ON THE DIPHTHONGS *AW* AND *AY* IN SYRIAN ARABIC

BY

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It is a conventional usage in most Arabic grammars to call the combinations *aw* and *ay* the diphthongs of Arabic. Phonetically their status as falling diphthongs is a matter of course, but according to their morphemic function they are, as a rule, equivalent to any combination of *a* plus a consonant. Thus, in the words *yawm* and *bayt* they have the same function as *al* in the word *kalb*, i.e. *a* plus the second root consonant (aC^2) in the nominal pattern *qatl*. Similarly, the combination *ay* in *ramaytu* is aC^3, *aw* in *'awlād* and *ay* in *'aytām* are aC^1.

In some cases, however, the morphemic function of *aw* and *ay* is of another nature. Such are the suffix of dual casus obliquus *-ayni* and the diminutive pattern *qutayl*, where *ay* belongs to the qualifying morpheme. The *aw* of the word *ǧazaw* consists of *a* plus the combinatory variant *-w* of the perf. pl. 3. masc. suffix *-ū*. In spite of this dual morphological rôle the diphthongs *aw* and *ay* can always be analyzable phonemically into two different units, and it is well-founded to deny, with Cantineau[1], the existence of phonemic diphthongs in Classical Arabic.

Phonetically, in addition to the rising diphthongs *wa*, *wi*, *wu*, *ya*, *yi*, and *yu*, there are another two falling diphthongs, *uw* and *iy*, morphologically *u* and *i* plus a root consonant, e.g. in the words *kūᶜ* [*kuwᶜ*] and *kīs* [*kiys*], and as parts of qualifying morphemes, e.g. in the words *ḥurūb* [*ḥuruwb*], *maktūb* [*maktuwb*], *taqsīm* [*taqsiym*],

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[1] Jean Cantineau, Esquisse d'une phonologie de l'arabe classique. — Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris 43 (1946), pp. 93—140; Les semi-voyelles pp. 126f.

and *ǧadīd* [*ǧadiyd*]. Phonemically there is no difference between the two cases, but both can be classified equally as long vowels.

The present study aims, for one thing, to give a short description of the equivalents to the Classical Arabic combinations *aw* and *ay* in the dialect spoken by the sedentary population in the Syro-Palestinian area, with special reference to the rôle of morphology in the phonetic change, and on the basis of this description to discover the phonemic status of these sounds. To avoid a too great heterogeneity of the material, necessarily caused by differences in local dialects and dissimilar transcriptions, I have collected most examples from my own recordings [1] trying, however, to give examples generally used in a great part of the area. The general use of these forms was further checked by comparing them with those given by BAUER [2] and BARTHÉLEMY[3]. Additional examples are mentioned from different local dialects, especially when their distribution is very limited or insufficiently known. In order to make the transcriptions of the diphthongs more uniform I have marked the semi-vowels always with *w* and *y*, and, furthermore, the long vowel of the stressed syllable with /ˆ/.

The equivalents of Cl. aw and ay in different positions and morphological categories

In stressed syllables followed by one consonant the Cl. combinations *aw* and *ay* are pronounced as monophthongs *ō* and *ē* in almost the whole Syro-Palestinian area, e.g. (pattern *qatl:*) *yôm* 'day', *nôm* 'sleep', *bêt* 'house', *lêl* 'night', (pattern *qutayl, qutaylil:*) *'abu ḥṣēni*

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[1] An account of these recordings was given on pp. 17—21 in my Lower Galilean Arabic. An Analysis of Its Anaptyctic and Prothetic Vowels With Sample Texts. — Studia Orientalia XXXII. Helsinki 1966.

[2] Leonhard BAUER, Deutsch-Arabisches Wörterbuch der Umgangssprache in Palästina und im Libanon. 2. Auflage, unter Mitwirkung von Anton SPITALER hrsg. Wiesbaden 1957.

[3] A. BARTHÉLEMY, Dictionnaire Arabe-Français, Dialectes de Syrie: Alep, Damas, Liban, Jérusalem. Paris 1935—1955 (Fasc. 4 et 5 publ. par H. FLEISCH).

'fox', *flêfle* 'paprica', *shêl* 'Canopus', *swêlim* personal name, (pattern *qartal:*) *žôhar* 'jewel', *bêdar* 'threshing-floor', (dual *-ayn:*) *tnên* 'two', *šahrên* 'two months', (pattern *maqtal, maqtil:*) *môžab* 'task', *môsam* 'harvest (season)', *môqade* 'fireplace', (4-rad. verb:) *sôlaf* 'he told a *sâlfe*', *tšêṭan* 'he had a wicked design', 'he was raging mad', (perfect of verbs C^3y:) *baqêt* 'I, you stayed', *ḥaṭṭêt* 'I, you put', *štarêtu* 'you (pl.) bought', *stannêna* 'we waited'. The diphthongs *aw* and *ay* have been preserved only in central and northern Lebanon including Beqᶜa and parts of the Anti-Lebanon. Moreover, the monophthongization is only partial in a small area near Antioch (Bergsträsser, Sprachatlas [1], p. 193, Karte 11).

