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The Folktale of Saint George and il-Xiḍⁱr:
A Text in Christian Arabic of is-Swaydī (Samandağ)
in the Turkish Hatay Province

Summary

This article presents a text in Christian Arabic, a dialect used by a small community in the town of is-Swaydī (Samandağ), in Hatay Province, Turkey. The recorded text refers to the figure of il-Xiḍⁱr whose pilgrimage site is located in Samandağ. Christians believe that il-Xiḍⁱr and Saint George are the same person. Apart from the transcription of the text, this article includes its translation and grammatical commentary focused on vowels, pausal forms, and assimilations.

Keywords: Antiochia Arabic, Christian Arabic, folktale, Hatay, pausal form, Saint George, Samandağ, is-Swaydī, Turkey, il-Xiḍⁱr

The aim of this paper is to present the dialectal text in Christian Arabic of is-Swaydī (Samandağ) along with a brief grammatical commentary. The text tells the story of il-Xiḍⁱr whose tomb is used as a pilgrimage site (*zyāra*)[1] in is-Swaydī and is called il-Xiḍⁱr by the locals. Alawites from the surrounding area visit the place to offer their prayers to il-Xiḍⁱr. However, Christians living in Hatay Province believe that il-Xiḍⁱr is none other than Saint George (Ǧirǧus) and that is the main subject of the presented registered text. The issue of pilgrimage sites in Hatay, as well as merging il-Xiḍⁱr with Saint George by Christians has already been discussed in several scientific publications.[2]

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[1] Classical Arabic: *ziyāra* 'visit'.

[2] See: Jens Kreinath, *Virtual Encounters with Hızır and Other Muslim Saints: Dreaming and Healing at Local Pilgrimage Sites in Hatay, Turkey*, "Anthropology of the Contemporary Middle East and Central Eurasia" 2 (1), 2014, pp. 25–66, Jens Kreinath, *The Seductiveness of Saints: Interreligious Pilgrimage Sites in Hatay and the Ritual Transformations of Agency*, in: Michael A. Di Giovine, David Picard (eds.), *The Seductions of Pilgrimage: Sacred*

Is-Swaydī (in Turkish Samandağ) is a town located in the south-western part of Hatay Province, which was annexed by Turkey in the waning days of the French Mandate for Syria and the Lebanon on 29 June 1939. To this day, Arabic dialects called Antiochia Arabic are preserved in the province.[3] They belong to the Syro-Palestinian group of Arabic dialects. Peter Behnstedt classifies them in Syrian coastal dialects (Küstendialekte), which extend from Çukurova in Turkey, through both Hatay and the Syrian coast to Lebanon.[4] Çukurova dialects (Cilician Arabic) have been described by Stephan Procházka,[5] while Antiochia Arabic dialects are described by Werner Arnold in his work *Die arabischen Dialekte Antiochiens*.[6] The latter distinguishes two types of Arabic dialects in Hatay Province: sedentary (which are divided into urban and rural) and Bedouin. Only Jews use the urban dialects, while the dialects of Christians, Sunnis and Alawites are classified as the rural dialects.[7] The number of Christians in Hatay Province has been estimated to be as many as 5,000 people, but these figures come from 1975.[8] Emilie Durand Zuniga

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Journeys Afar and Astray in the Western Religious Tradition, Ashgate, Farnham–Burlington 2015, pp. 121–143, Laila Prager, *Alawi Ziyāra Tradition and Its Interreligious Dimensions: Sacred Places and Their Contested Meanings among Christians, Alawi and Sunni Muslims in Contemporary Hatay (Turkey)*, "The Muslim World" 103, 2013, pp. 41–61, Hüseyin Türk, *Hatay'da Müslüman-Hıristiyan Etkileşimi: St. Georges ya da Hızır Kültü*, "Millî Folklor" 22 (85), 2010, pp. 138–147.

[3]   Werner Arnold, *Antiochia Arabic*, in: *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics. Vol. I A-Ed*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2006, pp. 111–119.

[4]   Peter Behnstedt, *Sprachatlas von Syrien. II: Volkskundliche Texte*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2000, p. 108.

[5]   Stephan Procházka, *Cilician Arabic*, in: *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics. Vol. I A-Ed*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2006, pp. 388–397, Stephan Procházka, *Contact Phenomena, Code-copying, and Code-switching in the Arabic Dialects of Adana and Mersin (Southern Turkey)*, in: Abderrahim Youssi, Fouzia Benjelloun, Mohamed Dahbi, Zakia Iraqui-Sinaceur (eds.), *Aspects of the Dialects of Arabic Today: Proceedings of the 4th Conference of the International Arabic Dialectology Association (AIDA), Marrakesh, Apr. 1–4,2000. In Honour of Professor David Cohen*, Amapatril, Rabat 2002, pp. 133–139, Stephan Procházka, *Die Alawitendialekte der Çukurova – Vergleichsmaterialien zu Peter Behnstedts Sprachatlas von Syrien*, "Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes" 92, 2002, pp. 91–109, Stephan Procházka, *Die arabischen Dialekte der Çukurova (Südtürkei)*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2002, Stephan Procházka, *From Language Contact to Language Death: The Example of the Arabic Spoken in Cilicia (Southern Turkey)*, "Orientalia Sucecana" 48, 1999, pp. 115–125, Stephan Procházka, *Some Morphological and Syntactical Characteristics of the Arabic Dialects Spoken in Cilicia (Southern Turkey)*, in: Manwel Mifsud (ed.), *Proceedings of the Third International Conference of AÏDA Association Internationale de Dialectologie Arabe held at Malta, 29 March–2 April 1998*, AIDA, Malta 2000, pp. 219–223, Stephan Procházka, *The Arabic dialects of Cilicia (Southern Turkey)*, in: Joe Cremona, Clive Holes, Geoffrey Khan (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference of l'Association Internationale pour la Dialectologie Arabe (AIDA) held at Trinity Hall in the University of Cambridge, 10–14 September 1995*, University Publications Centre, Cambridge 1995, pp. 189–196, Stephan Procházka, *Women's Wedding Songs from Adana: Forty Quatrains in Cilician Arabic*, "Estudios de Dialectología Norteafricana y Andalusí" 13, 2009, pp. 235–255.

