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BALGĀWI ARABIC
1. TEXTS FROM MĀDABĀ

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Balgāwi Arabic

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In studies of Palestinian Arabic the territory east of the Jordan has always remained a marginal area. This is also true of the Balgāwi dialect spoken in Belqā' District between the rivers Zerqā' (Jabbok) and Wādī el-Muġīb (Arnon). No extensive study of this dialect has as yet been published, and only scattered material is available. Thus, BERGSTRÄSSER gives in his Sprach-atlas¹ a few data from some localities of Belqā', drawn partially from MUSIL's Arabia Petraea², and many of the songs included in DALMAN's Diwan³ are dialectally very close to Balgāwi. The compendious study of the Jordanian dialect groups by CLEVELAND⁴ gives important characteristics of the main dialect types spoken both on the western and the eastern bank of the Jordan.

As regards the dialect of Mādabā, 33 km. southwest of 'Ammān, two short studies should be mentioned here. Linguistically, the more important one is the selection of ethnographic texts published by CZAPKIEWICZ,⁵ but although the texts themselves very well reflect the modern, mildly formal colloquial style of an educated Balgāwi speaker, the plentiful classicisms should have been distinguished from the local dialect. This also holds good of the grammatical sketch which often fails to indicate the classical borrowings.⁶ The other recent study is HAMARNE's article⁷, of a more markedly ethnographic nature.

¹ G. BERGSTRÄSSER, Sprachatlas von Syrien und Palästina. — ZDPV 38 (1915), pp. 169–222.

² ALOIS MUSIL, Arabia Petraea III. Wien 1908.

³ G. DALMAN, Palästinischer Diwan. Beitrag zur Volkskunde Palästinas. Leipzig 1901.

⁴ RAY L. CLEVELAND, A Classification for the Arabic Dialects of Jordan. — BASOR 171 (1963), pp. 56–63.

⁵ ANDRZEJ CZAPKIEWICZ, Sprachproben aus Mādabā. — Prace monograficzne, Polska akademia nauk. Oddział w Krakowie, Komisja Orientalistyczna Nr 2. Kraków 1960.

⁶ The most serious confusion of classical borrowings and the genuine local dialect occurs in the description of verbal forms. Thus, the statement 'Das Futurum wird ebenso wie im

I recorded my own collection of Balgāwi Arabic in different localities during the summer of 1965. The material consists mainly of folk tales and anecdotes, but there is also a rather comprehensive selection of *qaṣīda* poetry recited by Yûsef Ṭarîf 'Abu Kamâl from Şâfûṭ, near Şuweileḥ, which I hope to be able to publish in the near future.

The speakers of my texts from Mādabā are all Greek Orthodox Christians whose ancestors came from Kerak in the second half of the 19th century. All the speakers are literate; the texts nos. 1 and 4 to 8 were spoken by a janitor of church, aged 48, nos. 2 and 3 by his wife, aged 43, and nos. 9 to 12 by his niece, aged 12.

Transcription

In general the system of transcription used here is the conventional one. *Hamza* ist, however, written only when clearly heard; *ǧ* denotes explicitly the voiced palatal fricative and not the palato-alveolar *ǰ*. Assimilation of consonants is marked only when it is complete; in close juncture ligature is used. Thus, the voiceless combinatory variants of voiced consonants are not marked. Similarly, combinatory emphasis is left unmarked. As for vowels, *e* and *o* are used besides *a*, *i* and *u*. The central vowel *ə* is in most cases rendered by *e*; when its phonetic value comes close to other vowels, these are used, e.g. *bugûl*, *bûḍurbu*. A stressed long vowel is marked by \hat{V} , an unstressed half-long one by \bar{V} . When necessary, the vowel of a stressed syllable is marked by \acute{V} .

