

A Modern Western Aramaic Account of the Syrian Civil War

Alexey Duntsov (HSE University, Moscow)

Charles Häberl (Rutgers University)

Sergey Loesov (HSE University, Moscow)

Abstract

Modern West Aramaic is one of the most critically endangered Aramaic languages, and the only extant member of the Western Aramaic sub-family. Its speakers are among the few who have not migrated away from their original territory, but the Syrian civil war (2011–present) has accelerated its endangerment and resulted in the abandonment of one of the three villages in which it was previously spoken. Modern Western Aramaic thus provides us with an opportunity to document a language precisely as it succumbs to some of the primary causes of language endangerment, i.e. conflict and migration. The following text, collected in 2020, discusses this community’s experience during this conflict from the perspective of one of the few remaining competent speakers. We have contextualized this text with a discussion of the language and its grammar in comparison with the most recent descriptions, all of which were made decades prior to the war, when the language was much less endangered.

Introduction to the language

Modern Western Aramaic, or Siryōn (*Sirjo:n*) to its speakers, is the sole surviving representative of the Western Aramaic languages. Prior to the Syrian civil war (2011–present), it was spoken in three villages in the Rif Dimashq Governorate of the Syrian Arab Republic, Maaloula (*Maʿlu:la*, Arabic *Maʿlūlah*, al-Qutayfah District), Baḡḡa (Arabic *Ṣarḡah*, Yabroud District), and ʿUppaʿo:ḏ (Arabic *Jubbʿadīn*, al-Qutayfah District). Regarding the present number of speakers, there is no certain data available. Residents of Maaloula today estimate that there are fewer than 3,000 speakers living within two of the villages (Maaloula and ʿUppaʿo:ḏ). More speakers formerly resided in these two villages, and in the village of Baḡḡa, which was destroyed during the war and subsequently abandoned. These speakers are today distributed across a growing diaspora:¹

Name	Population, 2004	Population, 2021	Speakers, 2021	Speaker Percentage, 2021 ²
Maaloula	2,762	1,700 [7,400]	1,500 (25)	20.3% (0.3%)
Baḡḡa	1,405	0 [4,500]	800 (15)	17.8% (0.3%)
ʿUppaʿo:ḏ	3,778	9,800 [9,800]	1,200 (30)	12.2% (0.3%)
Diaspora	n/a	10,700	500 (n/a)	4.7% (n/a)

All of these speakers live within larger (and growing) monolithically Arabophone populations, and consequently speak that language in addition to Siryōn. Within Maaloula, at most only a few dozen individuals have a confident command of the language. Most members of the younger generations are passive or partial speakers of the language, comprehending it but lacking an active control, and consequently they prefer to communicate with one another in Arabic. Even those few remaining fluent speakers have largely failed to pass their command of the language to their own children. The language was therefore likely already moribund at the start of the war, but the present conflict has

¹ 2004 population estimates courtesy of the Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics. The 2021 estimates, courtesy of our primary informant, ‘Abu George’ Diab Mosa Bekhet, reflect current residents as well as former residents presently in diaspora. The latter figures are given in [brackets]. The 2021 speaker estimates, also courtesy of Bekhet, reflect both partial and fluent speakers of the language. The latter figures are given in (parentheses).

² P.c. Bekhet, 2021/05/18.

accelerated the timetable for its demise, as many of the villagers have fled the region, and one of the three villages (Baḡa/Ṣarxa) was ruined and completely deserted as a consequence of the events described below.

Prior Research

The most extensive and recent samples of Modern Western Aramaic comprise the four volumes published by Werner Arnold from 1989–1991. These were followed by 111 short texts, which the late Aki'o Nakano collected from a speaker from ʿUppaṣo:ḏ between 1989 and 1990, and published without translation in 1994. Arnold's most recent contribution (2019) is a new dictionary, the first since Bergsträsser (1921 [1966]), based upon the heretofore published corpus and therefore admittedly limited by its size (at roughly 200,000–250,000 tokens). Arnold has also published a descriptive grammar (1990b), for which he furnishes information in parallel columns for all three dialects whenever necessary. The primary focus of this grammar is the morphology of the language, and its description of phonology is limited, particularly with regard to syllable structure and suprasegmental phenomena. Even more of a desideratum is an updated description of verbal morphosyntax, after Correll's 1978 contribution, which depended upon the texts that were available to him at the time, primarily those of Prym and Socin which Bergsträsser published (1915), the products of Bergsträsser's own field work (1919), those of Cantarino (1961), those of Reich (1937), and those of Correll himself (1969). Spitaler also employed the texts of Bergsträsser (1915 and 1919) and Reich (1937) as sources for his 1938 grammar, which does not address syntax except in a perfunctory manner. The syntax proper of Modern Western Aramaic therefore remains largely undescribed. Most of Correll (1978) is dedicated to verbal morphosyntax, but 33 pages (99–132) concern clause-level syntax. Additionally, Cohen has contributed an article on verbal morphosyntax (1979) as well as 52 pages of his monograph (1984 [2003]), which address the MWA verb from a diachronic perspective. The most urgent tasks facing the researchers engaged in documenting Modern Western Aramaic are therefore enlarging the existing corpus and eventually creating a comprehensive description of the syntax, which will require a much larger corpus than that presently available.

The present text is the first prose text published since those of Nakano in 1994, which were in any case published without translation, grammatical commentary, or glossary, which drastically limits their utility. Save those texts, it is the first prose text published since Werner Arnold's fieldwork in Qalamun during the mid-80s, nearly forty years ago. Therefore, this text offers us the clearest picture of the language as it is currently spoken by a member of the last generation of fully competent speakers.

The Present Text

The following story was collected during the first field season of the Russian expedition to Qalamoun in December of 2020.³ It was related by our primary informant, 'Abu George' Diab Mosa Bekhet, on 18 December 2020 at the house of Ibrahim 'Brom' Sinjar and Luiza Askar in the village of Maaloula.⁴ Abu George was born 2 February 1952 in Maaloula, and at the time of this recording he was 68 years old. He was educated at Maaloula Elementary School until the fifth grade, whereupon he continued his schooling in Damascus, eventually completing his secondary education there and proceeding to study law until circumstances required him to cease his studies. After completing his compulsory military service (1973–1977), he returned to Maaloula and has since been living there. Prior to his retirement, he worked as the Archaeological Sites Monitor in al-Qutayfa region for the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums. In addition to Siryōn, Abu George is also fluent in the local Qalamun variety of Arabic, as are most of his neighbours, and he is literate in standard Arabic. The respect in which his neighbours hold him is illustrated by the honorific titles *muxtār* (Arabic 'village headman') or *so:ba* (Siryōn 'elder') that they bestow upon him.

Abu George relates an oral history of the Syrian civil war as it unfolded in Maaloula and the adjacent villages after 2011. This conflict first emerged in 2011 as a consequence of the 'Arab Spring' protests that spread from Tunisia throughout the whole region. Two of the primary participants in the conflict were Al-Nusra Front (Arabic *Jabhat an-Nuṣrah li- 'Ahl aš-Šām*, 'Syrian People's Supporters Front') and ISIS (Arabic *Tanḡīm ad-Dawlah al- 'Islāmīyah fī l- 'Irāq wa-š-Šām* 'The Government of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria', or *Dā 'iš* for short), whom Abu George mentions in his narrative. These groups reached Qalamun shortly after May of 2012, and destroyed the army checkpoint at Maaloula on 4 September 2013, inaugurating the 'Battle of Maaloula'. Three days later, on 7 September, Abu George, his family, and many of the other families of Maaloula quit the village, returning only on 14 April 2014, when the Syrian Army

³ The present text may be compared with the digital audio recording available at [URL](#).

⁴ See plate 1.

reassumed control over Maaloula. As a consequence of the Battle of Maaloula, 35 villagers were killed, 200 were injured, and 2,000 were displaced, but have subsequently returned to Maaloula. An additional 1,000 have resettled elsewhere in Syria and Lebanon, and 1,500 have left the region and sought refuge elsewhere.

Transcription System

Following the example of Fassberg 2019, we have elected to represent the sounds of the Maaloula variety of Modern Western Aramaic according to the IPA, in order to make the sample more accessible to a wider readership. A comparative chart of the traditional system of transcribing MWA phonemes, as established in Arnold 2006, and their IPA correspondents, is illustrated below:

Stops and Affricates

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Post-Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Voiceless	<i>p / p</i>			<i>t / t</i>	<i>č / ʧ</i>	<i>k / c</i>	<i>ḵ / k</i>			[<i>ʔ / ʔ</i>]
Voiced	<i>b / b</i>			[<i>d / d</i>]			[<i>g / g</i>]			
Emphatic				<i>ṭ / ṭʕ</i>						

Fricatives

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Post-Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Voiceless		<i>f / f</i>	<i>θ / θ</i>	<i>s / s</i>	<i>š / ʃ</i>		<i>x /</i>	<i>χ</i>	<i>ħ / ħ</i>	<i>h / h</i>
Voiced			<i>ḏ / ḏ</i>	<i>z / z</i>	<i>ž / ʒ</i>		<i>ḡ /</i>	<i>ʁ</i>	<i>ʕ / ʕ</i>	
Emphatic			[<i>ḏ / ḏʕ</i>]	<i>ṣ / ṣʕ</i>						
				[<i>ṣ / ṣʕ</i>]						

Sonorants

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Post-Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Nasal	<i>m / m</i>			<i>n / n</i>						
Lateral				<i>l / l</i>						
Apical				<i>r / r</i>						
Approximant	<i>w / w</i>					<i>y / j</i>				

Arnold (2006, 1) describes the velar consonant *ḵ / k* as ‘post-velar’, but Fassberg (2019, 633) describes Arnold’s *ḵ* as only ‘slightly post-velar’ and renders it with a retracted *ḵ*. In Abu George’s speech, this phoneme is neither post-velar nor retracted, suggesting that it has advanced to *k*. The ‘emphatic’ series of consonants are those that have a pharyngeal coarticulation, not due to the environment in which they occur, but in contrast with the homorganic phonemes that are not so coarticulated. These are often described as ‘pharyngealized’ in the literature, but we have elected to retain the traditional designation ‘emphatic’ in order to underline their phonemic status.

In addition to these phonemes, Arnold (2006, 1) identifies five marginal phonemes, *ʔ / ʔ*, *d / d*, *g / g*, *ḏ / ḏʕ*, and *ṣ / ṣʕ*, which only appear in unassimilated loanwords from Arabic and other languages. We have indicated these within [brackets] in the table above. The last is a voiced pharyngealized alveolar fricative, but it corresponds historically to the voiced pharyngealized interdental fricative, *ḏ / ḏʕ*, with which it sometimes forms minimal pairs, such as (older) *ḏʕarfa* ‘rocker churn (for making butter)’ and (newer) *ṣʕarfa* ‘envelope’, both ultimately from Arabic *ḏarf* (pl. *ḏurūf*) ‘vessel,

container’ (Arnold & Behnstedt 1993, 54). In illustrating Arabic etymons, we employ the Romanization system of the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics* (2006, viii–ix). Unless otherwise indicated, all references to Arabic vocabulary imply Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), as reflected in Wehr 1979.

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
Close	<i>i</i> / <i>iː</i>		<i>u</i> / <i>uː</i>
Mid	<i>ɛ</i> / <i>ɛː</i>		<i>o</i> / <i>oː</i>
Open		<i>a</i> / <i>aː</i>	

In the variety of Maaloula, vowel quantity is phonemic, the ‘short’ vowels contrasting with their ‘long’ equivalents. Long vowels only appear within stressed syllables; whenever the stress moves to another syllable through inflection or derivation, the long vowel is reduced to its short equivalent: *ɛː* > *i*, *iː* > *i* / *ɛ*, *oː* > *a* / *u*, and *uː* > *u*, respectively. The correspondence between *oː* and *a* reflects the historical shift of **aː* > *oː* in accented syllables and > *a* in unaccented syllables. In the speech of Abu George, the L and tL verbal stems (q.v. below) are characterized by an *oː* in the first syllable of the stem when that syllable is stressed, which is reduced to *u* whenever the stress shifts,⁵ as in the examples below:

soːʕet ‘he supported’, *suʕiːte* ‘he supported him’ (ln. 21)

ʕamhoːreb ‘he is fighting’ *ʕamhuribit_tawəlθa* ‘they are fighting the government’ (ln. 6)

ʕammissoːʕet ‘he is collaborating’ *ʕammissuʕiːtin ʕemmit_tawəlθa* ‘they are collaborating with the government’ (ln. 8)

Arnold (1990b, 82–83) notes that *oː* reduces to *a* rather than *u* in the context of these stems in the speech of his informants. Note that the post-tonic *ɛ* of the stem lengthens to *iː* in an open accented syllable, as in the examples from lns 21 and 8 above, and reduces to *i* in a pre-tonic syllable, as in the example from ln. 6 above.

