INTRODUCTION

I. GENERAL

a. *Central and Southern Sinai in Recent History*

Over the past twenty years the development of the tourist industry in the area has acquired such speed, that, as an arabist with a special interest in the dialects of Bedouin tribes, I could no longer sit idly by and watch these dialects slowly disappear. In less than two decades Šarm aš-Šēx and its surrounding areas on the southern tip of the peninsula has developed from a sleepy village of fishermen with only a few hotels from the times of Israeli occupation and catering for a few thousand visitors a year into a major attraction for literally hundreds and thousands of tourists from around the world, who go there for the favourable climate,¹ water sports and for some of the world's most spectacular dive sites. This development started from Na'āmah Bay, which lies some 5 kilometres more or less to the east of the village Šarm. After this bay had been filled with hotels, more hotels and tourist villages were constructed between Na'āmah Bay and Šarm, on the plateau between the village and the lighthouse, and farther east from the bay into the direction of the airport. Today there are more than 150 hotels and resorts in the area and more are under construction.

With the development of the tourist industry, thousands of mainland Egyptians flocked into the area to work in the newly built facilities, easily outnumbering the original inhabitants, most of whom are of the Mzēnah tribe. The Bedouin themselves usually work in jobs like driving taxis, guiding tourists on desert safaris, etc.

The numbers of members of Bedouin tribes in Sinai are not certain. Since, to the best of my knowledge, official numbers of Bedouin inhabitants do not appear in state publications,² the numbers given here are estimates.³

¹ Temperatures during the day vary from around (minimum) 18 or 19 degrees C. in winter to 40 degrees C. or more in summer, see www.holiday-weather.com (accessed 10-18-2010).

² I have only seen total numbers of inhabitants published, which include 'immigrants' from the Egyptian mainland.

³ Von Sarnowski 2004:388 estimates the number of Bedouin in South Sinai at 19,000–27,000. EEAA 2003:3 based on the population census of 1996 estimates the number of

b. *Cultural Background*

The central part of Sinai, on the Tih plateau, is inhabited mainly by tribes who speak a group I dialect-type (see De Jong 2000:Chapter I). Tribes inhabiting the lower coastal areas on the Gulf of 'Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez are also speakers of this dialect-type. The higher mountains towards the south are inhabited by tribes who are often collectively referred to as Ṭawara (or Ṭuwara). Most of these tribes immigrated at different times in history coming from the Arabian Peninsula or (via) Palestine and (today's) Jordan. Of some of these tribes in Sinai today, relatives can still be found in the northern part of the Ḥiğāz, across the Gulf of Aqaba, in present-day Saudi Arabia. Other tribes arrived in Sinai via the mainland of Egypt.

Like the Bedouin in northern Sinai, Bedouin in the centre and south of Sinai are culturally much more part of the larger area known as Arabia Petraea than of Egypt, to which Sinai belongs in a political and administrative sense, and as G.W. Murray (1935:256–257) remarks, “among themselves, they can distinguish each tribe and subtribe by their looks and dialects...”⁴

c. *Present-day Distribution of Bedouin Tribes in Central and Southern Sinai and Surrounding Regions*

With an approximate north-south length of 380 kilometres and an east-west width of about 210 kilometres, the surface area of Sinai is some 61,000 square kilometres.

The majority of Sinai's inhabitants (the total was estimated at 360,000 in 2007)⁵ are found along the Mediterranean coast in the north, who live more or less along the main road al-Ganṭarah (on the Suez Canal in the west)—Rafaḥ (on the border with the Gaza Strip in the east). Of this total, more than one third today live in North Sinai's capital city al-ʿArīš.

Bailey 1985:23 and 2009:xvi show maps of the distribution of tribal confederations in Sinai in the early twentieth century. Interestingly, some

Bedouin in the Governorate of South Sinai to be in the range of 20,000 to 24,000 and their number is projected to reach 53,800 souls by the year 2017 (ibid.:6).

⁴ For other general remarks on the cultural background of Sinai Bedouin, see also De Jong 2000:3–4.

⁵ Some 300,000 in the north, 60,000 in the south. Numbers are quoted from the Executive Summary and Recommendations in *Egypt's Sinai Question, Middle East./North Africa Report N°61* of 30 January 2007, International Crisis Group, see www.crisisgroup.org (accessed 10-18-2010).

tribes⁶ in present-day Saudi Arabia just across the Gulf of ‘Aqabah and in Jordan are also indicated on these maps (these are also included in the map below): in the far north of the Ḥiğāz and in the south of Jordan we find Ḥwētāt (on Bailey’s map spelled as Ḥuwaytāt), with to their south (just east of the Tīrān islands in the mouth of the Gulf of ‘Aqabah) the Masā’id and (a little farther to the southeast, along the Arabian Peninsula’s west coast) Bili. These tribes are also found in Sinai today: the Masā’id live in and around the village of Ġilbānah in the northwest, Bili (transcribed as Baliy on the map below) are found not far south from the main road al-Ganṭarah—al-‘Ariš, in an area named Ġarīf al-Ġizlān near ar-Rawḍah in the central northeast, and the Ḥwētāt live in the areas as indicated on the map below.

On the map below I have also indicated the presence of three (sub-) tribal collectives not indicated on the map in Bailey: the Ġarāğrah, whom I interviewed in the area near Wādiy as-Siğ named al-Malbad, the Dbūr, whom I found residing not far south from the road leading through the Mitla pass to Naxl,⁷ approximately forty kilometres to the west of Nixl, and also the Malālḥah, who live near the border with Israel in the northeast of Sinai. Another name not indicated on Bailey’s map is that of the Hanādwah, who are actually a family said to be of non-Bedouin origin⁸ living in Wādiy aṭ-Ṭūr inside the territory of the Awlād Sa’id.

d. *Remarks on the Arrival of Bedouin Tribes in Central and Southern Sinai and some Remarks on their History*

Most of the tribes of Sinai came to the area between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries.⁹ The history reported for the Ġbāliyyah is undoubtedly one of the most sensational of the tribes in Sinai:¹⁰ one hundred men with their wives and children are said to have been recruited in 530 CE

⁶ The different communities are referred to here as ‘tribes’, although I am aware that in some cases ‘tribal confederation’, ‘sub-confederation’, ‘sub-tribe’ or ‘clan’ would be more appropriate terms.

