Contemporary Bedouin Poetry: A Reading Guide

I. Please consider the following questions as you read the assigned material from Kurpershoek’s *Arabia of the Bedouin* and Sowayan’s *Nábatí Poetry*. In formulating your responses to these questions, please provide the appropriate reference information (page number, etc.) from the readings to enable an efficient and dynamic discussion of these questions in class.

1) How do we define *nábatí* poetry? How does it contrast in formal and linguistic terms with the classical Arabic *qasída*?

2) Why is poetry viewed as more authoritative and trustworthy than other forms of communication and expression on the Arabian Peninsula?

3) Why do people still compose *nábatí* poetry?

4) What real behaviours of the pre-modern bedouin are expressed in pre-Islamic poetry? How can we use pre-modern bedouin lifestyle to better understand pre-Islamic poetry?

5) How do *nábatí* poetry and pre-Islamic poetry differ? What has remained the same? Has the *nasíb, ríhla* & “boast” structure survived in the *nábatí* poetic tradition?

6) Recalling Sells’ “dissembling metaphors,” do we find similar metaphoric structures in *nábatí* poetry?

II. People, Places and Things to Remember:

1. Muhámmad ibn Abd al-Wáhháb & Muhámmad ibn Sa’úd – agreement in 1744
2. Abd al-Azíz Ibn Sa’úd (“Ibn Sa’úd”) – united the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932
3. The *Ikhwán* ("The Brotherhood")
4. al-Dákhúl and Háwwal
5. *diwán*