In the environment of consonant with an uvular or pharyngeal articulation or coarticulation (i.e., *tʕ*, *ðʕ*, *sʕ*, *zʕ*, and *ʕ*), vowels are regularly retracted, e.g. *ilkaʕ* /ilkaʕ/, *liʕlajn* /liʕlajn/. This retraction is preserved even in the case of formerly uvular consonants such as *k* (historically **q*), e.g. *ðajjiːkin* /ðajjiːkin/. These allophones are not indicated in our transcription. In addition to the ten phonemic vowels, there is also an epenthetic vowel *a*, which has no phonemic status but is regularly inserted to break clusters of three or more consonants (CCC > CəCC), or a cluster of *j* and a word-final consonant (VjC# > VjəC#), e.g. *rajaʕ* ‘my head’. In the environment of a pharyngeal consonant, this vowel merges with *a*, e.g. *aħamlilχun bloːta ʕilloː* ‘I showed you (pl.) the upper village’⁶ and *hann araʕwoːθa χullun l-kurjoːj* ‘these lands all belong to Christians’.⁷ In the event that this epenthetic vowel appears between two separate words (e.g. *ħ-ʕihriːblə sloːħa* ‘in smuggling weapons’), we have indicated the prosodic unity of these words with an undertie.

Similarly, we employ the undertie in the event of assimilation across word boundaries, e.g. *ðʕettit_tawəlθa* ‘anti-government’, reflecting **ðʕettit* + *tawəlθa* (cf. MSA *dʕidd ad-dawlah* ‘against the state’), degemination, e.g. *ap_χebra meʕle*, reflecting **app χebra meʕle* ‘they informed on him’, and juncture between words, e.g. *manʕull_omθa* ‘they barred the people’, particularly when new diphthongs arise as a result of such juncture, e.g. *jiːb barnaʕχett m-ʔamna_jθeːle_jʕuklenn* ‘lest somebody come seize them as well, from security.’ Normally, the stress falls upon penultimate syllable unless the final syllable is ‘long’, either containing a long vowel or doubly closed. Apart from unassimilated loan words (in which the stress is borrowed from the source language), there are some instances in which the stress appears in unexpected places. For example, when plural verbs take a direct object, the final *-n* of the plural morpheme may assimilate to the object marker *-l*, e.g. *ʕkilil_ħariːmun*, ‘they have taken their wives away’, reflecting **ʕkiːlin* + *l* + *ħariːmun*. In such instances, the final syllable of the verb assumes the stress as if it were doubly closed, and therefore we indicate the stress with an acute accent. Additionally, the object marker may assimilate to the following consonant as well, e.g. *ʕamhuribit_tawəlθa*, reflecting **ʕamħuriːbin* + *l* + *tawəlθa* ‘they are fighting the government’.

⁵ Cf. Arnold (2019, 83): *sōfar* ‘he traveled’ but *safīrat* ‘she traveled’.

⁶ Cf. Arnold (1990b, 276): *aħ³mlahlēla* ‘we showed it to her’.

⁷ Cf. Arnold (2019, 34b): *ar³ʕwōṭa* ‘lands’.

Historical Phonology

From a diachronic perspective, the Maaloula dialect is conspicuous for its treatment of the non-emphatic obstruents inherited from earlier stages of the language, namely **b*, **g*, **d*, **p*, **k*, **t*. As is well-known, at about the turn of the Christian era these six non-emphatic obstruents became fricatives after vowels across all Aramaic languages. Thus, *b* > *β*, *g* > *γ*, *d* > *δ*, *p* > *f*, *k* > *χ*, and *t* > *θ* (all /V_). This rule is no longer productive in these languages, resulting in a series of phonemic splits between the obstruent and fricative realizations of these consonants, with *γ*, *δ*, *f*, *χ*, and *θ* emerging as new phonemes. Another consequence is the merger of **b* and **w* in a postvocalic environment in most attested Aramaic languages save for that of Maaloula,⁸ in which **β* becomes *b*, and contrasts with *p*, the reflex of the erstwhile stop **b* in other environments.⁹ Significantly, the voiced obstruents **g* and **d* have completely disappeared from the inherited lexicon. Within the Semitic language family, only MWA and Cypriot Maronite Arabic have lost their inherited voiced obstruents. In the latter language, the loss of these inherited phonemes is usually attributed to Greek influence (cf. Nāim 2011, 921–922); in the case of MWA, the source of this loss is not so clear, since Greek is not widely spoken in Syria and has not been for many centuries.

In most cases, the contemporary reflexes of these historical obstruents in the variety of Maaloula are defined by three environments: 1) word-initial, 2) (synchronically or historically) post-vocalic, and 3) post-consonantal or lengthened. In the first environment, these obstruents become *b*, *γ*, *δ*, *f*, *χ*, and *θ*. In the second environment, in which these obstruents follow or historically followed vowels or diphthongs, the same reflexes obtain, even when the conditioning vowel has been syncopated. In the third environment, the voiceless obstruents *p*, *k*, and *t* became *f*, *c*, and *ʃ*, and the voiced obstruents *b*, *g*, *d* were devoiced to *p*, *c*, and *t*. Thus **p* unconditionally shifted to *f* in all environments, but the reflexes of all other obstruents retain a two-way distinction, reflecting their separate histories. Finally, the uvular **q* became the aforementioned velar *k* in all environments. Two of the historical diphthongs, **ay* and **aw*, have survived as *aj* and *aw*, after which these obstruents behave as they do in environments 1 and 2. This picture is somewhat complicated by the introduction of Arabic loan words, particularly those that are cognate with the inherited vocabulary, such as *sajta* ‘hunting’ (cf. Syriac *ṣaydā* id. and Arabic *ṣayd*- id.) rather than the expected ***sajḏa*, or *hajcla* ‘altar’ (cf. Syriac *hayklā* ‘palace; temple’ and Arabic *haykal*- ‘temple; edifice; altar’), rather than the expected ***hajxla*.

The table below illustrates the reflexes of these obstruents in the basic vocabulary of inherited substantives across various environments, together with their Middle Aramaic etymons. In order to highlight the speculative nature of these etymons, and to underline their reflexes across Middle Aramaic, we have transcribed our reconstructions according to the SBL conventions, reflecting a posited stage prior to the fricativization of obstruents and the syncopation of short vowels in unaccented open syllables. We have not included any verb forms in this table, as the reflexes of these same obstruents are not predictable in those forms due to analogical levelling, which preserves the integrity of the root while obscuring its history.

	Environment 1	Environment 2	Environment 3	/V ^w /y_
<i>*b</i>	<i>bo:la</i> ‘sense, reason’ < <i>*bālā</i>	<i>kabra</i> ‘grave’ < <i>*qabrā</i>	<i>χalpa</i> ‘dog’ < <i>*kalbā</i>	<i>fawba</i> ‘heat’ < <i>*šawbā</i>
		<i>ʕenba</i> grape < <i>*ʕinab-</i>	<i>χoppa</i> ‘thorn’ < <i>*kubbā</i>	(no examples)
<i>*g</i>	<i>yaḏja</i> ‘kid, goat’ < <i>*gadyā</i>	<i>sjo:ʔfa</i> ‘fence’ < <i>*sayāgtā</i>	<i>θelca</i> ‘snow’ < <i>*tīlgā</i>	<i>zawya</i> ‘pair’ < <i>*zawgā</i> ¹⁰
		<i>nyo:ba</i> ‘plundering’ < <i>*nagābā</i> < <i>*ganābā</i>	<i>ʕacco:ra</i> ‘roof’ < <i>*ʕal</i> + <i>iggārā</i>	(no examples)
<i>*d</i>	<i>ḏe:ba</i> ‘wolf’ < <i>*dēbā</i>	<i>neḏra</i> < <i>*nidrā</i> vow	<i>ʔelta</i> ‘skin’ < <i>*gildā</i>	(no examples)
		<i>barḏa</i> ‘hail’ < <i>*barad-</i>	<i>etra</i> ‘threshing floor’ <	(no examples)

⁸ As in other MWA varieties.

⁹ The fate of **b*, **g*, **d*, **p*, **k*, **t* in the dialect of Maaloula was discussed at length in Spitaler 1938, 12–20 (§10–16).

¹⁰ Ultimately from Greek ζεύγος ‘yoke; pair’.

<i>*ʔiddar-</i>			
<i>*p</i> <i>fɛlca</i> ‘half’ < <i>*pilgā</i>	<i>ʕafra</i> ‘soil’ < <i>*ʕaprā</i>	<i>xɛsfa</i> ‘silver’ < <i>*kispā</i>	(no examples)
	<i>ʔalfo:</i> ‘thousands’ < <i>*ʔalapayyā</i>	<i>rɛffa</i> ‘brood’ < <i>*rippā</i>	(no examples)
<i>*k</i> <i>xɛ:fā</i> ‘stone’ < <i>*kēpā</i>	<i>ðaxra</i> ‘penis’ < <i>*dakra</i>	<i>malca</i> ‘king’ < <i>*malkā</i>	(no examples)
	<i>ðxi:rʔfa</i> ‘relic’ < <i>*dakīrtā</i>	<i>iccum</i> ‘black’ < <i>*ukkām</i>	<i>sawxa</i> ‘thistle’ < <i>*sawkā</i>
<i>*t</i> <i>θɛbna</i> ‘straw’ < <i>*tibnā</i>	<i>bo:θar</i> ‘after’ < <i>*b-atar</i>	<i>θarf</i> ‘two (f.)’ < <i>*tartayn</i>	<i>zajθo:</i> ‘olives’ < <i>zaytayyā</i>
	<i>χθo:ba</i> ‘book’ < <i>*katābā</i>	<i>ħaʔʔfa</i> ‘new (f.)’ < <i>*ħattā</i>	<i>mawθa</i> ‘death’ < <i>*mawtā</i>
		< <i>*ħadttā</i>	
<i>*q</i> <i>kðo:la</i> ‘neck’ < <i>*qdālā</i>	<i>θo:kɛn</i> ‘correct’ < <i>*tāqin</i>	<i>θakki:na</i> ‘exactly’ < <i>taqqīnā</i>	(no examples)

Treatment of the Feminine Morpheme *(-[a]t)

Two by-forms of the feminine morpheme on the substantive exist: *-θa*, reflecting historical **-atā* (e.g. *ðocθa* ‘place’) and *-ʔfa*, reflecting historical **-tā* (e.g. *berʔfa* ‘daughter’). Presently, the distribution of these by-forms is unpredictable, independent of the phonetic environment, and must be memorized for every word. Spitaler (1938, §98f) adduces some general trends for the outcomes of these phonemes. For example, the productive derivational morpheme *-o:jθa* (e.g. *barro:jθa* ‘outside’), historically **-āy(a)tā*, consistently appears with the fricative rather than the affricate realization.

Adaptation of Arabisms

Per Arnold 2002, assimilated Arabic loans adapt to the phonology and morphophonology of MWA, e.g. *χebra* ‘news’ (lns 2 and 11) corresponds to MSA *xabar-* id., with the expected realization of post-vocalic **b*, the addition of the desinence *-a*, and the syncope of a short vowel in an open unaccented syllable, as if it were of Aramaic origin. Accordingly, these loans observe the phonotactic constraints of MWA, including the absence of the voiced obstruents **d* and **g*.

Since *d* has largely disappeared from MWA as a consequence of the aforementioned sound changes, Arabic *d* unconditionally shifts to **t*, e.g. *tawəlθa* ‘government’ (ln. 2 *et passim*) corresponding to MSA *dawlat-* ‘state’, reflecting the replacement of the Arabic feminine morpheme with the native feminine morpheme *-θa*, and *blo:ta* ‘village’ (ln. 1 *et passim*) from Levantine Arabic *blād* ‘country’, reflecting the expected outcome of **b* in initial position and *t* in post-vocalic position. The segment *d* therefore appears only in unassimilated or partially assimilated borrowings, such as *dī:na* ‘religion’ from Arabic *dīn* id. (Arnold 2019, 230), rather than the expected completely accommodated form **ti:na* or the native form *ði:na* (Arnold 2019, 245), with which it forms a doublet.

Arabic **g* had already shifted to *ʒ* in most of the sources of Arabic vocabulary in the variety of Maaloula, and therefore *ʒ* is its primary realization in loans from those sources. In those from sources in which this sound change had not occurred, **g* shifts to *ɣ* in word-initial and post-vocalic contexts, e.g. *ymo:ʕʔɛ* ‘his group’ from Arabic **gamā* ‘at-’ ‘group’ (ln. 2) and *ʔiyrɛpʔa* ‘temptation’ from Arabic **tagrībat-* id. (Arnold 2019, 309), and to *c* when post-consonantal, e.g. *mawcʕa* ‘pain’ from **mawga* ‘- id. (Arnold 2019, 883). In unassimilated or only partially assimilated loans, it remains *g*, e.g. *argi:lʔa* ‘waterpipe’ from Levantine Arabic *argīle* id., ultimately from Persian *nārgil* ‘coconut’.

