

Texts for Teaching Damascus Arabic (Syria)
Carmen Berlinches Ramos (2025)

This document contains ten texts in Damascus Arabic, adapted for classroom use. Each text is accompanied by vocabulary, activities, and the English translation.

The texts were collected by the author in Damascus between 2007 and 2008 using a voice recorder. The participants were men and women under the age of 30. To ensure their spontaneity, no preparation or rehearsal was conducted prior to the recording.

Keywords: Levantine Varieties of Arabic, Syrian Arabic, Damascus Arabic, Arabic as a Foreign Language



Transcription system

Consonants

ʔ	ء
b	ب
t	ت
ʒ	ج
ħ	ح
x	خ
d	د
r	ر
z	ز
s	س
ʃ	ش
ʂ	ص
ð	ض
ɸ	ط
z	ظ
ʕ	ع
ɡ	غ
f	ف
q	ق
k	ك
l	ل
ɫ	ل (velarized)
m	م
n	ن
h	ه
w	و (semivowel)
y	ي (semivowel)

Vowels

Short vowels

a	
e	
ə	(mid-central unstressed)
i	
o	
u	
ɐ	(helping vowel)

Long vowels

ā
ē
ī
ō
ū

Text 1

1 əš-šām bəttəll ʕala qāsyūn ʔlli huwwe žabal mən nāhīt əš-šāmāl. əš-šām əl-ʔadīme hiyye bəl-
 2 ʔasās kānet əl-qalʕa w ʔawālē-a sabʕ ʔbwāb. w mən baʕda ballašu yəbnuww-a ʔāra ʔāra ʔatta
 3 šāret əš-šām ʔlli hiyye hallaʔ kəll-a. [wēn əl-qalʕa?]¹ əl-qalʕa hiyye bi-šarʔ əš-šām w ʔlli hnīk
 4 hiyye muʕzam əl-manāteʔ əl-masīhiyye mətʔl bāb tūma wəl-ʔaššāʕ w šāref ʔalab ʔlli
 5 baʕd-a biwaddi ʕala šāref baḡdād w mənn-o byəʔlaʕ ʕala baʔīt əš-šām, ʕala markaz əl-madīne
 6 mətʔl sāht əl-muḥāfaʔa, šāref əs-sawra, əl-barāmke, əl-ḥižāz. w bən-nāḥye t-tānye fi baʔīt əl-
 7 manāteʔ ʔlli hənnen bi-ʔəttižāh qāsyūn ʔaktar ʔlli hənnen əl-manāteʔ ʔlli šwayy ʔaḡna mətʔl əl-
 8 mālki, ʔabu rəmmāne... lāʔ, əl-mazze šāret ʔabʕad. šu kamān fi? [ʔayya manāteʔ fi bəl-qāsyūn?]
 9 lə-mhāžrīn ʔlli bəl-qāsyūn, lə-mhāžrīn w fi yaʕni ʔažžāʔ mən əl-mazze fōʔ, mazze žabal ʔaw
 10 yaʕni ʔəl-a ʔaktar mən ʔəsʔm.

Vocabulary

(1) *bəttəll*: she/ it overlooks

(1) *nāhīt* > *nāhiyye*: side / direction

(2) *ballašu*: they started

(5) *biwaddi*: leads to

(5) *byəʔlaʕ*: comes out to

(5) *baʔīt* > *baʔiyye*: the rest / the remaining parts

(9) *ʔažžāʔ*: parts (sg. *žəzʔ*)

¹ The author's interventions are shown in square brackets.

Answer the following questions:

- wēn bəš-šām fi manāte? masīhiyye?
- wēn əl-qalʿa?
- kam bāb fi əš-šām əl-ʔadīme?
- šu ʔəs^əm manṭiʔtēn ġaniyye?
- ʔayy manṭiʔa mawzūde b-žabal qāsyūn?

