] 'lunch', [samrá'] 'swarthy' (f.). No glottal catch was ever noted in the corresponding context forms." This also seems to hold true for *hu'/hû*, cf. *ḡâ hu'* (5), *ḡâ məṭleb hu'* (6), *ḡa' - hû ḡâ taḡḡ ^cala l-bâb* (8) below. Cantineau also gives forms with a final glottal stop but does not consider them as pausal forms. Thus, he gives '*âna* for Bani Xāled and the Sirḥān, '*âna*' for the ^cUmūr, *hû* and *hî* for the Šlūt, Mawāli and the Sirḥān, *hû'* and *hî'* for the ^cUmūr, *ḡe*, *ḡa* for the Ḥadīdīn and the town of Raḡqa, *ḡe'* for the

5. *ğâ hu' - w-ləgátleh' - gowṭar yəṭ^ogannaṣ f-al...fa...al-basatîn - yômen ğa' - w-alha sîsân - 'ulguṭ ya-l-faxx - wazstên u-ṭêr - w-hû mrawweḥ əbhənn - lagâh aš-šāwîš - ya-l-walad mən wên bəddawwer ... mən wên lak hōḍalla?¹³ ğâl w-ala hōḍal laġatṭhen 'úḍ^urbeh kaff - w-gowṭar dalli ^calêhen u-xuḍhen.*

5. So he started trapping; he went hunting in the gardens. When he then went to look, there were birds there. The trap had sprung and caught two geese and a small bird. On the way home with the birds, the watchman met him. (He said,) 'Look, boy, where did you get those from?' The boy said, 'Well, I have caught them.' The watchman cuffed the boy and made off. Right off, he took the birds.

6. *rawwaḥ iṣayyeḥ ^ca-ammah - w-gowṭar b-aṣ-ṣe... b-al-wazstên w-aṭ-ṭêr - youmen ğa' - səme^c b...b-al-wazstên ğâ məṭleb hu' - w-étba^cah aš-šāwîš all axadhen.*

6. The boy went home crying and calling to his mother, and the watchman went off with the two geese and the small bird. When the boy had got home, he heard where the two geese were. He started pursuing and followed the watchman who had taken them.

7. *ğā' - yōmənneh ğā w-aš-šāwîš yōmənneh xašš ^cala bêtēh - ğâl yā wāli - 'ūtubxi haḍōla' - w-yōmenni arsəl-əlki wāḥad - bta^cṭîh al-wazstên w-aṭ-ṭêr - w-xams əġnēhāt fōghen.*

Faḍl and Mawāli, *ğā'* for Bani Xāled, *ya'* for the Sirḥān and al-Ġōf, *ğā'* for the Sardīye, Bani Šaxar and Ḥsane, but *ğ^ya* for the Rwala, Sba^ca, Šamar and ar-Rass; J. Cantineau, *Études sur quelques parlers de nomades arabes d'Orient*, I-II, *Annales de l'Institut d'Études Orientales* 2 (1936), pp. 1-118, 3 (1937), pp. 119-237; see I, pp. 42, 70, 93, II, p. 198.

13 Plural forms with *-ll-* have been reported from different Bedouin dialects in South Palestine, South Jordan and the Negev: *haḍelle* (Amarīn SW of Jerusalem, G. Bergsträsser, *Sprachatlas von Syrien und Palästina*, *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 38 (1915), pp. 169-222; § 40), *haḍella* (Bdūl in Wādī Mūsa, *ibid.*), *haḍollāk* (Bedouin of the coastal plain of South Palestine, Leonhard Bauer, *Das palästinische Arabisch*, *Die Dialekte des Städters und des Fellachen*, 4. Aufl. Leipzig 1926; § 55, p. 73), *hōḍallāh*, *hōḍallāk(ah)* (Blanc, Negev, p. 144). I have also noted it among Bani ^cAṭīye in Tabūk, where the most frequent forms are *haḍalla*, *haḍallāk*. The doubling of *l* may be due to some secondary development, but the occurrence of the forms in a large area of related Bedouin dialects more plausibly suggests that the *-ll-* is historically comparable with the Hebrew, Aramaic and Ethiopic plural forms **'ullā*, **'ullū*, cf. Wolfdietrich Fischer, *Die demonstrativen Bildungen der neuarabischen Dialekte*, *Ein Beitrag zur historischen Grammatik des Arabischen*, 's-Gravenhage 1959; p. 109; J. Barth, *Die Pronominalbildung in den semitischen Sprachen*, Leipzig 1912; p. 118.