Because MWA has borrowed and continues to borrow words from different dialects and registers of Arabic, as the examples above illustrate, the shape of the loan words may reflect their origins in these diverse sources. For example, one of the isoglosses defining different Arabic speech areas is the reflex of Proto-Semitic **g*, which is variously articulated as *g*, *j*, *ɖ*, *ʒ*, and even *j*. In MWA, the reflex of this **g* may therefore appear as *g* as in *gra:fɛ* ‘necktie’ (Syrian Arabic *grāfe*, a back-formation from French *cravate*, which was reanalysed as a plural *grāfāt*, cf. Arnold 2019, 300), *ʒ* as in *zajfa* ‘army’ (MSA *jayš*, Syrian Arabic *ʒɛ:f*, with the Syrian pronunciation of *j*, but without the collapse of the diphthong), *ɖʒo:z* *ətʕ-tʕi:b* ‘nutmeg’ (MSA *jawz at-tīb*), and *yawza* ‘nut’ (< Middle Aramaic *gawzā*). Some Arabic words have been borrowed more than once, occasionally resulting in doublets distinguished by their treatment of the phonemes

ʔ, d, g, ɖ, z, and the diphthongs *aw* and *aj* in their sources, such as the aforementioned *ɖʕarfa* ‘rocker churn (for making butter)’ and *zʕarfa* ‘envelope’.

Nominal Morphosyntax

Substantives are marked for number and gender, as well as the adjectives, pronouns, and verbs that refer to them, e.g. *ho:ʒa ti hanna* ‘the checkpoint (m.), this one (*hanna*, m.)’ (ln. 10), and *b-o:f faʔərθa* ‘in this (*ho:ɖ*, f.) period (f.)’ (ln. 6). This agreement is obligatory for singular nouns, but Abu George generally does not observe a gender distinction when referring to plural nouns, e.g. *hann araʕwo:θa ʒullun l-kurjo:j* ‘these fields (f.pl.), all of them (m.pl.), belong to Christians’ (ln. 7), *yapp ana wo:b ʒet kunublo:θa, nʒahhi:zlun* ‘I also had grenades (f.pl.), I had prepared them (m.pl.)’ (ln. 19), and *θo:lun tʕajjarjo:θa* ‘planes (f.pl.) came (m.pl.)’ (ln. 20), with one exception, *θikniθ nʒame:l macinjo:θa nahhi:ʔan* ‘I started watching the cars (f.pl.) going down (f.pl.)’ (ln. 12). The same word *macinjo:θa* ‘cars’ can also take a feminine singular anaphoric pronoun as in Arabic, e.g. *macinjo:θa, irʒeb aʕla raʕʕaʕo:* ‘cars (f.pl.), upon which (f.sg.) machine guns are mounted’ (ln. 15). Previously, speakers from Maaloula observed a distinction in the plural between feminine and singular, e.g. *ʒaklō xullen* ‘all the fields’ (Arnold 1991a:56 ln. 21), but Arnold (1990b, 74) alludes to the loss of this distinction in Baʕʕa, as well as among younger speakers in Maaloula and ʔuppaʕo:ð.

Collective nouns, e.g. *omθa* ‘people’, require either feminine singular agreement, e.g. *lorcaʕ affull omθa ʔislak ʕal-araʕwo:θa, jaʕni omθa ʒettə m-neʔʕa lorcaʕ silkaθ* ‘No longer did they permit people to go up (f.sg.) to the fields, like, people moreover did not go up (f.sg.) anymore on their own’ (ln. 8), and *ucmil ʒajji:ja ho:ʔ omθa* ‘they live like this (f.sg.) people live (f.sg.)’ (ln. 9), or masculine plural agreement, e.g. *u θo:lun omθa* ‘and people came (pl.)’ (ln. 5), and *omθa jammi:tʕin mnə-blo:ta* ‘people fled (pl.) the village’ (ln. 26). In some examples, the verb is ambiguously masculine singular or plural, due to the loss of the relevant suffixes, e.g. *iθken omθa mn-elbar ʒett* (ln. 1) ‘people also appeared from outside’, and *iθken so:lek liʕlajn omθa* ‘The people [...] started going up to them’ (ln. 4), but in either case the verb cannot be interpreted as feminine singular, as in the previous examples.

A third category, definiteness, is marked on the adjective but not on the substantive. Formerly, such a distinction was made on both, which has left a vestige in the desinence *-a* that appears invariably upon the masculine singular substantive (e.g. *yabro:na* ‘(an/the) old man’). Adjectives continue to mark the definiteness of their respective noun phrases (e.g. *yabro:na iʒʔur* ‘an old man’ vs *yabro:na ʒʔo:ra* ‘the old man’), but this function is evidently obsolescent, cf. lns 7 and 23 *blo:ta ʕillo:* ‘the Upper Village’ but ln. 21: *o:bu iʒʔur* ‘his old father’ for the expected **o:bu ʒʔo:ra*.

For the full paradigm of inflected forms, consult the following table:

Indefinite		Definite	
<i>pso:na izʕur</i>	a small boy	<i>pso:na zʕo:ra</i>	the small boy
<i>bisni:θa zʕo:r</i>	a small girl	<i>bisni:θa zʕo:rʔa</i>	the small girl
<i>bisino: zʕu:rin</i>	small boys	<i>bisino: zuʕro:</i>	the small boys
<i>bisənyo:θa zʕo:ran</i>	small girls	<i>bisəngo:θa zuʕro:θa</i>	the small girls

Verbal Morphosyntax

The derivation of the MWA verb and its inflection reflects a non-concatenative ‘root and pattern’ morphology. Each root participates in one or more derivational patterns, also known as ‘stems’. Eleven such patterns have been described (Arnold 1990b, 67–96). Six of these have been inherited from earlier stages of Aramaic. The most common of these is a simple stem, which is composed of consonantal root (typically three in number) and a minimal vowel pattern, and which is traditionally described as G (for the German *Grundstamm* ‘basic stem’, e.g. *aʕal* ‘he ate’). In addition to this G-stem, there are also five other inherited patterns which are derived via a variety of derivational morphemes and processes.¹¹ These are traditionally described as D (for a doubled middle root consonant, e.g. *ʕammeð* ‘he baptized [trans.]’), C (for the causative derivation, e.g. *aðmeʕ* ‘he put s.o. to sleep’), tG (for a detransitivizing derivation from the G-stem, e.g. *iʔʔʕel* ‘it was edible’), tD (for the detransitivizing derivation from the D-stem, e.g. *ʔʕammað* ‘he got baptized’), and tC (for the detransitivizing derivation of the C-stem, e.g. *ʔʕaðmaʕ* ‘he was put to sleep’). The marker of the so-called t-stems (tG, tD, and tC) was formerly *t-*, whence the name, but it has shifted to *ʔ-* as a result of the sound changes noted above. Both the tG- and tC-stems are rare in the corpus, and neither are productive any longer. The tG-stem is the rarest

¹¹ The term ‘derived’ here implies from the root, not from the G-stem, for which some verbs lack forms.

of all the inherited stems, surviving for three verbs, of which one is detransitive, *ifʃʃχel* ‘it is edible’, and two are purely lexical, lacking a basic stem, *ifʃʃχel* ‘he put his trust (in s.o.)’ and *ifneħ* ‘he rested’. In total, there are 32 examples of the tG-stem within the corpus consulted by Arnold 2019, of which nearly all possess four root consonants rather than three, in which case they belong to a separate morphonological class of quadriradical verbs, Q-stems and tQ-stems rather than G-stems and tG-stems, e.g. *ʃʃarcal* ‘he stumbled, he slipped’ from *ʃarcel* ‘to make s.o. stumble’. Many of these quadriradical verbs are ultimately derived from Arabic nouns, albeit according to an inherently Aramaic derivational pattern, e.g. *ʃmarcaz* ‘to assume a position’. The tC-stem, which yields passives of the C-stem, is also comparatively rare, for which only 12 tokens exist.

Four of these patterns formally correspond to the Arabic ‘Forms’,¹² and therefore MWA accommodates Arabic loan vocabulary originally belonging to these forms to its own patterns. An additional four patterns, L, tL, Gt, and St, are not native to MWA and have been borrowed wholesale from Arabic, e.g. *sʕo:lah* L ‘he settled (e.g. a disagreement)’, *ʃsʕo:lah* tL ‘he reconciled himself (with s.o.)’, *isʕʃlah* Gt ‘they reconciled with each other’, and *sʃaslem* St ‘he surrendered (himself)’.¹³ These correspond to the Forms III, VI, VIII, and X of Arabic, respectively. Finally, MWA has created a new productive passive pattern based upon the Arabic Form VII, for which reason the use of the inherited tG- and tC-stems is deprecated, as noted above. This stem, the N-stem, is the most productive means of forming the passive of both the G-stem, e.g. G *isʕar* ‘he squeezed’ and N *inʕʕsʕar* ‘it was squeezed’, and the C-stem, e.g. G *akam* ‘he stood up’, C *o:kem* ‘he lifted’, N *inkam* ‘he was picked up, removed’.

The following table illustrates the inflection morphemes on the verb ‘to kill’ across its five inflected bases: the past (PST), the present (PRS), the imperative (IPV), the subjunctive (SBJV), and one of two perfect bases (PRF I and PRF II), which are lexically distributed. In this paradigm, the second perfect base is illustrated by the verb ‘to go down’. These two verbs belong to the G-stem, but the same inflectional morphemes are employed across all the stems.

	PST	PRS	SG IPV	SBJV	PRF I	PRF II
1M	<i>katʕl-iθ</i>	<i>n-ko:tʕel</i>		<i>ni-ktʕul</i>	<i>n-iktʕel</i>	<i>n-nahħeʃf</i>
1F		<i>n-ko:tʕl-a</i>			<i>n-iktʕi:l-a</i>	<i>n-nahħi:ʃf-a</i>
2M	<i>katʕl-ifʃ</i>	<i>ʃf-ko:tʕel</i>	<i>iktʕul / ktʕo:l</i>	<i>ʃi-ktʕul</i>	<i>ʃf-iktʕel</i>	<i>ʃf-nahħeʃf</i>
2F	<i>katʕl-ifʃ</i>	<i>ʃf-ko:tʕl-a</i>	<i>iktʕul / ktʕu:l</i>	<i>ʃi-ktʕul</i>	<i>ʃf-iktʕi:l-a</i>	<i>ʃf-nahħi:ʃf-a</i>
3M	<i>iktʕal</i>	<i>ko:tʕel</i>		<i>ʃi-ktʕul</i>	<i>iktʕel</i>	<i>nahħeʃf</i>
3F	<i>katʕl-aθ</i>	<i>ko:tʕl-a</i>		<i>ʃi-ktʕul</i>	<i>ktʕi:l-a</i>	<i>nahħi:ʃf-a</i>
	PST	PRS	PL IPV	SBJV	PRF I	PRF II
1M	<i>katʕl-innaħ</i>	<i>n-ko:tʕl-in</i>		<i>ni-ktʕul</i>	<i>n-iktʕi:l-in</i>	<i>n-nahħi:ʃf-in</i>
2F		<i>n-ko:tʕl-an</i>			<i>n-iktʕi:l-an</i>	<i>n-nahħi:ʃf-an</i>
2M	<i>katʕl-ifʃχun</i>	<i>ʃf-ko:tʕl-in</i>	<i>kutʕl-un / kutʕl-o:n</i>	<i>ʃf-kutʕl-un</i>	<i>ʃf-iktʕi:l-in</i>	<i>ʃf-nahħi:ʃf-in</i>
2F	<i>katʕl-ifʃχen</i>	<i>ʃf-ko:tʕl-an</i>	<i>kutʕl-en / kutʕl-e:n</i>	<i>ʃf-kutʕl-an</i>	<i>ʃf-iktʕi:l-an</i>	<i>ʃf-nahħi:ʃf-an</i>
3M	<i>iktʕal-ø</i>	<i>ko:tʕl-in</i>		<i>j-kutʕl-un</i>	<i>ktʕi:l-in</i>	<i>nahħi:ʃf-in</i>
3F	<i>iktʕal-ø</i>	<i>ko:tʕl-an</i>		<i>j-kutʕl-an</i>	<i>ktʕi:l-an</i>	<i>nahħi:ʃf-an</i>

For the so-called ‘sound’ verbal stems, i.e. those with three stable root consonants, the shape of the perfect bases (PRF I and PRF II) in the basic stem depends upon the transitivity. Transitive verbs such as ‘to kill’ assume the shape of the first perfect base, and intransitive verbs such as ‘to go down’ assume the second shape. The perfect of highly dynamic transitive verbs has both active and passive significance, e.g. *wajbin pajθjo:θun χullunənyi:bin [...] ti nyibille – nyibille* ‘All their houses had been plundered [...] what they plundered, they plundered’ (ln. 24). This is remarkable from a cross-linguistic perspective. Also noteworthy is the fact that the perfect of intransitive verbs referencing telic motion can encode both punctual events in past time, e.g. *iθkelle mett robʕif ʃaʕθa sallek mn-o:xa* ‘it happened to be roughly a quarter of an hour ago that he went up from here’,¹⁴ and progressive meanings, e.g. *ʕajno: nahħeʃf m-fenna* ‘Look, he’s

¹² This being a term of art borrowed from the linguistic literature on Arabic. In particular, Form I corresponds to G, Form II to D, Form IV to C, and Form V to tD.

¹³ While some of the roots that appear in these stems are common to both Arabic and Aramaic, in each case in which the root appears in these stems, it corresponds in the respective meaning to its Arabic etymon, e.g. MWA *bo:reħ* ‘to bless’, MSA *bāraka* id., MWA *iħʃal* ‘to become sweet’, MSA *iħtalā* id.