Translation

Damascus overlooks Qāsyūn, which is the mountain located in the northern part. Old Damascus was originally the citadel and around it there were seven gates. Later, they began building street by street until it became the Damascus we know today. [Where is the citadel?] The citadel is in the east of Damascus, where most of the Christian neighborhoods are located, such as Bāb Tūma, ʔAššāf, and Aleppo Street, which then leads to Baghdad Street, from which one can reach the rest of Damascus, including the city center, such as Muḥāfaza Square, əs-Sawra Street, Barāmke, and Ḥižāz. On the other side are the districts that are closer to Qāsyūn, which are a bit wealthier, like Mālki and ʔAbu Rəmmāne... no, Mazze is farther away. What else is there? [Which districts are in Qāsyūn?] Mhāžrīn is the one located in Qāsyūn, Mhāžrīn, and there are parts of Mazze higher up, Mazze Žabal or... it has more than one name.

Text 2

1 əš-šām əl-ʔadīme ktīr žaww-a ḥamīmi yaʔni ḥārāt-a d-dayyʔa bətxallī-ki tḥəssi ʔənn-o ʔənti
 2 ʔarībe mn əš-šaxš ʔlli ʔam-təmši maʔ-o, bətxallī-ki tḥəssi ʔənn-o ʔənti btaʔʔfi ktīr əl-ʔālam,
 3 ʔənn-o lə-wžūh hunīk ma bəḥəssiya-a ǧarībe la-ʔənn-o ktīr ḥārāt-a dayyʔa w ʔktīr ʔktīr
 4 žaww-a ḥamīmi. hallaʔ ḥatta l-kāfētīryāt ʔlli bəš-šām əl-ʔadīme la-ʔənn-o hiyye byūt
 5 dimašqīyye ʔadīme, ktīr ʔktīr žaww-a ḥamīmi w ʔktīr ʔbtəʔʔdi maʔ rəʔʔāt-ek w ʔənti hēke
 6 mabsūṭa w ḥasse ḥāl-ek ʔāʔde bəl-bēt ʔan žadd.
 7 hallaʔ kamān əl-kāfētīryāt bixallū-ki tḥəssi ʔənn-o ʔənti ʔāʔde maʔ rəʔʔāt-ek bi-žaww mərtāḥ
 8 w mān-ek ḥābbe tʔūmi la-ʔənn-o dāyman ḥāṭṭīn fayrūz, dāyman fi fṭūr ʔaw ǧada mən ʔakl əl-
 9 bēt: žəbne w labane ʔaw zaʔtar² w kəll hadōl əš-šāǧlāt, kāst-ek əš-šay maʔ-ek maʔ lə-fṭūr w
 10 ʔənti ʔam-təsmāʔi fayrūz ʔaw fənžān-ek əl-ʔahwe, ʔam-bəʔʔarʔgli yaʔni btəʔʔmli šāǧlāt ʔlli
 11 bəḥəbbiy-a, lli bəḥəbbi təʔʔmliya-a bəl-bēt ʔbtəʔʔdri təʔʔmliya-a hunīke b-waḥde mən hadōl əl-
 12 kāfētīryāt, ʔənn-o btəmbəṣṭi ktīr fiyy-a.

Vocabulary

(1) *dayyʔa*: narrow

(2) *bətxallī-ki*: she lets you

(3) *wžūh*: faces (sg. *wažʔh*)

(5) *btəʔʔdi*: you (f.) sit

(5) *rəʔʔāt*: friends (sg. *rʔīʔ*)

(6) *ʔan žadd*: seriously

² A spice mix composed mainly of thyme, sesame, and salt. It is typically eaten with bread and oil.

(9) *aš-šaġlāt*: thigns (sg. *šaġle*)

(10) *bātʔarʔgli*: you (f.) smoke *ʔargīle* (= shisha)

(11) *btəʔdri*: you (f.) can

Find the following types of words within the text:

b- (+ verb)	ʔam (+ verb)	Active participle

Translation

The atmosphere of Old Damascus is very intimate; in other words, its narrow alleys allow you to feel close to the person you are walking with, allow you to feel that you truly know the people, that the faces there don't seem unfamiliar because the streets are so narrow and the ambiance is very intimate. Even the coffee shops in Old Damascus, since they are old Damascene houses, have a very, very intimate atmosphere, and you sit with your friends, feeling that way, happy, and you truly feel at home.