An exception is the word *kêf* 'how?', which is very commonly pronounced *kîf* or *čîf* in the Lebanon and parts of Syria and Palestine. Bauer gives *čîf* and *čêf* for the *fellaḥîn*, *kîf* for the rest (s.v. wie?), Barthélemy *kîf* for the Lebanon and the Syrian coast, elsewhere *kêf* (s.v. *kyf*).

The diphthong is preserved, however, if its latter component is geminated, e.g. *rawwaḥ* 'he went home', *mayyal* 'he turned off', *'awwal* 'first', *ḥayyâṭ* 'tailor', *ḥayyâl* 'horseman', *bawwâb* 'doorkeeper'. In final position the latter component is prolonged (similarly with *'abb*, *'aḥḥ*, *damm*): *šwayy* 'a little', *mayy* 'water', *'aww* 'or', *laww* 'if', *'ayy* 'which?'. The form *ᶜalê* 'against him' has lost its pronominal suffix *-h* only after the monophthongization.

In an unstressed position the monophthongized diphthong is shortened phonetically in the same way as the other long vowels, e.g. *yomên* 'two days', *betên* 'two houses', *ma-laqenâš* 'we did not find him', 'we did not find'. Side by side with these regular forms *a* also appears as the result of the shortening: *laqanâk* 'we found you (sg.)' and *ma-laqatušš* 'I, you did not find him', 'you (pl.) did not find' (Blanc, Studies [2], p. 46), but this seems to be a peculiarity found in a restricted area and in a limited number of cases.

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[1] G. Bergsträsser, Sprachatlas von Syrien und Palästina. — Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins 38 (1915), pp. 169—222.

[2] Haim Blanc, Studies in North Palestinian Arabic. Linguistic Inquiries Among the Druzes of Western Galilee and Mt. Carmel. Jerusalem 1953. — Oriental Notes and Studies published by The Israel Oriental Society, No. 4.

According to the rule given by VILENČIK[1] the diphthongs *aw* and *ay* have been reduced to *u* and *i* in unstressed syllables followed by one consonant: *fô’* ’over’, *fu’ấni* ’upper’, *dêne* ’ear’, *dinên* ’two ears’. Although this rule does not accord with the actual state of things in a great part of the area, the reduction to *u* and *i* is a common occurrence in some words, e.g. *žuᶜân* ’hungry’, *biṭâr* ’farrier’, *tufîq* personal name, *slimân* personal name, and *šiṭân* ’Satan’. Phonemically the vowels of the initial syllables are undoubtedly *ū* and *ī* which are phonetically shortened in an unstressed position, instead of *ō* and *ē*. On closer inspection each one of these instances can, however, be regarded as a special case. The first word might be explained as representing the Cl. *ǧawᶜân*, affected by *ǧūᶜ* ’hunger’ (thus BARTHÉLEMY, s.v. *ǧwᶜ*), and then it might better be analyzed as composed of *žûᶜ* plus *-ân* than looked upon as a result of a phonetic development *žawᶜân* > *žoᶜân* > *žuᶜân*. The validity of this explanation is rendered uncertain by the existence of such forms as *žīᶜân* (FEGHALI, *Kfarᶜabîda*[2], p. 84) and *žaᶜân* (BLANC, Studies, p. 47). The remaining instances are easier to explain: *biṭâr* is a loan word (Syr. *payṭārā*, Gr. *ἱππιατρός*), and therefore its phonetic development is relatively independent of the morphological structure of the langugage; *tufîq* and *slimân* are proper nouns, similarly independent of morphology because of their loose semantic association with the nominal patterns *taqtīl* and *qutaylān*. *šiṭân* is both a loan word, though an old one, and a proper noun. The phonetic development has presumably developed from *aw* and *ay* into *u* and *i* through the intermediate stage *ō/o* and *ē/e*. Besides personal names and loan words this phenomenon occurs in several place names, e.g. *ᶜilûṭ* (< *ᶜaylūṭ*) and *ᶜilabûn* (< *ᶜaylabūn*) villages in Lower Galilee; *mīdân* (< *maydān*) a quarter of Damascus, *bâb kīsân* (< *kaysān*) a gate of Damascus (GROTZFELD, Laut- und Formenlehre[3], p. 24).

