ON THE DIALECTOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE OF ARABIC AMONG THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF BEIRUT

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The research reported here is based on dialectological fieldwork among Lebanese Jews from 2006 to 2015. In the 20th century most Jews of Beirut lived in the Jewish Wādi ʾAbu Žmīl quarter, an area measuring 300 metres by one kilometre. Very few families lived in other parts of the city. The Beirut community consisted of Jews originally Lebanese, Syrian Jews from Aleppo and Damascus, numerous Ashkenazi Jews, Jews originally Maghrebi, some Kurdish Jews, Jews from Turkey and Greece, especially Salonika, and Sephardi Jews originally from Andalusia who reached Beirut after their expulsion from Spain in 1492. The Beirut Jews' dialect differed from that of the Sidon Jews, but in many respects also from the dialects of the Beirut Arabs, lacking highly typical phenomena such as the Imāla. Like diverse other Modern Judeo-Arabic dialects, this one embraces the vast array of vocabulary used in Jewish life. At its height Beirut's Jewish community numbered several thousands, but over time it dwindled and disappeared – together with its dialect. Most of its speakers left, many of them for Israel, where the fieldwork was undertaken.

Key words: Arabic dialectology, Judeo-Arabic, Modern Judeo-Arabic, fieldwork, language anthropology, language obsolescence, Lebanon, Jews, Beirut, Sidon, Jewish communities.

1. Fieldwork and Linguistic Informants

This study is based on fieldwork among nine Beiruti Jews [*yahūd Bayārte*[1]] undertaken between 2006 and 2015. In 2006 two of my students, Yael Kaufmann and Elite Hayya, recorded Sofi Yael Srūr and Rachel Lazar. Elite was also present at my own recording of Yehudit Pardés in 2006. I took the other six recordings in 2015 at

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[1] In the same morphological pattern the Sidonese Jews were called *yahūd Ṣayādne* (compare the *nisbe* form of the Moslems of *Sidon* who called themselves *Ṣaydawiyye*); on additional *nisbe*-forms in *Baskinta* (Lebanon), see Farida Abu-Haidar (1979, p. 64).

Karmiel, Haifa, Ramat-Gan, Bat-Yam, Holon, and Jerusalem. All the informants were
born in Beirut between the 1920s and the 1950s. Their names, with the abbreviations
used here and the years of recording, are: Sofi Yaʕēn Srūr (SYN, 2006), Rachel Lazar
(RL, 2006), Yehudít Pardés[2] (YP, 2006), Ya'aḳóv[3] (Jacques) Kamḥin (YK, 2015),
ʕAbdo (ʕOvádya) ʕAbbūd[4] (AA, 2015), Allegra ʕAbbūd[5] (AAA, 2015), Eli Zaytūni[6]
(ElZ, 2015), Mordechaì Zaytūni[7] (MrZ, 2015), Moshe Zaʕafrāni[8] (MsZ, 2015).

2. Essential Historical Background on the Jewish Community
in Beirut

In the mid-20th century there were about 5000 Jews in Beirut. This was the largest
Jewish community in Lebanon; the second largest was that in Sidon.[9] Most of the
Jews came to the city from the Druze village of *Dēr elʾAmar* in 1860,[10] consequent to
the brutal civil war between the Druze and the Christians. Yet some informants said
that even before this migration wave there was an ancient Jewish core in Beirut con-
sisting of three almost mythological families whose names rhymed: Dāna, Ḥanna, and
Manna.[11] They lived in the vicinity of the Upholsterers Market (*Sūʾ liMnaẓẓdīn*) and
the Sirsōʾ Market (*Sūʾ Sirsōʾ*). According to ElZ, at that stage the Jews were influ-
enced linguistically by their Sunnite neighbours.

In the 20th century most Jews lived in the Jewish Quarter of *Wādi ʾAbu Žmīl*,
an area measuring 300 metres by one kilometre. Very few families lived in other parts
of the city. The Beirut community consisted of Jews who were originally Lebanese,[12]
Syrian Jews from Aleppo and Damascus, numerous Ashkenazi Jews (*Šakānze~Sa-
kānže*), Jews from Maghrebi (*Maġārbe*[13]), some Kurdish Jews (*krād*), Jews from

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[2] Born *Widād Srūr* on 18 August 1927.

[3] Born in July 1956.

[4] Born on 5 February 1939.

[5] Born *ʾAllégra ʾArgálži* in 1947.

[6] Born on 2 May 1953. The original name of the Zaytūni family was *Zaytūne* (زيتونه).

[7] Born in August 1932.

[8] Born on 31 August 1955.

[9] Schulze (2001, p. 20): "The Community of Saida had been embellished by mainly *Magh-
rebi* Jews from the Shouf who brought with them rural traditions which they implanted onto the
terrain around this predominantly Sunni city." Today, there are officially about fifty Jews in Beirut.
The *Magen Avraham* synagogue was lately refurbished. See more in Qabbāni (2014).

[10] *yahūdi Dirāni* [A Jew from *Dēr elʾAmar*] pl. *yahūd Dyārne*. The Kohēn-Ḥallāle family
was one of the prominent Jewish families from *Dēr elʾAmar*.

[11] There is connection also to the name *elMenn*, or *elMenn* synagogue or *elMenn-Alley* [*Za-
rūbat elMenn*, YK, 1]. See also Levi (2012, p. 174). This might be the source of the well-known
saying "*bēn Ḥanna w Manna ḍāʕat lḥāna*" [= between Hanna and Manna we lost our beard]; it con-
cerns two women, the wives of an old man. The younger plucked the grey hairs from his beard to
make him look young, the older the black hairs to make him look old. In the end he lost his entire
beard, symbolising loss of respect.

[12] They are called by some informants *Mustaʕribīn*, literally 'Arabised'.

[13] E.g. the family of *ʾAbrahām Larīdo*, originally from Tetwan.

Turkey[14] and Greece, especially Salonika,[15] and Sephardi Jews originally from Andalusia who reached Beirut after their expulsion from Spain in 1492 (this group was collectively called *Spanyoliyye*[16]). There were also some Jewish families of Italian origin.[17] Thus, the linguistic landscape of the Jewish community was heterogeneous, as every subcommunity spoke its own mother tongue at home and at the synagogue. The Ashkenazim spoke Yiddish, the *Spanyoliyye* Ladino, and the old Jews from Syria their original dialects of Aleppo or Damascus. However, whenever the diverse groups of Jews intermingled, they spoke an Arabic dialect characteristic of the Beirut Jewish community; even the young generation of Syrian Jews abandoned their parents' dialects for this dialect (hence JBD). Hearing it spoken, Christians, Moslems, and Druze often diagnosed it – mistakenly – as a "Syrian dialect" and not as Lebanese. ElZ believes that originally the Jewish dialect of Beirut was influenced by the Sunni dialects of the city, as was the ancient core of the three Jewish families that once lived in a Sunni environment.

Most of the Jews of Beirut spoke fluent French, and many also knew English. Both languages were taught at schools.