7. The watchman arrived home. When he entered his house, he said, 'Look, wife, cook these and when I send a man to you, you must give him the two geese and the small bird and five pounds as well.'

8. *ǧa' - hū ǧâ tagg ʕala l-bâb - mánanhen má-stawen - ǧâ w-ṭagg ʕala l-bâb ǧâl aʕtîni l-wazstên w-aṭ-ṭêr u-xams lērât aʕtat iyâhen u-rawwah.*

8. The boy came and knocked at the door before the birds were ready. He came, knocked at the door and said, 'Give me the two geese, the small bird and five pounds.' She gave them to him, and he went home.

9. 'akteb ʕala l-bâb - biǧûl -

hâda ḥsên

hêdi¹⁵ ṭ-ṭaggah al-hayyneh

btâ¹⁴ aṭ-ṭêr w-al-wazstên

w-at-tâli ʕal allah.

9. Thereupon he wrote on the (watchman's) door:

This was (done by) Ḥsên,

He who had the small bird and the two geese.

This is the light blow,

And only God knows what is to come.

10. *gowṭar - yowmen ǧa' - hu' - ǧâl - ǧâ l-mersâl aṭ-tâni yôm ǧa' - ǧâl waddi l-wazstên w-aṭ-ṭêr - ǧâl awad ... ǧâlat awadhen wâḥad men hâda¹⁶ - gowṭar ǧâl - mâ ǧêbt ... mâ ǧêbtlak šayy - mawadhen wâḥad ment ent bâʕet wâḥad xalfî? ǧâl la'.*

10. Then he made off. When the other man sent by the watchman came — when he came, he said, 'I want the two geese and the small bird.' She said, 'There was a man here already who took them.' He went away and said, 'I didn't bring you anything. A man had taken them already. Haven't you sent anybody after me?' The watchman said, 'No.'

14 Besides the *b*-imperfect, the use of analytical genitive constructions is one of the most important typological features which the dialect of al-ʕAzāzme has in common with the sedentary dialects of Greater Syria. This also holds true for the dialect of the Ḍullām, see Blanc, Negev, p. 147 (the genitive markers are *šugl*, *šuglāt* and *tabáʕ*).

15 Sing. masc. *hâda/hâda*, fem. *hêdi* (as in the dialect of the Ḍullām, Blanc, Negev, p. 144; the *ê* of the feminine form is best explained as a monophthongized older diphthong: **hây* (fem. of *hâ*) plus *dî*; cf. Fischer, Dem., p. 79, for the Lebanese form *haydi*. The *ô* of *hōdalla* could be explained in the same manner: **hâw* (pl. of *hâ*).

16 'Here' *fi hâda*, 'from here' *men hâda* are well attested from the dialect of the Ḍullām, Blanc, Negev, p. 146. According to my own observations, they are also used by al-Ḥwēṭāt and Bani ʕAṭīye.

11. *yowmen ġâ w-ala hayy maktûb -*

'*əsmi ħsên*

hêdi t-ṭaggah al-hayyneh

btâ^c aṭ-têr w-al-wazstên

w-at-tâli ^cal allah.

11. When the watchman came home, he found the writing:

My name is *Ḥsên*,

He who had the small bird and the two
geese.

This is the light blow,

And only God knows what is to come.