Well, the coffee shops make you feel like you are sitting with your friends in a comfortable environment, and you don't want to leave because they always play Fairuz, there is always a homemade breakfast or lunch: cheese and yogurt or *zaʔtar* and all those things, your glass of tea with breakfast while you are listening to Fairuz, or (drinking) your cup of coffee, smoking *ʔargīle*. That is to say, you do things you enjoy, the things you like to do at home, you can do there in one of these coffee shops, meaning you really enjoy being there.

Text 3

- 1 halla? ʔana bi-ʔəʃtibār-i ʔənn-o ʔāyeš _____ _____ _____ hiyye š-šām, fa-kənt ʔktīr ʔbħəbb
- 2 ʔəḥki ʔan əš-šām. [kīf əš-šām?] kīf əš-šām. halla? əš-šām... ʔawwal ši _____ _____ nəzkor əl-
- 3 maʔlūmāt ət-tārīxiyye yəlli _____ ʔənn-o hiyye masalan _____ _____ _____ w mən hal-
- 4 ḥaki, bi-hək _____ _____ _____ əš-šām ʔšlōn ʔbtəʔnīna ʔəl-na nəḥna. biḥəss kəll šaxʔə ʔāyeš ʔb-
- 5 hayy əl-madīne... halla? yəmkən _____ _____ _____ _____ bəl-ʔālam biḥəss ʔənn-o madīnt-o
- 6 _____ _____ _____ madīne xāššatan ʔlli šār-lo zamān ʔāyeš fiyy-a. bass əš-šām bəz-zāt _____ _____
- 7 _____ _____ _____ hēke mumayyaz, fiyy-a ši ǧarīb ʔktīr, bišədd _____ _____ w yaʔni hək bixalli _____
- 8 ʔktīr mətʔalle? ʔb-hayy əl-madīne.

Match the words from both columns:

Damascus Arabic

šu

lēš

ʔē

mū

la-ʔənn-o

ʔaddēš

Modern Standard Arabic

نعم

كم

لأنه

لماذا

ما

ليس

Fill the gaps in the text with the following words:

bətʔūl: she says

ʔmnəḥki ʔan əš-šām: we talk about Damascus

bidūn ma: without

bi-madīne ktīr ḥəlwe: in a very beautiful city

ʔl-wāḥed (x2): one person

ʔbḥəss ʔənn-o fiyy-a ši: I feel that there is something in it

kəll šaxʔš ʔāyeš bi-madīne: every person living in a city

hiyye ʔaḥla: she is the most beautiful³

ʔaʔdam madīne bəl-ʔālam: the oldest city in the world

ǧarīb ʔktīr: very strange

Translation

Let's see, I, considering that I live in a very beautiful city, which is Damascus, would really like to talk about Damascus. [What is Damascus like?] – What is Damascus like? Let's see, Damascus... first of all, without mentioning the historical facts that say, for example, that it is the oldest city in the world or those things, with this we are talking about what Damascus means to us.

Everyone who lives in this city feels... let's see, maybe everyone who lives in any city in the world feels that their city is the most beautiful, especially the one who has been living there for a long time. But Damascus specifically, I feel that there is something in it, (something) characteristic, there is something very strange in it that attracts a person and, I mean, in this way, allows a person to be very attached to this city.

³ In order to have this superlative meaning, it must be followed by a noun.