¹⁴ Arnold 1991b:156–157, Text 19, ln. 33.

going down the mountain!'.¹⁵ Other verbal stems, i.e. those historically having one or more glides or glottals, employ the second perfect base (PRF II), e.g. *lajjeŋ* 'he kneaded; it was kneaded' and *ŋaww(i)* 'he has made; it has been made'.

New Vocabulary

The present text contains several new lexical items otherwise lacking from Arnold 2019, in addition to new meanings for already attested vocabulary. Verbs are indicated by their past and subjunctive forms, for which the thematic stem vowels are not always predictable. The other forms can be inferred from the table above.

azəmθa 'crisis'; MSA *ʿazmat-* 'emergency, crisis'.

mharraḇo:na 'smuggler', pl. *mharraḇno:*; cf. Arnold 2019, 333 s.v. *hrb* II 'abscond (with something), let flee, escape'.

ŋħasʿsʿen ~ jifħasʿsʿen tD 'fortify oneself', MSA *ħṣn* V 'strengthen one's position, protect o.s.; be fortified; be secure, protected'; cf. Arnold 2019, 399 s.v. *ħṣn*¹ 'fortress'.

ŋso:ŋet ~ jifŋso:ŋet tL 'collaborate', cf. MSA *sʿd* III 'to help, aid, assist', and Arnold 2019, 679 s.v. *sŋt* III 'to help, support'.

sʿolħa 'truce, armistice', MSA *ṣulħ* id., cf. Arnold 2019, 789 s.v. *ṣolħ*² 'reconciliation'.

ŋfaɜzar ~ jifŋfaɜzar tD 'explode (oneself)', cf. MSA *ffr* V 'to burst out', and Arnold 2019, 299 s.v. *fẓr* I 'explode (intrans.)', II 'explode (trans.)', VII 'to be exploded'.

foraḇθa 'balcony', cf. MSA *šurfat-* 'balcony'.

araŋ ~ jirruŋ 'spray (with a machine gun)', MSA *ršš* I 'spray (a liquid), etc.' and *midfa* 'raššāš' 'machine gun'; cf. Arnold 2019, 663 s.v. *ršš* I 'spray'.

sahhel ~ jisahhel 'facilitate, make easy', MSA *shl* II 'smooth, level (the ground); facilitate, make easy', cf. Arnold 2019, 685 s.v. *shl* II 'only found together with *ahhel*'.

zamʿo:ŋθa 'cooperative housing project', cf. MSA *jam* 'ŋyat- 'club, association, society' and Arnold 2019, 987 s.v. *zamʿōyṯa* 'association, community, meeting'.

ħarrar ~ jiħarrar 'liberate', MSA *ħrr* II id., cf. Arnold 2019, 388 s.v. *ħrr* I 'become warm, hot' and *ħurr* 'free'.

aŋŋel ~ jaŋŋel 'burn down (intrans.)', MSA *šʿl* IV 'to light, kindle, etc.', cf. Arnold 2019, 721 *šʿl* IV 'to light, ignite (trans.)'.

Interlinear Glossing

We have furnished the text with interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses according to the Leipzig rules (<https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf>), with a few minor modifications in order to conserve space and represent the morphosyntax of the text with greater precision. For example, where the running text consistently indicates apocopated bound forms by means of the undertie, e.g. *ap_ħebra meŋle* 'they informed on him', the morpheme-by-morpheme glosses reflect their unbound forms, e.g. *app ħebra-a meŋl-ε*. Preference is given to glossing examples with words rather than category labels, particularly with regard to substantives and adjectives. Additionally, we do not mark non-overt elements. Unaccommodated borrowings from Arabic, which we have left unglossed, are set off from the surrounding text by the superscript letter [^], e.g. *mutafaɜɜira:t* '[^]explosives[^]'.

With regard to category labels, we employ all of those recommended by the Max Planck Institute, shortening SG to S, PL to P, and additionally introduce here the following labels, all of which are commonly met elsewhere in the literature:

ABS = absolute, i.e. the free, non-incorporated form of the noun

DO = direct object

EMP = emphatic particle

¹⁵ Collected December 2020.

EXIST = existential predicate

HD = marks the head of a noun or verb phrase to indicate an immediately following, definite dependent

HES = hesitation

IO = indirect object

NUM = numerative, a special form used immediately following a numeral

PLEO = a pleonastic pronoun, which connects some verbal forms to the object marker or enclitic object pronouns

PN = proper noun

POS = predicative possession

The Text

1. Đuccil aptaθ azəmθa, la wajba ... wajba blo:ta ʃʉppa mett. Hinn, ʃajlθa ti bε: Đja:b, uppun mharabno:, u uppun omθa δʼettit_tawəlθa. M-bito:jθa iθken omθa mn-elbar χett ... jaʃni mwazhillun innu jifʃaylun δʼettit_tawəlθa.

2. Ilkatʰ ahhað minnajn b̥-so:hθlə_blo:ta kommil...¹⁶ Ɔalla tawəlθa, amna ti tawəlθa. Ap_χεbra meʃle ʃmo:ʃʃε, karribo:je. Đajji:kin mēne, ap_χεbra meʃle. Laktʰunne kommil matrasθa, uʃme Smaʃi:l Ha:ʃem Đja:b, ʃaklunne. Đuccif_ʃaklunne, tuʋraj rfiko:je azaʃ ji:b barnaʃ χett m-ʔamna_jθε:le_jʃuklenn.

3. Wajbin miʃʃaylin b̥-ʃihri:ba, ʃihri:blə_slo:ha, miʃʃaylin δʼettit_tawəlθa. So:lkin ʃa-fo:tka, so:lkin, hinn ʃimmajn slo:ha, ʃaklillə_slo:hun u kaʃillun elʃel.

4. Elʃel ʃu barəʃ jaʃni mo:tʰ lʲiʃlajn, isʲʃeb barnaʃ jimətʰ lʲiʃlajn. Iskel faʃərθiʃ_ʃεʃʃa jarəh kaʃin elʃel. Iθken so:lek liʃlajn omθa mn-o:χa m-karribajn, missuʃi:tin ʃimmajn δʼettit_tawəlθa.

5. U θo:lun omθa, ajθ omθa m-ʒabhet ən-Nusʳa u Da:ʃεʃ m-Jabruð u Rancus u Ǝʃʃal, kʃo:lun ʃimmajn.

6. B-o:f_faʃərθa iθken χul_Suri:ja uppa omθa ʃamħuribit_tawəlθa, ʃu battajn tawəlθa ti Baʃʃa:r əl-ʔasad.

7. Hinn kaʃin elʃel wə_ʃhasʳi:nin, ʋappajne_slo:ha baħar. U manʃull_omθa mn-o:χa mnəblo:ta. Anaħ ðuccis_silkinnaħ rumʃə_m-sajla w_ahamlilχun blo:ta ʃillo:. Hann araʃwo:θa χullun l-kurjo:j. Sarko:j ʃu:lun araʃwo:θa bo:n.

8. Lorcaʃ affull_omθa ʃislak ʃal-araʃwo:θa, jaʃni omθa χetta_m-neʃʃa lorcaʃ silkaθ. Ana ʋapp arʃa elʃel, lorcaʃ silkiθ, laʔinnu ana χett, wajbine_tʰlibir_rajəʃ, hinn ʃawwi:jin himəʃ iʃəm ti ʃammissuʃi:tin ʃemmit_tawəlθa, ana no:b minnajn.

9. Ana m-ho:l law amrullə_sla:k, ʃu nso:lek, laʔinnu nzo:jaʃ jiluktʰunn elʃel, jinuxsunn. Bo:θar ʃεʃʃa jarəh huwi:laθ tawəlθa innu ʃiʃu ʃimmajn sʰolha, jisalmullə_slo:hun u jihhun, ucmil hajji:ja ho:ʔ_ʔomθa. La irəsʰ.

¹⁶ The actual form of the preposition implies the governed substantive *matrasθa*, omitted by the speaker but supplied in what follows.

10. Majθin ahħað ɣari:ba, ʃu:b minnajn, jaʃni ʃu:b m-ti maro:ʃil Maʃlu:la, u ʃo:klin ... Maħcjin bajnθil baʃðʃinn innu battun jifazrúl_ħo:ʒza ti hanna, ti wo:b ʒajʃa be:, b-awwalʃlə_blo:ta, ɣappil kawsa ti b-awwalʃlə_blo:ta ho:ʃ.

11. Anaħ ho:xa bə-blo:ta ʃu barnaʃ jaððeʃ. Hinn, sarko:j ti wajbin eʃeʃ, ħari:mun wə_bnajn kaʃil_b-pajθjo:θun ho:xa bə-blo:ta. Appullun ɣebra ʃaro:ba. Ti infek ʃaro:ba, infek. ti la infek, ʃasʔofra baccar, mett islek nohra, ajθ macinjo:θa, arəɣpun w ʃaklunnə_mnə-blo:ta, ħetta iza iθken ħarba, innu ʃkilil_ħari:mun u lə-bnajn.

12. Anaħ b-neʃʃil jo:ma ðʃinnaħ ... ʃaja ðʃinnaħ? Hinn ... ana pajθ b-so:ħθa, karreb ʃa-so:ħθa, θikniθ nħame:l macinjo:θa naħhi:ʃan, nmarceʃ baccar ana.

13. ʃeθθ illa robʃe_ʃsʔofra, hanna ti batte_jfazrél_ħo:ʒza, miʃwille ħafəlθa eʃeʃ, u ħalkille u mɣasjille, innu hanna batte_jfazrél_baʃðʃe, hu: u mácana ti:ðe ɣulla mutafazʒira:t, u hu: mɣas_ħuzo:ma ɣet_miʃʃazʒar, innu jaðði:ʃəl baʃðʃe batte ji:muθ. ʃu ʃamħo:reb, innu <ʃu>¹⁷ batte ji:muθ aw biʒu:z jiskel tʃabb.

14. No:ħeʃ ʃeθθ illa robʃe_ʃsʔofra, mʃazʒarəl baʃðʃe hu: u ho:m_mácana, mo:jeθə_m-ʒajʃa ħamʃa ʃeʃʃa ħo:ð, u minəɣraħ ħamʃa ʃeʃʃa ħo:ð. U ħessa hazlə_blo:ta. Katmil o:θ uppa, mácana, mutafazʒira:t, hazézlə_blo:ta, marəcʃin maro:ʃlə_blo:ta ʃal-anna ħessa.

15. Wajbin haθinn, hinn u ɣari:ba ti ʃimmajin, no:ħʃin ʃa-blo:ta. Macinjo:θa, irɣeb aʃla raʃʃaʃo:, u ɣullunə_msalhin kunublo:θa, u raʃʃaʃo: ʃa-macinjo:θa, u buntukjo:θa, u θo:kninə_mkaprɪn: «Alʃʃa:hu akbar, Alʃʃa:hu akbar», innu hinn inəʃʃar, iʃu mett jaʃni: faʒrúl_ħo:ʒza, iktʃalə_m-ʒajʃa.

16. Ana no:bə_b-pajθa, ʃanħo:m mo: ʃamθo:ken. θo:lun hann ti msalhin l-erraʃa_m-pajθa u islek, katrút_tarba ti so:lek ʃa-Berəcθa, katrút_tarba ti θe:le ʃa-Mar Iljas ti θinnaħ mənne.

17. U ahħað minnajn, ɣalpa, ʃamzo:ʃek, «Ucmil ... iza ʃħo:mjin ɣalpa kurjaj, rohələ_gzo:za, aw wakkəʃ elbar ʃa-forəθa, ʃimkawsille, ʃkatʃille».

18. θo:le arpaʃ ħamʃa ħo:ð, ʃimmajin ahħað mnə-blo:ta m-be: Ðja:b, θo:lun ʃa-matəɣlil bino:jθa ti ɣappajnaħ anaħ, ʃa-matəɣlil pajθa. ana ʃimmi slo:ħa, skilliθ atar, ʃanimrukéblun mo: battun jifwun. Imtʃi ʃa-matəɣla l-erraʃ u ʒahzúl_buntko:jθa innu iza ħo:mjin barnaʃ jikawsunne.

19. Ana, pajθ eʃeʃ, ʃanħo:m m-ʃajna ti θarʃa iza barnaʃ islek ʃa-tarʒo:θa, ba_nfuθħél_θarʃa u nruʃʃenn. ɣapp ana wo:b ɣet_kunublo:θa, nʒahhi:zlun. Iza iθken mett, innu nʃaləʃlun ʃalajin. Ban_ninəktʃal – ban_ninəktʃal, ħetta la ninəktʃal ɣa:n, katmil ħajəl niktʃul minnajnə_nko:tʃel.

20. Hinn mo: aħkə_b-baʃðʃinn? ʃo:wet la islek liʃəl l-eʃeʃ, infek m-pajθa u zallun. θe:n jo:ma anaħ, θo:le ʒajʃa met_ʃaʃθa etʃaʃ u fəʃce eʃsar, θo:lun tʃajjarjo:θa, u θo:le ʒajʃa, iθken mo:ħjin ʃalajin, iʃmatʃ, tʃaʃrúl_blo:ta u infek.