An amazing fact is that Hebrew was taught legally and officially in Lebanon. This is perhaps the only Arab country in the mid-20th century where Modern Hebrew, *Ivrit*, was taught;[18] together with this there was a semi-open permit to conduct activities of Jewish organisations such as Maccabi. As a result, most of the Lebanese Jewish newcomers to Israel easily integrated linguistically.

The Jews of Beirut used the Hebrew word *goyyīm* (sing. *gōy,* Heb. < גוי) only for the Moslems, while the word *ʕarelīm* [sing. *ʕarēl,* Heb. < ערלים] was used to denote Christians.

3. Dialectal Remarks

3.1. Phonology

The Beiruti informants show almost unanimous use of the ancient **q* as a glottal stop (> ʔ). Only very rarely did I find in the texts some exceptional deviations, where a *k* was the allophone.

No interdentals are reflected in the speech of the various informants. As in other Lebanese dialects sometimes the Classical Arabic ث turns into its voiceless dental sibilant *s*, e.g. *hawādis* (< *ḥawādiṯ* 'events') (AA, 8).

Thus is the dialect of the Jews of Beirut urban in nature.

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[14] E.g. the *ʔAškenāzi* and *Baxxār* families.

[15] E.g. the *Sfīnzi* and *ʔÚški* families.

[16] YK mentioned two families that spoke Ladino at home: *Kário* and *Šalḥōn*.

[17] E.g. *Galānte* and *Tēlio*.

[18] The most prominent teacher of Modern Hebrew was Moshe Qamheen (*Mošé ʔAmḥīn*) who died in New Mexico in 1992 in his eighties. He was known as a Zionist but in the end he did not live in Israel after leaving Lebanon. He taught Ivrit with passion.

Likewise the ancient * ‎ح is almost unanimously performed as *ž* and only spo-radically do we find the allophone *ǧ*, especially in the root √< *‎جمع.

The original Ancient Arabic dental vibrant *r* is rendered more by elderly in-formants, while the younger Jews shift it almost completely into its fricative voiced equivalent *ġ*. Only in some original Hebrew words in the dialect are there deviations where the *r* is kept. I assume that the shift to *ġ* did not occur in Israel but evinces a French influence on the pronunciation of this consonant.

The vowels produced by our informants lack almost entirely the use of the Lebanese *Imāla*.[19] Rarely some informants (such as YP and YK) use certain words, for example, *šā̊bb* 'boy' with *Imāla*, although the plural form does not evince this fea-ture: *šabāb*.

The dialect presents no diphthongs. There is a complete monophthongation of the Ancient Arabic *aw (> ō) and *ay (> ē). Only in place names, such as *Bayrūt* or *Ṣayda*, can one sporadically trace a diphthong, apparently in imitation of other Leba-nese dialects, especially those of the Christians.

Nor is there any trace at all of pausal elongation, even though it is highly char-acteristic of the Syrian Macro dialectal group. This means that the second generation of Jews originally from Aleppo and Damascus did not use this type of speech. Pausal forms are absent, too.

3.2. Morphology

Morphologically the feminine ending is *-e*, not *-i*; the article is *el-*, not *il-*.

The verb in the I. Stem in perfect has the pattern *f⁽al*-, e.g. *trak⁽t ʾana* [I left; SYN, 8] and in contrast to Palestinian dialects lacks a vowel, e.g. *faⁱal⁽t*. Some verbs that in Classical Arabic normally have the pattern *faⁱal* appear in the texts in the form *fiⁱilī*, e.g. *ṭilib* 'asked for' (< Classical Arabic *ṭalaba) (ElZ, 6). The pattern *fuⁱel* (< Classical Arabic *faⁱula) is attested, e.g. *kuber* 'grew up' (RL, 2).

In many of the above phonological and morphological features the dialect of the Jews of Beirut resembles Palestinian dialects, especially the dialect of the Jews of the Galilee region.[20] Still, a morphological pattern typical of the Jews from Beirut is present, reflecting a similarity to Lebanese dialects. Examples are *mišmoš* 'apricot' instead of the Galilean *mišmiš*; *Sižud* 'a Jewish religious site in southern Lebanon' instead of *Sužud*;[21] *kitob* 'books' (SyN, 5) instead of *kutub* as in the Jewish Galilean

[19] For more on Lebanese Imāla, see Levin (1972, vol. I, pp. 203–238). See also Naïm-Sanbar (1985, p. 218) who ascribes the use of the *Imāla* to the Christian population of Lebanon.
[20] I began my work among Arabic-speaking Galilean Jewish informants some twenty years ago in the cities of Haifa, Tiberias, Safed, and Pqiʿīn. Most of these Jews reached the Galilee after their expulsion from Spain in 1492. The majority came indirectly after living in northern Morocco, which explains the Maghrebi linguistic remnants in their speech. For more details, see the follow-ing two books and two papers: Geva-Kleinberger (2004 and 2009) and Geva-Kleinberger (2000 and 2005).
[21] This is a southern Lebanese holy site for Jews near the village of *Reḥān*. The site is lo-cated on a mountain and is attributed to Oholiav Ben Ahi Samakh [*ᴴʾaholiʾáv-Ben-ʾAḥi-Samáx*ᴴ,

dialects. Also, Jewish Beiruti and Jewish Galilean dialects differ in the use of some personal pronouns. The former normally uses *liḥna*[22] 'we', the latter *ʾiḥna*; the Jews of Beirut also normally use *hinnen*[23] 'they' while the Galilean Jews use *hinne*. The use of *hunīk ~ honīk ~ hnīk* 'there' is always Lebanese while in the Jewish Galilean dialects we find *hunāk*.

The demonstratives in singular, as attested in the interviews and in the texts, are normally *hayda* (m.) and *haydi* (f.) (MrZ, 1, 4), but the Palestinian (hence the Galilean) demonstratives are also attested, e.g. *hādi* (AA, 10).

Some informants use *halli* 'that' (YK, 5, 9) or even *ʾalli* and *yalli* (Syn, 5), while others use *ʾilli* which is regarded as more Palestinian.[24]

The informants normally use *mū~mō* 'not' by negation of an attribute, although some informants speak the more Palestinian way of *muš*.[25]

The genitive exponent is always *tabaʕ*[26] 'of', as in Galilean Jewish dialects.

One feature typical of the dialect of the Beiruti Jews is the omission of the final *-d* in the numeral *wāḥad, which turns into *wāḥa*[27]. It does not mean that *wāḥad* does not exist, yet we find *wāḥa-rāyeḥ, wāḥa-žāy, wāḥa-ʕam-biʕayyeṭ min hōn, wāḥa-bi-ṣarrex min hōn"* 'He {the High Commissioner} saw one goes in, one goes out, one screams here, one shouts there'.

Most of the Jewish informants from Beirut display a very interesting feature which is also found in Galilean Jewish Arabic but cannot be traced in other Arabic dialects in the region. This is the use of Maghrebi remnants in numeral form, for example, the noun after the numeral is in singular and with a definite article, e.g. *xa-masṭaʕš issine* 'fifteen years' (SYN, 8), *žīna tisʕaṭaʕš ezzalame*[28] 'we were nineteen people who came'.