⁷ My Turḥāniy informant Eid told me that the name for the Mitla pass is actually derived from *Umm Itlah* “(the region) with the tamarisk tree”. Bailey (1991:344) gives the same etymology.

The town of Naxl in central Sinai is referred to among Sinai Bedouin as Nixl.

⁸ Literally their name means “Indians, i.e. (originally) from India”, but this could not be verified.

⁹ The dating is in this paragraph is quoted predominantly from Bailey 1985.

¹⁰ The quote in Bailey 1985:26 of the German geographer Carl Ritter is another example of a sensational claim: the ‘Azāzmah are claimed to be the “aboriginal inhabitants” of the Negev.

Approximate distribution of Bedouin tribes in Sinai and surrounding regions

in the land of the Wallachians¹¹ (another document mentions Byzantium (ar-Rūm) and Egypt) by the Emperor Justinian I (c. 482–565 CE) in the pre-islamic period to serve and protect St. Catherine's Monastery together with one hundred men with their wives and children who were sent to Sinai from Egypt. After about one thousand years almost the whole tribe had converted to islam. They remained, however, in the service of the Monastery.¹²

The estimated times of arrival of Bedouin tribes in central and southern Sinai appearing in this study are (as reported in Bailey 1985;¹³ tribal names are given in my own transcription;¹⁴ in notes some details of their origins, histories, etc. will be given):

Tribe	Estimated time of arrival
Ġbāliyyah* ¹ , Ḥamāḍah* ²	pre-islamic period
Badārah* ³ , Tayāha* ⁴ , Baniy Wāṣil* ⁵	10th (perhaps earlier) through 13th c.
Ṣawālḥah* ⁶ , Awlād Sa'īd* ⁷ , 'Awārmah* ⁶ , 'Lēgāt* ⁸	14th c.
Taṣābīn* ⁹ , Garārsah* ¹⁰	16th c.
Ḥwēṭāt* ¹¹ , Mzēnah* ¹²	17th c. (at the latest)

*¹ For further information on the Ġbāliyyah, see also aṭ-Ṭayyib 1993:621–622 and 639–640 and Maiberger 1984:139–149. For an extensive account of their origins, history and present, Hobbs 1995 (especially 139–174) is recommended.

*² For more background information on the history and origin of the Ḥamāḍah, see also aṭ-Ṭayyib 1993:620. They are today a small tribe who are involved in mining activities in their mineral-rich area east of Aḥuw Znēmah, like in Wādiy aṣ-Ṣahaw.¹⁵ (see also remarks under *⁵). Ṣuqayr 1916:107 writes that before the arrival of the Ṣawālḥah they were in control of the region. After the Ṣawālḥah had arrived, the 'Lēgāt became their protectors.

¹¹ In present-day Romania the larger region around Bucharest, between the Transylvanian Alps and the Danube river.

¹² See Bailey 1985:33–35. Maiberger 1984:147–148 quotes Johann Ludwig Burckhardt writing that until well into the eighteenth century a few Ġbāliyy families had remained Christians.

¹³ See however Stewart 1991, where caution with regard to Bailey's conclusions is advised.

¹⁴ For dates of arrival of tribes in northern Sinai, see Bailey 1985 and De Jong 2000:14–15. For more information on the tribes of the central and south of Sinai, see also Ṣuqayr 1916:106–120.

¹⁵ Aṭ-Ṭayyib 1997:290 lists them as one of the oldest tribes present in Sinai today. See also Ṣuqayr 1916:107, where also the presence of aṭ-Tabanah, as the original inhabitants of the 'garden of Fērān', and al-Mawāṭrah is reported, and who in a distant past have their roots in the Ḥamāḍah. I have not heard the names of these former two groups mentioned during the research for this study.

^{*3} Aṭ-Ṭayyib 1993:620 actually spells their name as *al-Badārā* (بداري, with final 'alif *maqṣūrah*, but it is spelled as بدارة in Ṣuqayr 1916:107). They are a very small tribe, who are reported to have moved from their earlier abode on Ġabal 'Iġmah (on the central Tih plateau), where they lived together with (and were allies of) the Tayāha. When they fell out with the Tayāha, they allied with the Ṣafāyḥah (a sub-tribe of the Aḥaywāt).¹⁶ Ṣuqayr (ibid.) suggests that perhaps the name 'Iġmah is derived from the word (from the same root 'ġ-m) describing their speech as "improper Arabic": *luġah 'a'ġamīyah*.

^{*4} The Tayāha are a relatively large tribe. Aṭ-Ṭayyib 1993:566 reports that they came to Sinai with the Banū Hilāl (of 'Adnānī origin)¹⁷ and that they were among the first tribes to 'settle' on the Tih plateau. After the Tarābīn had arrived there, several wars were fought over control of the land. Sawārkah, Biliy, Rmēlāt, Samā'nah are mentioned as allies of the Tayāha in these wars. For some time they were also allied with the Ḥwētāt against the Sawārkah. For further details on their history, presence in other countries etc., see ibid.:565–570 and also Aṭ-Ṭayyib 1997:227–233.

^{*5} They are reported, also in Aṭ-Ṭayyib (see 1993:622 and 1997:292),¹⁸ to be one of the oldest tribes in Sinai. They are said there to have fought numerous wars against the Ḥamāḍah over territory and that both tribes severely weakened each other in the process. After these wars they agreed on a division of the land to the north and south of Wādiy Fērān, which was then later largely occupied by (the various sub-divisions of) the Ṣawālḥah.