21. Kʃinnaħ iθər θlo:θa ju:m ... ɣet_zawʃa_w meħja, ħarba ʃayɣal, maro:ʃlə_blo:ta infek, hannə_ɣʃuro: u ħari:ma. O:bu lə-Bro:m iɣʃur, iskəl ho:xa masalan, ʃu ħajle jalleɣ, jarħetʃ, jizelle, u ʃu:θ macinjo:θa ʃnukləll_omθa. inħeʃ mn-o:xa, o:bu iɣʃur, ʃomre tʃiʃəʃ wə_θmo:n iʃən, laɣθa ʃa-θeʃʃa. Hu:, Bro:m, suʃi:te innu ħetta jinʃuð ʃa-θeʃʃa.

¹⁷ The speaker subsequently excluded *ʃu* ‘not’ as a slip of his tongue.

22. Maro:jlə blo:ta ho:xa, sarko:j, la iskel bæ-blo:ta, xullun zallun. Kurjo:j ti iskel o:xa, xet zafsa iθken mamellun, msahhelle:lun tarba. Ti batte jzelle – jizelle, fajattil hari:ma u tʃiflo:. yappajnaḥ anah fappo:, met θartʃ emsa fapp, wajbinə msalhin, iskel mrukibill aθinn, kʃo:lun b-ðucco:θa, b-zamʃo:jθa b-awwalʃlə blo:ta u b-naḥhi:θa elləl, uʃma naḥhi:θlə tro:, u ku:ril Berəcθa, b-ann ... ho:xa, b-ann ðucco:θa ti fenna, ti mʃarro:, kʃo:lə xet kalles minnajn. Iza barəʃ no:həʃ ʃa-blota, la-jkawsunne.

23. U maro:jlə blo:ta iffək mnə-blo:ta, la iskel omθa bæ-blo:ta. O:θ sajla kurajnaḥ ho:xa, hinn faʒrunne hətta la nistʃaʃamlenne anah. θikninnahə nθjillaḥ anah ʃmo:tʃa ʃa-blo:ta, nmalxin bə: mett emsa miʃər, emsa u himəʃ miʃər wə nno:fkin m-kommil pajθah mn-o:xa, nʃo:brin m-naḥhijo:θa, lorcaʃ ḥamjillaḥ. hin kaʃjin, wajbin elʃelə f-fo:tka bæ-blo:ta ʃillo:.

24. ʃʃniz zamo:na, b-ʃnəl o:ləf w etʃaʃ ... θartʃ o:ləf w ɛθlaθʃasər, tawəlθa afkaʃʃunə mn-o:xa mnə-blo:ta, harriraʃlə blo:ta, u ro:zaʃ maro:jlə blo:ta ʃa-blo:ta. Wajbin pajθjo:θun xullunə nyi:bin, u ti xarrihille – xarrihille, u ti nyibille – nyibille. Nyibíl pajθjo:θa u xarrihillun. Hann wajbin xullunə xʃu:ra, ɛxt o:xa pajθa yappə. Mʃaʃlill ... lə-xʃuri:θa – maʃʃel pajθa xulle.

25. Fəlcil pajθjo:θlə blo:ta ja aθar xarri:hin. Ho:ʃ o:θ baḥar pajθjo:θa, ucmil aḥmillaḥ ho:xa elbar, xarri:hin. Kajja marajin la aktar jifwunn hətta jiruzi:ʃun jikʃullun bo:n.

26. Ho:ð faʃərθa anah ti kaðʃlahla, faʃərθil zawʃa u lə-nyo:ba, la barnaʃ infək, omθa ʃammi:tʃin mnə-blo:ta, tʃʃʃiril kirʃajn wə l-ðahbun, u pajθjo:θa maljin, xul pajθa. Ucl aḥḥað ikʃə b-pajθə. Ji:b pajθə ʃawwi:lle innu jaktar jikʃe:le bə:, xulle mett uppe. O:lə, la iʃʃah mett, la iʃʃah pajθa.

27. Hanna faʃərθil ḥarba anah, ti maro:jlə blo:ta, ho:xa kaðʃðʃunna.

<i>ðuccil</i>	<i>apt-aθ</i>	<i>azəm-θ-a,</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>w-ajb-a ...</i>
when	start.PST-3fs	crisis-F.S-ABS	NEG	PST-COP-F.S

<i>w-ajb-a</i>	<i>blo:t-a</i>	<i>ʃfupp=a</i>	<i>mett.</i>
PST-COP-F.S	village.F.S-ABS	NEG+EXIST+in=3fs	something

<i>hinn,</i>	<i>ʃajl-θ-a</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>bə:</i>	<i>ʤa:b,</i>	<i>upp=un</i>	<i>mharraʃn-o:,</i>
they	family-F.S-ABS	of	house.of	PN	EXIST+in=3p	smuggler-P

<i>u</i>	<i>upp=un</i>	<i>omθ-a</i>	<i>ðʃettil</i>	<i>tawəl-θ-a.</i>
and	EXIST+in=3p	people-ABS	against	government-F.S-ABS

<i>m=bito:j-θ-a</i>	<i>iθken</i>	<i>omθ-a</i>	<i>mn=elbar</i>	<i>xett ...</i>
from=beginning-F.S-ABS	become.PST	people-ABS	from=outside	also

<i>jaʃni</i>	<i>mwaʒh-il-l=un</i>	<i>innu</i>	<i>ji-ʃʃaʃl-un</i>	<i>ðʃettil</i>	<i>tawəl-θ-a.</i>
HES	direct.PRS-P-HD=3p.DO	in.order.to	3-work.SBJV-P	against	government-F.S-ABS

1. When the crisis started, it was not ... there wasn't anything in the village. They, the Diab family, have smugglers, and they have anti-government people. From the beginning people also appeared from outside, like, they direct them to work against the government.

<i>ilkatʃ</i>	<i>aḥḥað</i>	<i>minnaj=n</i>	<i>b=so:h-θ-l</i>	<i>blo:t-a</i>	<i>kommil ...</i>
catch.PST	one.M	of=3P	in=square-F.S-HD	village-ABS	in.front

<i>θ-al-la</i>	<i>tawəl-θ-a,</i>	<i>amn-a</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>tawəl-θ-a.</i>
come.PST-3fs-3fs	government-F.S-ABS	security-ABS	of	government-F.S-ABS

<i>app</i> give.PST	<i>χebr-a</i> report-ABS	<i>mεʕl=ε</i> about=3ms	<i>ymo:ʕf=ε</i> community=3ms	<i>karrib-o:j=ε.</i> relative-P=3ms	
<i>ḍajji.k-in</i> be.annoyed.PRF-P	<i>menn=ε,</i> from=3ms	<i>app</i> give.PST	<i>χebr-a</i> report-ABS	<i>mεʕl=ε</i> about=3ms	
<i>lakt^c-unn=ε</i> catch.PST-3p=3ms.DO	<i>kommil</i> in.front	<i>matras-θ-a,</i> school-F.S-ABS	<i>ufm=ε</i> name=3ms	<i>Smaʕi:l Ha:ʕem ʔja:b</i> PN	
<i>ʕakl-unn=ε,</i> seize.PST-3p=3ms.DO	<i>ḍuccil</i> when	<i>ʕakl-unn=ε,</i> seize.PST-3p=3ms.DO	<i>tuyraj</i> immediately	<i>rfik-o:j=ε</i> friend-P=3ms	<i>azaʕ</i> be.afraid.PST
<i>ji:b</i> lest	<i>barnaʕ</i> someone	<i>χett</i> as.well	<i>m=ʔamn-a</i> from=security-ABS	<i>ji-θε:-le</i> 3m-come.SBJV-3ms	<i>ji-fukl-enn</i> 3m-seize.SBJV-PLEO+3p.DO

2. They caught one of them in the village square¹⁸ out in front of... The government came, the government security came. His group, his relatives informed on him. They got upset with him, they informed on him. They caught him in front of the school, his name is Ismael Hashem Diab. They seized him. As soon as they seized him, immediately his friends became afraid lest somebody come seize them as well, from security.

<i>w-ajb-in</i> PST-COP-P	<i>mifʕayl-in</i> be.engaged.PRS-P	<i>b=ʕihri:b-a</i> , in=smuggling-ABS	<i>ʕihri:b-l</i> smuggling-HD	<i>slo:h-a</i> , weapon-ABS			
<i>mifʕayl-in</i> be.engaged.PRS-P	<i>ḍ^cettil</i> against	<i>tawəl-θ-a</i> . government-F.S-ABS	<i>so:lk-in</i> go.up.PRS-P	<i>ʕa=fo:tk-a</i> , to=hotel-ABS	<i>so:lk-in</i> , go.up.PRS-P		
<i>hinn</i> they	<i>ʕimmaj=n</i> with=3p	<i>slo:h-a</i> , weapon-ABS	<i>ʕakl-il-l</i> take.PRS-P-HD	<i>slo:h=un</i> weapon=3p	<i>u</i> and	<i>kaʕ-il-lun</i> sit.PRS-P-3p	<i>εʕεl</i> . above

3. They were engaged in smuggling, smuggling weapons, working against the government. They go up to the hotel, they go up, they have weapons, they take their weapons and settle down up there.¹⁹

<i>ɛʕɛl</i> above	<i>ʕu</i> NEG	<i>baraʕ</i> someone	<i>jaʕni</i> HES	<i>mo:t^c</i> reach.PRS	<i>liʕlaj=n</i> , to=3p
<i>iʕ^cɛb</i> difficult	<i>barnaʕ</i> someone	<i>ji-məʕ^c</i> 3m-reach.SBJV	<i>liʕlaj=n</i> . to=3p		
<i>iskɛl</i> continue.PST	<i>ʕaʕər-θ-il</i> period-F.S-HD	<i>ʕeʕʕa</i> six.M	<i>jarəh</i> month.M.NUM	<i>kaʕ-in</i> sit.PRF-P	<i>ɛʕɛl</i> . above
<i>iθken</i> start.PST	<i>so:lek</i> go.up.PRS	<i>liʕlaj=n</i> to=3p	<i>omθ-a</i> people-ABS	<i>mn=o:xa</i> from=here	
<i>m=karrib-ajn</i> ,	<i>missuʕi:t-in</i>	<i>ʕimmaj=n</i>	<i>ḍ^cettil</i>	<i>tawəl-θ-a</i>	

¹⁸ See plate 2.

¹⁹ See plate 3.

from=relative-P+3p collaborate.PRS-P with=3p against government-F.S-ABS

4. Up there no one could, like, reach them, someone could hardly reach them. They stayed settled in for a period of six months up there. The people from here among their relatives started going up to them, collaborating with them against the government.

u θo:-lun omθ-a, aθ omθ-a m=ʒabhet ən-Nusʕra u Da:ʕef
and come.PST-3p people-ABS bring.PST people-ABS from=PN and PN
m=Jabruð u Rancus u ʕʕfal, kʕo:-lun ʕimmaj=n.
from=PN and PN and PN sit.PST-3p with=3p

5. And people came, they brought people from al-Nusra Front and ISIS²⁰ from Yabroud, Rankous, and Assal Al-Ward,²¹ they settled in with them.

b=o:ð faʕʕar-θ-a iθken ʕull Suri:ja upp=a omθ-a
in=this.F period-F.S-ABS start.PST all PN EXIST+in=3fs people-ABS
ʕa-mħurib-il-l tawəl-θ-a, ʕu battaj-n tawəl-θ-a ti Baʕʕa:r əl-ʔasad.
PROG-fight.PRS-P-HD government-F.S-ABS NEG want-3p government-F.S-ABS of PN

6. In this period, all of Syria started to have people fighting the government, they don't want the government of Bashar al-Assad.

hinn kaʕ-in ʕlʕel w ʕħasʕsʕi:n-in, ʕappaj-n slo:h-a baħar.
they sit.PRF-P above and fortify.oneself.PRF-P POS-3p weapon-ABS many
u manʕ-ul-l omθ-a mn=o:ʕa mnə=blo:t-a.
and bar.PST-3p-HD people-ABS from=here from=village-ABS
anah ðuccil silk-innaħ rumif m=sajl-a
we when go.up.PST-1p yesterday through=flood.course-ABS
w aħam-l-i=lχun blo:t-a ʕill-o:.
and show.PST-HD-1s=2p.IO village-ABS upper-M.S.DEF
hann araʕ-wo:θ-a ʕull=un l=kurj-o:j sark-o:j ʕu:l-un araʕ-wo:θ-a b=o:n.
these field-P-ABS all=3p to=Christian-P Muslim-P NEG+POS-3p field-P-ABS in=3p

7. They were settled up there and were fortifying themselves, they had many weapons. And they barred the people from here, from the village. We, when we went up yesterday through the flood course,²² and I showed you the upper village, all of these fields belong to Christians. Muslims have no fields among them.

lorcaʕ aff-ul-l omθ-a ʕi-slak ʕal=araʕ-wo:θ-a,
no.more let.PST-3p-HD people-F.S-ABS 3f-go.up.SBJV to=field-P-ABS

²⁰ The Nusra Front and ISIS were two participants in the Syrian Civil War (2011-present).