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[1] J. VILENČIK, Zur Behandlung der Diphthongen im Syro-arabischen. — Le Monde Oriental 31 (1937), pp. 16f.

[2] M. FEGHALI, Le parler de Kfarᶜabida (Liban-Syrie). Paris 1919.

[3] Heinz GROTZFELD, Laut- und Formenlehre des Damaszenisch-Arabischen. — Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 35, 3. Wiesbaden 1964.

Considered together with *kîf* which as an interrogative particle
is independent of verbal and nominal patterns, these instances sug-
gest a trend of the monophthongized diphthongs towards becoming
ū/u and *ī/i*.[1] This development appears first in words whose associ-
ation with morphological patterns is loosest.

Such words as *ulâd* 'children' and *itâm* 'orphans' are not good
material for diphthong study, because the reduction of the initial
syllable is most plausibly caused by the change of the pattern *'aqtāl*
through a prothetic form to *qtāl*: *'awlād > ᵊwlâd > w/ulâd* and
'aytām > ᵊytâm > y/itâm.

In stressed syllables followed by two consonants the diphthongs
are usually monophthongized: *žêḃtak* 'your pocket', *tnênku* 'you
two', *bênna* 'between us', *dôrna* 'our turn', *laqêtni* 'you found me'.
VILENČIK[2] stated that *aw* and *ay* usually become *a* in doubly closed
stressed syllables, and later he supplemented the rule alleging that
the same is true of *aw* and *ay* in doubly closed unstressed syllables
(MO 31, pp. 16f.). He took examples showing this from FEGHALI,
Kfarᶜabida (p. 85): *bat ḥánna* 'Ḥanna's house', *mónǧáṛ šáṛ'* 'meaning
no harm', *ḫar mónnẹk* 'better than you', and *ᶜan ṭûṛa* a Lebanese
village, and from FEGHALI, Syntaxe[3] (p. 188): *rəddát lak* (side by
side with *rəddáyt lak*) 'I returned (it) to you'.

It should be noticed that these instances occur in a dialect area
where the diphthongs are usually preserved, and thus they cannot
be ranked in the same category as the rest of the cases given by
VILENČIK from the monophthong area. Furthermore, all the exam-

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[1] This change has taken place most fully in the sedentary dialects of
Maghreb, vide Jean CANTINEAU, Cours de phonétique arabe. Paris 1960
(Édition originale réimprimée). Les Diphthongues, pp. 102—105. Cf. Philippe
MARÇAIS, Le parler arabe de Djidjelli (Nord constantinois, Algérie). Paris
1956. — Publications de l'Institut d'Études Orientales d'Alger XVI. Pp. 55ff.

[2] J. VILENČIK, Études sur la phonétique historique de l'arabe vulgaire 3
(in Russian). — Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Sciences de l'URSS, No. 8
(1927), pp. 157—161.

[3] M. FEGHALI, Syntaxe des parlers arabes actuels du Liban. Paris 1928.
— Bibliothèque de l'École des Langues Orientales vivantes 9.

ples of unstressed doubly closed syllables occur in proclitica. It is noteworthy that this kind of reduction occurs particularly in proclitica also outside the Lebanese diphthong area, although the instances are very few. One of them is the auxiliary of futurity *raḥ* (< *rayḥ* < *rāyeḥ* < *rā'iḥ*; act. part. of *râḥ*) given e.g. for Damascus by GROTZFELD (Grammatik[1], p. 87) while CANTINEAU — HELBAOUI[2] (p. 91) gives *rāḥ*; BARTHÉLEMY (s.v. *rwḥ*) gives *râḥ* for the Lebanon, BLANC (Studies, p. 47) *raḥ* for the Druzes of Northern Palestine; in my recordings *raḥ* occurs several times side by side with *rayḥ*. A parallel case is *ṭaḅ* 'well now' (BLANC, Studies, p. 64; also in my recordings from Lower Galilee), used to introduce a sentence, doubly reduced: *ṭayyib* > *ṭayb* > *ṭaḅ*. Probably no intermediate form with a monophthongized diphthong existed in either instance. It seems likely that the reduction *ay* > *a* (*aw* > *a*) in a doubly closed syllable is limited to the diphthong area from which sporadic cases have spread elsewhere.

The monophthongized diphthongs in unstressed doubly closed syllables have regularly been phonetically shortened: *ma-laqĕtnâš* 'you did not find us', *bĕt maḥmûd* 'Maḥmūd's house', *bĕt laḥ°m* 'Bethlehem', *dĕr ḥanna* and *°ĕn* (*°eӯn*) *mâhel* villages in Lower Galilee.