Texts

1. *'ahel mādaba nazahu mn-el-kerak la-sbāb fatā masihīyye 'ahāda wāḥed mislim u-hāǧaru mn-el-kerak 'ala mādaba. mādaba kânat 'awwal ma'a l-badu, w-sakanu fiha w-waǧadu fiha masākin u-'ammaru w-sakanu fi mādaba.*

The inhabitants of Mādabā fled from Kerak because a Muslim had seduced

Kl.-Ar. mittels *sawfa* oder *sa-* in Verbindung mit dem Imperfekt gebildet, es ist dabei nur zu betonen, dass Futurum viel häufiger im Dialekt gebraucht wird' (p. 16) is true only as concerns poor efforts to speak *fusha* or, of course, in classical language with its different modifications; this is by no means a feature occurring in Balgāwi dialect, not even in the stylistic variant of the colloquial spoken by the educated. Similarly, 'sehr selten vorkommender und gemäss den Regeln des Kl.-Ar. gebildeter Modus energicus' (*ibid.*) is nothing but a learned borrowing.

⁷ SALIH HAMARNE, Children's songs and plays in Jordan. — *Folia Orientalia* 5 (1963), pp. 175–181.

a Christian girl. From Kerak they fled to Mādabā. Previously Mādabā was inhabited by Bedouins. When they settled there, they found domiciles there. Then they began to build houses and settled in Mādabā.

2. *hayy fi lamma ḥarbet lūt, balad 'isemha balad lūt illi l-yôm bi- . . . buḥayrat lūt, ṭala' lūt u-banātu w-maratu. lamma šāru fi nuṣṣ et-ṭarīg, maratu eltaftat la-wara w-šarat 'amūd mileḥ. fa-ṭala' lūt u-banātu t-tintén. banāt lūt fakkaran 'innu nḡaṭ'at ed-dinya, ma ḍall ḥada. fa-'iḡan ḡarren 'abūhin 'ala 'innu yōḥūdhon. fa-'ahādūhin 'abūhin biddūn ma ykūn šāḥi ḥālu. ḥablen el-banāt et-tintén.*

lamma ša'ar 'abūhin, sa'ālhin. ḡālen 'eḡna lli . . . 'inte lli 'amalt ma'na. fa-'iḡa ḡāl: šu ḥaṭīti kbīre, kēf biddha trūḥ hādī l-ḥaṭiyye 'anni? sa'al. 'a' tū maṭāriḡ etnén, ḡāl: 'izrāḥhin. 'iḡa ṭala'an šaḡarāt ikbār, fa-ḥaṭītak rāḡat. u-dīr bālak, ḡīb mayyi lli ma ykūn šārib minha 'insān u-'isḡūhin. hādā šār yungul mayyi. kull ma yšīr fi nuṣṣ et-ṭarīg, ya' arḍu malāka w-insān uw-ši ya'ni ṭāni w-yuṭlum mayyi sḡī. u-yirḡa' duḡri y'abbī, w-maḡat sini kāmle w-hū birūḥ u-birḡa'.

lamma kammal es-sini, 'iḡāhin w-ennhin šaḡarāt ikbār 'alyāt et-tintén. ba'd ma kabru, ḡaṭa'ūhin, ḥaṭṭūhin fi 'umḡ iknīst el-gyāme. fa-kānat tumrug el-'ālam 'anha w-tuḡrub el-ḥašabāt haḍōla ygūlu: ḥašbat en-nigme. fa-'iḡat waḡade, kānat 'ilha riḡel ḡāfer, fātāt, 'iḡat min hanāk u-nó' el-ḡalaṭ ta-dḡul: ḥašbat en-nigme, ḡālat: ḥašbat en-na'me. fa-riḡelha raḡa'at miṭel l-uhra. 'iḡu 'ahādūhin ḥaṭṭūhin fi l-iggyāme, 'illi 'inšalab 'aléhin el-masīḥ.¹

When Lot — a place named Lot's town, which today lies down in the Dead Sea — was destroyed, Lot left it with his daughters and his wife. When they were on the way, his wife turned around and became a pillar of salt. But Lot and his two daughters escaped. Lot's daughters thought that the world was destroyed and no one was left. So they came to their father and seduced him to take them. Their father took them without being sober. Both daughters became pregnant.

When their father found it, he asked them. They said, 'We . . . it was you who have done this to us.' So he said, 'How serious is my sin! How can I atone for this sin?' When he asked (Abraham), he was given two sticks and told, 'Plant these. If they grow big trees, your sin has been atoned. But remember, you must bring water from which no one has drunk, and water them.' Now he began to carry water. Every time when he was on the way, angels, men and someone else (i.e. Satan) interfered, asking him to give them a drink of water. Then he always went straight back to fill again. For a whole year he kept on going back and forth.