²¹ These are three towns to the northeast, southwest, and due west of Maaloula, respectively, within a half-hour's drive in each direction.

²² Abu George speaks of St Thecla's way (Arabic *fajj Mār Tiqlā*), which proceeds from the convent to the north. See plate 4.

<i>jaʕni</i>	<i>omθ-a</i>	<i>χett</i>	<i>m=neff=a</i>	<i>lorcaʕ</i>	<i>silk-aθ.</i>
HES	people.F.S-ABS	moreover	from=self=3fs	no.more	go.up.PST-3fs

<i>ana</i>	<i>yapp</i>	<i>arʕ-a</i>	<i>ɛlʕɛl</i>	<i>lorcaʕ</i>	<i>silk-iθ.</i>
I	POS.1s	field-ABS	above	no.more	go.up.PST-1s

<i>laʔinnu</i>	<i>ana</i>	<i>χett</i>	<i>w-ajb-in</i>	<i>tʕlib-il-l</i>	<i>rajəʕ</i>
because	I	also	PST-COP-P	seek.PRF-P-HD	head+1s

<i>hinn</i>	<i>fawwi:j-in</i>	<i>himəʕ</i>	<i>ifəm</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>ʕam-missuʕi:t-in</i>
they	put.PRF-P	fifty	name.NUM	REL	PROG-collaborate.PRS-P

<i>ʕemmil</i>	<i>tawəl-θ-a,</i>	<i>ana</i>	<i>n-o:b</i>	<i>minnaj=n</i>
with	government-F.S-ABS	I	1-COP	from=3p

8. No longer did they permit people to go up to the fields, like, people moreover did not go up anymore on their own. I have a field up there, I did not go up anymore, because I also ... they were seeking my head, they came up with fifty names of the ones who were collaborating with the government, and I was among them.

<i>ana</i>	<i>m=ħo:l</i>	<i>law</i>	<i>amr-ul=l</i>	<i>sla:k</i>	<i>ʔu</i>	<i>n-so:lek</i>
I	from=own+1s	if	tell.PST-3p=1s.IO	go.up.IMP	NEG	1-go.up.PRS

<i>laʔinnu</i>	<i>n-zo:jaʕ</i>	<i>ji-luktʕ-un=n</i>	<i>ɛlʕɛl</i>	<i>ji-nuxs-un=n</i>
because	1-afraid.PRS	3-catch.SBJV-P=1s.DO	above	3-slaughter.SBJV-P=1s.DO

<i>bo:θar</i>	<i>ʕɛʔʔa</i>	<i>jarəħ</i>	<i>ħuwi:l-aθ</i>	<i>tawəl-θ-a</i>
after	six.M	month.M.NUM	attempt.PST-3fs	government-F.S-ABS

<i>innu</i>	<i>ʔi-ʔu</i>	<i>ʕimmaj=n</i>	<i>sʕolħ-a</i>
COMP	3f-make.SBJV	with=3p	peace-ABS

<i>ji-salm-ul-l</i>	<i>slo:ħ=un</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ji-ħħ-un</i>
3-surrender.SBJV-P-HD	weapon=3p	and	3-live.SBJV-P

<i>ucmil</i>	<i>ħajji:j-a</i>	<i>ho:ð</i>	<i>omθ-a</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>irəsʕ</i>
like	live.PRF-F.S	this.F	people.F.S-ABS	NEG	want.PST

9. On my own, if they had told me, ‘Go up’, I would not have gone up, because I was afraid they would grab me up there to slaughter me. Six months later, the government attempted to make peace with them, they would surrender their weapons and live like this people live. They did not agree.

<i>majθ-in</i>	<i>ahħað</i>	<i>yari:b-a</i>	<i>ʔu:b</i>	<i>minnaj=n,</i>
bring.PRS-P	one.M	outsider-ABS	NEG+COP	from=3p

<i>jaʕni</i> HES	<i>ʃu:b</i> NEG+COP	<i>m=ti</i> from=REL	<i>mar-o:j-il</i> people-P-HD	<i>Maʕlu:la</i> PN	
<i>u</i> and	<i>ʃo:kl-in ...</i> take.PRS-P	<i>maħcj-in</i> talk.PRS-P	<i>bajnθil</i> among	<i>baʕðʕinn</i> each.other	
<i>innu</i> COMP	<i>batt-un</i> FUT-3p	<i>ji-faʒr-ul-l</i> 3-explode.SBJV-P-HD	<i>ħo:ʒz-a</i> checkpoint-ABS	<i>ti</i> of	<i>hanna,</i> this.M
<i>ti</i> REL	<i>w-o:b</i> PST-COP	<i>ʒajf-a</i> army-ABS	<i>b=ε:;</i> in=3ms	<i>b=awwal-ʃ-l</i> in=beginning-F.S-HD	<i>blo:t-a,</i> village-ABS
<i>yappil</i> beside	<i>kaws-a</i> arch-ABS	<i>ti</i> REL	<i>b=awwal-ʃ-l</i> in=beginning-F.S-HD	<i>blo:t-a</i> village-ABS	<i>ho:f.</i> now

10. They bring one outsider, not one of them, like, not one of the people of Maalula, and they take ... they talk among themselves that they will explode the checkpoint, the one that the army was in, at the beginning of the village, beside the arch that is now at the beginning of the village.²³

<i>anaħ</i> we	<i>ho:ħa</i> here	<i>bə=blo:t-a</i> in=village-ABS	<i>ʃfu</i> NEG	<i>barnaʃ</i> someone	<i>jaððεʕ.</i> know.PRF	
<i>hinn,</i> they	<i>sark-o:j</i> Muslim-P	<i>ti</i> REL	<i>w-ajb-in</i> PST-COP-P	<i>εlʕel,</i> above	<i>ħari:m=un</i> women=3p	<i>w</i> and
<i>kaʕ-il-l</i> sit.PRS-P-3p	<i>b=pajθ-jo:θ=un</i> in=house-P=3p	<i>ho:ħa</i> here	<i>bə=blo:t-a.</i> in=village-ABS			
<i>app-ul=lun</i> give.PST-3p=3p.IO	<i>ħebr-a</i> report-ABS	<i>ʕaro:b-a.</i> evening-ABS	<i>ti</i> REL	<i>infek</i> go.out.PST	<i>ʕaro:b-a,</i> evening-ABS	<i>infek.</i> go.out.PST
<i>ti</i> REL	<i>la</i> NEG	<i>infek,</i> go.out.PST	<i>ʕasʕofr-a</i> morning-ABS	<i>baccar,</i> early		
<i>mett</i> as.soon.as	<i>islek</i> go.up.PST	<i>nohr-a,</i> light-ABS	<i>ajθ</i> bring.PST	<i>macin-jo:θ-a,</i> car-P-ABS		
<i>arəxp-unn</i> put.in.PST-3p+3p.DO	<i>w</i> and	<i>ʃakl-unn</i> take.PST-3p+3p.DO	<i>mnə=blo:t-a,</i> from=village-ABS			
<i>ħetta</i> so	<i>iza</i> if	<i>iθken</i> happen.PST	<i>ħarb-a,</i> war-ABS	<i>innu</i> then	<i>ʃkil-il-l</i> take.away.PRF-P-HD	<i>ħari:m=un</i> women=3p
					<i>u</i> and	<i>lə=bn-ajn.</i> DO=son-P+3p

²³ See plate 5.

11. We here in the village, no one knew. They, the Muslims that were up there, their wives and children were sitting in their houses here in the village. They informed them in the evening.²⁴ Those who went out in the evening – they went out. Those who did not go out, early in the morning, as soon as the light came up, they brought cars, they put them in, and they took them from the village. In case the war starts, then they have taken their wives and children away.

<i>anaḥ</i>	<i>b=neff-il</i>	<i>jo:m-a</i>	<i>ðʕ-innaḥ ...</i>	<i>ʕaja</i>	<i>ðʕ-innaḥ?</i>
we	in=same-HD	day-ABS	know.PST-1p	why	know.PST-1p

<i>hinn ...</i>	<i>ana</i>	<i>pajθ</i>	<i>b=so:ḥ-θ-a,</i>	<i>karreb</i>	<i>ʕa=so:ḥ-θ-a,</i>
they	I	house+1s	in=square-F.S-ABS	near.INDF	to=square-F.S-ABS

<i>θikn-iθ</i>	<i>n-ḥame:l</i>	<i>macin-jo:θ-a</i>	<i>naḥḥi:ʔf-an,</i>	<i>n-marceʔ</i>	<i>baccar</i>	<i>ana.</i>
start.PST-1s	1-see.PRS-HD	car-P-ABS	go.down.PRF-F.P	1-awaken.PRS	early	I

12. In the same day we learned ... why did we learn? They ... My house is on the square, near the square, I started watching the cars going down, I get up early, I do.

<i>ʕeθθ</i>	<i>illa</i>	<i>robʕ=ε</i>	<i>ʕasʕofr-a,</i>
six.F	except	quarter=3ms	morning-ABS

<i>hanna</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>batt-ε</i>	<i>ji-faʕr-εl-l</i>	<i>ḥo:ʕz-a,</i>
this.M	REL	FUT-3ms	3m-explode.SBJV-PLEO-HD	checkpoint-ABS

<i>miʔw-il=lε</i>	<i>ḥafəl-θ-a</i>	<i>εlʕεl,</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ḥalk-il-l=lε</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>mχasj-il-l=ε,</i>
make.PRS-P=3ms.IO	feast-F.S-ABS	above	and	shave.PRS-P-HD=3ms.DO	and	dress.PRS-P-HD=3ms.DO

<i>innu</i>	<i>hanna</i>	<i>batt-ε</i>	<i>ji-faʕr-εl-l</i>	<i>baʕðʕ=ε,</i>
because	this.M	FUT-3ms	3m-explode.SBJV-PLEO-HD	self=3ms

<i>hu:</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>mácan-a</i>	<i>ti:ð=ε</i>	<i>χull=a</i>	<i>mutafaʕʕira:t,</i>
he	and	car-F.S	of=3ms	all=3fs	^explosives^

<i>u</i>	<i>hu:</i>	<i>mχass</i>	<i>ḥuzo:m-a</i>	<i>χett</i>	<i>miʔfaʕʕar,</i>
----------	------------	--------------	-----------------	-------------	-------------------

²⁴ That is, the rebels informed their families about the impending attack.

and he wear.PRS belt-ABS also explode.PRS

innu jaðði:ʕ-əl baʕðʕ=ε batt-ε ji:-muθ.
 so know.PRF-HD self=3ms FUT-3ms 3m-die.SBJV

ʃu ʕa-mħo:rɛb, innu <ʃu> batt-ε ji:-muθ
 NEG PROG-fight.PRS then NEG FUT-3ms 3m-die.SBJV

aw biʒu:z ji-skɛl tʕabb.
 or perhaps 3m-stay.SBJV alive.INDF

13. At a quarter to six in the morning, the one who will blow the checkpoint up, they make him a feast up there, and they shave him and dress him up, because this one will blow himself up, he and his car, entirely explosives, and he wears a belt that blows up as well, so he knows he himself will die. He is not fighting, then he would die or perhaps stay alive.

no:ħɛʃ ʃɛθθ illa robʕ=ε ʕasʕofr-a,
 go.down.PRS six.F except quarter=3ms morning-ABS

mfaʒʒar-əl baʕðʕ=ε hu: u ho:ð mácan-a,
 explode.PRS-HD self=3ms he and this.F car-F.S

mo:jɛθ m=ʒaʃf-a ħamʃa ʃɛʃʃa ħo:ð,
 die.PRS from=army-ABS five.M six.M person.M.NUM

u minəyrah ħamʃa ʃɛʃʃa ħo:ð.
 and be.wounded.PRS five.M six.M person.M.NUM

u ħɛss-a haz-l blo:t-a.
 and sound-ABS shake.PST-HD village-ABS

katmil o:θ upp=a, mácan-a, mutafaʒʒira:t, hazɛz-l blo:t-a,
 as.much.as EXIST EXIST+in=3fs car-F.S ^explosives^ shake.PRS-HD village-ABS

marəɛf-in mar-o:j-l blo:t-a ʕal=anna ħɛss-a.

awaken.PRS-P people-P-HD village-ABS at=this.M sound-ABS

14. He goes down at a quarter to six in the morning, he blows himself up, he and this car, five or six individuals die from the army, and five or six individuals are wounded. And the sound shook the village. Whatever was in it, the car, the explosives, shook the village, the villagers awaken at this sound.

w-ajb-in haθinn, hinn u yari:b-a ti ζimmaj=n,
PST-COP-P those they and outsider-ABS REL with=3p

no:ħf-in ζa=blo:t-a. macin-jo:θ-a, irχeb aʃl=a raffaʃ-o:,
go.down.PRS-P to=village-ABS car-P-ABS be.mounted.PRF on=3fs machine.gun-P

u χull=un msalh-in kunubl-o:θ-a,
and all=3p armed-P.INDF grenade-P-ABS

u raffaʃ-o: ζa=macin-jo:θ-a, u buntuk-jo:θ-a,
and machine.gun-P on=car-P-ABS and rifle-P-ABS

u θo:kn-in mkapr-in: «Alʔa:hu akbar, Alʔa:hu akbar»,
and start.PRS-P recite.PRS-P ^‘God is the greatest, God is the greatest’^

innu hinn inəʃsʕar, ifu mett jaʃni:
because they win.PST do.PST something HES

faʒr-ul-l ho:ʒz-a, iktʕal m=ʒajf-a.
explode.PST-3p-HD checkpoint-ABS kill.PST of=army-ABS