The phonemic gemination does not allow the monophthongization of the combinations *aw* and *ay* when they are results of a phonetic shortening of *aww* and *ayy* before a consonant: *raw(w)ḥu* 'go home (imp. pl.)', *ṣaw(w)ṭu* 'vote (imp. pl.)', *may(y)lu* 'turn toward (imp. pl.)', *mraw(w)ḥîn* 'going home (act. part. pl. masc.)', *mbay(y)ne* 'clear (act. part. sg. fem.)', *midday(y)nîn* 'devout (act. part. pl. masc.)'. On the ground of a purely segmental analysis, contrasts *aw* — *ō* and *ay* — *ē* can be found: *maylu* vs. *mêlu* 'his inclination' and *ṣawṭu* vs. *ṣôṭu* 'his voice' (vide BLANC, Studies, p. 44).

The I pass. part. of verba C¹*w* preserves the diphthong of the initial syllable, e.g. *mawlûd* 'born', *mawžûd* 'existing', *mawsûm*

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[1] Heinz GROTZFELD, Syrisch-arabische Grammatik (Dialekt von Damascus). — Porta Linguarum Orientalium, Neue Serie VIII. Wiesbaden 1965.

[2] Jean CANTINEAU et Youssef HELBAOUI, Manuel élémentaire d'arabe oriental (parler de Damas). Paris 1953.

'branded (cattle)', *mawṣûf* 'distinguished'. Such forms as *māgûd* 'existing', *mārûṭ* 'inherited', *māsûm* 'branded', *māᶜûd* 'promised', and *māgûd* 'lighted' which occur in Ḥōrân, are better explained as belonging together with the imperfect than through a phonetic change *aw* > *ā* (CANTINEAU, Ḥōrân[1], p. 237).

In the causative form IV of verba C¹*w* the diphthong *aw* of the initial syllable is monophthongized: *'ôğaᶜ* 'it caused pain', *'ôᶜad* 'he promised', *'ôgad* 'he lit', *'ôsäm* 'he branded (cattle)' (CANTINEAU, Ḥōrân, p. 261), *ôḵadu* 'they lit' (SCHMIDT—KAHLE, Volkserzählungen[2] I 54, 2), *ôğah* 'he came' (ibid., I 45, 4), *ômêtle* 'I beckoned to him' (ibid., I 16, 1), *'ôḍaᶜat* 'she gave birth' (BAUER, s.v. gebären). The imperfect form has been transformed in analogy with the perfect: *yôğäᶜ*, *yôᶜed*, *yôged* (CANTINEAU, Ḥōrân, p. 261), *yôsim* (SCHMIDT—KAHLE, Volkserzählungen I 38, 9), *yôḵid* (ibid., II 110, 4), *bôᶜdič* 'I promise you (sg. fem.)' (ibid., I 47, 9), and similarly also act. part.: *môğih* (ibid., II 80, 4). Thus the monophthongization has led to a morphological division: while the perfect and imperfect forms of verba firma are *'aqtal* or *eqtal* (with a prothesis) and *yuqtil*, the forms of verba C¹*w* are *'ôtal* and *yôtel*, *yôtil*, i.e. similar to the I imperf. of verba C¹'*w*: *yôkel*, *yôčil*, *yôzin*, *yôfi* etc. found in Palestine and parts of Syria. This concourse is probably rendered possible by the gradual extinction of form IV in the dialect.

There are some instances of monophthongization in form X also, at least in Ḥōrân: *ᵉstôğaᶜ* 'he pretended to have a pain', *ᵉstôḥad* 'he felt lonely', *ᵉstôḥaš* 'he was frightened', *ᵉstôdaᶜ* 'he entrusted', *ᵉstôfaṛ* 'he economized' (CANTINEAU, Ḥōrân, pp. 271 f.), but side by side with them nonmonophthongized forms also appear: *ᵉstawfaṛ* (ibid., p. 156). Elsewhere the diphthong usually seems to be preserved,

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[1] J. CANTINEAU, Les parlers arabes du Ḥōrân. Notions générales, grammaire. — Collection linguistique publ. par La Société de Linguistique de Paris, LII. Paris 1946.

[2] Hans SCHMIDT und Paul KAHLE, Volkserzählungen aus Palästina, gesammelt bei den Bauern von Bīr-Zêt und in Verbindung mit Dschirius Jusif in Jerusalem hrsg. Bd. I Göttingen 1918, Bd. 2 1930. — Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, 1. Folge, 17—18.

e.g. in Damascus (GROTZFELD, Laut- und Formenlehre, p. 83);
BAUER and BARTHÉLEMY likewise give these forms with diphthongs.
In Palmyra the first root consonant *w* has disappeared: *ŏstače^c* 'he
suffered pain' (CANTINEAU, Palmyre I[1], p. 164). The fact that two
alternatives of the same word occur in a local dialect calls forth the
presumption that they are stylistic variants, the diphthongal form
of which is a recent reconstruction influenced by the classical form
of the language.