Text 4

1 bəddi ʔəḥkī-lek ʔan lə-mhāžrīn la-ʔənn-o ʔaʃʔl ʔēlt-i huwwe mən lə-mhāžrīn. lə-mhāžrīn hiyye
 2 mn əl-manāteʔ ʔlli ktīr ʔbhəbb-a w la-hallaʔ fi mažmūʔa mʔayyane mən ʔēlti lli la-hallaʔ sākne
 3 bə-lə-mhāžrīn. [kīf lə-mhāžrīn?] lə-mhāžrīn hiyye baʔa ḥayy ʔadīm, xallīna nʔūl mən əl-ʔaḥyāʔ
 4 əl-ʔadīme māla mn əl-ʔaḥyāʔ lə-ždīde. bətlāʔi ʔənn-o ktīr dayyeʔ, ʔarīʔ ʔs-sayyārāt fi ktīr
 5 maʔžūʔ, ktīr fi maḥallāt, ktīr fi ḥayāt. yaʔni mn əl-ʔaḥyāʔ əl-ḥəlwe ʔənn-o l-wāḥed yəskon fiyy-
 6 a ʔaw yzūr-a bəš-šām. lə-mhāžrīn hiyye ḥayy sakani yaʔni ma fī-na nʔūl ʔənn-o hiyye fiyy-a
 7 sūʔ, hiyye fiyy-a mažmūʔet maḥallāt ʔakʔl, warʔd, bi-maʔna hiyye sūʔ. fī-na nʔūl ʔanno sūʔ lə-
 8 mhāžrīn, bass lamma tkūni fiyy-a bəḥḥəssi fiyy-a ktīr ḥayāt yaʔni mn əl-maḥallāt əl-wāḥed
 9 lāzem yzūr-a gēr əl-ʔaswāʔ ʔlli bizūr-a bəš-šām.
 10 ʔiza bəddi ʔəḥki ʔan lə-mhāžrīn, lə-mhāžrīn bən-nəsbe laš-šām əl-ʔadīme huwwe mn əl-
 11 ʔaḥyāʔ ʔlli ʔār-lo mītən səne ʔaw miyye w xamsīn səne. fī-na nəʔtəbr-o la-ʔəmr əš-šām huwwe
 12 ḥayy ʔždīd. gālibīt ʔahl ʔmhāžrīn, mnən? ʔaw ʔtsamma kəlmet ʔmhāžrīn yaʔni hənnən
 13 *emigrants* yaʔni hənnen ʔaʔlan hāžaru ʔaš-šām, sakanu bəš-šām, hal-həžrāt ʔəret bi-ʔāxer
 14 fatret əd-dawle t-tərkiyye. gālibīt-on kānu mwazzaʔfīn bəd-dawle t-tərkiyye yaʔni ma kānu
 15 ʔarab. fi ʔəzʔ mənnon ʔatrāk, fi ʔəzʔ mənnon yūnān, fi ʔəzʔ mənnon mağārbe... ʔəžu
 16 sakanu bi-hāda l-ḥayy.

Vocabulary

(1) *ʔēlt-i*: my family (> *ʔēle*: family)

(2) *la-hallaʔ*: until now / still

(2) *sākne*: living (f.)

(5) *maʔžūʔ*: crowded

(8) *lamma*: when

(9) *lāzem*: must

(12) *ġālibīt-*: majority (> *ġalibiyye*)

(12) *mnēn*: from where

(13) *ʔaʃlan*: originally

Idiomatic expressions

- *xallī-na nšūf-ak!*: let us see you!
- *xallīna nəḥki*: let us speak !
- *ʔaḷḷa yxallīk*: Please! (lit. May God make you (do something))

Answer the following questions:

- a) *mīn wēn fēlt-o?*
- b) *lə-mhāžrīn ḥayy ʔadīm wəlla ždīd?*
- c) *šu fī bə-lə-mhāžrīn?*
- d) *mnēn ġālibīt ʔahl lə-mhāžrīn?*

Translation

I want to talk to you about Mhāžrīn because my family is originally from Mhāžrīn. Mhāžrīn is one of the neighborhoods I like very much, and until now, a large part of my family lives in Mhāžrīn. [What is Mhāžrīn like?] Mhāžrīn is still an old neighborhood, let's say, one of the old neighborhoods, not the new ones. You find that it is very narrow, the streets have a lot of traffic, there are many shops, there is a lot of life. In other words, it is one of the nice neighborhoods where one lives or visits in Damascus. Mhāžrīn is a residential neighborhood, we can't say there is a souk, there are food shops, flower shops, like a souk. We can call it "the souk of Mhāžrīn", but when you are in it, you feel there is a lot of life, so it's one of the places someone must visit, apart from the souks he visits in Damascus.