[6]   Werner Arnold, *Die arabischen Dialekte Antiochiens*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 1998.

[7]   Werner Arnold, *Die arabischen Dialekte der Christen in der Türk*ei, "Mediterranean Language Review" 22, 2015, p. 111, Arnold, *Antiochia Arabic*, p. 111.

[8]   Arnold, *Die arabischen Dialekte der Christen in der Türk*ei, p. 108, Arnold, *Antiochia Arabic*, p. 111. See also: Peter Alford Andrews, Rüdiger Benninghaus, *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey*, Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, Wiesbaden 1989, pp. 154–156.

estimates the precise number of Christians at 2,000 people.[9] According to the sources, the number of dialects' users has been consistently dropping over the last decades. Besides Werner Arnold's fundamental work on Antiochia Arabic dialects and his papers,[10] it is also necessary to pay attention articles he co-authored with Mahmut Ağbaht,[11] and also to Emilie Durand Zuniga's doctoral thesis[12] about phonetic and phonological issues – particularly pausal vowels – of il-Ğillī Arabic.

Is-Swaydī is inhabited by Christians and Alawites, each of them using different Arabic dialects. The town was established from the merger of several villages.[13] Therefore, it can be expected that there are some inconsiderable differences in the dialect of each religious community. The recorded dialectal text and data collected previously by Werner Arnold suggest some slight differences in Christian Arabic of is-Swaydī within the town. The question of dialectal variation remains unresolved. Without further analysis, it is difficult to assert what such differences would entail. Due to the lack of young users, it is likely that is-Swaydī dialects will be forgotten soon. During my

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[9] Emilie Durand Zuniga, *An Instrumental Study of Pausal Vowels in Il-Ğillī Arabic (Southern Turkey)*, PhD thesis, University of Texas at Austin, Austin 2015, p. 6.

[10] Arnold, *Antiochia Arabic*, Werner Arnold, *Arabian Dialects in the Turkish Province of Hatay*, in: Joe Cremona, Clive Holes, Geoffrey Khan (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference of l'Association Internationale pour la Dialectologie Arabe (AIDA) held at Trinity Hall in the University of Cambridge, 10–14 September 1995*, University Publications Centre, Cambridge 1995, pp. 1–10, Werner Arnold, *Code Switching and Code Mixing in the Arabic Dialects of Antioch*, in: Abderrahim Youssi, Fouzia Benjelloun, Mohamed Dahbi, Zakia Iraqui-Sinaceur (eds.), *Aspects of the Dialects of Arabic Today: Proceedings of the 4th Conference of the International Arabic Dialectology Association (AIDA), Marrakesh, Apr. 1–4, 2000. In Honour of Professor David Cohen*, Amapatril, Rabat 2002, pp. 163–168, Werner Arnold, *Der Lulav. Ein Text im arabischen Dialekt der Juden von Iskenderun (Südosttürkei)*, in: Matthias Kappler, Mark Kirchner, Peter Zieme (eds.), *Trans-Turkic Studies. Festschrift in Honour of Marcel Erdal*, Türk Dilleri Araştırmaları Ölmez, Istanbul 2010, pp. 431–434, Arnold, *Die arabischen Dialekte der Christen in der Türkei*, Werner Arnold, *Homonymenfurcht in den Arabischen Dialekten Antiochiens*, "Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam" 29, 2004, pp. 136–144, Werner Arnold, *Pausalformen in den arabischen Dialekten Antiochiens*, in: Shabo Talay, Hartmut Bobzin (eds.), *Arabische Welt: Grammatik, Dichtung und Dialekte. Beiträge einer Tagung in Erlangen zu Ehren von Wolfdietrich Fischer*, Reichert Verlag, Wiesbaden 2010, pp. 227–235, Werner Arnold, *The Arabic Dialect of Jews of Iskenderun*, "Romano-Arabica" 6–7, 2007, pp. 7–12, Werner Arnold, *The Arabic Dialects in the Turkish Province of Hatay and the Aramaic Dialects in the Syrian Mountains of Qalamūn: Two Minority Languages Compared*, in: Jonathan Owens (ed.), *Arabic as a Minority Language*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin–New York 2000, pp. 347–370, Werner Arnold, *Über den Arrak in Eriklikuyuköyü. Zwei Texte eines arabischen Dorfdialekts der Nuṣayrier in Antiochien*, in: Jordi Aguadé, Ángeles Vicente, Leila Abu-Shams (eds.), *Sacrum Arabo-Semiticum. Homenaje al profesor Federico Corriente en su 65 aniversario*, "Estudios Árabes e Islámicos" 6, Instituto de Estudios Islámicos de Oriente Próximo, Zaragoza 2005, pp. 91–97, Werner Arnold, *Über die Herstellung von Seide in Antiochien. Ein Text im arabischen Dialekt der Nusayrier von Yaqtu*, in: Pier Giorgio Borbone, Alessandro Mengozzi, Mauro Tosco (eds.), *Loquentes linguis. Studi linguisticie orientali in onore die Fabrizio A. Pennacchietti*, Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 2006, pp. 21–27.