In the elative pattern *'aqtal* the diphthong of the initial syllable
is regularly preserved: *'awṣaṭ* 'middle', *'awṭa* 'lower', *'awsaḫ* 'dirtier',
'awḍaḥ 'clearer'. Exceptions are very uncommon, e.g. *ŏhar* 'more
terrible' (SCHMIDT—KAHLE, Volkserzählungen I 44, 7) and *'awwal
b-ǫwal* 'one by one' (CANTINEAU, Palmyre I, p. 92), but *'awwal
b-'awwal* (BARTHÉLEMY, s.v. *'áwwal*). The preservation of the diph-
thong is obviously connected with the semantically prominent rôle
of the pattern.

Influence of style

The colloquial dialect abounds in words borrowed either from
literary (Old Classical or Neo-Classical) Arabic or foreign languages.
In spite of great local and personal differences some common features
occur everywhere. In addition to being heard almost daily, the
literary language is used by everybody in religious formulae, in some
schematic greetings, and, to an increasing degree, in the new con-
cepts brought by modern life, swiftly circulated by radio and school.
These words are incorporated in the colloquial speech, usually almost
unchanged, and among them several instances can be found where
the diphthong is preserved, of which the most extensively used are
lâ ḥawla . . . 'there is no power . . .', *s-salâm ^calaykum* (side by side
with *^alê-*) 'peace be on you', and *ṭawra* 'revolution'.

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[1] J. CANTINEAU, Le dialecte arabe de Palmyre. T. I. Grammaire. T. II.
Vocabulaire et Textes. Beyrouth 1934. — Mémoires de l'Institute Français
de Damas.

The new diphthongs aw and ay

Besides the cases where the combinations *aw* and *ay* have been preserved, new ones have developed due to phonetic change. To the most usual instances of such diphthongs in stressed syllables belong:

1. Broken plurals of the pattern *qatā'il* followed by a vocalic suffix: *nasaybak* and *qaraybak* 'your relatives'.

2. The nominal pattern *qitāla* of nomina tertiae infirmae when the feminine ending is followed by a vocalic suffix: *bnayti* 'my building', *mraytak* 'your mirror'.

3. The nominal pattern *qātila* of nomina C²': *ᶜayle* 'family', further monophthongized *ᶜêle*; the two words *ḥêṭ* 'wall' (Cl. *ḥā'iṭ*) and *mêde* 'low table' (Cl. *mā'ida*) occur only with monophthongized diphthongs. The *hamza* has early become *y* between the long vowel and *i* (cf. the mediaeval Judaeo-Arabic writing *'lḥ'yyṭ* = *al-ḥāyiṭ*, BLAU, Judaeo-Arabic [1], p. 74), then *âyi* shortened to *ay* before a vocalic suffix (cf. *ḥyṭk* = *ḥayṭak* or *ḥêṭak*, ibid., p. 74). These two words are pronounced in most Arabic dialects similar to the nomina C²*wy* of the pattern *qatl*: in the Lebanese diphthong area they are *ḥayṭ* and *maydė* (FEGHALI, Kfarᶜabîda, p. 86), in Djidjelli *ḥêṭ* and *mîda* (P. MARÇAIS, Djidjelli, p. 59). Here an important difference between the nomina of the pattern *qātila* and the active participles using the same pattern can be found. In participles monophthongization never occurs: *šâyef*, shortened *šayf*, fem. *šayfe* 'seeing', *nâyef*, shortened *nayf* personal name, *sâyil*, sometimes *sayyil*, fem. *sayle* 'asking', *râyeḥ* or *rayyeḥ*, fem. *rayḥa* 'going'.

4. The demonstrative pronoun *hayy* (< *hā-ī*, vide FISCHER, Die demonstrativen Bildungen [2], p. 54) and the particle *hôn* (< **hawnā* < **hā-unā* < **hāhunā*, ibid., pp. 118f.).

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[1] Joshua BLAU, The Emergence and Linguistic Background of Judaeo-Arabic. A Study of the Origins of Middle Arabic. Oxford 1965. — Scripta Judaica V.

[2] Wolfdietrich FISCHER, Die demonstrativen Bildungen der neurarabischen Dialekte. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Grammatik des Arabischen. 's Gravenhage 1959.

In an unstressed syllable a new diphthong most commonly occurs
in the plurals of I active participles: *šayfîn, šayfât, rayḥîn, rayḥât.*
After the syncope of the middle syllable of *ḥayawān* 'animal' a new
diphthong is formed: *ḥaywân,* and in some local dialects this is still
monophthongized, even developed to *i̬: ḥiwên* (CANTINEAU, Pal-
myre I, p. 92, cf. FEGHALI, Kfarᶜabîda, p. 84).