12. *'uzguṭ ^calêh tâni marrah - w-əlḡṭ aš-šawîš w-ədbahah - yowmen dəbāḡah -*

'*əkṭeb ^calêh ġâl -*

hâda ... hêdi ṭaggt əḥsên

hêdi t-ṭaggah al-hayyneh

w-at-tâli ^cal allah.

12. Now the boy laid hands on the watchman another time, fell upon him and killed him. When he had killed him, he wrote on him:

This is the blow of *Ḥsên*,

This is the light blow,

And only God knows what is to come.

13. *dalla gowṭar - ġa' - w-lagga ^cala xazânt al-ḡukûmah u-ṭale^c f-ha-l-ḡaṣar*

- yowmen ṭale^c sawwleh¹⁷ as-səllam - w-əṭla^c - w-əsreg al-xazâneh w-əkṭeb

^cala š-šabbâk -

'*ənn hêdi t-ṭaggah ṭaggt əḥsên*

hêdi t-ṭaggah al-hayyneh

btâ^c aṭ-têr w-al-wazstên

w-at-tâli ^cal allah.

13. Then he made off. Now he came to a public treasure house. He climbed up to the palace. When he climbed up... he made a ladder, climbed up and stole the treasure. Then he wrote on the window:

This blow is the blow of *Ḥsên*,

This is the light blow,

He who had the small bird and the two
geese.

And only God knows what is to come.

17 *saww* is a continuation of the Old Arabic (e.g. Cl. Ar.) pattern of the C₃^y verbs, which have short final vowels in the imperative sing. masc.; for the historical development, see Henri Fleisch, *Traité de Philologie Arabe* II, Beyrouth 1979; pp. 393-395. This type has been attested in several Bedouin dialects, e.g. in the dialect of the ḡullām: *imš* 'go', *ijir* (and *ijriy* 'run', *sawwiy/saww* 'do', *wadd/waddiy* 'convey', *samm/sammiy* 'name', *xall/xalliy* 'let' (Blanc, Negev, pp. 137f.; Sammar: *əmel* 'fill', *emš* 'go', *xell* 'let' (Cantineau, Nomades II, p. 197; the examples are taken from Montagne's texts); ^cAnaze: *āsgāni* 'let (sing. masc.) me drink' (ibid.); Bani ^cAṭīye: *'aməl* 'fill', *'imš* 'go', *'irm* 'throw', *'iḡz* 'make a raid', *'išər* 'buy', *saww* 'do', *xall* 'let', *warr* 'show' (own observations); al-ḡweṭāt: *'irm*/'*irmi* 'throw' (own observation); Bani Ṣaxar: *'irm* 'throw', *'imši* 'go', *'aḡé/'aḡéi* 'talk' (Heikki Palva, Characteristics of the Arabic Dialect of the Bani Ṣaxar Tribe, *Orientalia Suecana* 29 (1980), pp. 112-139; p. 128);

14. *yowmen ġaww - ġâlaw ar^cah wên kâteb - w-ar^cah sâreg xazânt al-ħukûmah - dawwer ^calêh dawwer ^calêh - walad u-hu m^câhom ulêd zġayyar - ya^cni ma^c al-...ma^c al-ulâd byal^cab.*

14. When people came, they said, 'Look where he has written! Look, he has stolen the public treasure!' They started hastily looking for him. But he was just a boy, and he was there among them. He was just a little boy, I mean he was playing there with the children.

15. *ṭâni marrah - sawwuleh hâġah allî hî timskeh - bîr - w-hû kân ġâ^ced¹⁸ ^candhom - homm byâštâġlu w-hû ġâ^ced - şabbu fî zafteh - ^cašân allî yusguṭ fî galbah mâleh hîleh yəṭla^c hâleh.*

15. Another time they set a trap in order to catch him. It was a pit. But he was sitting among them. While they were working (with the pit), he was sitting there. They poured pitch into the pit, so that he who would fall into it wouldn't have any chance to get out.