¹ Cf. another version of the same legend in LEONHARD BAUER, *Das palästinische Arabisch. Die Dialekte des Städtlers und des Fellachen*. 2. Aufl. Leipzig 1910; p. 178.

When he came after a whole year, he found that the two sticks were big, tall trees. After growing big they were cut down and taken to the place where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre now stands. People used to pass by there and touch these pieces of wood saying, 'The tree of penalty'. Once a woman with one foot and one hoof came and, passing by, instead of saying, 'The tree of penalty', said, 'The tree of grace'. Then her foot was restored like the other one. Those pieces of wood were (later on) taken into the Church of Holy Sepulchre. They were the pieces of wood on which Christ was crucified.

3. *kníse fi-r-ramle . . . kánat kníse masaḥiyye gadíme w-inhadmat u-bagi minha 'atár basít maḥall el-madbaḥ. fa-'iḡu biddhum iwass'ú maḥall el-madbaḥ, minšán eġ-ġámi'. lamma fataḥu l-madbaḥ, nazal ed-damm, kasa š-šawári'. kull ma šallu fi maḥall ed-damm, ma kán yinzal, kán yitwassa' 'aktar. ba'dén ġábu hūri masīḥi w-šalla. lamma gaddas fiha, šár ed-damm yirġa' la-ḥálu la-ḥatta waššal 'ila l-madbaḥ. u-gafalú w-sakkarú w-la-ḥadd el-'án ma bínfateḥ.*

In Ramle there was an old Christian church. It fell into ruins, and only some remains were left on the site of the altar. So people began to clear the site of the altar to make room for the mosque. When they tore up the altar, blood began to flow, covering the streets. No matter how they prayed at the place where the blood was flowing, it did not go back, but (the hole) grew wider and wider. Then they sent for a Christian priest. When he said Mass there, the blood began to flow back by itself until it had flowed back into the altar. Now they closed and shut it, and until now it has not been opened.

4. *kán fi wáḥad biḥebb eš-šéd w-el-ganaš. ráḥ yóm m-el-eyyám yištád. 'aġa 'ibnu sabagu 'ala š-šéd w-el-ganaš bidún ma ya'rif. ráḥ yištád, tawwal u-hú tárir biššayyad, ma gašad našib 'abadan. 'ibnu kán iššayyad štád niser, niser kebír. lamma štádu 'aġa w-itmaddad 'ala š-šafáḥ u-farad ġinhán en-niser 'alé.*

bukán marr 'abú mrawwa'ala l-bét u-muš muštád 'iši. yóm ladd w-enn han-niser fárid ġanahátu 'ala ha-t-ṭór. bug'ud la-ha-n-niser, bi'ayyen 'alé tamáman búdurbu w-ennu maḥallu. burú'ala n-niser iškúfu. yóm 'aġa w-en-niser magtúl, w-enn er-rašáša kánat fi 'ibnu. bíġi u-bḥutt 'ibnu fi šwál u-bi'allu 'ala ḍahru w-biḥab ḥálu w-brú'ala l-bét. gal la-maratu: yá mara, rúḥi, dawwri 'ilna gider 'aw tanġara kbíre 'illi ma ntabaḥ fiha 'aza.

háḍi ráḥat 'a-l-byút 'ala kull el-faríg tis'al: waḷla fi 'indku gider ma ntabaḥ fi 'aza? gal: lá waḷla, fi 'inna gúr intábaḥ fihin 'aza w-intábaḥ fihin farah. gálat: la', 'illi ma ntabaḥ fi 'aza. dárat 'ala kull el-faríg u-ma waġdet 'abadan gider 'illa ykán maṭbúḥ fi 'aza w-farah.

ba'dén raġ'at 'alé w-gálat: waḷla ma lagét 'abadan. gál: ma-dám 'innki ma lagéti gider ma ntabaḥ fi 'aza, li-dálik 'ana biddi 'aḥkílki l-iḥkáye. 'iftaḥi ha-l-kís u-šúfi. fathat el-kís w-ennu 'ibenha 'illi mawġúd f-ha-l-kís. gálat: šu háda? gál: háda ḥatta ti'azzi w-ana ḥallétik iddúri 'ala kull el-faríg. ma fi wáḥad

*bislam min nakbe 'aw min farah. lāzim inǧarrib farah u-'aza. u-hêk 'alla ħakam. w-es-salām.*¹

There was a man who liked hunting. One day he went on a hunt. His son followed him on the hunt without his father's knowledge. When hunting, he wandered looking for game for a long time, but did not catch anything. His son had caught an eagle, a big eagle. When he had caught it, he lay down on a rock and spread the wings of the eagle over himself.