[11] Mahmut Ağbaht and Werner Arnold, *Antakya'nın Dursunlu Köyünde Konuşulan Arap Diyalekti*, "Nüsha. Şarkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi" 39 (14: 2), 2014, pp. 7–26, Mahmut Ağbaht and Werner Arnold, *Der Kluge und der Narr. Ein Text im arabischen Dialekt der Nuṣayrier von Sqūtiyāt in der türkischen Provinz Hatay*, "Folia Orientalia" 49, 2012, pp. 25–35.

[12] Zuniga, *An Instrumental Study of Pausal Vowels in Il-Ğillī Arabic (Southern Turkey)*.

[13] Arnold, *Die arabischen Dialekte Antiochiens*, p. 346.

fieldwork, parents explained their children's ignorance of Arabic in a quite curious way. They believe that the language in this form (as a spoken language) will not be useful to their children. Therefore, they focus more on Turkish at home, so that later their children can have an easier start in the local school where lessons are not conducted in Arabic dialects. As a result, the young people of is-Swaydī have become passive users of Arabic.

The Christian Arabic text presented in this article was recorded in is-Swaydī on 16 March 2015 by the author. The informant was Basil Çapar (Basīl Ibn Simʿān), whose parents were born in is-Swaydī. He was born in 1931, and thus is perhaps one of the oldest users of the local Christian dialect. At school, he also learned Classical Arabic. In the text some loanwords from Classical Arabic appear, but it is unclear whether the story has been heard by him in Arabic, e.g. in the church, and then told with some loanwords.

First, I will present the recorded text in transcription along with its translation and the short grammatical analysis. In the transcription, I do not use punctuation marks and capital letters, but I note each pause (|) and words in pausal forms (#).

Transcription

(1) *ha-ṣ-ṣūrt illi šēyfa ʿanna b-il-ḥayṭ hādey# | ʾinti riḥt ʿa-l-baḥᵢr mā riḥt | riḥt ʿa-l-baḥᵢṛ# | (2) hūnīki fī li-zyāra | biqillū-la l-xiḍᵢṛ# | hawni ğamāʿtna ğamāʿt l-ʿalawīn | bass ʿan il-xiḍᵢr mā byaʿrfu*[14] *šī ʾabadin# | (3) il-xiḍᵢr# | baʿd il-mīlāḏ# | m-mītayn*[15] *w-tmēnīn sini ʾāš | xiliq xiliq fī balad ʾisma kabadōkya*[16] *| (4) hallaq ʾabiqillū-la nāwšahiṛ#*[17] *| b-it-tirki | hawnīk xiliq ʾimmu filisṭīnī | w-bayyu raʾīs il-ḥaras ʿand il-malik | malik r-rōmānīn | (5) hūwe# | ʾimmow# | ṣāyri masīḥī bass b-is-siṛṛ# | mā ḥada ʿabyistiğir*[18] *byaʿrifu rabbátu tirbāy masīḥī li-ğirğus |*

(6) *waqt-ili ṣār ğirğus ʾibᵢn sitta ʿš sini sabaṭaʿš sine# | bi ʿtū ʿala madrist il-ʿaskarī | hawnīk baddu yṣīr ẓābiṭ ʾiza xallaṣ il-madᵢrsi | (7) miši xallaṣ il-madᵢrsi ʾabu sintē:yn# | ʾallqū-lu masalan ʿālāmi niğmi ʿala kitfu | w-bi ʿtu ʿa-l-ḥarb# | (8) r-rōmānīn kīf sawwu ha-l-ʾimparaṭūṛ#*[19] *| b-il-ḥarb# | y-ğirğus hamm kān qawey# | hamm ğasūṛ# | ribiḥ il-ḥarb# | (9) miši ribiḥ il-ḥarb ʾallqū-lu niğimt it-tāney# | bi ʿtu ʿala ğabha ʾakbaṛ# | kamān ribiḥ | (10) ʾallqū-lu niğmi ṣār ᵢtlāti | qāʾid mī*[20] *| bib ʿatu ʿala ğabha ssa ʾakbaṛ w-ʾakbaṛ# | kmān byirbaḥ hūnīke# | (11) biṣīr qāʾid ʾalf*[21] *ʾibᵢn ʿišrīn sini biṣīr qāʾid ʾalf | ğirğus*

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[14] *byiʿrfu > byaʿrfu, i > a* under the influence of the pharyngeal consonant ʿ.

[15] *b-mītayn > m-mītayn.*

[16] Cappadocia; Turkish: Kapadokya.

[17] Turkish: Nevşehir.

[18] *starğa > staǧar.*

[19] Turkish: *imparator.*

[20] A literal translation from Turkish: *yüzbaşı* 'commander, senior grade': *yüz* 'hundred', *baş* 'head, chief'.

[21] A literal translation from Turkish: *binbaşı* 'commander, squadron leader': *bin* 'thousand', *baş* 'head, chief'.

| (12) *ba ʿdĩ:n#* | *kill il-ʿālam ṣār ⁱtḥibbu la-ǧirǧus* | *bass mā ʿirfātu*[22] *ʾimmu m ʿallimtu ta ʿlīm masīḥi* |