G.W. Murray 1935:243 writes that the original inhabitants of southern Sinai "are said to have been Beni Suleiman, and the Hamada and the Beni Wasil [in my own transcription: Baniy Slēmān, Ḥamāḍah and Baniy Wāṣil]. Not long after the Arab conquest of Egypt, the Sawalha and the 'Aleiqat [in my own transcription: Ṣawālḥah and 'Lēgāt] were living in Sharqiya [...], from which they regularly raided south Sinai to carry off the dates of Feiran or to graze their camels wherever there had been rain. One year, these two tribes migrated *en masse* into the peninsula where they succeeded in conquering the Beni Suleiman and the rest, some of whom fled while others were absorbed into the conquerors [...] [T]he two tribes quarrelled and victory was inclining towards the Sawalha when there arrived from Arabia seven tents of the Muzeina [in my own transcription: Mzēnah], the remnant of a noble tribe flying from the results of a blood feud. These asked permission of the Sawalha to share their grazing. But this the Sawalha refused, unless the Muzeina paid them tribute. So the proud Muzeina went off to join the 'Aleiqat and both tribes together overcame the Sawalha in a battle fought in the Watia Pass [in my own transcription: Wāṭyah. The pass is located at appr. 28.41.40 North and 33.58.53 East, see Google Earth] on the main road to the Monastery. A sensible compromise then took place by which the three tribes divided the peninsula among them."

^{*6} In the map below I have indicated the Ṣawālḥah as a separate entity positioned in the area where Bailey 1985:23 indicated the presence of the 'Awārmah. I have not met people who claimed to be members of the 'Awārmah¹⁹ (see also the quote from G.W. Murray 1935 in the previous remark).

¹⁶ Aṭ-Ṭayyib 1993:620 adds a footnote reporting that some Aḥaywāt claim that the Badārāh are originally of Aḥaywiyy origin. See also Aṭ-Ṭayyib 1997:290–291. Today they are found in ar-Ramlah near Ġabal Ḥmayyir, which is part of the 'Dividing Valleys' between the Tih Plateau and the Sinai Massif, see Greenwood 1997:27 (figure 3-1), The geomorphic regions of Sinai.

¹⁷ The Banū Hilāl were led by their legendary commander 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ when they conquered Egypt in the seventh century CE.

¹⁸ Their origin is reported to be Qaḥṭāniy, through Ćuḍām and Banū 'Uqbah.

¹⁹ Aṭ-Ṭayyib 1993:642 actually mentions the 'Awārmah as one of the four sub-tribes of the Ṣawālḥah: al-'Awārimah, al-Maḥāsinah, ar-Raḍāwinah and an-Nawāṣirah (in my transcription: 'Awārmah, Maḥāsnah, Raḍāwnah and Nawāṣrah). For the history and origin

^{*7} Aṭ-Ṭayyib 1993:681–682 (see also 1997:360–367) relates a story describing how the Awlād Saʿīd joined the tribe of Ṣawālḥah during their days in the Ḥiğāz, after which they came to Sinai together. In *ibid.* it is also reported that a branch (named Awlād Sayf) of the Awlād Saʿīd are originally Masāʿīd.

^{*8} For a short history of the origin, present location(s) and activities of the ʿLēgāt in Sinai,²⁰ see also aṭ-Ṭayyib 1993:701–711 and 1997:475–489. Aṭ-Ṭayyib (1993:710 and 1997:487) however quotes Aḥmad Luṭfi as-Sayyid in his book *qabāʾil al-ʿarab fi miṣr* on the date of arrival of the ʿLēgāt in Sinai as being in the tenth century Ḥiğrah (i.e. appr. in the sixteenth century CE) (see also quote from G.W. Murray 1935 in remark ^{*5} above).

^{*9} The large tribe of at-Taṛābīn²¹ in earlier times occupied land in central Sinai, but later, in the eighteenth century, expanded and moved into different directions at the expense of other tribes claiming their territories for themselves.²²

^{*10} The Garāršah are said to be a section of the Ṣawālḥah (see Bailey 1985:33; I have heard the same from my own informants).

Bailey (1985:28–29) reports that the ʿAwārmah, Awlād Saʿīd and Garāršah are ‘jointly known as the Ṣawālḥah’.²³

Bailey (1985:33) also reports a war that took place around 1600 between the Ṣawālḥah and ʿLēgāt.

^{*11} The Ḥwētāt in Sinai are only a small group,²⁴ but large numbers of the Ḥwētāt live as an amalgam of sub-tribes or clans of various origins in southern Jordan and the far northwestern region of Saudi Arabia just south of the border with Jordan. According to Von Oppenheim,²⁵ they occupy a special place among the Bedouin tribes in terms of genealogy. They are said to be offspring of an Egyptian man Ḥuwayṭ, who traveled to ʿAqabah where he fell ill. He was then given shelter by a member of the Baniy ʿAṭiyyah (who are still also today found in Jordan). When Ḥuwayṭ had recovered from his illness, he stayed in ʿAqabah, and managed to guile the Baniy ʿAṭiyyah out of their profitable business of

of the Ṣawālḥah see aṭ-Ṭayyib 1993:623–644. See also Maiberger 1984:141 (paraphrased:), where he mentions the ʿAwāreme (who are said to be the sub-section of the Ṣawālḥah who originally conquered the area), the Qarāreše (Garāršah in my transcription) (who—as owners of the best palm orchards in Wādiy Fēṛān—were the richest among the otherwise destitute Ṭawara), and the Awlād Saʿīd as sub-sections of the Ṣawālḥah. The name Ṣawālḥah derives from the prophet (an-nabiy) Ṣāliḥ, from whom they claim descent. Together with the ʿLēgāt the Ṣawālḥah secured an income (in the form of bread paid by the monks) as ‘Protectors’ of pilgrims *en route* from Cairo to the monastery.