Now it happened that his father passed by on his way home without having caught anything. Looking around he found an eagle with its wings spread on a rock. He stopped, aimed carefully at the eagle, shot, and hit it. He went to the eagle to see it. When he came, he found that the eagle was dead and that the bullet had hit his son. Now he put his son into a sack, loaded it on his back, got off and went home. He said to his wife, 'Look, go and bring us a pot or a big kettle never used to cook a funeral dinner.'

She went to houses all around asking, 'Have you a pot never used to cook a funeral dinner?' They said, 'No, we have not. We have pots used to cook both funeral and wedding dinners.' She said, 'No, (I want one) which is not used to cook a funeral dinner.' She kept on searching all around, but it was impossible to find a pot which was not used to cook both funeral and wedding dinners.

Now she came back to him and said, 'No, I could not find one.' He said, 'Because you did not find a pot never used to cook a funeral dinner, I shall tell you what happened. Open the sack and look.' She opened the sack and saw that what was in the sack was her son. She asked, 'Why (did you do) this?' He said, 'I let you go to try to find (a pot) all around so that you would find comfort. There is no one who is spared from both misfortune and joy. We must meet with joy and grief. God has disposed thus.' — And peace (be upon you).

5. *fī marra bimšī fār. u-l-fār hāda w-hū māši, waǧad maħall fī bibi' u 'araq. hadāg gāl: lāzim afūt 'askar, 'ašrab 'araq. bufūt el-fār fi-d-dukkan, bišāhid eṭ-ṭawli maħtūta. lamma bišuf eṭ-ṭawli, biṭla 'ala l-kās bišrab 'araq, bugūl . . . a-ṭ-ṭawli . . . bugūl: 'ala hōn 'ala 'aṭhan biss yūǧi.*

hāda masaħ šawārbu l-fār u-ga'ad 'a-ṭ-ṭawli sakrān. el-biss kān yithabba wara s-sidde, gallu: šu bta'mel ya fār? gāl: hōn 'ala 'aṭhan biss. ta'alayyi! 'iǧa l-biss haǧam 'a-l-fār, ḍarabu w-gala' 'ēnu. natṭ el-fār eṭhabba bi-ǧ-ǧuhur, gallu: 'ā-ā, 'inte 'aǧētni w-ana sakrān. laww aǧētni w-ana šāħi bafarǧik.

There was a mouse strolling about. It came to a place where 'araq was sold. It thought, 'I'll step in and get drunk.' The mouse entered the shop and saw that the table was ready. When it saw the table, it climbed up

¹ Cf. another version of the same story in HANS SCHMIDT — PAUL KAHLE, *Volkserzählungen aus Palästina I*. Göttingen 1918; no. 63, pp. 250–252.

to the glass to drink 'araq. Standing on the table it said, 'I'm safe even if the fattest cat should come.'

The mouse was sitting on the table drunk and wiping its whiskers. The cat was hiding behind the seat. It asked, 'What are you doing, mouse?' It said, 'I'm safe from even the fattest cat. Just try to attack me!' The cat attacked the mouse, hit it and scratched its eye. The mouse jumped and hid in the hole and said, 'Oh! You attacked me when I was drunk. But if you attack me when I'm sober, I'll show you!'