(13) *bi-marra l-malik taba ʿ l-rōmānīyīn*[23] | *kētib ⁱktābāt* | *w-m ʿallaqa ʿa-l-ḥīṭān w- ʿa-s-saǧiṟ#* | *ʾayn biššūfu*[24] *wāḥid masīḥi lāzim tmawwtū* | *taḥbisū*[25] | *ⁱssallmu*[26] *la-d-darak ssallmu la-l-maxfaṟ#* | (14) *hawni zi ʾil ǧirǧus* | *qal-lin la-rifqātu hūwi ra ʾīs il-ḥaras qal-lin la-rifqātu ʾana baddi fūt la-ʿand il-malik w-qil-lu lēš ʾabi[…]* | *lēš ʾabi[…]ḍāyqin la-ha-l-masīḥī hayki mā ʿaminšūf ẓarar*[27] *minnin niḥna* | (15) *qālū-lu lā tqil-lu* | *byiġdib ʿlayk ba ʿdĩ:n#* | *ba ʿdin qal-lin baddi qil-lu ʾaš-ma ṣār xallī yṣīṟ#* | (16) *fāt la-ʿand il-mali:k#* | *w-qal-lu* | *mawlāy* | *ʾinti kētib ha-li-ktābāt w-m ʿallaqin ʿa-l-ḥīṭān w- ʿa-s-saǧiṟ#* | *mišān il-masīḥī* | (17) *niḥna l-masīḥī mā ʿaminšūf minnin ẓariṟ#* | *ya ʿni mā wāḥid minnin mā ʿabyiḍrib ʿlayna ḥaǧiṟ#* | *bayna-ma ʾinti ʿabitqūl ʾayn biššūfu wāḥid mawwtū* | *ⁱḥbisū b-iz-zindān*[28] | *ʾē* | *ʾaṭu ʿa-l-maxfaṟ#* | *ʾaṭu la-d-darak xallī yǧī yāǧdu*[29] *ʾaṭu la-š-širṭey#* | (18) *qal-lu lēš ʾinti ʿabtišfaq ʿlayyin̲na-ha-ǧ-ǧamā ʿa*[30] *hādōli* | *ʾint minnĩ:n#* | *qal-lu na ʿam ʾana minnĩ:n#* | (19) *qal-lu yā ǧirǧus ridd ʿaqlak ʿala rāsak* | *ʾinti ʾibⁱn ʿišrīn sini qā ʿid ʾalf* | *bikṟa biǧūz ⁱṣṣīr*[31] *rayyis rōma* | (20) *qāl w- ʾana lli bya ʿṭīni*[32] *hūwi ʾaḷḷa sibḥān wa-ta ʿāla* | *bya ʿṭīni ḥayāt ʾabadī* | *rōma ʾaš badda ta ʿṭīni* | *ʾaktar min hayk* | (21) *biqil-lin xidu ʿa-l-ḥabs* | *byāġdū ʿa-l-ḥabs ba ʿd kān yawm yǧībū biqūl barki baddu yġayyir ʾifāttu*[33] | (22) *biqil-lu yā ǧirǧus* | *ʾanã:#* | *šiftak ʾinti raǧul ṭayyib ⁱktūṟ#* | *w-ġasūṟ#* | *w-riḥt ʿa-l-ḥarb kām̲marra*[34] *w-rbiḥt ha-l-ḥarḇ#* | (23) *ʾinti smā ʿ minni niḥna min ʿallī-lak wazīftak yāni*[35] | *bass bta ʿbid*[36] *miⁱl-ma ʾamni ʿbid niḥna* | (24) *qal-lu ʾanã:#* | *bi ʿbid ʾaḷḷa* | *w-il-masīḥ* | *w-mā fī šī biriddni ʿan ha-š-šī hāda* |

(25) *biqūmu biḥiṭṭu ʿala ʿāli byibirmūwa la-ha-l- ʿāli byitšaqqaf ǧismu hayk* | *bišūf kmām̲mā*[37] *biġayyir ʾifāttu bi-ǧirǧus* | (26) *biqillū-lu yā ǧirǧus mana*[38] *nāġdak la-mḥall il- ʾaṣnām halliq#* | *w-btidbaḥ* | *qirbã:n#* | *li-ṣ-ṣanam* | *w-min ʿallī-lak wazīftak ⁱktūṟ#* | (27) *byāxġdū la-hūnīke#* | *miši byāxġdū la-hūnīke#* | *miši byidxil byirsim iṣ-ṣalīḥ#* | (28) *miši byirsim iṣ-ṣalīb [ʿannhu]*[39] *biqūl ʾisⁱm ʾaḷḷa w- ʿism il-masīḥ hūnīki ha-l-* | *ṣ-ṣanam li-kbīr*

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[22] The grammatical form is unclear.

[23] The consonant *r* has not undergone assimilation.

[24] *bitšūfu > biššūfu.*

[25] *tiḥbisū > taḥbisū, i > a* under the influence of the pharyngeal consonant *ḥ*.

[26] *tsallmu > ssallmu.*

[27] Turkish: *zarar* < from Arabic: *ḍarār*.

[28] Turkish: *zindan* < from Persian: *zendān*.

[29] *yāxdu > yāǧdu.*

[30] *ʿlayyin la-ha-ǧ-ǧamā ʿa > ʿlayyin̲na-ha-ǧ-ǧamā ʿa.*

[31] *tṣīr > ṣṣīr.*

[32] *byi ʿṭīni > bya ʿṭīni, i > a* under the influence of the pharyngeal consonant *ʿ*.

[33] *ʾifādtu > ʾifāttu.*

[34] *kān marra > kām̲marra.*

[35] Turkish: *yani* < from Arabic: *ya ʿni*.

[36] *bti ʿbid > bta ʿbid, i > a* under the influence of the pharyngeal consonant *ʿ*.

[37] *kmān mā > kmām̲mā.*

[38] *baddna > bana > mana* (?).

[39] The word was interrupted and is unclear.