3.3. Vocabulary

The names spoken for the Jewish festivals resemble those spoken in the Galilean Jewish dialect, e.g. *Sukkōt ~ Sikkōt, Pēsaḥ, Šavuʕōt* and so on. The expression *ʕrebbet*

Heb. אהליאב בן אחי סמך], son of Ahisamakh of the tribe of Dan, and is described in Exodus 38:23. He worked under Bezalel as the deputy architect of the Tabernacle and the implements which it housed, including the Ark of the Covenant. The Jews made the ascent on donkeys before Lag ba-ʕōmer. This was an occasion for the Beiruti Jews to meet Jews from Sidon and the Galilee region.

[22] See e.g. YP, 1−2. Compare *ʾiḥna* AA, 3.

[23] See e.g. YP, 4. See also Jiha (1964, p. 126): *hinni, hin.* Compare also Nakhla (1937, p. 56): *henne.*

[24] Cf. Behnstedt (1997, pp. 496−497, Karte 248). There are almost no data on Lebanon in this item, yet one can diagnose that *halli* is widespread in Syria's coastal region and in its other western parts.

[25] See e.g. YP, 5: here the informant uses *muš* by the negation of a verb in perfect: *muš žīt* 'I did not come'.

[26] See RL 4, 8, 10; YK 2, 5; AAA, 1; ElZ, 3,9. Cf. Behnstedt (1997, pp. 498−499, Karte 249).

[27] The Jews of Tiberias used *wāḥ*. See Geva-Kleinberger (2009, p. 58, e.g. sentence 12).

[28] Compare Feghali−Feghali (1978, p. 84, footnote 1).

'the evening of a Jewish fast' is typical of the dialect under consideration. Some Jewish terminology also is the same in Beirut and in the Galilee region. Noteworthy is the use of the word *knīs*, which is feminine in the Beiruti Jews' dialect, e.g. *elknīs ʾilli tˤammaret* 'the synagogue which was built'; *elknīs elkbīġe*[29] 'the Great Synagogue; Magen Avraham synagogue'. Sometimes this word has the feminine suffix *-t* in annexations such as *knīst ešŠwām* [*the Damascus Synagogue*]. This pattern is also found in the Jewish dialect of Pqiˤīn in Upper Galilee.

The informants vary in their use of the word *ʾabi* (SyN, 1, 2, 4, 5; YK, 4) ~ *bayyi* (AAA, 2) ~ *ʾabūy* (AA, 2)[30] 'my father'. *ʾabi* is apparently not borrowed from Classical Arabic but naturalised in the use of some Beirut Jewish informants.

Some words may be regarded as typical of the Beiruti Jewish dialect, especially in plural forms. The word *zalame* 'man' has the plural *zílim*; *sabt* 'Saturday' has the plural *sbūte*.

There is also a wide range of words spoken in French in speech, but some of these have acquired an Arabic morphological form, e.g. *ferūž*, which is a portmanteau word <*[F]feu rouge* 'traffic light'. The vowels that reflect French words imitate the French pronunciation, e.g. *bi-lAliʾœns[F]* 'in the *Alliance (school)*', while the French definite article in this word overlaps the Arabic *il-*.

4. Conclusions

The Beirut Jewish dialect lacks some highly typical Lebanese features, such as the existence of *Imāla* and diphthongs, so it resembles more the Palestinian dialects than the Lebanese ones or even other dialects in the Greater Syrian Macro dialectal region. It is a coastal and urban Arabic dialect.

This dialect also differs in some features from that of the Jews of Sidon.

Some informants emphasised that the Lebanese capital Beirut had a medley of dialects (*Beġūt lammāme*[31]), each neighbourhood possessing its own dialectal features reflecting the city's different communities and religions; moreover, its Jews also came from different places and origins. Nevertheless, a unique Beirut Jewish dialect seems to exist that differs from other dialects there. Historically, the three legendary Jewish families that established the city's Jewish community apparently spoke a dialect influenced by their Sunnite neighbours: it, too, lacks certain prominent Christian dialectal features such as the *Imāla* and the absence of diphthongs. No remnants remained of a Druze dialect supposed to have existed in the Beirut Jews' dialect as many families came from *Dēr elʾAmar* after 1860.

Ignoring the minute differences between Galilean Jewish Arabic dialects and the Beiruti Jewish dialect, these dialects resemble each other from many aspects.

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[29] SyN, 2: *wušš ilknīs likbīġe* 'in front of the *Great Synagogue*'.

[30] Cf. Behnstedt (1997, pp. 520−521, Karte 260): *bayyi* is attested in northern Lebanon. The use of *ʾabūy* in Syria is rare and is apparently a Palestinian influence. The feature *ʾabi* is widespread in the eastern parts of Syria.

[31] Literally '*Beirut is collecting* [in its nature]' = 'a complex mosaic'.

Both have generally more Palestinian linguistic features and also Maghrebi remnants, although the Galilean Jewish dialects have more of these phenomena. Some of the Jewish families like the SYNs originally came from *Pqiʕīn* in Upper Galilee before moving to Beirut. The geographical proximity to the Land of Israel made this community one of the closest to the Holy Land, and the Jews of Sidon even upheld the Jewish festivals as in Eretz Israel, namely they celebrated each of the three Pilgrimage festivals for only one day instead of two.[32]

Accordingly, I would suggest that the Beiruti Jewish dialect can be regarded historically as part of the Galilean Jewish dialects, although later the modern boundaries did not overlap the political borders. After the expulsion from Spain in 1492 some Jews apparently went to Lebanon after sojourning in the Jewish communities of the Galilee. There, in Tiberias, Safed, Pqiʕīn, Shfarʕām, and Haifa, these Jews, who originally spoke Maghrebi Arabic dialects, were influenced by their Palestinian neighbours in the course of time. Gradually their Arabic dialect became more Palestinian than Maghrebi, albeit preserving some of the latter's linguistic phenomena. So I would suggest that the lack of typical Lebanese or Lebanese Christian features in the Jews' speech does not result from any influence of their Sunni neighbours on the development of their dialect, which also lacks some of those features, just as the Jews' speech contains no remnants from their 19th-century Druze neighbours either. In Beirut, some of the Galilean Jews found better financial opportunities. They had religious connections with rabbis and teachers from Safed, Tiberias, and Pqiʕīn. As a minority living mostly in the circumscribed area of *Wādi Abu-Žmīl*, they continued to preserve their religious life and folklore. More importantly, they felt that they were still at the gates of the Holy Land.