New diphthongs aw and ay over an external juncture

The combinations *aw* and *ay* are often formed over an external
juncture in consequence of the loss of *i* and *u* (sometimes also *a*)
in open unstressed initial syllables. Such cases as *biqra‿w-biktib,
ma‿ykûn, lamma‿yfûtu,* and *ta‿yšûf* are, in this connection, not as
noteworthy as those where more noticeable sound changes take
place. Thus, according to my recordings from Lower Galilee, the
word *hunâk* often loses its initial *h* when preceded by a vowel, e.g.
la‿wnâk '(to) there', *'eḥna lli štiḡalna‿wnâk* 'we who worked there',
examples of crasis *'êš* 'what?' $<$ **'ayy ši (šayy $>$ ši* in proclitic
position) with a monophthongized »new» diphthong, and the nominal
negation *muš, məš $<$ mâ hû ši* which has developed through a new
diphthong *aw,* although it is uncertain whether the short vowel
is a shortening of a monophthongized dipthong: *mawš $>$ môš* as VI-
LENČIK explains (CRASU 8, p. 157), or whether the negative affor-
mative *š(i)* was appended to *mû $<$ ma-(h)û $<$ mā hû.* It is certain
that the development has not been similar in different local dialects.
While *mû* is widely used without the afformative, this appears even
in a very conservative form: *māhûš* (used in Ḥōrân side by side
with *môš* and *mûš,* CANTINEAU, Ḥōrân, p. 390).

Pre-pausal diphthongization

The new diphthongs *aw* and *ay* are found as a result of dissimilation
of *ū* and *ī* in pre-pausal position especially in the diphthong area.
They are most common in Beqᶜa, where FLEISCH (Zaḥlé[1], p. 85)

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[1] H. FLEISCH, Notes sur le dialecte arabe de Zaḥlé (Liban). — Mélanges
de l'Université Saint Joseph, Beyrouth, T. XXVII, Fasc. 5 (1947—48),
pp. 73—116.

characterizes the phenomenon as »le grande originalité du parler de Zaḥlé» giving such examples as *kŗûm* 'vineyards', pre-pausal *kŗåům*, *šu báddọọ?* 'what does he want?', *šáů?* 'what?', *šu báddu féĭk?* 'what does he want with you?', *baddu yiŗáůḥ* 'he will go, he wants to go' (Zaḥlé, p. 85), *ᶜönĭb utäĭn* 'grapes and figs' (ibid., p. 107), and *ḥâleĭ* 'myself' (ibid., p. 109).

The pre-pausal diphthongization, although not as prominent, is also reported from North Palestine by BLANC (Studies, pp. 50—52), who noted it especially in the dialect of older, non-literate and non-urbanized speakers. It occurs most frequently before ? and !: *bifhamš* *ᶜarabay!* 'but he doesn't understand Arabic!', *baddak 'išay?* 'do you want anything?', *qallay* 'he said to me' (Studies, p. 50), *ṭfaḍḍalaw!* 'please come in!', *šarraftaw!* 'you have honoured us (by your visit)', and *'ilkaw* 'to you (pl.)' (Studies, p. 52).

The phonemic status of the monophthongized diphthongs

On the ground of a purely synchronic segmental analysis, the monophthongized diphthongs *aw* > *ō* and *ay* > *ē* can indisputably be regarded as independent phonemes. There are numerous contrast pairs showing this, e.g. *ō* — *ū*: *qôm* 'tribe' vs. *qûm* 'get up (imp. sg. 2. masc.)', *ō* — *ā*: *qôm* vs. *qâm* 'he got up', *ē* — *ī*: *dên* 'debt' vs. *dîn* 'religion', *ē* — *ā*: *bêt* 'house' vs. *bât* 'he stayed over night'.

However, the phonemic status of *ō* and *ē* has become a cause of controversy involving the principle which should be followed in the description of the phonemic structure of a dialect. When FER-GUSON in his review[1] of CANTINEAU—HELBAOUI added several phonemes, e.g. the »foreign» *v*, *p*, *ọ̄*, and *ȫ* (*krâve* 'tie', *brâvo* 'bravo', *narvaz* 'he upset [someone]', *veraṇda* 'balcony', *'awruppa* 'Europe', *garṣȫ* 'waiter', *dəktôr* 'doctor'), to those given for Damascus Arabic in the reviewed book, CANTINEAU replied with the article »The Phonemic System of Damascus Arabic»[2], where he categorically rejects

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[1] Language 30 (1954), No. 4, pp. 564—570.