16. *yowmen ġa' - ġa' - hu' - w-kumân¹⁹ nəsîb-leh bardō - yowmen ġa' - nəsîbeh usguṭ f-al-bîr - w-hû 'əṭla^c - w-əġta^c râs nəsîbak m-xôf²⁰ yə^cərfûh - w-xud al-^calagât - 'allî m^câh mən huwîyah ^cala şûrah ^cala 'əsəm - w-gowṭer - w-əsreg w-əs... w-əsreg al-... al-...şu...al-xazâneh.*

16. When he came, he came with a brother-in-law of his. When he came, it was his brother-in-law who fell into the pit. He fell quickly upon him and cut off the head of his brother-in-law, out of fear that people would identify him. He took the papers which he had with him, the identification card with the picture and with the name. Then he made off and stole the treasure.

17. *yowm sarag al-xazâneh - 'əkteb ^cəndeh - hêḏî ṭ-ṭa'...aṭ-ṭaggah ṭaggt əhsên btâ^c aṭ-ṭêr w-al-waztên hêḏî ṭ-ṭaggah al-hayyneh w-at-tâli ^cal allah.*

17. When he had stolen the treasure, he wrote close by:

This is the blow of Ḥsên,

He who had the small bird and the two geese.

the Gulf area: *samm* 'name', *nād* 'call', *tmašš* 'stroll', *iktis* 'get dressed' (T. M. Johnstone, *Eastern Arabian Dialect Studies*, London Oriental Series, 17, London 1967; pp. 50f.)

18 [gē:^ced]; cf. *ġâ^ced* and *ġâ^ced* in North Arabian dialects, Cantineau, *Nomades I*, p. 35.

19 Also attested for Bani ^cAṭīye (own observation) and the Ḍullām, Blanc, Negev, p. 117.

20 Proclitically shortened from *mən*.

This is the light blow,

And only God knows what is to come.

18. *gâlu - šu*²¹ *wəddəh ya^cmal fīna hâda - 'alli hū sawwa l-^camal hâd?* - *hātûh - gâl wəddna ndalli ^calêh u-wəddna 'az-zâlamah al-mayyet ətlə^cûh - w-hātûh - w-ədəfnûh fi-hâda - hâda mağhûl - w-ədəfnûh fi-hâda - w-xallûh ilammaneh... 'ilammaneh yəğî.*

18. They said, 'What will this man do to us, who has done this? We must catch him.' Someone said, 'We must fall upon him. We must pick up the dead man, bring him and bury him here right away.' Nobody could identify him. They buried him there right away and left him alone until he (i.e. the killer) might come.

19. *ħuṭṭu ^calêh ha-l-^caskar - 'arba^cin ġəndi - 'alli həmm mṭawwġin ^calêh u-hû mayyet - 'ilamma gâl ha-l-ħîn yəğîleh aħad yâxḏeh - yəmskûh aġ-ğnûd.*

19. They put a troop of forty soldiers to keep guard over him (i.e. the body). They formed a cordon around him, around the dead man, (and waited) until (one of them) said, 'Now a man will come to him in order to take him.' Then the soldiers would catch him.

20. *ta^câl - w-hâtlak tuffâh - w-ħuṭṭ fih əğzât - 'alli hənne ya^cni bidawwəxən al-wâħad - byəğ^cod sətt sa^cât aww talaṭ sa^cât 'alli hənn ya^cni hū nâyem - mâ byədri ^ca-rôħah - 'əmal ħâlak xətyâr - w-hâtlak ħmâr - w-hât xurġ ^calêh - w-ħuṭṭ fi-kull tuffâħah əbreh - 'əlli hî mṭa^camah b-al-əğzât - 'alli hənn ya^cni yôm yākəlhen wâħad bidûx.*

20. He did indeed come. He had some apples with him. He put drugs in them which make one dizzy. It would take six or three hours, one would sleep that long unconscious. He disguised himself as an old man, took a donkey, put a saddle-bag on it, and injected every apple with a needle filled with the drugs which, I mean, when one eats them, one gets dizzy.