6. *fī tnēn biḥebbu waḥade, waḥad 'a'war u-waḥad 'a'ma. u-haḍōla biḥtağǧu minšān irūḥu 'alēha w-dayman burūḥu 'alēha. enhār bikūnu ṭayḥīn ma'a ba'ad ḥēk sawa w-ṭāḥu 'alēha minšān yit'ānsu 'indha w-šu bugūl el-'a'war la-l-'a'ma, ya'ni: law šāfna nās u-šu bugūlu: zalmatēn fī 'ēn waḥade būnuṣbu 'ind waḥade.*

There were two men who loved a girl. One was one-eyed and the other was blind. They tried to find excuses for calling on her, and every now and then they went to call on her. One day, when they were as usual walking together to call on her, in order to keep company with her, the one-eyed man said to the blind man, 'If people see us, what do you think they'll say? (They'll say,) »Two men with one eye are trying to fool a girl.«'

7. *fī waḥad 'aǧa 'a-l-farrān gallu: sakkru sakkru ya šēḥ, sakkru! gāl: lēš, šu fī? gāl: fī muḍāhara. lēš el-muḍāhara? gāl: braḥīm māra 'āmīl ṣalīga.¹*

Once a man came to the baker's and said, 'Master, shut the shop, shut it!' He asked, 'Why? What's going on?' He said, 'There is a demonstration.' 'Why is there a demonstration?' He said, 'Ibrahim Mara has cooked ṣalīga.'

8. *ǧuḥa 'aǧa 'ammar bēt. fatāḥlu l-bāb mn-eš-šarg. marr 'alē waḥad gallu: ya zalami, 'inte fāteḥ el-bāb mn-eš-šarg. eš-šamāl hū bīǧi minnu z-zhūr u-bīǧi l-hawa l-ikwayyis, u-mīn butruk el-bāb eš-šamāli w-bīǧi biftaḥu 'a-ǧ-ǧāl eš-šargi?*

hāda bihedd el-bāb u-bīǧi biftaḥ el-bāb mn-eš-šamāl. marr 'alē wāḥad gallu: ya zalami, ha-d-dār dār ikwayyise, lākin bass fāteḥ bābha 'a-š-šamāl. u-šu fī fi-š-šamāl? bīǧīk el-hawa ṣ-šāmit f-eyyām eš-šita lli ma tigdar tiḥarrak u-biḍbah ulādak. lākin law ḥallētu 'ala l-ǧarb, bikūn 'aḥsan, eš-šams ibtīǧi u-l-hawa bīǧi mn-el-ǧarb u-kull 'iši. el-ḥaya . . . el-ḥayāt . . . el-maskan huww eǧ-ǧāl el-ǧarbi.

gāl: ṭayyib ya 'ammi. bīǧi 'a-ǧ-ǧāl eš-šamāli w-bisakkru, w-bīǧi 'a-ǧ-ǧāl el-ǧarbi w-biftaḥu. marr 'alē wāḥad tāni gallu: ya zalami, 'inte fāteḥ 'ala l-ǧarb u-mdaššer el-bāǧi . . . ǧ-ǧihāt. ma 'annu fi-l . . . eyyām eš-šéf eš-šames biḍḍall tigdaḥ fī wlādak lamma tfaṭṭassum, u-fi-yyām el-bard ka-dālik. lākin 'ana baḡullak: 'iftaḥu 'a-ǧ-ǧāl el-gibli.

gāl: ṭayyib, 'āmānna bi-llāhi w-ḥayy eḥna sakkarnā w-biddna niftaḥu 'a-ǧ-ǧāl

¹ HAMARNE describes ṣalīga as follows: ṣalīga illi hiyye 'l-gamīḥ maṣṭāq u bizidūtu šweyyet ibḥārāt u bḥuṭṭū ma'u na'na' u-gre⁹še fl-šīnīye kebire (p. 176).

el-gibli. fataḥu 'a-ġ-ġāl el-gibli, gāl: ya zalamī, ha-d-dār ikwayyise w-lēš fāteḥ 'a-ġ-ġāl el-gibli w-emmaššer bāgi l-ġihāt? u-šu biġi mn-el-gibli ġēr el-hawa l-ḥārr, ma biġi 'iši, w-biġi bard fi-yyām eš-šita. gallu: wēn 'aftaḥ? gāl: 'iftaḥ 'a-š-šarg! gāl: 'eḥna ma fataḥna ya 'ammi 'a-š-šarg, 'aġa nās u-gāl 'ilna: 'iftaḥ 'a-š-šamāl! w-aġa nās . . . lākin 'ana bidḍi 'a'malilha zumbarak.