²⁰ They are for instance reported to be allies of the Mzēnah and Ḥamāḍah and to have been in territorial disputes with the Ṣawālḥah.

²¹ Their name Taṛābīn is said to derive from their place of origin Wādiy at-Taṛabah or the town of that name, located to the northwest of aṭ-Ṭāʾif in present day Saudi Arabia. Today sections of this tribe are also present in the Gaza area and the Negev Desert, see also aṭ-Ṭayyib 1993:554–564.

Stewart 1991:106 also mentions that the Taṛābīn were part of the Baniy ʿAṭiyya.

²² Bailey 1985:25 reports that they moved into ʿAyyādiy territory to their west (now Taṛābīn of Rās Ṣadr), the Mzēnah to their south (now Taṛābīn of Nwēbi) and Ḥayḍāt, Ġbārāt (now found to the north of Gaza) and Rmēlāt (in my own transcription) to their north (now northern Taṛābīn). In turn, they had their “own place in drought-ridden central Sinai taken over by the Aḥaywāt, although not by conquest”, see *ibid.* For more on the Taṛābīn see also aṭ-Ṭayyib 1993:554–570 and aṭ-Ṭayyib 1997:210–226.

²³ I have treated them as separate entities, in conformity with how informants themselves defined their affiliations.

²⁴ See Von Oppenheim 1943:154–155.

²⁵ See Von Oppenheim 1943:291.

protecting grain transports from Syria to pilgrimage stations. Only part of them became nomadic, and only at a later point in history.²⁶

^{*12} The Mzēnah are reported (see Bailey 1985:33) to be originally of ‘Adnānī (northern Arabian tribes) origin, but they later (between the 14th and 16th centuries) joined the Qaḥṭānī (southern Arabian) Ḥarb. For a description of their origins, history, presence in Sinai and other locations, see also aṭ-Ṭayyib 1993:687–700 and 1997:368–474. (See also the quote from G.W. Murray 1935 in remark ^{*5} above).

e. Professional Activities of Bedouin in Central Southern Sinai Today

Many of the Bedouin who live near or on the coast of the Gulf of ‘Aqabah make a living in the tourist industry. The focal point of this industry is Šarm aš-Šayx, where hundreds of thousands of tourists come for sunshine and diving, every year generating billions of dollars of income for the Egyptian economy. Most of this money is, however, earned by mainland Egyptians and relatively very little trickles down to the local Bedouin population. Bedouin work mainly as taxi drivers, desert safari guides, and run small businesses like rental shops for diving equipment, cafeterias and small restaurants or sell souvenirs and camel rides. Only few Bedouin have seen opportunities to start their own hotel businesses or larger transport companies for tourists.²⁷

About an hour's drive from the airport of Šarm aš-Šayx, Dahab also takes its share of tourism revenues, albeit a mere fraction of the money made in Šarm. Farther to the north in Nwēbi', which is about a two hours' drive from Šarm airport, and along the coast stretching towards Ṭāba, much money has been invested to develop the tourism industry by (again predominantly) mainland Egyptians, but ever since the second *intifāḍah*²⁸ many of the tourists from or via Israel that would come to this area have stayed away.²⁹ The result is a coastal area filled with half-finished concrete constructions, lying untouched while investors wait for better times. Only a limited number of hotels and a handful of holiday camps run by local Bedouin are open for the few tourists who do come.

²⁶ For a description and list of sub-sections of the Ḥwēṭāt in Jordan and mainland Egypt, see Von Oppenheim 1943:291–308. For more information on their background and history, see Maulvi Al-Haq, Al-Huwaytat in: Encyclopaedic ethnography of Middle-East and Central Asia (Vol. I):287–289.

²⁷ Most of the larger tourism businesses are controlled by mainland Egyptians.

²⁸ The second *intifāḍah* started at the al-'Aqṣā mosque in late September 2000.

²⁹ As part of the Camp David Accords, Israelis (and other tourists entering from Israel at Ṭāba) are allowed to travel into Sinai and visit the east coast of Sinai and its towns (including Šarm aš-Šayx and St Catherine's Monastery) on a 14-day permit available at the border. Israeli authorities (the Counter Terrorism Division) have however issued warnings to their citizens not to travel to Sinai due to the threat of terrorist attacks.

On the coast of the Gulf of Suez more tourist facilities are being developed. The focal point for this business in this area is Rās Šadr (the name of the town is usually spelled 'Ras Sudr' on road signs) and the coast to its south. These facilities mainly cater for holiday makers from Cairo, Rās Šadr being only a two and a half to three hours' drive away from the capital.

Other sources of income for Bedouin include fishing, herding small cattle, some modest crop farming in a *karm*,³⁰ transporting fresh water from the mountains to hotels and also smuggling.³¹ Nowadays members of Bedouin tribes also find employment in development projects like the large scale South Sinai Regional Development Programme (SSRDP), which is funded by the European Union.³²

f. *Research Questions and Purpose of this Study*

The volume in hand is the second on Bedouin dialects in Sinai after the first volume, which is on the Bedouin dialects of the northern Sinai littoral. The primary aim of this study is to give a synchronic description of the Bedouin dialects of central and southern Sinai and thus to complete the description of the Bedouin dialects of the Sinai Desert.³³

This study is also aimed at testing the hypothesis that dialect-typological group of Northwestern Arabic dialects, as proposed by Palva 1991, continues farther south into Sinai, and to investigate the type of differences

³⁰ Lack of fresh water is one of the main problems in Sinai (in 2005 southern Sinai had been without any significant rainfall for fifteen years). Several kinds of fruits and vegetables are grown, as well as poppies and marihuana (in more isolated places) for the production of drugs. These crops are grown on ground water (delivered by means of drip irrigation), but due to the lack of rain and the large quantities which have already been trucked to Šarm aš-Šayx for the tourist industry, the ground water has already run out in several places. In some areas rain-fed agriculture is sometimes possible in *šdūd* (sg. *sidd* 'dam'). See also fn 129, p. 104.