21. *lagga ^calêh u-hû biṭugg ^cala məkâdeh - gâl yâ waladî - 'əntu wən? - yalla gâl əħna ga^cdîn həni - gâl ən-kâнку ga^cdîn hənîyeh - 'ana wədd ašûf - 'ana ġît ha-l-ħîn hâda məl ləbnân m^cagged - w-ṭâšš - wəddi 'a^cṭîku ma^ci tuffâh.*

21. He came to him (i.e. the dead man) stumping along with his walking stick. He said, 'Look, my son, where are you?' Well, he said, 'We're sitting and waiting here.' He said, 'If you're sitting and waiting here, I want to see you. I've just come from the Lebanon. I've been wandering and roaming about, and I want to give you apples which I have.'

21 Probably a koineized form used instead of *wəš* or *š-*.

22. *gâl əşha wâhad yâkel mənhen - 'ilammanny a^ctîk iyâhen kullhen - ^caşân tgassmûhen ma^c ba^cđku balkənnhen ixassen.*

22. He said, 'Take care that no one tastes them before I've given you all of them, so that you can divide them among yourselves. Perhaps they are not enough.'

23. *gəssem gəssem w-ala kull wâhad tuffâhah - gâl l-allâh al-^cafu - wên kullku ma^cdudât ^cala hşâbku?*

23. He kept dealing out, and behold, there was one for each of them. He said, 'Thank God, how could you be that exact in number, many as you are!'

24. *'akalôhen fi-hâda - yôm 'akalôhen - 'akalôhen ma^c ba^cadhom - kullhom dâxu w-tâhu - 'ağ-ğnûd - w-yômənnhom tâhu kullhom dâxu w-şaffafhom ^cala ġnûb ba^cadhom - w-ħuṭṭ ^calêhom fəğ... ħuṭṭ fi-ħlâghom fəğəl kullhom - w-ğazzəzhen - w-xud al-mayyet - w-əkṭeb ^cəndhom f-al-ħêṭ allî həmm ^candeh - 'əkṭeb fîh - hêdi ṭ-təgğah ṭaggt əhsên btâ^c at-têr w-al-wazztên hêdi ṭ-təgğah al-hayyneh w-at-tâli ^cal allah.*

24. They ate the apples right away. When they ate them, they ate them all at once, and they all became dizzy and fell down, all the soldiers. When they had all fallen down and lost consciousness, he piled them side by side, packed a radish in each one's anus, pressed the radishes tight, then took the dead man and wrote on the wall near which they were:

This blow is the blow of Hşên, He who had the small bird and the two geese.

This is the light blow, And only God knows what is to come.

25. *yowmen ġaww aş-şubḥ yôm ġaww - w-ala hayyhom məṭbaṭṭḥîn - w-kull wâhad ma^câh fəğəl - səbhân allâ l-^cadîm - gâl hâda tamân ... fəğ... w-fəğəl mazrû^c u-mzabbal u-nə^cmat allâh u-mazrû^c hayy hû w-hâda ^camâleh - w-hayy hû kâteb hənîyeh - dawru²² ^calêh ^cala hşên - w-salânten sallem.*

25. In the morning they found to their surprise that they were lying on the ground and that everyone had a radish. 'Praised be God Almighty! Planted and manured radishes! Goodness gracious! Look, they are planted by him, it's he who has done this, and look, he has written here!' They started looking for him, for Hşên. And peace be with you.

22 Perhaps not a descriptive imperative.

The descriptive imperatives of the present story

The speaker portrays the initial state of the story using nominal clauses and verbal clauses with the predicate in the *b*-imperfect. The change in the initial state (*w-rabbna 'axaq wəda^cteh*) and the progression of the plot are described using verbal clauses with the predicate in the perfect, except in the dialogues.