5. The Texts

A. SYN

1. ʾana ʾismi Sófi …S…Sófi Yaʕēn Sġūġ. 2. ʾana min Wādi ʾAbu-Žmīl, wušš liknīs likbīġe ^HMagēn ʾAvrahām^H. 3. ʾana mžawwze kamān maʕa Libnāni. 4. hūwe kamān min ʕeylet bēt Yaʕēn Sġūġ, ʾibn xāli. 5. niḥna ʾaṣᵉlna min Pqiʕīn ʾal…yalli ʾāllo Ben-Tsvī maktūb ʕandon bi-lkitob ʾinno niḥna ʾaṣᵉlna min Pqiʕīn…bēt Sġūġ w baʕdēn sāfġu la-Dēġ elʾAmar, min Dēġ elʾAmar la-Tġāblus w min Tġāblus la-Beġūt. 6. ʾimmi ḍallet bi-Tġāblus la-ḥatta tžawwazet, tžawwazet ʾižat la-Beġūt.7. niḥna kinna tmān ʾixwāt,ʾē… 8. trakᵉt ʾana; kān ʕumri xamisṭāš essine. 9. tʕallamᵉt bi-lmadraset el… ʾAliœns^F. 10. taʕallamna ʕəbṛāni³³, ʕaġabi w fränsāwi.

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[32] Schulze (2001, p. 20): "The town of Said in the 1830s was surrounded by a little wall in which are very good streets and houses built of hewn stones, and the climate is wholesome. There are of native Israelites about 25 families, principally merchants; they have a small synagogue, they speak Arabic and have the same customs of Judea."

[33] Here with *r* and not *ġ* as is usual. This might be the influence of the way of pronouncing Hebrew words based on the Torah reading.

Translation of A. SYN

1. My name is Sofi…S. Sofi Ya'en Srur. 2. I am from Wadi Abu Jmeel, opposite the Great Synagogue, Magen Avraham. 3. I am married to a Lebanese too.[34] 4. He [her husband] is also from the Ya'en Srur family, being my maternal cousin. 5. Our origins are from Pqiʿīn…according to what Ben-Zvi[35] said, that he has a written record that our origins are in Pqiʿīn, that is, the Srur-family, which in the aftermath went to Der elAmar and from Der elAmar to Tripoli and from Tripoli to Beirut. 6. My mother lived in Tripoli until she got married and when she got married she went to Beirut. 7. We were eight sisters, yes. 8. When I left I was eighteen years old. 9. I studied in the *Alliance*[36] School. 10. I studied Hebrew, Arabic, and French.

B. RL

1. ʾasāset ʿēlet ʾabi hiyye min Túrkya[H]. 2. ʾabi xileʾ bi-Killes, w baʿd-ma… bi-ḥarb il…ʾawlāni, tyattam min ʾabū ve-[H] min ʾimmo, w ʾaxadū la-Ḥalab w hun…hunīk kubər bi-Ḥalab. 3. ʾimmi xalʾāne bi-…bi-Berūt, ʾával[H37] ʾaṣla min ʾe…ʿIṛāʾ; ʿaṃṃi (sic) ʿēlet Baġdādi. 4. ʾabi taʿallam b…bi-bēt yítama bi-Ḥalab maʿ l…bi-maṭraḥ tabaʿ lyahūd w kabbarūlo… kabar maʿa ʾarbaʿ-xams ʾaxwāto. 5. baʿad-ma kān ʾe…fi ṭarīʾ la-Berūt – ʾiža yiskon bi-Berūt w hun…hunēk…hunāka taʿarraf ʿala ʾabī (sic)…ʾabi taʿarraf ʿala ʾimmi w tžawwazu w žābu sabʿa ʾawlād – wāḥad ʾāʿed biFrānsa lyōm, wāḥde ʾāʿde bi-ʾAmērika:, ve-[H] niḥna killna lbāʾi ʾaʿdīn bi-Yisraʾēl. 6. ʾaxwāti sākn…wāḥad (sic) min ʾaxwāti ṣākne bi-Ġoš-ha-ʿĀyin, w ttānye sākne bi-Bnēy Bṛāk, w tālte sākne bi-…Ḥulōn. 7. w killna bi-lʾaʿyād mnoʾod maʿa baʿḍtna (sic) minšān minḥebb ᵉktīr ᵉktīr lʾēle maʿa baʿḍha. 8. le-ʾasās tabaʿna ben… kill ilwaʾet minkūn maʿa baʿᵉḍna… ninkat… minḥibb baʿᵉḍna w ʾana mabsūṭa lli xliʾet la-ʾēle hādi, w-nšaLLa bi-sint el…žāyye minsāfer killna-killna la-ʿind ʾaxi bi-Frānsa minšān ḥābbîn minkūn maʿa baʿaḍna. 9. ʾana ktīr mabsūṭa ʾalli e… fi ḥayāti (m)tžawwze maʿa wā…rižžāl Romani[H]…bass biḥki kamān šwayye ʿarabi, minšān kill waʾet lamma naḥna noʾud maʿa baʿᵉḍna mniḥki bi-…maʿa lʾēle. 10. žōzi bifham ʿarabi šwayy,

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wlādi mu-ktīr, bass ʾana be…baḥassev^H ʾinni be…ʿinna…m…mistʿidde ʾinno ʾawlādi kamān yaʿrfu ʿarabi, minšān baḥassib ʾinno hiyye lsān mnīḥa yaʿrfu kill iliwlād bi-Yisraʾēl ta-y ifhamu lʿadu tabaʿon.

Translation of B. RL

1. The origin of my father's family is Turkey. 2. My father was born in *Kílles*[38] and after the…World War I, he lost his father and also his mother and he was taken to Aleppo and from…there…he grew up in Aleppo. 3. My mother was born in…Beirut, but her origins are in…Iraq; my mother is originally from the *Baghdadi*-family. 4. My father studied in an orphanage in Aleppo, in a Jewish place and he grew up…he grew up together with his four-five brothers and sisters. 5. After he was…on his way to Beirut, he came to live in Beirut, and…there…there… he met…my father…my father met my mother and she married him and they had seven children: one lives today in France, the second daughter lives in the United States, and all the rest of us live in Israel. 6. My sisters live… one of my sisters lives in Rosh ha-ʿAyin, another one in Bney-Brak and the third one in Holon. 7. We celebrate, all of us, the [Jewish] festivals, because we love very much that the family is all together. 8. Actually…we are all the time together…we love each other and I am happy that I was born to this family, and hopefully next year, we will go, all of us, to visit my brother in France, because we would like to be together. 9. I am very happy that…I married a Romanian man who…also speaks Arabic a bit, since all of us when we are together we generally speak Arabic in…the family. 10. My husband understands Arabic a little bit, but my children not so much, yet I think… I would like my children to understand Arabic too, since I think it is a nice language that all children in Israel should know, in order to understand their enemy.