'aġa 'imil la-d-dār zumbarak 'ala sās ikūnilha bāb wāḥad. lamma kānu ygūlūlu: 'iftaḥ 'a-š-šarg, idir ha-z-zumbarak 'a-ġ-ġāl eš-šarg, ikūn el-bāb šār šarg, lamma ygāl: ḥalli l-bāb ikūn 'a-l-ġarb, idir ez-zumbarak, ikūn mn-eġ-ġāl el-ġarbi. w-'ala ha-l-ḥāl 'arḍa nafsu w-'arḍa n-nās.

Once Ġuḥa built a house. He made the door to face east. A man passed by and said, 'Look, man, you have made the door to face east, but the bloom and the favourable wind come from the north. Who opens the door to the east and not to the north?'

Now he removed the door and made it to face north. A man passed by and said, 'Look, man, this is a good house, but the door faces north. What's there in the north? The chilly wind blows against you in the winter so that you cannot move, and it kills your children. But if you let it face west, it would be better. The sunshine and wind and everything come from the west. The direction which is suitable for living is the west.'

He said, 'Well then, master.' So he shut the door on the northern side, and made the door to face west. Again a man passed by and said, 'Look, man, you have made the door to face west, and left all the other directions. But in the summer days the sun will unceasingly scorch your children and kill them, and in the cold days it will be the same. But I say to you, 'Open the door to face south!'

He said, 'Well now, (as true as) I trust in God, I shall surely shut it and make it to face south.' But when he had made it to face south (a man came and) said, 'Look, man, this is a good house, but why have you made its door to face south and left the other directions? What comes from the south but the hot wind? Nothing, and in the winter the cold weather will come (from there).' Ġuḥa asked him, 'In which direction should I make it, then?' He said, 'Make it to face east!' He said, 'Master, when I made it to face east, people came and said, »Make it to face north!« And people came . . . , but I'll make a spring for the house.'

Now he made a spring for the house so that it could have one door only. When people said to him, 'Make the door to face east', he just turned the spring to the east, and so the door faced east. When people said, 'Let the door face west', he just turned the spring, and so it faced west. In this way he satisfied both himself and the people.

9. *ġuḥa kān māšī marra bidḍu yrūḥ 'ala l-barīd yib'at maktūb. šādafu ḥūri fi-t-ṭarīg, gallu: yā 'abūna, wēn el-barīd? gallu: min hōn ibtimšī. 'aġa gallu*

l-ḥūrī: ma'a s-salāme ya 'abūna¹ w-ana baṣallīlak minšān tudḥul el-ḡanne. ḡāl: dahlak ya 'abūna 'ana māni 'āref ṭarīḡ el-barīd, kēf 'a'rif ṭarīḡ el-ḡanne?

Ḡuḥa was once on his way to the post-office to send a letter. A priest happened to meet him on the way. Ḡuḥa said to him, 'Father, tell me, where is the post-office?' He said, 'You must go this way.' Then the priest said, 'Good-bye, I shall pray for you that you will enter Paradise.' He said, 'Pardon, Father, not knowing the way to the post-office, how could I know the way to Paradise?'

10. *fī marra ḡuḥa bištāri laḥme w-ba'ṭīy el-laḥḥām waraga w-biktīb 'alēha kēf eṭ-ṭabīḥ bintābeḥ. bilagī ṭēr u-bōḥud minnu l-laḥme. fa-bigullu ḡuḥa: 'int 'aḥatt el-laḥme u-l-waraga ma'i. ma bta'rif kēf tuṭbuhḥa.*

Once Ḡuḥa bought a piece of meat. The butcher gave him a piece of paper and wrote on it how the meat should be cooked. A bird met him and took the piece of meat from him. Ḡuḥa said, 'You took the meat, but I have the paper. You don't know how to cook it.'

11. *fī ḥtyarīyye tñēn būṭulbu 'innhum ikūnu zayy l-iwlād l-izḡār yaḥku. fa-buṭlub minḥa z-zalame l-ikbīr l-iḥtyār: 'a'ṭīni 'inbū, ya'ni l-mayyi. fa-marra binzal 'an ed-daraḡ biššaglab u-bitkassar 'iḡrē w-binzal ed-damm. biṭṭalla' 'alē mn-eš-šibbāk l-iḥtyāra, btaḥkīlu: dibbō, ḥabībi. bitfakkru 'innu ya'ni biḍḥak ḍaḥek. gallha: walek 'ana tkassart u-lissa bta'mli zayy l-iwlād l-izḡār.*

Two old people decided to speak like small children. The old man asked his wife, 'Give me 'inbū', i.e. water. Once he fell down on the stairs, tumbled down, and broke his legs. Oh! Blood was flowing. The old woman looked at him out of the window and said to him, 'dibbō', dear child! She thought that he was only joking. He said to her, 'You (pest), I broke my legs and you are only playing like the small children.'