*ⁱbyūqaʿ w-ṣwāt ⁱttiṭla ʿ*⁴⁰ *yā laṭīf* | (29) *biqūmu šyūxt illi btaʿbad iṣ-ṣanã:m#* | *biqillū-lu la-l-malik ir-rōmānīn ʾiza hāda mā biššīlu*⁴¹ *min n-niṣṣ* | *ʾaktarīt l-ʿālam badda ṣṣīr*⁴² *min dīnu badda taʿbad ʾaḷḷa w-titrik iṣ-ṣanam* | (30) *ʾamma ʾilūf ʿālam min ir-rōmānīn kirmāl ğirğus ṣārat masīḥī* | *ʾāk s-sāʿa byiḍribu rāsu la-ğirğu:s#* | *bi-s-se:yf#* | *tlāta w-ʿišrīn bi-nisẽ:yn#* |

(31) *ʾē hallaq niḥna* | *l-malik qiṣṭanṭīl*⁴³ *waqt-il qibil ⁱdyānt il-masīḥī* | *ⁱšūf mītayn w-tmēnīn sini baʿd il-mīlād#* | (32) *il-malik qiṣṭanṭīl baʿd il-* | *baʿd il-mīlād bi-tlāt mīt sini qibil bi-tlāt mī w-xamsa w-ʿišrīn sine#* | (33) *sawwa ʾawwal mağmaʿ bi- ʾiznīk*⁴⁴ *ğimiʿ* | *ruʾasa d-dīn hal ʾabibaššru* | *bi-dyānt il-masīḥī ğimaʿin*⁴⁵ *w-ta-yifham minnin* | (34) *il-ḥaqīqa yaʿni* | *ʾawwal mağmaʿ* | *baʿdin kām marra*⁴⁶ *b-marra sawwa mağāmiʿ qiṣṭanṭīn hūwe#* |

(35) *w- ʾiğit ʾimmu ʿa-l-qiss*⁴⁷ *l-malaki hīlāne#*⁴⁸ | *maṭraḥ-ili nqabar il-masī ʿ ʿammrate#*⁴⁹ | *knīsi w-sammata knīst il-qiyāme#* | *w-la-hallaq mawğūdi bi- ʾisrāʾīl* | (36) *ʾē w-ⁱntašrat id-dyāni baʿdin bi-kill ʾōroppa* | *ʿala zmār rōmānīn*⁵⁰ *miši l-malik* | *qiṣṭanṭīn illi qibil ⁱdyant il-masīḥīye#* | *bi-sṭanbūl hūwe#* | (37) *hūwi li sṭanbūl ʿammra kamẽ:yn#* | *ṣār yqillū-la la-hawn hallaq wlād il-madⁱrsi bi-t-tārīx qiṣṭanṭīna pōlos* | (38) *ʾē* | *hāda hallaq hawni ʿabiqūlu ʾannu l-xiḍⁱr bass mā byaʿrfu ʾannu šī mitli ʾana* | *ʾē* |

Translation

(1) This picture which you see at our place, on the wall, this one [picture]. Did you go to the seaside, or didn't you? You went to the sea. (2) There is a *zyāra* [a pilgrimage site]. They – our local group, Alawites – call it il-Xiḍⁱr. But they do not know anything about il-Xiḍⁱr! (3) Il-Xiḍⁱr in our era, [he was born] in the year 280. He was born in the country called Cappadocia. (4) Now they call it Nevşehir in Turkish. There he was born. His mother was Palestinian and father a captain of king's guards, the king of the Romans. (5) He [and] his mother secretly became Christian. No one suspected, knew it. She raised Ğirğus (George) in a Christian way.

(6) When Ğirğus was sixteen, seventeen, they sent him to a military school. There he will be an officer, if he finishes the school. (7) As soon as he graduated from the school, in about two years, they gave him, for example, a badge – a star on his shoulder,

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⁴⁰ *btiṭla ʿ > ttiṭla ʿ.*

⁴¹ *bitšīlu > biššīlu.*

⁴² *tṣīr > ṣṣīr.*

⁴³ Constantine the Great.

⁴⁴ Turkish: İznik.

⁴⁵ *ğimiʿin > ğimaʿin, i > a* under the influence of the pharyngeal consonant ʿ.

⁴⁶ *kān marra > kām marra.*

⁴⁷ *ʿa-l-qids > ʿa-l-qiss.*

⁴⁸ Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great.

⁴⁹ *il-masīḥ ʿammrata > il-masī ʿ ʿammrate#.*

⁵⁰ *zmān rōmānīn > zmār rōmānīn.*

and sent [him] to the war. (8) How did Romans become emperors? By war. Ǧirǧus was also strong, also brave. He won the war. (9) As soon as he won the war, they gave him the second star and sent him to a more strategic frontline. [There] he also won. (10) They gave him the third star. A senior grade [a commander of one hundred soldiers]. They sent him to a front even more and more strategic. There he also won. (11) He became a squadron leader [a commander of one thousand soldiers], at the age of twenty he became a squadron leader, Ǧirǧus. (12) Then all the people began to love Ǧirǧus. However, they did not know that his mother taught him the Christian teachings.