C. YP

1. kānet ḥayāt ḥilwe ktīr… w liḥna nbasaṭna. 2. w kān fī ʾaxawiyye, liḥna w žiranna, masiḥiyye w ʾislām w ʾarman w drūz. 3. kānu…ktīr ^ektīr žamāʿa mnāḥ w ʿišta[39] maʿon ilʿamar killo. 4. waʾet illi biddi ʾaži la-^HÈrets Yisraʾēl^H- hinnen saʿadūni w ʿirfu w kān mamnūʿ. 5. w žīt ^ehrībe; muš žīt bi-l…e…maʿa paspōrt, lā, žīt bi-lbaḥaṛ, bēn elḥáya w elmōt, w hinne saʿadūna. 6. w kānu žamāʿa ktīr ^emnāḥ, w minḥibbon. 7. w elyahūd killon kānu mabsūtīn ^ektīr, w ʾažǧālon w ttužāra wilkill. 8. w kānu byūtna mnāḥ. 9. w elyahūd ^ehnīk mā-yitʿāṭu maʿā ḥada, žiríton ḥilwe w mā bitdaxxalu dvarīm^H ʾilli mā bitxuṣṣon. 10. minšān hēk ʾistaʾdarūna ktīr w ʾaddarūna.

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[38] Kilis (Turkish), *Kilîs* (Kurdish), is a city in south-central Turkey, near the border with Syria. This city had about 300 Jewish families at the end of the 19th century.
[39] Apparently a Classical Arabic influence.

Translation of C. YP

1. It was a very beautiful life, and we enjoyed it. 2. There was brotherhood between us and our neighbours, Christians, Moslems, Armenians, and Druze. 3. They were very good people and we lived with them all our life. 4. When I planned to come to Israel they helped me, although they knew that it was forbidden. 5. I came illegally, without a passport, no, I came by sea, between life and death and they helped us. 6. They were very nice people and we loved them. 7. All the Jews were very content: their jobs, their trade and everything. 8. Also our houses were very nice. 9. The Jews there do not interfere with anybody, their neighbourly relations are nice and they don't stick their noses into things that are not their concern. 10. That is the reason that they [her neighbours] appreciated us a lot and respected us.

D. YK

1. kinna ʕayšīn bi-lWādi, Wādi ʾAbu-Žmīl, w tʕallamna bi-lAliʾœns^F w kān…kint sākin bi-Zarūbat elMenn, Zaġūbat^40 elMenn. 2. w halli batzakkarha min ṭufúlti…min elḥayāt, min elʕīše bi-Libnān kānet ᵉktīr ḥilwe; w il…e…cœntġə^F tabaʕ l…ʕayšítna bi-Beyġūt kānet e lAliʾœns^F, el ^HMagén Dav…^H41 ^HMagén ʾAvrahám^H w el^Hbaté-midráš^H halli min dāyer elknīs. 3. ʾana kint eṣalli bi-^HBet-Midráš^H elMenn, ʾIzāk…Yitṣḥāk^H lMenn, kan-huwwe māsek el ^HBet-Midráš^H-bi-Zaġubet elMenn. 4. w kint hunīk ʾaṣalli maʕa ʾabi, kill sabet w ʾaʕyād. 5. w halli batzakkaġ min ^HMagén ʾAvrahám^H leʕrās ʾilli kānu ysawwū, kān kullon ykūnu bi-lknīst likbīġe tabaʕ ^HMagén ʾAvrahām^H, w laʕyād be-^HMagén ʾAvrahām, sukkōt^H w… 6. elʕilem bi- lAliʾœns^F ktīġ yaʕni; kinna niḥki bi-lʕaġabi w elfransāwi, tlat-ʾirbaʕ elḥaki kān bi-lfransāwi. 7. kinna nitʕallam min lʾazīl^F ʾÃ la-ʾazīl^F-Bē, yaʕni ^Fjarden d'enfœ^42F,baʕdēn nġanni be-lefransāwi, bi-lʕaġabi, bi-lʕəbġāni; baʕdēn bi-lṣaff elxāmes nballeš bi-lʾinglīzi kamān. 8. el…kinna nitʕallan ʾabel iḍḍəhəġ, sāʕa ṭnāʕš nitlaʕ ʕal-bēt, wāḥde w nuṣṣ nirža ʕ, nitʕallam la-ssāʕa ʾaġbaʕa. 9. baʕd essāʕa ʾaġbaʕa, elWādi kan-yitʕabba wlād, kān-fi halli yrūḥu l-^F ʾA-ʾA^F, -^F ʾA-ʾA^F yaʕni yitʕallamu lṣála w ʕand elḥaxām^H, w nilʕab. (AGK: šū l ^F ʾA-ʾA^F?)- l ^F ʾA-ʾA^F l ^HBet-Midráš^H nitʕallam maʕa elḥaxām^H lṣála, Tehillīm^H, baʕad sāʕa ʾaġbaʕa… 10. halli-ḏakkar (sic), ʾana kint… Zaġūbat elMenn kant-titʕabba wlād w…la-ḥaddīt ma-tġib eššaməs, kill wāxad (sic) ʕala bēto kān yrūḥ.

Translation of D. YK

1. We lived in the Wadi, *Wadi Abu-Žmīl*, and we studied at the *Alliance*-School…and I lived in *elMenn*[43]-Alley, *elMenn*-Alley. 2. What I remember from my childhood is…from my life…the life in Lebanon, is that it was very beautiful; the centre of our

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life in Beirut was the *Alliance* and *Magen Dav…Magen Avraham* and the several *Batey-Midrash* around the synagogue. 3. I prayed in *Bit-Midrash elMenn*, [named for] Isaac, Itshak elMenn and the Bet-Midrash was in *elMenn*-Alley. 4. I prayed there with my father every Saturday and on the [Jewish] festivals. 5. What I still remember from the *Magen Avraham* [synagogue] are the weddings that took place there, since all of them took place in the *Great Synagogue* of *Magen Avraham,* and also [he recalls] the festivals at *Magen Avraham* such as *Sukkot*. 6. In the *Alliance* there was lots of study; we spoke in Arabic and French as three-quarters of our speech was in French. 7. We learned from *Class-A* to *Class-B* in the kindergarten, I mean *Jardin d'enfants* and then we used to sing in French, Arabic and Hebrew; afterwards in the fifth class we began to learn English as well. 8. We studied before noon, and at twelve o'clock we went home and at one thirty we went back and studied until four o'clock. 9. After four o'clock the Wadi gradually filled up with children, since some of them went to the *A.A.*, it means they went to learn to pray, to go to the Rabbi and then we went to play. (AGK[44]: What does *A.A.* mean?) *A.A.* is the *Bet-Midrash* where we learned with the Rabbi to pray and to [learn] Psalms; and then after four o'clock… 10. What I remember is that the *Menn*-Alley would fill up with children until… the sun set, and then everyone went to his own home.