12. *ḡāl 'ustād el-madrasi la-tullābu: eš-šāṭer biddi 'aḥuṭtu 'ala rāsi. kán el-'ustād 'ašla', ma fī 'ala rāsu ša'r. fa-t-tullāb kullhum rafa'u 'ašābī'hum 'innhum rayḥīn ikūnu šāṭrīn. fī waḥad mā rafa' 'ašba'u, gallu l-'ustād: lēš ma rafa't 'ašba'ak? ḡāl: ya stād, baḥāf lamma ṭuṭṭni 'ala rāsak, 'azzahlag la-'innak 'ašla'.*

A teacher said to his pupils, 'I'll remember (lit. I'll put on my head) the one who is clever.' The teacher was bald-headed, he had no hair on his head. All the pupils raised their fingers (in order to show) that they were clever. There was one who did not raise his finger. The teacher asked him, 'Why didn't you raise your finger?' He said, 'Teacher, I'm afraid that if you put me on your head, I'll slip down, because you are bald-headed.'

¹ The word used in addressing people is often repeated in the answer.

Consonants

The consonants *tā'*, *dāl* and *dād + zā'* are pronounced as interdental fricatives *t̪*, *d̪*, and *d̪*. The only exception occurring in the texts is in the feminine numeral *tintên*, where it might be regarded as a sign of an incipient urban influence, but more probably as an instance of assimilation to the feminine *t*. As for *kāf*, no instance of the palato-alveolar pronunciation *ç* occurs in the present texts. This agrees with BERGSTRÄSSER's observation from es-Salt, where he mentions that the educated always use *k* and not *ç*.¹ The *ç* variant, widely used in the rural dialects of the adjacent areas, is regarded in Mādabā as a rustic vulgarism, and every classicizing and levelling tendency leads to its suppression.

Regressive assimilation appears rather frequently, according to my observation more commonly than on the western bank of the Jordan. This is especially true of the assimilation of the verbal prefix *t*, both personal and reflexive, to the following dental, alveolar or palatal, e.g. *biṣṣayyad*, 'azzahlag and *biṣṣaglab*; the form *biḍḍall* is also usual on the western bank.

In the word *minṣān*, *n* is scarcely audible and could more accurately be transcribed *miṣān*.

Vowels

The short vowels *i* and *u* have disappeared in open unstressed initial and medial syllable. Anaptyctic and prothetic vowels are pronounced between the first and second consonant of three-consonant clusters (Pause is here also numbered as a consonant). The colour of these new vowels is most usually neutral, but they are often progressively assimilated, especially after *u*. The short *a* has disappeared in the nominal pattern *qatīl* via *qitīl* when the development has not been prevented by a laryngal or an emphatic consonant, e.g. *knīse*, *kbīre*, but *ṭarīg*, *ḥaṭiyye*, *naṣīb*, *ṣalīga*, *farīg (f)*, *ḥabībi*. The pronunciation *kebīr* for *kbīr* is caused by a classicizing tendency. Similarly, the word *buhayrat* is 'corrected'; instead, *barīd*, *masīḥ* and *muḍāhara* are lexical loans incorporated with the colloquial.

The only word where *a* has disappeared in the nominal pattern *qatāl* is *(e)nhār*, if not from **nuhār* or **nihār*.

In Text 3 the word *masaḥiyye* appears in its dialectal form, while in the clumsy Text 1 it has been 'corrected' to *masīḥiyye* which is a classicizing device and is preceded by the classical word *fatā*.

¹ BERGSTRÄSSER, § 7, p. 185.