³¹ This is said to include drugs (I was told that in January 2008 1 kilo of marihuana cost LE 50.-, 1 *wigīyyah* (about 6 or 7 in a kilo) of opium LE 450.-, both locally grown in the central areas, and a kilo of heroine LE 70,000.-), and even women, who come on charter flights to Šarm (many from Russia and the Ukraine) to work in prostitution in Israel. Smuggling of fire arms and explosives is also said to take place.

³² A total of 64 million Euros has been allotted to this project by the European Union. For more information, see webpage <http://www.eu-ssrdp.org/> (accessed 10-18-2010).

³³ There are publications, however, which partially fill this gap: Nishio 1992 gives a basic vocabulary of the speech of the Ġbāliyyah, Stewart 1990 is a very valuable collection of texts (in transcription, and with translation in Stewart 1988) on customary law recorded mainly among the Aḥaywāt, but also some of the other tribes. Stewart 1987 gives some texts and provides a sketch of the dialect of the Aḥaywāt. Material presented by Stewart was incorporated into De Jong 2000. Material presented by Nishio will be referred to in descriptive chapter I below.

which exist between the NWA dialects in this area. A similar related question is how far the Negev-type (the dialect of the *Ḍullām*) can be concluded to stretch into Sinai.³⁴

In northern Sinai a continuum of dialects with an east-west dimension was identified as constituting the transition of a largely Bedouin dialect-type (that of the Negev spoken by the *Ḍullām* as described in Blanc 1970, or the group I-type as described in De Jong 2000) towards the much more sedentary type as spoken in the eastern part of the Nile Delta, such as described in Abul Fadl 1961, Woidich 1979 and 1980 and in Behnstedt and Woidich 1985).³⁵ The sedentary characteristics of the western dialects in the north, in particular those of group III (i.e. BA and AxA), are very likely to be due to dialect contact with sedentary dialects of the eastern Delta.

Another question to be investigated in this study is therefore whether similar sedentary influences can be traced in the dialects of the central and southern Sinai, which are geographically so much farther removed from sedentary dialects spoken on the Egyptian mainland than the dialects of group III.

In De Jong 2000:283 the pronominal suffixes *-ʔk* for the 2nd p. sg. masculine and *-k* for the sg. fem. found in group II of the north were surmised to be a feature more typical of southern Sinai dialects. Another question is therefore whether this is indeed the case, and if so, how widespread this feature is.

A secondary purpose of this study is to apply the 'step' method introduced in De Jong 2000:614–621 to the dialects of central and southern Sinai and compare these to results of comparisons of the same dialects with the help of techniques of multi-dimensional scaling and clustering by generating a dendrogram.

II. FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

a. *Infrastructural Arrangements*

As a 'base' to work from for my field research I had chosen the small town of Dahab, situated on the east coast of Sinai and more or less half way between Šarm aš-Šayx and Nwēbi'. The advantage of this town is that it

³⁴ This question was already posed in Blanc 1970:2.

³⁵ See De Jong 2000:621–627.

was within reasonable travelling distance from the locations I wanted to visit for my recordings, while at the same time I was able to more or less 'mix in' with the numbers of tourists who come to spend a holiday in Dahab.³⁶ On most of my visits I used a rented car from Cairo, while for recordings 'off the beaten track' I would sometimes rent a Toyota pick up truck, which handled remarkably well in sandy conditions. On other occasions I was able to bring a 4 X 4 vehicle (a Mitsubishi Pajero). With this vehicle I could visit Badārah in the area of ar-Ramlah and Lēgāt and Ḥamāḍah in other hard-to-access areas in the central western parts of southern Sinai.

In Dahab I would rent an apartment with a desk, where I could write out my recordings with my guide and main informant Eid and where I would also occasionally conduct recording sessions with informants.³⁷

Recordings were made with digital recorders (2 Apple iPods and an Archos recorder)³⁸ in MP-3 or WAVE format. To make sure speech was recorded properly, I always used extra cassette recorders making simultaneous recordings.³⁹ The advantages of digital recordings are many: almost instant copies on computer become possible (without loss of sound quality), no wear and tear of audio tapes, and the recorders were easy to recharge with special cigarette lighter adaptors in a car. Other advantages are that recording of a speaker would not have to be interrupted to flip or change an audio tape, so that the speaker would be less actively reminded of the fact that he was being recorded. At 'home' in Dahab I would usually burn copies of these recordings on CD, and work with these copies on CD players (with extra battery powered Sony speakers) to write the texts out on my computer with the help of my friend Eid. The computer I used was an Apple G4, on which I had installed the necessary fonts for transcription and which were created by Manfred Woidich.

After my experiences with chances for permission for my research in northern Sinai, I had decided not to apply for official permission to

³⁶ At the time of my field trips the town of Nwēbi' had almost no tourists, and my chances to keep a low profile would have been much slimmer, while the town of Šarm aš-Šayx was too heavily infested with security personnel (the town regularly hosts international conferences and summit meetings) to remain relatively unnoticed.

³⁷ Most of the recordings were however conducted *in situ*.

³⁸ These were about the size of a pack of cigarettes.

³⁹ Although the sound quality was excellent when set to the maximum sampling rate, the Archos recorder I used (with an external Soundman 'Kopfmikrofon') was quite difficult to operate, especially in conditions without light. After pressing the wrong invisible button, this could result in loss of the recording. The iPods were much easier to handle with a Griffin iTalk click-on microphone.

conduct my research in the centre and south, but to simply maintain as low a profile as possible. To remain friends with military or security personnel manning road blocks, a pack of cigarettes, or a bottle of water could work miracles.⁴⁰

b. *Selecting Targets for Field Research*

During the research needed for this study the same assumption was made as for the previous research in northern Sinai: that the dialect of members of the same tribal collective will not be substantially different in different locations within the same *dīrah* (or ‘tribal area’). At the same time, some differences did show up in places inside the same *dīrah*.

