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Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Illustrations -- Foreword / Nagy, Gregory -- Preface -- Notes on Transcription and Transliteration -- Introduction: The Tradition -- Part One: The Ethnography of a Poetic Tradition -- 1. The Village -- 2. Poets Inside and Outside the Epic -- 3. The Economy of Poetic Style -- Part Two: Textual and Performance Strategies in the Sahra -- 4. The Interplay of Genres -- 5. The Sahra as Social Interaction -- Conclusion: Epic Text and Context -- Appendix: Texts in Transliteration -- Works Cited -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	An astonishingly rich oral epic that chronicles the early history of a Bedouin tribe, the Sirat Bani Hilal has been performed for almost a thousand years. In this ethnography of a contemporary community of professional poet-singers, Dwight F. Reynolds reveals how the epic tradition continues to provide a context for social interaction and commentary. Reynolds's account is based on performances in the

northern Egyptian village in which he studied as an apprentice to a master epic-singer. Reynolds explains in detail the narrative structure of the *Sirat Bani Hilal* as well as the tradition of epic singing. He sees both living epic poets and fictional epic heroes as figures engaged in an ongoing dialogue with audiences concerning such vital issues as ethnicity, religious orientation, codes of behavior, gender roles, and social hierarchies.