(13) Once the king of Romans wrote notes which were hung on walls and trees: 'If you see a Christian, you have to kill him, arrest him, hand [him] over to the gendarmerie, deliver [him] to the police station.' (14) Ǧirǧus got angry. He told them, his colleagues, he told them, he the head of the guard said to them, to his colleagues: 'I will go to the king and tell him why, why do you disturb those Christians? We do not experience from them any harm.' (15) They told him: 'Do not tell him! He will get med at you!' Then he told them: 'I will tell him. Whatever happens, happens.' (16) He went to the king and told him: 'My Lord! You wrote writings – hung on the walls and trees – because of Christians. (17) We do not experience any harm from them [Christians]. It means, none of them throw stones at us, while you say, if you see some [Christian], kill him, lock him in a prison, give him to the police station, give him to the gendarmerie. If he comes, take him, give [him] to the police'. (18) He answered: 'Why do you feel sorry for them, this group? Are you one of them?' He said to him: 'Yes, I am one of them.' (19) He told him: 'Ǧirǧus, put your mind back into your head. You are twenty years old, and you are a squadron leader. It is be possible that in the future you will be the king of Rome.' (20) He answered: 'I am the one whom He – God, may He be praised and exalted – gives. He gives me eternal life. Rome? What will it give me? More than this [eternal life]?' (21) He told them: 'Take [him] to the prison!' They took him to the prison. After a few days, they brought him back. He said: 'Perhaps he will change his confession.' (22) He told him: 'Ǧirǧus, I, I saw you. You are a very good man, brave. You went several times to the war and won. (23) Listen to me! We raise your pay, but you serve as we serve.' (24) He answered him: 'I serve the God and Christ. And there is nothing that would revert me from it.'

(25) They began to put [him] on a machine, fastened him to this machine that his body would tear. He sees that Ǧirǧus also will not change his confession. (26) They told him: 'We will take you now to a place of idols. You must slaughter a sacrifice for the idol and we will raise your pay much more. (27) They took him there. As soon as they took him there, as soon as he entered, he drew a cross [made the sign of the cross]. (28) As soon as he made the sign of the cross, he uttered the name of God, the name of Christ, a big idol collapsed and noises emerged. Oh my God! (29) Old men who served the idol began to talk to him, the king of Romans: 'If you do not remove this [man] out of your way, most of the people would profess his religion. They [most of the people] will serve the God and will leave the idols.' (30) Thousands of people from the Romans became Christians for the sake of Ǧirǧus. Then they hit his head, Ǧirǧus ['s head], with a sword, on 23 April.

(31) Now we […]. The King Constantine the Great, when he converted to Christianity, see 280 years after the birth of Christ. (32) The King Constantine the Great after the birth of Christ, in 300 years, converted in 325. (33) He organized the First Council of İznik [Nicaea]. He gathered religious leaders who taught Christianity. He gathered them together to understand, to learn from them. (34) In fact, it means, it was the First Council. Then a few other Councils of Constantine took place.

(35) His mother, Empress Helena, came to Jerusalem. In the place where Christ was buried, she built a church and called it the Church of the Resurrection [the Church of the Holy Sepulcher]. And it is still in Israel. (36) Then the religion spread throughout Europe, during the Roman period. As soon as the King Constantine the Great converted to Christianity, he [settled] in Istanbul. (37) He was the one who built Istanbul. They began to talk about it [Istanbul] – now here just children in the school, in history lessons – Constantinopolis [Constantinople]. (38) Now here it said about him il-Xiḍ'r, but they do not know anything about him, as I [know].

Grammatical Commentary

In this part of the article, the issues of phonology, morphology and syntax in Christian Arabic of is-Swaydī are discussed and complement our existing knowledge of the dialect. The focus is on the short and long vowels, assimilations and various types of pausal forms. With regard to morphology, only demonstrative adverbs, relative pronoun, indicative prefixes, pseudoverb *badd-*, existential phrase, as well as endings *-īyīn* and *-ī* are discussed.

One of the characteristics of the Syro-Palestinian dialects occurring in Turkey is the phonological presence of two short vowels. In Adana Arabic, according to Otto Jastrow, there are two short vowels: *i* and *a*, which are realised depending on a consonantal environment.[51] The short vowel *i* is realised in contact with emphatic or back consonants as *ə* [ə], and in other cases as *i* [ɪ ~ i̞]; the short vowel *a* is realised in contact with emphatic or back consonants as *a*, *ạ* [ạ ~ ɑ], and with other consonants as *ä* [æ ~ ɛ].[52] Short vowels in all Çukurova dialects are realised in the same way.[53] Also in sedentary Arabic dialects of Hatay two short vowels occur: *a* and *i*, which are realised as [ɛ] and [i] in a non-emphatic environment and as [a] and [ɪ] in an emphatic environment.[54] The two vowels are present in each type of syllable.

The Christian Arabic of is-Swaydī also has the system of two short vowels: *a* and *i*, which are realised depending on a consonantal environment. In addition, in the last open syllable a short vowel *u* may occur, which grammatically refers to the third person

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[51] Otto Jastrow, *Beobachtungen zum arabischen Dialekt von Adana (Türkei)*, "Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik" 11, 1983, p. 75.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Procházka, *Die arabischen Dialekte der Çukurova (Südtürkei)*, p. 27.

[54] Arnold, *Die arabischen Dialekte Antiochiens*, p. 46.

masculine singular pronominal suffix *-u*, and verbs in the perfect form ending with the vowel suffix *-u*, verbs in the imperfect form ending with the vowel *-u*, and verbs in the imperative mood with the plural ending *-u*. In some cases, the short vowel *u* is lengthened and becomes a long vowel, e.g., with the connection of a pronominal suffix to a verb. In the Arabic dialectology, it is considered that phonemically this vowel is long but is realised as a short vowel when it is not stressed. It should be emphasized that synchronously it is a short vowel and minimal pairs can be easily found, e.g.:

> *tmawwtu* 'you (pl.) [have to] kill' – *tmawwtū* 'you (pl.) [have to] kill him',
> *ʾinti* 'you (m. sg.)' – *ʾintu* 'you (pl.)',
> *ʾimma* 'her mother' – *ʾimmu* 'his mother'.

The short vowel *u* occurs also in the last closed syllable in loanwords: *ǧirǧus* 'George', *raġul* 'man', as well as the short vowel *o*: *ʾōroppa* 'Europe', *qiṣṭanṭīna pōlos* 'Constantinople (Latin: Constantinopolis)'. In this position they are allophones.