15. Those, they and the outsiders with them, were going down into the village. Cars, upon which machine guns are mounted, and all of them are wielding grenades, and machine guns on the cars, and rifles, and they start reciting, ‘Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar’, since they won, like, they did something, they blew up the checkpoint, they killed some of the army.

ana n-o:b b=pajθ-a, ζa-n-ħo:m mo: ζam-θo:ken.
I 1-COP in=house-ABS PROG-1-see.PRS what PROG-happen.PRS

θo:-lun hann ti msalh-in l=erraʕ m=pajθ-a
come.PST-3p these REL armed-P.INDF to=below from=house-ABS

u islek, katr-ul-l tarb-a ti so:lek ζa=Berəc-θ-a,

and go.up.PST bind.PST-3p-HD road-ABS REL go.up.PRS to=blessed-F.S-ABS

katr-ul-l tarb-a ti θε:-lε ζα=Mar Iljas
bind.PST-3p-HD road-ABS REL come.PRS-3ms to=PN

ti θ-innaḥ menn=ε.
REL come.PST-1p through=3ms

16. I am at home, seeing what is happening. These armed people came below the house,²⁵ and they went up, they tied up the road that goes up to the Blessed Lady,²⁶ and they tied up the road that comes to St. Elias Church by which we came.

u ahḥaḏ minnaj=n, χalp-a, ζam-zo:ζek,
and one.M of=3p dog-ABS PROG-cry.PRS

«ucmil ... iza ḡ-ḥo:mj-in χalp-a kurj-aj,
like if 2-see.PRS-P dog-ABS Christian-M.S.INDF

rohḷ gzo:z-a, aw wakkef εlbar ζa=forəf-θ-a,
behind window.glass-ABS or stand.PRF outside on=balcony-F.S-ABS

ḡi-mkaws-il-l=ε ḡ-katʿl-il-l=ε».
2-shoot.PRS-P-HD=3ms.DO 2-kill.PRS-P-HD=3ms.DO

17. And one of them, the son of a bitch, is crying out, ‘Whenever you see a Christian dog, behind a window pane, or standing outside on the balcony, you shall shoot him, you shall kill him’.

θo:-lε arpζa ḥamfa ḥo:ḏ,
come.PST-3ms four.M five.M person.M.NUM

ζimmaj=n ahḥaḏ mnə=blo:t-a m=bε: Dja:b,
with=3p one.M from=village-ABS from=house.of PN

θo:-lun ζa=matəχl-il bino:j-θ-a ti yappaj-naḥ anah,
come.PST-3p to=entrance-HD bulding-F.S-ABS REL POS-1p we

²⁵ Abu George’s house stands just above a small square.

²⁶ I.e., they stationed themselves along the road to St Thecla’s Convent in order to deter traffic; see plate 6.

<i>ʕa=matəχl-il</i>	<i>pajθ-a.</i>	<i>ana</i>	<i>ʕimm=i</i>	<i>slo:h-a,</i>
to=entrance-HD	house-ABS	I	with=1s	weapon-ABS

<i>skill-iθ</i>	<i>atar,</i>	<i>ʕa-ni-mrukeb-l=un</i>	<i>mo:</i>	<i>batt-un</i>	<i>ji-fw-un.</i>
stay.PST-1s	so	PROG-1-watch.PRS-HD=3p.DO	what	FUT-3p	3-do.SBJV-P

<i>imtʕi</i>	<i>ʕa=matəχl-a</i>	<i>l=erraʕ</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>ʒahz-ul-l</i>	<i>buntko:j-θ-a</i>
arrive.PST	to=entrance-ABS	to=below	and	prepare.PST-3p-HD	rifle-F.S-ABS

<i>innu</i>	<i>iza</i>	<i>ħo:mj-in</i>	<i>barnaʕ</i>	<i>ji-kaws-unn=ε.</i>
in.order.to	if	see.PRS-P	someone	3-shoot.SBJV-P=3ms.DO

18. Along came four or five individuals, with them was someone from the village, from the Diab family, they came to the entrance of the building that belongs to us, to the entrance of the house. I have weapons, so I stayed, I am watching them, what they will do. They arrived at the entrance down below and set up rifles, so if they see someone they could shoot him.

<i>ana,</i>	<i>pajəθ</i>	<i>εlʕεl,</i>	<i>ʕa-n-ħo:m</i>	<i>m=ʕajn-a</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>θarʕ-a</i>
I	house+1s	above	PROG-1-see.PRS	through=eye-ABS	of	door-ABS

<i>iza</i>	<i>barnaʕ</i>	<i>islek</i>	<i>ʕa=tarʒ-o:θ-a,</i>
if	someone	go.up.PST	on=stairs-P-ABS

<i>batt</i>	<i>n-fuθh-εl-l</i>	<i>θarʕ-a</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>n-ruʕf-enn.</i>
FUT.1s	1-open.SBJV-PLEO-HD	door-ABS	and	1-spray.SBJV-PLEO+3p.DO

<i>yapp</i>	<i>ana</i>	<i>w-o:b</i>	<i>χett</i>	<i>kunubl-o:θ-a,</i>	<i>n-ʒahhi:z-l=un.</i>
POS.1s	I	PST-COP	also	grenade-P-ABS	1-prepare.PRF-HD=3p.DO

<i>iza</i>	<i>iθkən</i>	<i>mett,</i>	<i>innu</i>	<i>n-falef-l=un</i>	<i>ʕalaj=n.</i>
if	happen.PST	something	then	1-toss.PRS-HD=3p.DO	at=3p

<i>batt</i>	<i>ni-nəktʕal</i>	<i>batt</i>	<i>ni-nəktʕal,</i>
FUT.1s	1-be.killed.SBJV	FUT.1s	1-be.killed.SBJV

<i>hetta</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>ni-nəktʰal</i>	<i>χa:n</i> ,
in.order.to	NEG	1-be.killed.SBJV	so

<i>katmil</i>	<i>ħajəl</i>	<i>ni-ktʰul</i>	<i>minnaj=n</i>	<i>n-ko:tʰel</i> .
as.many.as	can.1s	1-kill.SBJV	from=3p	1-kill.PRS

19. I, my house is up there, I am looking through the peephole of the door whether someone were coming up the stairs, then I would open the door and ‘spray’ them. I also had grenades, I had prepared them. If something were to happen, then I would toss them out at them. Were I to be killed, I shall be killed, lest I be killed so, as many as I can kill of them, I shall kill.

<i>hinn</i>	<i>mo:</i>	<i>aħk</i>	<i>b=baʕðʰinn?</i>
they	what	talk.PST	among=each.other

<i>ʕo:wet</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>islək</i>	<i>liʕəl</i>	<i>l=elʕel</i> ,
go.back.PST	NEG	go.up.PST	to+1s	to=above

<i>infək</i>	<i>m=pajθ-a</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>zal-lun</i> .
go.out.PST	from=house-ABS	and	go.PST-3p

<i>θe:n</i>	<i>jo:m-a</i>	<i>anaħ</i> ,	<i>θo:-le</i>	<i>ʒajf-a</i>
next	day-ABS	we	come.PST-3ms	army-ABS

<i>mett</i>	<i>ʕaʕ-θ-a</i>	<i>etʰfaʕ</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>fɛlc=ε</i>	<i>εʕsar</i> ,
some	hour-F.S-ABS	nine.F	and	half=3ms	ten.F

<i>θo:-lun</i>	<i>tʰajjar-jo:θ-a</i> ,	<i>u</i>	<i>θo:-le</i>	<i>ʒajf-a</i> ,
come.PST-3p	plane-P-ABS	and	come.PST-3ms	army-ABS

<i>iθkən</i>	<i>mo:ħj-in</i>	<i>ʕalaj=n</i> ,	<i>iʃmatʰ</i> ,
start.PST	fight.PRS-P	against=3p	flee.PST

<i>tʰaʕr-ul-l</i>	<i>blo:t-a</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>infək</i> .
-------------------	----------------	----------	----------------

leave.PST-3p-HD village.F-ABS and go.out.PST

20. What did they say to each other? They went back, they did not go up there, they left the house and went away. Next day we ... the army came sometime between half past nine and ten, planes came, and the army came, they started fighting them, they fled, they abandoned the village and left.

kʕ-innaḥ iθər θlo:θa ju:m ...
sit.PST-1p two.M three.M day.M.NUM

χett zawʕ-a w mɛħj-a, ħarb-a fayyal,
again fear-ABS and beating-ABS war-ABS under.way.INDF

mar-o:j-l blo:t-a infek, hann χʕfur-o: u ħari:m-a.
people-P-HD village-ABS go.out.PST these old-P and women-ABS

o:bu lə=Bro:m iχʕfur, iskel ho:χa masalan,
father of=PN old.INDF remain.PST here for.example

ʕu ħajl-ε ja-lleχ, ja-rhetʕ, ji-zel-le,
NEG can-3ms 3m-walk.SBJV 3m-run.SBJV 3m-go.SBJV-3ms

u ʕu:θ macin-jo:θ-a ʕ-nukl-εl-l omθ-a.
and NEG+EXIST car-P-ABS 3f-carry.SBJV-PLEO-HD people-ABS

inhεʕf mn=o:χa o:bu iχʕfur,
go.down.PST from=here father+3ms old.INDF

ʕomr=ε tʕiʕəʕ w θmo:n iʕən, laχ-θ-a ʕa=Θεʕʕfa.
age=3ms ninety and eight.F year.F.NUM walking-F.S-ABS to=PN

hu:, Bro:m, suʕi:t=ε innu.ħetta ji-nfuð ʕa=Θεʕʕfa
he PN help.PST=3ms.DO COMP 3m-reach.SBJV to=PN

21. We stayed two-three days ... there was still terror and fighting, the war was in full swing, the villagers left, these old men and women. Brōm's father was old, he remained here, for example, he cannot walk, run, go away, and there are no cars to transport people. His old father went down from here,²⁷ he is 98 years old, walking to Ayn al-Tinah. He, Brom, helped him reach Ayn al-Tinah.

<i>mar-o:j-l</i> people-P-HD	<i>blo:t-a</i> village-ABS	<i>ho:χa,</i> here	<i>sark-o:j,</i> Muslim-P				
<i>la</i> NEG	<i>iskel</i> remain.PST	<i>bə=blo:t-a,</i> in=village-ABS	<i>χull=un</i> all=3p	<i>zal-lun.</i> go.PST-3p			
<i>kurj-o:j</i> Christian-P	<i>ti</i> REL	<i>iskel</i> remain.PST	<i>ho:χa,</i> here	<i>χett</i> also	<i>ʒajf-a</i> army-ABS	<i>iθken</i> start.PST	<i>mamel=lun,</i> say.PRS=3p.IO
<i>msahhel-lε:=lun</i> make.easy.PRS-HD=3p.IO		<i>tarb-a.</i> way-abs					
<i>ti</i> REL	<i>batt-ε</i> want-3ms	<i>ji-zel-lε</i> 3m-go.SBJV-3ms	<i>ji-zel-lε,</i> 3m-go.SBJV-3ms				
<i>ʕajattil</i> for.the.sake.of		<i>hari:m-a</i> women-ABS	<i>u</i> and	<i>tʕjfl-o:.</i> child-P			
<i>yappaj-naḥ</i> POS-1p	<i>anaḥ</i> we	<i>fapp-o:.</i> young.man-P	<i>mett</i> some	<i>θar-ʔf</i> two-F	<i>εmʕa</i> hundred.F	<i>fapp,</i> young.man.NUM	
<i>w-ajb-in</i> PST-COP-P	<i>msalḥ-in,</i> armed-P.INDF	<i>iskel</i> continue.PST	<i>mrukib-il-l</i> watch.PRS-P-HD	<i>haθinn,</i> those			
<i>kʕo:-lun</i> sit.PST-3p	<i>b=δucc-o:θ-a,</i> in=place-P-ABS	<i>b=ʒamʕo:j-θ-a</i> in=cooperative-F.S-ABS					
<i>b=awwal-ʔf-l</i> in=beginning-F.S-HD	<i>blo:t-a</i> village-ABS	<i>u</i> and	<i>b=naḥḥi:-θ-a</i> in=neighbourhood-F.S-ABS	<i>ellεl,</i> there			
<i>uʕm=a</i> name=3fs	<i>naḥḥi:-θ-l</i> neighbourhood-F.S-HD	<i>tr-o:.</i> threshing.floor-P	<i>u</i> and	<i>ku.ril</i> near	<i>Berəc-θ-a</i> blessed-F.S-ABS		
<i>b=ann ...</i> in=these	<i>ho:χa,</i> here	<i>b=ann</i> in=these	<i>δucc-o:θ-a</i> place-P-ABS	<i>ti</i> of	<i>fenn-a,</i> rock		
<i>ti</i> of	<i>mʕarr-o:.</i> cave-P-ABS	<i>kʕo:-lε</i> sit.PST-3ms	<i>χett</i> also	<i>kalles</i> few	<i>minnaj=n.</i> of=3p		
<i>iza</i> if	<i>barəʃ</i> someone	<i>no:ḥεʔf</i> go.down.PRS	<i>ʕa=blot-a</i> to=village-ABS	<i>la=j-kaws-unn=ε</i> EMP=3-shoot.SBJV-P=3ms.DO			

22. The villagers here, the Muslim ones, did not remain in the village, all of them went away. As for the Christians who stayed here, the army then began to deal with them, paving the way for them. Whoever wants to go, he can go, for the sake of the women and children. We have young men, some two hundred young men, they were armed, they started watching them, they stationed themselves in various places, at the housing co-op at the entrance to the village and in the neighbourhood over there, its name is 'Nahhit l-tro',²⁸ and in the vicinity of the Blessed Lady, in these ones here, in

²⁷ Ayn al-Tinah is lower than Maaloula, and some 3 km closer to Damascus.