An example of such differences showing up among speakers of the same tribal collective is the treatment of ‘original anaptyctics’ in initial position in the suffixed preposition *m(i)* ‘with’ (see ^{*6} in chapter I, 3.1.16.) in different areas inside the *dīrah* of the Ġbāliyyah; speakers of Ġbāliyy who live near the monastery tend to say e.g. for “with him” *im’ūh* (where *i* is an anaptyctic vowel), while speakers of Ġbāliyy in Mrēr (in Wādiy aš-Šēx) will more regularly stress the anaptyctic as in *ím’uh* (which leads to the conclusion that the morphophonemic base of the in the latter case is actually |im’|). Another example are the genitive exponents in use for ‘indirect annexation’ among speakers of the Mzēnah. Speakers of Mzēniyy living in Dahab and near to the coast will generally use *šuġl*, while speakers of Mzēniyy living more inland will more regularly use *ħagg* (see chapter II, 3.1.11.). When such differences did show up among speakers of the same tribal collective, separate mention of this is made in the descriptive chapters.

To select the tribal communities to be approached for this study, I made an inventarisation based on the map in Bailey 1991 (also in Bailey 2009). I would then go out to the tribal areas where these collectives were to be found, and would try to conduct interviews with speakers after having been introduced to them by my guide and travelling companion Eid al-Aṭraš.⁴¹ In the course of my research I would sometimes also hear

⁴⁰ If one passes through a road block three times a week, every time claiming a different purpose of the journey, such as Ġabal al-Banāt, St. Catherine’s Monastery, the Blue Desert, or some other local attraction, one sometimes has to prop up one’s credibility with a little present.

⁴¹ The method of selecting informants, topics discussed during interviews, some of the difficulties associated with field research and the general methodological approach are described in De Jong 2000:20–21 and 23–30.

names mentioned of tribal collectives not indicated (or known by another name) on the map in Bailey 1991, I would then go to the *dīrahs* of these collectives to conduct interviews with speakers there as well. I would not attempt to subsume such collectives under a larger collective (like the *Dbūr*, of whom it is reported that they are a sub-section of the *Ḥwētāt*, or the *Badārah*, of whom it is said that they are originally *Aḥaywāt*, or in any case lived in close contact with a sub-section of the *Aḥaywāt* for a considerable length of time), but I would simply accept the way speakers identified themselves, at face value, so to speak.⁴²

I did however take note of the remarks I had heard about the origins of such smaller collectives, and at a later stage compared the typological position of such a sub-group with that of their original (usually) larger tribal collective with the help of Multi-Dimensional Scaling plots. Not surprisingly perhaps, such collectives show up relatively near each other in such Multi-Dimensional Scaling plots (see in the appendix below, where *DbA* is plotted in the immediate vicinity of *ḤwA* and *BdA* shows up very near *AḥA*), which means that such tribal collectives show relatively few differences in a linguistic sense (for other remarks made by informants, see Conclusions, IV. e.).

c. *Selecting Informants*

Informants for interviews were—like so often in Arabic dialect research—selected on the basis of practical considerations: those who were prepared and able to be interviewed were invited to cooperate. Due to the conservative nature of Bedouin society, interviewing women was often not possible. Like in other areas of Sinai, women spend most of their time inside their homes or at a younger age herding goats and sheep. In towns like *Dahab* and *Nwēbi'* younger girls can often be seen trying to sell locally produced souvenir trinkets like bracelets, purses, etc. to tourists. Approaching a woman who is alone—e.g. when she is out herding goats and sheep in the desert, or shopping in town—is regarded as extremely bad manners and is for Bedouin themselves even punishable under customary law (اقصاع الغريفي in Arabic).

There were a few exceptions: of the *Tayāha* I interviewed an elderly lady. This was possible because my guide and main informant *Eid* (ʿĪd) knew her personally, as he had spent time in prison with her son for more

⁴² After all, if speakers do not identify themselves as belonging to a certain larger (or smaller) tribal group, or another group altogether, who am I to suggest that they should?

than a year.⁴³ I have also often spoken to the mother of my main informant Eid, a Tuḫbāniyyih of appr. 65 years old.

Below the persons who were more or less formally interviewed⁴⁴ during this research⁴⁵ (their ages at times of recording follow in brackets) are listed. These interviewees are referred to by their first names only:

Group I

Tarābīn Nwēbiʿ Šēx Šēš (47) (Nwēbiʿ) + several Tuḫbāniy visitors from around Nwēbiʿ and Wādiy Watīr in his magʿad. The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is TAN.

Tarābīn Rās Šadr ʿId (33) (Rās Šadr) (+ 4 or 5 of his friends of appr. the same age in Rās Šadr/Aḫuw Šwayrah, his mother, appr. 60). The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is TAŠ.

Ġarāğrah Ṭalāl (29) (born al-Bāğah/Wādiy as-Sīg); Swēlim (35) (born in Rās asSīg); Ġamāl (appr. 32) (born in Wādiy as-Sīg); Mḥammad (appr. 32) (born in Wādiy as-Sīg); Silmiy (53) (born in al-Malbad/Wādiy as-Sīg). The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is ĠrA.

Tayāha Mḥammad (34) (recorded in Aḫuw Šwayrah); Slēm (49) (Rās aš-Šētān, from Rās ʿBēd appr. 105 km south of al-ʿAriš); Aḥm Xidr (appr. 65) (recorded near (northeast of) aṭ-Ṭarfa;⁴⁶); Xidr (32) (northeast of aṭ-Ṭarfa). The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is TyA.

⁴³ Many Bedouin men have spent time in prisons, often even without official charges.