E. AA

1. ṭufūli ʾiʕtiyadiyye…yaʕni kinna fi-ṭāʾife muḥtarame židdan, ṭāʾife zġīre, ʾamma muḥtarame kulla yaʕni. 2. w ʾabūy kān tāžer…ʾaʾmiše, ᴴve-zéhuᴴ. 3. w iḥna nḍammēna la-Ḥizb elKatāʾeb[45], sint elxamsīn. 4. w ḍallēna yaʕni bi- ṭāʾife kān fī ʕinna ʾasātze lli kānu ymaššūna ʕa-ṭṭarīʾa ʾilli kān biddon iyyāha yaʕni. 5. w kānt ḥayāt ḥilwe yaʕni, mā kānš nāʾeṣna walla-ʾiši yaʕni. 6. w ilyahūd ʾilli nẓalamu bi-dduwal lʕarabiyye…ʾiḥna mā kān…kull ʾiši tamām! mā ḥadan ʾažu ʕalēna yaʕni. 7. ʾalīl ṣārat ḥawālay sane, ʾifradiyye yaʕni, li-lli yīžu nnās yitḥarrašu yinzalu ʕala Wādi-ʾAbu-Žamīl[46]. 8. nuṣṣ sane yaʕni kānet ḥawādis hududiyye yaʕni, māla ʕalāʾa, ʾamma ššaʕb kān yḥibbna yaʕni w ma-kanneš, mā-kan yaʕmíkna ʾiši yaʕni; la-ʾinn lKatāʾib kullna munḍammīn la- Ḥizb elKatāʾeb, w Ḥizb elKatāʾeb kān ydāfeʕ elyahūd ktīr. 9. ʕa-ʾiyyām Pyēr ižŽmayyel, ʾAḷḷa yírḥamo. 10. w hādi hiyye…hādi hiyye lḥayāt; w baʕd sant issabʕa w sittīn, baʕd ḥarb lʾiyyām issitte, badaʾū lyahūd yiṭlaʕu min Lubnān.

Translation of E. AA

1. My childhood was a normal one… I mean, we were in a most respected commu-
nity, albeit a small one, but very distinguished. 2. My father was a merchant in
fabrics…and that's all. 3. We [= I] joined the *Kataeb Party* in 1950. 4. We [= I] re-
sumed my life in the community and we had leaders that led us in the way they
thought suited us. 5. It was a beautiful life and lacked for nothing. 5. As for the Jews
that were abused in Arab countries…we had nothing at all of that sort! Nobody at-
tacked us. 7. It happened only rarely, for example, during approximately one year, but
these were only single cases, when some people came to *Wadi Abu-Žamīl* in order to
stir up trouble. 8. For half of a year there were some troubles on the borders [between
Lebanon and Israel] which had nothing to do with us; the people loved us and did us
no harm, since we were all members of the *Kataeb Party* and the *Kataeb Party* pro-
tected the Jews a lot. 9. [Especially] during the time of Pierre Jumayyil, of blessed
memory. 10. And that was… that was the life; after 1967, after the Six Day War, the
Jews began to emigrate from Lebanon.

F. AAA

1. kbiġna bi-Libnān maʕa ṣḥābi, kihilá[H] *tabaʕana, lḥévre*[H] *tabaʕ l…bi-lʾAliʾāns*[F]*. 2.
baʕdēn tžawwazt žōzi, bibʾa šġīko la-bayyi, šġīko la-bayyi; . bayyi w ʾabū kānu šġīke,
ʾaġbaʕ šġīke.;w kān ʕandna ġífʕa. 3. baʕdēn maʕ sine tžawwazna; ba-l… 4. ḍallēna
kámo*[47H] *famílya,* [H]*mišpaḥá· w be-sēdeġ*[H.] *ḥamdi-LLā. (AGK: w ḥaflet ilʕiris wēn
kānat?)- bi-liknīs* [H]*Magén-ʾAbrahám*[H]*. (AGK: yaʕni dāʾiman kānu yiʕmalu hunīk?)-
bæss! bæss!- mā-fi* [H]*ʾulamót, lo-hayá…*[48]*5. w šaheġ ilʕasal kānu yġūḥu la-Štūġa, la-
Štūġa w yibʾu fīha, ʾotēl Masābkę. 6. kill elyahūd et-tseʕiġím*[H] *yaʕni yġūḥu yiʕmalu
šaheġ ʕasal. 7. liḥna* [H]*otóyom*[H] *kinna ġāyḥîn, bass fī wāḥad šofēġ fī ʕando ʾóto*[H] *ḥilu,
yaʕmilna lyahūd, huwwe yahudi, Dōdž, kān ʕindo ʾóto*[H] *ḥilu, ʾāxidna šaheġ ʕasal. 8.
waʾʾafūna hunīke ʕa-lᵉḥdūd, ʾinno maktūb ʕala-lhawiyye ʾinno ʾIsraʾiliyye. 9. walla
ʕindon…ʾintu šū? ʾIsraʾiliyye?! hadōle mitl harbanīn! ʾamma hayda ʕaġīs wa ʕaġūs!
10. taḥaʾʾaʾu maʕana w ṭallaʕu ʾinno maẓbūṭ liḥna Lubnaniyye bass maktūb
elmawalīd…elžinsiyye ʾIsraʾiliyye, bass liḥna yahūd! – ʾaz*[H] *baʕatūna…*

Translation of F. AAA

1. We [=I] grew up in Lebanon with my friends and with our [Jewish] community
and with our guys from the *Alliance*. 2. Afterwards I married my husband who was
my father's partner, my father's partner; my father and his father were partners [in a
company], four partners; and we also had friends. 3. After one year I married. …
4. We remained like a family, [one big] family and everything was fine, thank God.

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[47] < כמו
[48] There is a break in the recording.

(AGK: And where was the marriage?) In Magen Avraham Synagogue. (AGK: All the marriages were there?) Just there! Just there! There were no marriage halls. 5. There was a tradition to go to *Shtura*[49] for the honeymoon, to go to *Shtura* and stay at the *Hotel Masabke*. 6. All the young Jews used to go there for honeymoon. 7. On that day, as we were going, there was one driver who had a nice car, he would take us Jews, since he was also a Jew; he had a Dodge, a nice car and he took us to the honeymoon. 8. We were stopped there at the border, since it was written on our identity cards that we were Israelis.[50] 9. They were surprised to have…'What are you? *Israelis?!*' – 'It looks as if they're running away!' But 'This is a groom and a bride!'[51] 10. They questioned us and found out that we were Lebanese, although it was written that we were born… our identity was 'Israeli', but we were Jews! Finally we were released…