²⁸ Lit. 'neighbourhood of threshing floors'.

these rocky places with caves, a few of them also stationed themselves. If someone were to go down to the village, they would shoot him.

u mar-o:j-l blo:t-a iffεk mnə=blo:t-a,
and people-P-HD village-ABS go.out.PST from=village-ABS

la iskel omθ-a bə=blo:t-a.
NEG remain.PST people-ABS in=village-ABS

o:θ sajl-a kuraj=naħ ho:χa,
EXIST watercourse-ABS near=1p here

hinn faʒr-un=ε ħetta la ni-sʃaʃaml-enn=ε anaħ.
they explode.PST-3p=3ms.DO in.order.to NEG 1-use.SBJV-PLEO=3ms.DO we

θikn-innaħ ni-θj-il-laħ anaħ fmo:t^ε-a ʃa=blo:t-a,
start.PST-1p 1-come.PRS-P-1p we sneaking-ABS to=village-ABS

n-malχ-in b=ε: mett εmʃa miʃər, εmʃa u ħiməʃ miʃər
1-walk.PRS-P in=3ms some hundred.F meter.NUM hundred.F and fifty meter.NUM

w n-no:ʃk-in m=kommil pajθ=aħ mn=o:χa,
and 1-go.out.PRS-P from=in.front.of house=1p from=here

n-ʃo:br-in m=naħħi-jo:θ-a, lorcaʃ ħamj-il-l=aħ.
1-enter.PRS-P through=neighbourhood-P-ABS no.more see.PRS-P-HD=1p.DO
P

hinn kaʃj-in, w-ajb-in εlʃel b=fo:tk-a bə=blo:t-a ʃill-o:.
they sit.PRF-P PST-COP-P above in=hotel-ABS in=village-ABS upper-M.S.DEF

23. And the villagers left the village, people did not stay in the village. There is a gully here near us. They blew it up so we would not use it. We started coming surreptitiously into the village, we walk through it some 100 meters, 150 meters, and we come out in front of our house, from here, and we enter the neighbourhoods, they do not see us anymore. They sit, they were up there in the hotel, in the upper village.

ɛfn-il *zamo:n-a*, *b=ɛfn-il* *o:lɛf* *w* *ɛtʰaʃ ...*
 year.F-HD time-ABS in=year.F-HD thousand.F and nine.F

θar-ʃf *o:lɛf* *w* *ɛθlaθʃasəɾ*,
 two-F thousand.F and thirteen.F

tawəl-θ-a *afk-aʃf=un* *mn=o:χa* *mnə=blo:t-a*,
 government-F.S-ABS drive.out.PST-3fs=3p.DO from=here from=village-ABS

ħarrir-aʃ-l *blo:t-a*,
 liberate.PST-3fs-HD village-ABS

u *ro:ʒaʃ* *mar-o:j-l* *blo:t-a* *ʃa=blo:t-a*.
 and return.PST people-P-HD village-ABS to=village-ABS

w-ajb-in *pajθ-jo:θ=un* *χull=un* *nyib-in*,
 PST-COP-P house-P=3p all=3p be.plundered.PRF-P

u *ti* *χarriħ-il-l=ɛ* *χarriħ-il-l=ɛ*,
 and REL burn.PRF-P-HD=3ms.DO burn.PRF-P-HD=3ms.DO

u *ti* *nyib-il-l=ɛ* *nyib-il-l=ɛ*.
 and REL plunder.PRF-P-HD=3ms.DO plunder.PRF-P-HD=3ms.DO

nyib-il-l *pajθ-jo:θ-a* *u* *χarriħ-il-l=un*.
 plunder.PRF-P-HD house-P-ABS and burn.PRF-P-HD=3p.DO

hann *w-ajb-in* *χull=un* *χu:r-a*, *ɛχt* *ho:χa* *pajθ-a* *ʃapp-ɛ*.
 these PST-COP-P all=3p wood-ABS like here house-ABS POS-3ms

mʃaʃl-il-l ... *lə=χfuri:-θ-a* *maʃʃel* *pajθ-a* *χull=ɛ*.
 set.on.fire.PRS-P-HD DO=piece.of.wood-F.S-ABS burn.PRS house-ABS all=3ms

24. A year's time, the year one thousand and nine ... two thousand and thirteen,²⁹ the government drove them out of here, out of the village, it liberated the village, and the villagers returned to the village. All their houses had been plundered, and what they burned down, they burned down, and what they plundered, they plundered. They plundered houses and burned them down. These were all wooden, like what's here, the house he has. They set one piece of wood on fire, the whole house burns down.

fɛlc-il pajθ-jo:θ-l blo:t-a ja acθar χarri:h-in.
 half-HD house-P-HD village-ABS or more burnt-P.INDF

ho:f o:θ baħar pajθ-jo:θ-a,
 now EXIST many house-P-ABS

ucmil aħm-il=laχ ho:χa elbar, χarri:h-in.
 like show.PST-1s=2ms.IO here outside burnt-P.INDF

kajja mar-ajñ la aktar ji-fw-unñ
 still owner-P+3p NEG can.PST 3-make.SBJV-P+3p.DO

ħetta ji-ruzi:ʕ-un ji-kʕ-ul-lun b=o:n.
 in.order.to 3-return.SBJV-P 3-stay.SBJV-P-3p in=3p

25. Half of the village's houses, even more, had been burned. Now there are many houses, like I showed you here outside, they have burned down. Still their owners have been unable to make do in order to return to stay in them.

ho:ð fafθar-θ-a anaħ ti kaðʕ-laħl=a,
 this.F period-F.S-ABS we REL spend.PST-1p=3fs.DO

fafθar-θ-il zawʕ-a u lə=nyo:b-a,
 period-F.S-HD fear-ABS and of=plundering-ABS

la barnaʕ infek, omθ-a fammi:tʕ-in mnə=blo:t-a,
 NEG someone go.out.PST people-ABS flee.PRF-P from=village-ABS

²⁹ Abu George says 2013, but he intends 2014. The main events of this story took place during the fall of 2013, and the government reassumed control over Maaloula in the spring of 2014.

tʰaʃʃir-il-l *kirf-ajɲ* *w* *l=ðahb=un*,
 leave.PRF-P-HD money-P+3p and DO=gold=3p

u *pajθ-jo:θ-a* *malj-in*, *χull* *pajθ-a*.
 and house-P-ABS full-P.INDF every house-ABS

ucc-il *aħħað* *ikʃ* *b=pajθ=ε*
 every-HD one.M sit.PRF in=house=3ms

ji:b *pajθ=ε* *ʃawwi:l-l=ε* *innu* *ja-ktar* *ji-kʃε:-lε* *b=ε:*
 must house=3ms make.PRF-HD=3ms.DO in.order.to 3m-can.SBJV 3m-sit.SBJV-3ms in=3ms

χulle.mett *upp=ε*
 everything EXIST+in=3ms

θo:-lε *la* *iʃʃaħ* *mett* *la* *iʃʃaħ* *pajθ-a*
 come.PST-3ms NEG find.PST something NEG find.PST house-ABS

26. This period which we spent, the period of fear and plundering, nobody went out. People fled the village, they left their money and their gold, and the houses were full, every house. Every one stayed in his house.³⁰ He must have built his own house so he could stay in it, everything was in it. He came back, he found nothing, he found no house.

hanna *faʃʃar-θ-il* *ħarb-a* *anaħ*,
 this.M period-F.S-HD war-ABS we

ti *mar-o:j-l* *blo:t-a*, *ho:χa* *kaðʰðʰ-unn=a*.
 REL people-P-HD village-ABS here spend.PST-3p=3fs.DO

27. This is the period of the war which we, the villagers, spent here.

Bibliography

Arnold, W., 1989. *Das Neuwestaramäische I. Texte aus Bax'a*. Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden.

³⁰ That is, before the war, these villagers normally stayed in their homes year-round.

- Arnold, W., 1990a. *Das Neuwestaramäische II. Texte aus Ġubb 'adīn*. Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden.
- Arnold, W., 1990b. *Das Neuwestaramäische V. Grammatik*. Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden.
- Arnold, W., 1991a. *Das Neuwestaramäische III. Volkskundliche Texte aus Ma 'lūla*. Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden.
- Arnold, W., 1991b. *Das Neuwestaramäische IV. Orale Literatur aus Ma 'lūla*. Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden.
- Arnold, W., 2002. Zur Geschichte der arabischen Lehnwörter im Neuwestaramäischen. In: Nebes, N. (Ed.), *Neue Beiträge zur Semitistik*. Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, pp. 5–11.
- Arnold, W., 2006. *Lehrbuch des Neuwestaramäischen*. Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden.
- Arnold, W., 2019. *Das Neuwestaramäische VI. Wörterbuch*. Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden.
- Arnold, W., Behnstedt, P., 1993. *Arabisch-Aramäische Sprachbeziehungen im Qalamūn (Syrien): eine dialektgeographische Untersuchung mit einer wirtschafts- und sozialgeographischen Einführung von Anton Escher*. Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden.
- Bergsträsser, G., 1915. *Neuaramäische Märchen und andere Texte aus Ma 'lūla*. Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 13,2. Deutsche Morgenlandische Gesellschaft, Leipzig.
- Bergsträsser, G., 1919. Neue Texte im aramäischen Dialekt von Ma 'lūla. *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 32, 103–163.
- Bergsträsser, G., 1921. *Glossar des neuaramäischen Dialekts von Ma 'lūla*. Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 15,4. Deutsche Morgenlandische Gesellschaft, Leipzig.
- Cantarino, V., 1961. *Der neuaramäische Dialekt von Ġubb 'adīn (Texte und Übersetzung)*. Orange Printshop, Chapel Hill, N. C.
- Cohen, D., 1979. Sur le système verbal du néo-araméen de Ma 'lūla. *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 24, 219–239.
- Cohen, D., 1984. *La phrase nominale et l'évolution du système verbal en sémitique: études de syntaxe historique*. Peeters, Leuven – Paris.
- Correll, C., 1969. Materialien zur Kenntnis des neuaramäischen Dialekts von Baḥ 'a (Dissertation). München.
- Correll, C., 1978. *Untersuchungen zur Syntax der neuwestaramäischen Dialekte des Antilibanon (Ma 'lūla, Baḥ 'a, Ġubb 'adīn) mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des arabischen Adstrateinflusses, nebst zwei Anhängen zum neuaramäischen Dialekt von Ġubb 'adīn*. Kommissionsverlag Franz Steiner GMBH, Wiesbaden.
- Fassberg, S., 2019. Modern Western Aramaic. In: Huehnergard, J., Pat-El, N. (Eds.), *The Semitic Languages* (Second Edition). Routledge, Abingdon, pp. 632–652.
- Naïm, S., 2011. Dialects of the Levant. In: Weninger, S., et al. (Eds.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*. De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin – Boston, pp. 920–935.
- Nakano, A., 1994. *Ethnographical Texts in Modern Western Neo-Aramaic (Dialect of Jubb 'adīn)*. ILCAA, Tokyo.
- Reich, S., 1937. *Études sur les villages araméens de l'Anti-Liban*. L'Institut français de Damas, Damascus.
- Spitaler, A., 1938. *Grammatik des neuaramäischen Dialekts von Ma 'lūla (Antilibanon)*. Leipzig.
- Versteegh, K., et al. (Eds.), 2006-2009. *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics* (Vols. I–V). Brill, Leiden – Boston.
- Wehr, H., 1979. *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic (Arabic-English)*, Fourth Edition (Ed. Cowan, M.). Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden.

Plates

Plate 1. The sign welcoming visitors to the village of Maaloula.



Plate 2. The village square.



Plate 3. *Fundūq al-Safīr* (the ruins of the *Safīr* Hotel).



Plate 4. St Thecla's Way, a seasonal watercourse north of the convent.



Plate 5. The arch at the entrance of the village, which served as a military checkpoint.



Plate 6. View from St Thecla's Convent, illustrating the road leading from the centre of the village to the convent.