⁴⁴ “More or less formally” should be interpreted to mean that I conducted recording sessions with them. Often enough though, I met people during my travels with whom I chatted and on whose speech I would then later—immediately after the conversation—take notes if I was certain to which tribal groups they belonged, e.g. several Mzēnah in ʿAyn Ḥuḍrah, a couple of Ḥwētāt on the main road through the Mitla pass, Ḥamāḍah on the way from the Ġabal Ḥmayyir area to Wādiy Liḫyān, several ʿLēgāt near the area where I had interviewed Badārah (in the Ġabal Ḥmayyir area), Awlād Saʿid near al-Buwayb, just south of Wādiy Fērān, Tarābīn in Dahab, etc.

⁴⁵ Since I used to rent an apartment in Dahab during the several periods of my field research, I have spoken with and listened to many more individuals than those listed here. I would then also usually ask them about their tribal backgrounds. Many of these speakers were of course Mzēnah, but also members of other tribes of Sinai (including tribes from the north) can be found in this town.

⁴⁶ Appr. coordinates are 28.44.15 North and 33.58.48 East.

Malālḥah Xiḍr (80); Salmān (appr. 30); Zāyid (67); all three from al-Madḥūnīh/Nagʿ Šabānīh, very near (appr. 300 metres) the border with Israel. The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is MIA.

Ḥwēṭāt Slēmān (46) (born and living in al-Ġidy); Mḥammad (born in al-Ḥammīh, 20 km east of al-Ġidy); ʿĪd (28) (born and living in al-Ġidy). The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is ḤwA.

Dbūr al-Ḥaġġ Farāġ (62); ʿAwdih (appr. 45, though claims to be 60); Slēmān (appr. 35); Mḥammad (appr. 40, born in Ṭrayfīh). The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is DbA.

Badārah ʿAṭīyyih (60) (born on the Ṭih plateau); Silmān (55) (born on the Ṭih plateau). Both from aṭ-Ṛamlah, near Ġabal Ḥmayyir, some 10 to 12 kilometres almost due west from Ġabal Fōgah.⁴⁷ The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is BdA.

Group VI

Mzēnah Ḥasan (54) (from Ḍahab); Mḥammad (from Ḍahab/ʿAṣalah) (appr. 28); ʿĀyid (25) (from Ḍahab/ʿAṣalah); ʿAbdallāh (appr. 34) (from Ḍahab); Ḥayyġ (appr. 40) (on main road St Catherine's police post and appr. 30 km west of the police post at the intersection of the Nwebiʿ/Ḍahab road and the east-west route to St Catherine's monastery).⁴⁸ The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is MzA.

Baniy Wāṣil Mḥammad (60) (born in Wādiy Ṭammān, to the southeast of Wādiy aṭ-Ṭūr, about 30 km from the main road to Šarm); Sālīm (25) (born in the mountains east southeast of aṭ-Ṭūr, near Wādiy Sli').⁴⁹ The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is BWA.

⁴⁷ Coordinates appr. 29.02.52 North and 33.33.38 East. I have also spoken to four other men of the Badārah, but could not make recordings on that occasion. When sufficiently zoomed in, their four or five tents are visible on Google Earth as white rectangles (the tents are nowadays made of flour sacks donated by USAID). Three more tents (white and brown) are visible at 29.02.36 North and 33.34.18 East.

⁴⁸ Coordinates are appr. 28.48.18 North and 34.17.56 East, see Google Earth.

⁴⁹ Depending on dialect, this may also be pronounced as Wādiy Islah, Wādiy Aslah or Wādiy Sliy. See 1.2.4.4. and 3.1.5. in the descriptive chapters below. In Šuqayr 1916:69 the name is spelled in Arabic as *إسلا*.

Group VII

Hanādwah Ġim'ih (29) (born in Wādiy Fērān); Ḥamd (also known by his nickname Mundi) (26) (born in Wādiy Fērān); Slēmān (64) (born in Wādiy Fērān). All were interviewed in Wādiy aṭ-Ṭūr, a few kilometres to the northeast of aṭ-Ṭūr, Ḥamd was also recorded on several occasions in Dahab. The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is HnA.

Garāršah Maḥmūd (24) (from il-Ḥiṣwah, Wādiy Fērān); ʾId (22) (from il-Ḥiṣwah, Wādiy Fērān); Ḥsēn (54) (from il-Ḥiṣwah, Wādiy Fērān); Ḥsēn (24) (from il-Ḥiṣwah, Wādiy Fērān); Mūsīh (24).⁵⁰ The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is GrA.

Ḥamāḍah Maḥmūd (30) (born in Sēl Ba'ba');⁵¹ ʿAwwād (55) (Wādiy Liḥyān); Sa'ad (36) (Wādiy Liḥyān).⁵² The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is ḤmA.

Ġbālīyyah il-Ḥaġġ Msallam (67) (from Brēgah, between Fērān and Ḥiṣwah/Wādiy Fērān); Mūsa (28) (Wādiy iṛ-Rāḥah, appr. 3 km north of the monastery); ʿAṭwah (30) (Wādiy iṛ-Rāḥah); Silēmān (27) (St Catherine village); Silēmān (36) (Mrēr, appr. 30 km into Wādiy aṣ-Ṣēx from the police post at St. Catherine's); Aḥuw Ḥmēd (38) (Mrēr). The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is ĠbA.

Awlād Sa'īd ʿŌdah (35) (from Wādiy Ṣlāf. 2 years 'i'dādiy in Ṭūr); Niṣṣār (appr. 65) (from Wādiy Ṣlāf); Maḥmūd (appr. 60) (from Wādiy Ṣlāf). The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is ASA.

⁵⁰ Ḥiṣwah is in Wādiy Fērān, coordinates are appr. 28.43.13 North and 33.36.33 East, see Google Earth.

⁵¹ The mouth of Wādiy Ba'ba' is just to the northeast of Aḥuw Rdēs and just to the northwest of Wādiy Maġārah. Coordinates are appr. 28.54 North and 33.15 East on Google Earth. The area of Umm Buġmah is well known among geologists for its manganese deposits. Already in pharaonic times, in the general area around Sarābiṭ alXādim and in Wādiy Maġārah turquoise was mined.