G. ElZ

*1. kān e…ʾiyyām ilʾintidāb lamma…lamma lFransawiyye kānu bi-…bi-Bayrūt, kān-fi ʿāde ʾinno bi-lʾaʿyād yīži l…lmandūn elFransāwi la-lknīs ᴴMagén ʾAvrahám*ᴴ *la-ḥatta yʿayyed elṭāyfe. 2. kān kull raʾīs ilṭāyfe w elḥaxamīm*ᴴ*. 3. marra min elmarrāt, baẓunni yimken Pēsaḥ*ᴴ *ʾaw Sukkōt*ᴴ*, ʾiža lmandūb elFransāwi w ʿamlūlo ḥaflet istiʾbāl i-ssalōn tabaʿ ṭṭāyfe (AGK: bi-lknīs)- bi-lknīs, bi-knīs* ᴴ*Magén ʾAvrahám*ᴴ*. 4. lamma bitfūt ʿa-ssāḥa kān-fi salōn, salōn, salōn ʾistiʾbāl,* ᶠ*sāl də-Fət*ᶠ *kānu ysammūha; w istaʾbalū hunīk. 5. w ḥaku, yaʿni kān-fi xṭabāt w-ʾiža hannāʾhon be-lʿīd, 6. w lamma ṭilib biddo-yrūḥ, ʾiža lḥaxām*ᴴ *Líxtman*[52] *ʾāl "daʾīʾa bass, ʾiʿmil maʿrūf, biddi-faržīk ši". 7. "lḥaʾni!" 8. ʾaxadon. 9. wara knīs* ᴴ*Magén ʾAvrahám*ᴴ *kān-fi lmadrase,* ᴴ*Talmúd Torá*ᴴ *tabaʿ Salīm Ṭarrāb. 10. btiṭlaʿ bi-ssillom, bi-noṣṣ issillom tabaʿ lmadrase, fī ʾōḍa zġīre; ʾōḍa ktīr…zġīre mamāš*ᴴ*… šū biʾillak, mitrēn ʿala mitrēn, honīk kān liknīs tabaʿ lʾAškenazīm*ᴴ*, 11. kinna kull sine bi-*ᴴ*šabbāt, yōm-ši…*[53H]*, yom-el… yom-ežžimʿa (AGK: šū kān ʾismo?) – mā…mā-kan…Knīs isSkānze,*

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[49] *Shtura* or *Chtaura* is a town in Lebanon in the *Beqāʿ* valley, less than 50 kilometres from Beirut.

[50] In Lebanese identity cards and passports the word for Jews was *ʾIsrāʾīliyyi* 'Israelite', not *Yahūdi* or *Musawiyy* as in Syria.

[51] Apparently the words of the driver.

[52] Chief Rabbi Benzion Lichtmann. See Schulze (2001, p. 104): "At the end of 1959, Chief Rabbi Ben Zion Lichtman [sic!] also left Lebanon. It was a sad day for the community. Rabbi Lichtman, who had been born in Brailov (Lithuania) into a Hassidic family, had moved to Beirut in 1932. Before moving to Beirut he had lived in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. He had immigrated to Palestine in 1923/4 from Russia where he had been a young militant, active in the ultra-religious *Agudat bYisrael*, and had devoted much of his free time to researching rabbinic literature, with a specific interest in the *Shulchan Aruch*. He had not wanted to leave Palestine, but the economic situation was very bad, and he needed to find a way to support his family. From a relative that travelled in the region he heard that the Beirut community was looking for a *shochet*. So he went. After his arrival in Beirut, he went to the main synagogue on *Erev Shabat*. He was immediately spotted as a 'foreigner' and invited for *kiddush*."

[53] *yōm-šišī* 'Friday'.

Knīs išŠkānze. 12. w kinna nrūḥ hunīk kull sine bi-… yom-ežžimʕa ʾilli tabaʕ Ḥánuka^H, minṣalli ^HMinḥá Gdolá^H hunīk ta-mnṣīr mnšaʕʕel ḥanuká^H bi-lbēt baʕdēn. 13. baʕa…riḥna, ʾáxadon lḥaxām^H Līxtman la-lmandūb elFransāwi, ṭilʕu ta-yzūru hunīk. 14. daxal, ʾallon ʻwēn knīs elʾAškenazím^H?ʼ ma-taʕrif ʕind elʾAškenazím^H mū mitl ʕind esSefaradím^H; Sefaradím^H byeʕadu kull wāḥed b-maḥallo, kull wāḥid b-makāno, byiṣallu, w elḥazān^H huwwe ʾilli bidīr elminḥāž. 15. bi-lKnīs išŠkānze ṭiliʕ lmandūb, šāf wāḥa-rāyeḥ, wāḥa-žāy, wāḥa-ʕam-biʾayyeṭ min hōn, wāḥa-biṣarrex min hōn, w kull wāḥad b-hāyda.^54 16. šāf; ʾallo ʻhōn Knīs isSkānze bi-Bayrūt, w ʾana lḥaxām^H lekbīr tabaʕ Bayrūt, ḥaxām^H Šeknāži, bass ʾana biṣalli b-Magén ʾAvrahámʼ, hēk ʾallon, minšān eṭṭāyfe honīk. 17. hinne w nazlīn, dār lmandūb lFransāwi, baʾa ḥaxām^H Līxtman mā-kan yiḥki fransāwi; židdi ḥaxām^H ʾElyāhu kān yiḥki fransāwi w raʾīs eṭṭāyfe ʕAṭiyye kān yiḥki fransāwi; dār la-ʕandon w ʾallon… bi-lfransāwi willa bi-lʕarabi? (AGK: ʾiza thaddas bi-lfransāwi fal-ykūn bi-lfransāwi!) – w ʾallon bi-lfransāwi ^Fmétno že komprɔ ke purkwa le žwīf sɔ əntəližɔ^55ʹF; ʾalūlo ʻpurkwa^56F?ʼ – ʾallo ʻminšān ḥaṭṭu ^Filz-on-mi lə-fū səl…non normál sɔ…^57Fʼ [laughs] – ḥaṭṭu lmažanīn la-ḥalhon! hāy ʾoṣṣa!

Translation of G. ElZ

1. At the time of the Mandate, when the French were in…in Beirut, there was a custom during the [Jewish] festivals that the French High Commissioner came to *Magen Avraham Synagogue* to celebrate with the community. 2. The community's head and the rabbis were there. 3. Once, I assume during *Passover* or *Sukkot*, the High Commissioner came and they held a reception party for him in the community hall. 4. When you entered the yard, there was a hall, a hall, the community hall; it was called *Salle de fêtes*, and they held the reception for him there. (AGK: Was it in the synagogue?) [Yes], in the synagogue, at *Magen Avraham Synagogue.* 5. They talked, I mean there were speeches, and he came to greet them for the festival. 6. When he asked for permission to leave, Rabbi Lichtmann came and said: 'Just a moment, do me a favour, I would like to show you something'. 7. 'Please follow me!' 8. He took them.[58] 9. Behind the *Magen Avraham Synagogue* there was a school, the *Salim Tarrab Talmud Torah*.[59] 10. You had to climb a ladder [to reach it]; half way up the ladder leading to this school there was a little room, a really tiny room – what can I tell you? Two metres by two metres; there was the Ashkenazi Synagogue. 11. We

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[54] Here long and not *hayda* as normally.

[55] Maintenant, je comprends pourquoi les Juifs sont intelligents.

[56] Pourquoi.

[57] Ils ont mis les fous seuls. Non normal sont [= Ils ne sont pas normaux].

[58] Apparently, the High Commissioner arrived with a delegation.