In the text, there are five long vowels *ā, ī, ū, ē* and *ō*.[55] However, the vowels *ē* and *ō* appear very rarely and in certain cases. The long vowel *ē* was found only in words where an *ʾimāla* occurs, *ā > ē*: *šēyfa* 'you (m. sg.) see it', *tmēnīn* 'eighty', *kētib* 'he wrote', as well as in the interrogative adverb *lēš* 'why'. Werner Arnold notes in Christian Arabic of is-Swaydī the interrogative adverb *layš* 'why'.[56] The form *lēš* 'why', in which diphthong **ay* undergoes monophthongization, occurs in dialects of Jews in Hatay, Sunnis in Reyhanlı, Christians in Yayladağı and Alawites in Hüyük and Üçırmak.[57] The long vowel *ō* appears in loanwords: *kabadōkya* 'Cappadocia*', rōmānīn* / *rōmānīyīn* 'Romans', *rōma* 'Rome', *ʾōroppa* 'Europe', *qiṣṭanṭīna pōlos* 'Constantinople (Latin: Constantinopolis)', and in the demonstrative pronoun *hādōli* 'these'. The form *hādōl* / *hādōl* 'these' is typical for Christian Arabic dialects of Hatay. However, in the dialect of is-Swaydī Werner Arnold indicates three forms of this pronoun: *hādōl*, *hādōli* and *hādawl*. In the latter, the diphthong *aw* is not monophthongized.[58]

Apart from the examples mentioned above: *lēš* 'why' and *hādōli* 'these', in which *ay > ē* and *aw > ō*, diphthongs *aw* and *ay* remained in the dialect of is-Swaydī. Moreover, there are other diphthongs in words in pausal forms. One of the known characteristics of Antiochia Arabic is the presence of different types of pausal forms.[59] The registered text confirms previous findings in this regard and reveals new types of them. In Christian Arabic of is-Swaydī the following pausal forms occur:

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[55] Five long vowels occur in Çukurova dialects: Jastrow, *Beobachtungen zum arabischen Dialekt von Adana (Türkei)*, p. 74, Procházka, *Die arabischen Dialekte der Çukurova (Südtürkei)*, p. 37.

[56] Cf. Arnold, *Die arabischen Dialekte Antiochiens*, pp. 250–251.

[57] Ibid., p. 113.

[58] Ibid., p. 82, 105.

[59] See: Arnold, *Pausalformen in den arabischen Dialekten Antiochiens*, Ağbaht and Arnold, *Antakya'nın Dursunlu Köyünde Konuşulan Arap Diyalekti*, pp. 12–13, Zuniga, *An Instrumental Study of Pausal Vowels in Il-Ǧillī Arabic (Southern Turkey)*.

a. Diphthongisation of the vowels *i > ey* and *u > ow* in a last open syllable, if the
    vowels *i* and *u* were diachronically long:
    *hādī > hādi > hādey# 'this (f.)',
    *qawī > qawi > qawey# 'strong',
    *tānī > tāni > tāney# 'second',
    *širṭī > širṭi > širṭey# 'policeman',
    *ʾimmū > ʾimmu > ʾimmow# 'his mother'.

b. Lowering of the vowel *i > e* in a last open syllable, if the vowel *i* was diachro-
    nically *a*:
    *qiyāma > qiyāmi > qiyāme# 'resurrection',
    *masīḥīya > *masīḥīyi > masīḥīye# 'Christianity',
    *huwa > hūwi > hūwe# 'he',
    *sana > sini > sine# 'year',
    *hunāka > hūnīki > hūnīke# 'there',
    *hīlāna > hīlāni > hīlāne# 'Helena'.

c. Raising of the vowel *a > i* in a non-emphatic environment in a last closed syllable:
    ʾabadan > ʾabadin# 'never',
    saġar > saġi̯r# 'trees',
    ẓarar > ẓari̯r# 'harm',
    ḥaġar > ḥaġi̯r# 'stones'.

d. Raising of the vowel *a > e* in a last open syllable:
    ʿammrata > ʿammrate# 'she built it'.

e. Raising of the vowel *a > ạ* [ɔ] in an emphatic environment in a last closed syllable:
    ʾakbaṛ > ʾakbạ̯r# 'bigger',
    maxfaṛ > maxfạ̯r# 'police station'.

f. Devoicing of a final consonant:
    sirr > si̯r̥r̥# 'secret',
    baḥⁱr > baḥⁱr̥# 'sea',
    l-xiḍⁱr > l-xiḍⁱr̥# 'il-Xiḍⁱr',
    nāwšahir > nāwšahi̯r̥# 'Nevşehir',
    l-ʾimparaṭūr > l-ʾimparaṭū̯r̥# 'emperor',
    ğasūr > ğasū̯r̥# 'brave',
    yṣīr > yṣī̯r̥# 'he becomes',
    ktīr > ktī̯r̥# 'very, much',
    baʿd il-mīlād > baʿd il-mīlād̬# 'after Christ',
    ḥarb > ḥarb̥# 'war',
    ṣalīb > ṣalīb̥# 'cross'.

g. Lengthening of a vowel in a last closed and open syllable; the lengthened vowel is nasalised, if there is a nasal consonant in its environment:

   malik > mali:k# 'king',

   ǧirǧus > ǧirǧu:s# 'George',

   baʿdin > baʿdĩ:n# 'then',

   minnin > minnĩ:n# 'from them',

   ʾana > ʾanã:# 'I',

   ṣanam > ṣanã:m# 'idol'

   qirbān > qirbã̃:n# 'sacrifice'.

h. Raising and lengthening of the vowel *a > e* in the diphthong *ay* in a last closed syllable; the vowel *e* is nasalised, if there is a nasal consonant in its environment:

   sintayn > sintẽ:yn# 'two years',

   sayf > se:yf# 'sword'.

i. Diphthongisation of the long vowel *ā > e:y*; the vowel *e* is nasalised, if there is a nasal consonant in its environment:

   nisān > nisẽ:yn# 'April',

   kamān > kamẽ:yn# 'also'.