Accent

Sometimes two syllables are equally accentuated, e.g. *bíğik*, *šúfi*. In the verbal forms VII and VIII the stress is unsettled: *'inšalab*, *ma nṭábah*, *inṭábah*, *bínfateḥ*, *bištári*, *bínṭabeh*, but here the initially stressed forms belong to the local dialect, while the medially stressed forms are due to a modern levelling tendency commonly occurring in the koineized colloquial all over the area where the first syllable of the forms VII and VIII is stressed according to BERGSTRÄSSER'S Sprachatlas, i.e., Belqā', Palestine, and the sedentary dialects of the Lebanon.¹

Grammar

In morphology, a conservative feature is to be found: the separate feminine plural forms are still used in verbal inflection, e.g. *fakkaran*, *'iḡan*, *ḡarren*, *ḡablen*, *ḡálen*, *ṭala'an*. Here the present dialect does not differ from the idiom spoken by the *fellāḥ* population of Southern and Central Palestine, and whole Belqā'.

The verbal prefix *b-* is used with the imperfect as in most sedentary dialects in the Syro-Palestinian area, i.e., to indicate the indicative mood both in the present tense and future.

The negative affirmative *-(i)š* does not occur in the texts except in the nominal negation *muš*.

Style

The present text represent a typical slightly formal type of plain colloquial, where classicisms are restricted almost exclusively to the lexicon. In addition to the above-mentioned cases (*buḡayrat*, *mudáhara*, *masīḥíyye*, *fatá*, transition of accent in the verbal forms VII and VIII, and the restitution of the vowel in the first syllable of *kebír*) some others occur, the most conspicuous of them being *li-dálik*, *ka-dálik*, and *el-'án*, all characteristic of the classicizing tendency of the koineized colloquial. Such instances as *riḡel* (for *'iḡer*) and *madrasí* (for *midrasí*) may be regarded as mildly formal features, but they may also be genuine dialectal parallel forms like *'aḡa/'iḡa*.

As for the use of the conjunction *fa-* in the dialect, the general style of the context must be taken into account. Here a clear division must be made between the everyday vernacular and the artistic type of dialect used in the narrative style and folk poetry. In the former, *fa-* is a learned borrowing,

¹ BERGSTRÄSSER, § 44, Map 17.

while it has been traditionally used in the narrative style of the artistic colloquial, but not in poetry. This division is often very problematic; this is especially true of anecdotes usually told in everyday colloquial but not without considerable influence from the traditional narrative style. Thus it would be inappropriate here to regard the use of *fa-* as a definite classicism.

Classification

The 'Jordanian dialects' can be divided according to the tentative classification by CLEVELAND into four major groups: Group I (*yigūl*), belonging primarily to the bedu in the eastern and southern deserts of the Kingdom of Jordan, but also appearing among the recently settled nomads in Kerak District and elsewhere, Group II (*bagūl*), spoken by all the rural folk in Southern Palestine, the Jordan Valley, and the settled region lying east of this valley, as well as most of the nomads outside Group I, Group III (*bakūl*), spoken by the village people around Jerusalem and northward in central Palestine, and Group IV (*ba'ūl*), the *medeni* dialect of the city dwellers.¹

The dialect of Mādabā undoubtedly belongs to Group II (*bagūl*), since it shares with the other dialects of this group the most characteristic distinctive features, the use of *b-* as the indicative (pres. and fut.) imperfect prefix, and the pronunciation of *qāf* as a voiced velar *g*. But there are also two important differences. Firstly, negation is here expressed by *mā* and not by (*mā*) . . . -š, and, secondly, no instance of a conditioned palatalization of *kāf* (ē) occurs. Both these features could be attributed to the influence of a levelling tendency, but most probably this is true only as regards the pronunciation of *kāf*. To be sure, the negation (*mā*) . . . -š is not very rare in the dialects east of the Jordan, but it is used there with a greater emphasis and not as neutrally as on the western bank, and very seldom without the negative particle *mā*. This also agrees with the data given by BERGSTRÄSSER, who, although here admittedly using scanty material, gives only *mā* for Belqā'.²

The dialect of Mādabā as reflected in the present short texts can thus be classified as representing the eastern variation of the *bagūl*-group differing from the western idiom most distinctly in the form of the usual negation in verbal sentences, and at the same time from the rural dialect of the adjacent area in the pronunciation of *kāf*.

¹ CLEVELAND, pp. 56–60.

² BERGSTRÄSSER, § 53, Map 21.