After the static orientation and the dynamic continuation, the narrator introduces the dramatic part of the story. In the first close-up situation he transforms the structure by an imperative predicate, which in this case implies an expegetical insertion of the subject with the particle *yā* (*'ulguṭ ya-l-faxx* 5; cf. d1 - d6 in my previous article in *FO XVIII*). The rest of the story is told in a vivid and dramatic style where on the whole short verbal clauses alternate with dialogues. Descriptive imperatives are used far more frequently than in any text published thus far, and also according to rather consistent patterns.

This is why it is very interesting to notice that the descriptive imperative in the present story most often follows a stereotyped pattern: the imperatives form chains joined together with the conjunction *w-*. This pattern is identical with d3 in my earlier paper (an instance given by Blanc for the *Ḍullām* in the Negev). In the present text there are no less than seven chains of this kind:

- (5) *dalli - u-xudhen*
 (12) *'uzguṭ - w-əlḡṭ - w-əḏbaḥah*
 (13) *sawwleh - w-əṭla^c - w-əsreg - w-əkṭeb*
 (16) *'əṭla^c - w-əḡṭa^c - w-xud - w-gowṭer - w-əsreg*
 (18) *əṭlə^cūh - w-hātūh - w-ədəfnūh - (w-ədəfnūh) - w-xallūh*
 (20) *ta^cāl - w-hātlak - w-ḥuṭṭ*
 (20) *'ə^cmal - w-hātlak - w-hāt - w-ḥuṭṭ*

In all of these instances, the first imperative mainly expresses the idea of a rapid or sudden action, while the following syndetic imperatives denote a quick succession. That this pattern is well established, is shown by the fact that there is only one chain of imperatives in which the first might be explained as syndetic, i.e. (24) *w-ḥuṭṭ ... - ḥuṭṭ - w-ḡazzəzhen - w-xud - w-əkṭeb*. The suspended utterance *w-ḥuṭṭ ...* could, however, also be interpreted as a correction: the speaker actually replaces *w-ḥuṭṭ* by *ḥuṭṭ*. Only one syndetically used descriptive imperative (*w-ətba^cah* 6) occurs outside the chain pattern.

The high frequency of chains of this type seems to corroborate the hypothesis that this is the diachronically connecting link between the dramatic, exclamatory use of the descriptive imperative and the less dramatic, consecutive use thus far reported from the Šammari dialect of Ḥā'il.

The majority of the remaining instances are asyndetic and isolated imperatives used in the same manner as b1 - b9 in my earlier paper, i.e., they are vivid, actualizing descriptions of sudden or bold actions: (5) 'uḍurbeh, (9), (12), (17), (24) 'akteb, (15) ḡabbu, (16) usguṭ, (19) huṭṭu. All these are used rather dramatically in order to emphasize the boldness or unexpectedness of the actions.

Two of the instances are repeated imperatives describing a feverish action (*dawwer ḡalêh dawwer ḡalêh* 14) and quick, continued action (*ḡassem ḡassem* 23). Excluding the curious (depictive?) alternation of the vowels in *ḡassem ḡassem*, the pattern is the same as in a1 - a8 in my previous article.

C o n c l u s i o n

The story published here illustrates two important facts about the descriptive imperative of narrative style. For one thing, it shows that the use of the form in some dialect areas is no marginal feature in the stylistic context of the popular art of Arabic story-telling. Secondly, the more frequently it is used, the better established are the patterns followed. Thus it is not surprising that this additional material seems to fit well into the categories given in my earlier paper. On the other hand, they substantially complement the picture in one point: the above facts support my theory, according to which the use of the descriptive imperative in chains of one asyndetic imperative followed by one or more syndetic imperatives is the most plausible point of departure for the use of the form as a kind of consecutive tense.