[2] Jean CANTINEAU, The Phonemic System of Damascus Arabic. — Word 12 (1956), pp. 116—124.

the principle stated by FERGUSON that it is sufficient to establish
as a phoneme a sound that occurs in surroundings in which it cannot
reasonably be identified with any already established phoneme in
the language. CANTINEAU considers the phoneme »as a minimal
distinctive unit, and nothing else» (p. 117). On the basis of this defini-
tion he regards the sounds v, p, $\bar{o}$, and $\bar{o}$ not as phonemes but as
»optional stylistic variants of phonemes or groups of phonemes
underlining a certain modern style of speech» (p. 117). To avoid
the bias of the »purely synchronic» description, CANTINEAU shortened
the list of phonemes explaining $\bar{o}$ and $\bar{e}$ only as »realizations of the
groups of phonemes *aw* and *ay*» (p. 118). He was led to this conclusion
by morphological considerations: series of words such as names of
colours with their feminines: *'aḥmar* 'red', fem. *ḥamra*, *'aḫḍar* 'green',
fem. *ḫaḍra*, *'azra'* 'blue', fem. *zar'a*, *'abyaḍ* 'white', fem. *bêḍa*, *'aswad*
'black', fem. *sôda*, or substantives with their plurals: *žaḥš* 'donkey',
pl. *žḥâš*, *baġl* 'mule', pl. *bġâl*, *ḥabl* 'rope', pl. *ḥbâl*, *tôr* 'bull', pl. *twâr*,
and *kêl* 'measure', pl. *kyâl* (pp. 118f.). He had already set forth
the same view, although not in such express terms, a decade earlier:
»Les sujets parlants sentent dans ce cas non pas des voyelles longues
$\bar{e}$ et $\bar{o}$, mais bien des groupes *ay* et *aw*» (Ḥōrân, p. 156).

CANTINEAU's stand is particularly difficult to disprove because it
is based upon such ambiguous concepts as the »sentiment» of the
»sujet parlant» and »realization». The former most likely means the
native speaker's feeling for his language, his Sprachgefühl. If the
word »realization» is used accurately, it must in this connection
mean the same as i in *birûḥ* 'he goes' as the phonetic realization of
the phoneme $\bar{\imath}$ in *bīrūḥ* (CANTINEAU's phonemic transcription), a in
mafatîḥ 'keys' as the phonetic realization of $\bar{a}$ in *mafātîḥ*, i in *nəsito*
'she forgot him' as the realization of y in *nəsyto*, and u of *'ahuto*
'his coffee' as the realization of the phoneme w in *'hwto* (cf. Word 12,
p. 121), i.e. combinatory variants of phonemes or groups of pho-
nemes.

If $\bar{o}$ and $\bar{e}$ are regarded only as »realizations» of *aw* and *ay*, it is
difficult to understand how any phonemic change can take place
as a result of purely phonetic change, e.g. how the word *kêf* could

go over to the pattern *qiṭl*: *kîf*, or how a morphological division of
the causative form IV has been possible.

The fact that the phonetic trend towards monophthongization of
the diphthongs *aw* and *ay* is regulated by morphology is evidence
of a móre deep-going change than a mere realization of these groups
of phonemes. A condition of monophthongization is the preservation
of intelligibility. Thus the change does not meet any opposition in
the nominal pattern *qaṭl*; similarly words C² belonging to the nominal
pattern *qāṭil* can go over to *qaṭl* (*ḥā'iṭ > ḥayṭ*) and further mono-
phthongize their diphthong (*> ḥêṭ*) while this further development
is impossible in the morphologically more prominent active participle
pattern *qāṭil*. For the same reason the diphthongs have been pre-
served when their latter component is doubled. On the other hand,
the monophthongization of *aw* in the perfect of the causative form
IV is a token of weakening of its specific function, and the analogically
formed imperfect may be regarded as a step towards its incorpora-
tion into form I, while the comparative elative *'aqtal* preserved the
diphthong for morphological distinction. The only reason why mo-
nophthongization is not allowed in all morphological categories
seems to be that the pronunciation *ō* and *ē* might lead to the dimin-
ishing of intelligibility. Therefore I consider it improbable that *ō*
and *ē* could be »felt» — at least not in every word and by every
speaker — as *aw* and *ay*.