⁵² Wādiy Liḥyān (not indicated on Google Earth, but located appr. at 29.01 North and 33.25 East) is some kilometres (north) from Wādiy Mukattab, which is appr. at 28.50.58 North and 33.25.35 East and to the southwest Sarābiṭ alXādim. In this wadi there are several Nabataean and Byzantine rock inscriptions.

Şawālḥah Ḥsēn (38) (born in Xbayyir/Wādiy Fērān); Ğim'ih (18) (born in Aḥuw Rdēs, lives in Xbayyir/Wādiy Fērān); 'Aṭwah (36) (born in Xbayyir/Wādiy Fērān). The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is ŞwA.

Group VIII

'Lēgāt Sa'ād (appr. 40) (born in Sarābiṭ al-Xādim); Xiḍr (appr. 35) (from Sarābiṭ al-Xādim); Mḥammad (33) (from Sarābiṭ al-Xādim); Slēm (appr. 42) (from Sarābiṭ al-Xādim). The abbreviation used here to refer to their dialect is 'LA.

d. Gathering Linguistic Material

In principle, the mode of operations described in De Jong 2000:23–30 was followed for this research as well.

e. Difficulties during Field Research

Problems connected to conducting research in Sinai have been referred to before,⁵³ and since the times of my previous research in northern Sinai, matters in this respect have hardly changed for the better. If anything, local authorities have become all the more wary of foreigners who exhibit no particular interest in diving and/or sunshine.

At the same time, however, it seems that gradually the realisation has been sinking in that such foreigners too come in a variety of shapes, and with a variety of interests, and that not all of them are out to smudge the reputation of Egypt, but may have a genuine academic interest.

Apart from the known difficulties associated with field research needed for dialect studies in Egypt, additional complications arose when tourist facilities in southern Sinai became the target of terrorist attacks.

Three simultaneous suicide bomb attacks took place in Dahab on the 24th of April 2006 (it was the early evening of the very day I had arrived there for more field work). Before these attacks, on the 7th of October 2004, the Hilton hotel in Ṭāba, campsites north of Nwēbi⁵⁴ / Rās aš-Šayṭān had been targeted, which in turn came more than a year after on the 23rd

⁵³ See also remarks in De Jong 2000:18.

⁵⁴ Although I transcribe Nwēbi', as a transliteration for Arabic on road signs, Dr Frank Stewart (in personal communication) advised me to correct this to read Nwēb'ih (as is his practice in several of his publications). I have chosen however to maintain my original transcription.

of July 2005 bombs had exploded in Šarm aš-Šayx (of which one was a large car bomb driven into the reception area of the Ghazala Gardens Hotel). All in all, more than a hundred people lost their lives in these bombings, and hundreds more were wounded.

Since security forces almost immediately suspected Bedouin involvement in these attacks, thousands of Bedouin were rounded up and put under detention in al-‘Arīš. Only after several months, when the involvement in the attacks of 2004 of a few members of one of the Bedouin tribes had become clear, three suspects were (within a matter of days) tracked down in the desert near the mountain range of Šadr al-Ḥaytān (to the east of Rās Šadr) with the help of members of different Bedouin tribes, who had decided to assist authorities in their hunt to testify to their abhorrence for the terrorist acts ascribed to these three. The suspects died in the shoot-outs that ensued. Many of the estimated three thousand Bedouin who had been rounded up, however, remained in custody for a long time.

In the weeks following such attacks it was usually impossible to go out into the desert and look for informants to interview. On several occasions my regular informant Eid was taken from my car at one of the road blocks and locked up in prison or a police station, until some influential local tribesmen could be found to go there and seek his release. After a few of these incidents (he was arrested three times in the four weeks immediately after the Dahab bombings), we decided to work on recordings that we already had instead, and not to venture out of town until the situation had quieted down. This should in part explain why the average number of speakers is a little lower than during my previous research in northern Sinai. On the other hand, the number of Bedouin inhabitants of this southern region is also considerably smaller than in the north.

III. PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

a. *Presentation of the Data and Selecting Criteria for Comparison*

In this volume the data are presented in a manner similar to the method followed in De Jong 2000. As a very useful tool for linguistic description, the method used in Blanc 1970 is also followed here.

The emphasis again tends to be on differences between dialects, rather than shared characteristics.⁵⁵ A selection of features which show up as dif-

⁵⁵ For remarks on this issue, see De Jong 2000:31.

ferences between dialects in the area is then represented in maps in the appendix of this volume. As parameters for comparison, the same features that were selected (from publications on surrounding dialects) to serve as criteria in De Jong 2000, have been used here. The purpose is to facilitate direct comparison with dialects of the northern littoral (described in De Jong 2000) and to this end the numbering of the paragraphs in the volume in hand runs parallel (with a few minor modifications) to the numbering used there.

This also implies that in some cases no information is given in some of the paragraphs due to the fact that such information was not available, or the situation is different in the dialects discussed in the volume in hand. For a discussion on the selection of criteria for comparison, see De Jong 2000:30–50.

In De Jong 2000 the identified area of transition (the ‘continuum’) between ‘Bedouin’ dialects of the type such as that spoken in the Negev (the dialect of the ʔullām, described in Blanc 1970) was reflected in the gradual disappearance of certain ‘Bedouin’ dialectal features. The selection of criteria was in part also directed at illustrating the presence of such a continuum. For the sake of comparability, I have used the same criteria here, and although they do not produce the same or another type of transitional area of Bedouin vs non-Bedouin (or ‘less Bedouin’), most of these criteria proved useful to illustrate differences in the central and southern area as well.

b. *Method of Description*

The methods and terminology used in this study are the same as those used in De Jong 2000. For a succinct description of these, see *ibid.*:50–54.