[59] Schulze (2001, p. 43): "The *Ecole Talmud Torah* Selim Tarrab was located within the premises of Magen Avraham. Both the school and the synagogue provided the community as a whole with an impressive neighbourhood as well as functioning as a vehicle for the community leadership to counter de-Judaization and religious indifference." For more on the structure of *Talmud Torah* in Beirut, see Levi (2010, pp. 197–198).

used every year on Saturday, on Friday to… (AGK: What was its name?) It did not have…it did not have a name, it was just called 'the Ashkenazi Synagogue'. 12. We would go there every year, on the Friday of Hanukah to say the *Minha Gdola*[60] prayer there, and afterwards would light the *Hanukiyah* at home. 13. So Rabbi Lichtmann took the French High Commissioner to visit there. 14. He entered and asked them, 'Where is the Ashkenazi Synagogue?' As you know, the Ashkenazim are not like the Sephardim; every one of the Sephardim sits down in his place, in his own seat and prays, and the Cantor leads the service. 15. In the Ashkenazi Synagogue the High Commissioner saw someone going in, someone going out, someone yelling here, someone shouting there – and everything was chaotic. 16. He was staring; he said to him: 'Here is the Ashkenazi Synagogue of Beirut, and I am the Chief Rabbi of the Ashkenazi community of Beirut, but I pray in *Magen Avraham Synagogue* for that [Ashkenazi] community. 17. Going down, the French High Commissioner turned, as Rabbi Lichtmann did not speak French, while my grandfather Rabbi Eliyahu spoke French and so did Rabbi Atiyya, the head of the community – he turned to them and said to them… Shall I tell it to you in French or in Arabic? (AGK: If he was talking in French, please quote it in French). He said to him in French: 'Now I understand why the Jews are so intelligent!' They asked him [in French]: 'Why then?' He answered: 'Because they put, they put the crazy people separately, since they are not normal!' [he laughs]. They had put the crazy people separately! What a story!

H. MrZ

1. yaˤni haydi faḍīḥa haydi! 2. ʾiza bna-niḥki ˤala binit masalan, biddi ʾaḥarkíša: "rūḥ dissíla[61] *nnabaḍ!", šūf el…šūf elnabaḍ tabáˤa. 3. ʾana lā…nsīt; fī, fī ktīr…fī ktīr e…masa…mašāˤ…masāʾel min ha-nnōˤ. 4. masalan "hāy ilbinit haydi btistāhel ˤavōn*[H]*". 5. w šū kamān? 6. ʾaw…"eṭṭābe(ʾ) elfoʾāni fāḍi" – huw mṭarṭaˤ.*

Translation of H. MrZ

1. This is a real scandal![62] 2. If we wanted to speak about a certain girl and I wanted to tease her, [they used to say in the Jewish community of Beirut]: 'Go and check her pulse! Go and look at her pulse!'[63] 3. I cannot… I have forgotten; there are many expressions…many things like that. 4. For example: 'This girl deserves ˤavōn[H].[64] 5. And what else? 6. And also… 'His upper storey is empty', meaning 'he is stupid'.

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[60] Etymologically, the term *Minha* means 'a present'; it denotes the meal offering that accompanied each sacrifice offered in the Jewish Temple. The *Minha* service may be recited from half an hour after *halachic* noontime. This earliest time is referred to as *Minha gedola* 'Large *Minha*'. It is, however, preferably recited after *mincha ketana* 'Little *Minha*'.

[61] < جس النبض >

[62] The informant was asked to speak in Arabic after a long interview in Hebrew.

[63] Euphemism; denotes a sexual allusion.

[64] A sin, according to Judaism.

I. MsZ

1. ˤerébbet Kippūġ, kānu yidbaḥu žāž. 2. šūf, kill-ma tˀaddem bi-ššārġeˤ- yidbaḥu žāž. 3. lam(m) kan-ˤīd – kint tišˤoġ ˀinno fī ˤīd. 4. Wādi ˀAbu-Žmīl kān, ka-ˀanno bi-ḥafle! …[65] *5. ˀaġlabiyyet essukkót*[H] *kānu bi-lkanāyes. 6. liknīst-likbīġe masalan kān ˤandak sukkáʰ*[H] *tisaˤ šī miyye w xamsīn zalame. 7. baˤdēn bi-kill…kānu bi-kill ḥōš, ḥāġa, kān- fī kam sukkáʰ*[H]*, ˀiza lwāḥed saw(w)a sukkáʰ*[H] *– killon bifūtu. 8. ˀissa, ˀaġlabiyyat essukkót*[H] *kānu bi-lkanāyes, kān fī ˤandak tmantaˤš (sic)… tmantaˤš el…ᵉknīs! (AGK: zākir kill ˀasamīhon?) – ˀaġlabiyya ˀaftikir. 9. kān-fī ˤandak elḤalabiyye. 10. ˀawwalan kān-fī ˤandak tabaˤ tawāli, fī-ˤandak elḤalabiyye; fī-ˤandak elSpanyoliyye, fī-ˤandak el…elŠwām. hadōl kān-fī ˤelāt…ˤayāl; fī-ˤandak knīs ezZatūne; knīs elˤEddi; knīs edDāna;knīs bet-elMann; baˤdēn fī ˤandak maṭāġiḥ: knīs eṣṢalāya…e…knīs…baˤdēn knīs leKbīġe*[H]*Magén ˀAvrahám*[H]*, mā-kan ysammūha*[H]*Magén ˀAvrahám*[H]*, kān ysammūha Knīs liKbīġe, w ˀeddām knīs… ˀeddām Knīs liKbīġe kān*[H]*Bet Midġāš*[H] *ˀaw knīs elSáfġa; baˤdēn ˤāndek knīst et*[H]*Talmūd Toráʰ*[H] *w knīs el²Aliˀœns.*

Translation of I. MsZ

1. In Yom Kippur eve they would slaughter chicken. 2. Look: as you were going along the street you could encounter people slaughtering chickens. 3. When there was a [Jewish] festival you could feel its atmosphere. 4. *Wadi Abu-Jmil* looked like a whole celebration!… 5. Most of the *sukkot* were in the synagogues. 6. In the *Great Synagogue* there was for example a *sukkah* which held one hundred and fifty people. 7. Additionally, in each…in each yard, in each sub-neighbourhood there were several *sukkot* and if somebody built a *sukkah* everybody could enter. 8. Now, most of the *sukkot* were in the synagogues: there were eighteen…eighteen synagogues! (AGK: Do you remember all their names?) I think that I recall most of them. 9. There was the Aleppine Synagogue. 10. There were synagogues in the following order: the Aleppine; the Andalusian; the Damascene; *Zatūne* Synagogue; *Eddi* Synagogue; *Dana* Synagogue; *Mann* Synagogue. And then you had places like the *Ṣalāya* and then there was the *Great Synagogue* which was not actually called by its name *Magen Avraham* but [rather as] the *Great Synagogue*, and facing…the *Great Synagogue* was the *Bet Midrash* of *Safra*[66] or [as it was known] *Safra Synagogue*; next come the synagogue of *Talmud Torah* and the synagogue of *Alliance*.

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[65] A pause in the recording.
[66] Levi (2010, p. 50): "In 1920, Jacob Safra, a member of an Aleppo banking family, mi- grated to Beirut and founded a bank…The family lived in Beirut and was part of its Jewish commu- nity for three decades until its members migrated to Brazil in 1952."

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