Further, I cannot see why the series of words given by CANTINEAU
prove his theory. The word *tôr* may be classified as belonging to the
pattern *quṭl* as well as to its original pattern *qaṭl*, and similarly *kêl*
may be classified under the type *qiṭl*, since many words belonging
to the patterns *quṭl* and *qiṭl* have a plural form *qṭâl* like *twâr* and
kyâl. This classification was actually proposed by BLANC (Studies,
p. 44), who used the notation *uw* and *iy* instead of the traditional
ū and *ī*, and *ū* (*u:*) and *ī* (*i:*) instead of the notation *ō* and *ē* as »mo-
nophthongal prolongations of the phonemes *u* and *i*» (ibid., p. 43 f.).
This classification is reinforced by the fact that *ō* and *ē* have become
ū and *ī* in some dialects and that signs of a parallel trend are also
to be seen in the Syrian Arabic. Moreover, *ō* and *ē* appear as pro-

longations of *u* and *i* in imperative forms, e.g. in Damascus Arabic: *ḥôd, kôl, ktôb, nzêl, ᶜmêl,* and *lbês.*

One might claim that the classical pronunciations *aw* and *ay* are known to every speaker because of the daily contact with the classical form of language, and therefore *ō* and *ē* are nothing but colloquial realizations of those combinations which have a »latent» existence. This may be at least partially true, but cannot be proved. The concept of »latency» has been used e.g. by MARTINET [1] who solves the problem of the description of the French 'h muette' (*l'être* [letr] 'the being' vs. *le hêtre* [ləetr] 'the beech') by means of latency (p. 201), and HJELMSLEV [2] who explains the final *d* as »latent» in the Danish words *vand* [van] 'water' and *mand* [man] 'man' (cf. the adjectives *vandig* and *mandig*) (p. 83). SMEATON [3] gives as an example of latency in Arabic the suffix of sg. 3. masc.: »If a pronominal suffix *-hu* is daily heard or repeated (as for example in the form *lahu* '[un]to Him', in the oft recited 112th Sūrah), it must be regarded as having some sort of existence which even in colloquial apocope has a latent reality» (p. 361). If this could be proved, the same could be true of the monophthongized diphthongs. Although the latent reality of some classical forms in colloquial language is very difficult to disprove, I believe that some facts can be found which reveal the doubtfulness of this theory. Here I mean the deviations in orthography reflecting the spoken language. I have several instances of such »incorrect» forms in the letters sent by my Arab friends, highly formal and written with exceptional care. Most of these deviations occur in the non-classical word *biddu* (written either *bd*, *b* plus *d* with *šadda*, or *bd* plus *ḍamma*), next in *qallu* (*ql*, *q* plus *l* with *šadda*, *ql* plus *ḍamma*). When a person able to write often omits the *h* of the suffix, the conclusion must be drawn that the usage of *h* in writing is learned, i.e. not equally known in all words and to different speakers. There-

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[1] A. MARTINET, Remarques sur le systéme phonologique du français. — Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris 34 (1933), pp. 191—202.

[2] L. HJELMSLEV, Omkring sprogteoriens grundlæggelse. København 1943.

[3] B. Hunter SMEATON, Some Problems in the Description of Arabic. — Word 12 (1956), pp. 357—368.

fore its latent reality is both incomplete and unequal. As for the monophthongized diphthongs, the cases of a *defective scriptum* ō or ē found in the Judaeo-Arabic texts written in Hebrew characters, e.g. *'mt'* 'when?' (erroneously copied in GOTTHEIL—WORRELL [1] 132.b33, Plate XXVIII) show that their diphthongal origin was obscured because of monophthongization.[2]

Owing to the ambiguity of the concepts used in this kind of discussion, the problem of the phonemic classification cannot be satisfactorily solved without reference to its practical purpose. If an attempt is made at a »purely synchronic description» of the dialect, the monophthongized diphthongs ō and ē must be classified as independent phonemes side by side with the other long vowels ā, ī and ū. Strictly speaking such a description is not realizable without bias since it is based on actual speech, but the existence of a certain standard of speech, even colloquial, renders it possible to draw up a list of the phonemes of a dialect.

For pedagogical purposes different lists of phonemes can be made, but all of them are arbitrary, because in a diachronic description one must in each individual case consider where to stop investigation of the historical development. If CANTINEAU's definition of phonemes as minimal distinctive units is accepted, one must wonder how the distinctiveness can be examined, except at a certain synchronic level, such as a dialect actually spoken, or in a standardized system such as Classical Arabic. On these levels two different classifications are possible in exact terms: in Classical Arabic every combination of *aw* and *ay* is analyzable into two different phonemic units, in Syro-Palestinian Arabic ō and ē are independent phonemic units.

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[1] R. GOTTHEIL—W. H. WORRELL, Fragments from the Cairo Genizah in Freer Collection. New York 1927.

[2] vide BLAU, Judaeo-Arabic, p. 73; for further examples Joshua BLAU, A Grammar of Mediaeval Judaeo-Arabic (*Diqdûq*) Jerusalem 1961 (in Hebrew), p. 20, § 7 *bēṯ*.