One of the difficulties encountered during the transcription were numerous assimilations, and therefore, the determination of the basic forms of words. In the recorded text there are complete assimilations in two different types:

a. Regressive (right-to-left) and complete assimilation:

   b + m > mm   *b-mītēn > m-mītēn* 'in two hundred',

   n + r > rr   *zmān rōmānīn > zmār͜ rōmānīn* 'Roman period',

   n + m > mm   *kān marra > kām͜ marra* 'several times',

   kmān mā > kmām͜ mā '[that Ǧirǧus] also [will] not [change]',

   t + š > šš   *bitšūfu > biššūfu* 'you (pl.) see',

   bitšīlu > biššīlu 'you (m. sg.) remove him',

   t + s > ss   *tsallmū > ssallmū* 'you (pl.) [have to] deliver',

   t + ṣ > ṣṣ   *tṣīr > ṣṣīr* 'she becomes',

   d + t > tt   *ʾifādtu > ʾifāttu* 'his confession',

   b + t > tt   *btiṭlaʿ > ttiṭlaʿ* 'she emerges',

   d + s > ss   *ʾa-l-qids > ʾa-l-qiss* 'to Jerusalem'.

b. Progressive (left-to-right) and complete assimilation:

   n + l > nn   *ʿlayyin la-ha-ǧ-ǧamāʿa > ʿlayyin͜ na-ha-ǧ-ǧamāʿa*

   '[Why do you feel sorry] for them, this group?'.

The demonstrative adverb of time in all sedentary dialects of Antiochia Arabic is *hallaq* 'now', which form is also used in is-Swaydī.[60] The local adverbs have the

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60   Arnold, *Die arabischen Dialekte Antiochiens*, p. 109.

following forms: *hawn / hawni* 'here' and *hawnīk / hūnīki* 'there',[61] while the demonstrative adverb of manner – *hayk* 'so'. The interrogative adverb 'how many?' takes an interesting form of *kān* (which also means 'he was'). Werner Arnold reports that *kān* occurs only in the dialects of Christians living in Iskenderun and Uluçinar.[62] In Christian Arabic of is-Swaydī, he notes *kam*, while in Alawites dialect *kan*.[63] The relative pronoun is invariable: *illi / lli / li* 'which', a relative pronoun *hal* is also used, if there is no head noun:[64]

> *hal ʿabibaššru bi-dyānt il-masīhī* '[those] who taught Christianity',
> *qiṣṭanṭīn illi qibil ⁱdyant il-masīḥī* 'Constantine the Great who converted
> to Christianity',
> *hūwi li ṣṭanbūl ʿammra kamān* 'He was the one who built Istanbul'.

The relative pronoun with a head noun can appear in a construct state (in feminine nouns the ending *-a / -i > -t*) and get additionally the article:[65]

> *ha-ṣ-ṣūrt illi šēyfa ʿanna b-il-ḥayṭ hādi* 'This picture which you see at
> our place, on the wall, this one [picture]',
> *šyūxt illi btaʿbad iṣ-ṣanam* 'Old men who served the idol'.

In order to express the immediate present, a prefix *ʿab-* is used (for the first person plural *ʿam-*). The prefix *b- / bi-* has the meaning of the habitual present. The future tense is formed by using *badd-* with pronominal suffixes.

An existential phrase is formed by using *fī* 'there is' and is negated with *mā*: *mā fī* 'there is not'.[66]

Quite often in the text the plural ending is shortened: *-īyīn > -īn*: *ʿalawīyīn > ʿalawīn* 'Alawites', *rōmānīyīn > rōmānīn* 'Romans'. The ending *-īya / *-īyi* has the form *-ī* and is stressed.

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[61] Cf. Ibid., pp. 238–239.

[62] Ibid., p. 114.

[63] Ibid., pp. 252–253.

[64] See: Procházka, *Die arabischen Dialekte der Çukurova (Südtürkei)*, pp. 71–72.

[65] Cf. Procházka, *Cilician Arabic*, p. 395, Procházka, *Die arabischen Dialekte der Çukurova (Südtürkei)*, pp. 71–72, 153, 159.

[66] Cf. Maciej Klimiuk, *Third Person Masculine Singular Pronominal Suffix -hne (-hni) in Syrian Arabic Dialects and its Hypothetical Origins*, in: George Grigore, Gabriel Biţună (eds.), *Arabic Varieties: Far and Wide*, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, Bucharest 2016, pp. 345–349.

Conclusion

Based on the recorded text, this article provides additional data on the Christian dialects of the Hatay Province. New grammatical forms – other than those contained in earlier works – may indicate some local differences in the dialect.

The Christian Arabic dialect of is-Swaydī belongs to the group of endangered languages, which are progressively falling out of use and soon may become completely extinct. Unfortunately, this process seems to be irreversible due to the decreasing number of young users of Antiochia Arabic dialects.

However, we can at least document more accurately the various dialects of Hatay Province. Despite the studies made so far on Antiochia Arabic, recording new texts is crucial to preserve local culture and increase our dialectological knowledge. This fascinating cultural element of the Arab world should be explored and described thoroughly before it is completely forgotten.

The pilgrimage site in is-Swaydī