If I'm going to talk about Mhāžrīn, Mhāžrīn, regarding Old Damascus, is one of the neighborhoods that are one hundred fifty or two hundred years old. We can consider it, in comparison to the age of Damascus, as a new neighborhood. The majority of the people from Mhāžrīn, where are they from? Or it is called Mhāžrīn, which means "emigrants". That is, they originally emigrated to Damascus, lived in Damascus, and these migrations took place in the last phase of the Ottoman Empire. Most of them were Turkish civil servants, meaning they were not Arabs. There is a part of them that are Turks, a part of them that are Greeks, a part of them that are Moroccans... who came to live in this neighborhood.

Text 5

- 1 šāreḥ baġdād ʔbtəfre? ʔktīr fan lə-mhāžrīn, lēš? la-ʔənn-o hayy əl-manṭiʔa lli hiyye btəfšel bēn
 2 šāreḥ baġdād, _____, wəl-madīne l-ʔadīme ʔlli hiyye š-šām əl-ʔadīme ʔlli kəll əl-
 3 fālam bətzūr-a. bətlāʔi fi byūt ʔarabiyye māl-a ʔalāʔa _____ w māl-a ʔalāʔa bəl-
 4 madīne ž-ždīde. hayy lə-byūt hənnen ʔlli sākniḥ fiyy-a ġālibīt-on hənnen ʔahʔ əl-qura ʔaw
 5 _____ tānye ʔəžu sakanu bəš-šām. fa-ʔənti bətlāḥzi _____ ʔaš-šāreḥ huwwe yəmkən
 6 ʔtlāʔi šwām, bəl-madīne l-ʔadīme mumkən ʔtlāʔi _____. bass bəl-manṭiʔa bēn lə-tnən bətlāʔi
 7 ʔənn-o fālam hənnen ʔašlan mān-on šwām. hənnən mən qura w ɖiyaʔ ʔəžu sakanu _____.

Vocabulary

(1) *btəfšel*: she/it separates

(4) *qura*: villages (sg. *qarye*)

(5) *bətlāḥzi*: you (f.) notice

(7) *ɖiyaʔ*: hamlets (= sg. *dēʔa*)

Fill in the gaps in the text with the following words:

manāʔeʔ: areas

əl-madīne lə-ždīde: the new city

bə-šāreḥ baġdād: in Baghdad Street

šwām: Damascenes

bəš-šām: in Damascus

lə-mhāžrīn: Al-Mhāžrīn

bəl-madīne l-ʔadīme: in the old city

Translation

Baghdad Street differs greatly from Mhāžrīn. Why? Because this area separates Baghdad Street, the new city, from the old city, which is Old Damascus, that everyone visits. You find that there are Arab houses that are neither connected to the old city nor to the new city. Most of those who live in these houses are from villages or other areas who came to live in Damascus. So, you notice in Baghdad Street that on the street you can find Damascenes, in the old city you can find Damascenes, but in the area between the two, you find that the people are not originally from Damascus. They are from villages or hamlets and came to live in Damascus.

Text 6

1 [šu ʔəsm-a?] ʔəsm-a nihād ḥaddād. nihād ḥaddād, ʔabuww-a hāžar mən sūrya ʕa-ləbnān mən
 2 zamān yafni w ʔaxad-a maʕ-o. w ʕāšu hunīk w baʕʔd ma kəbret u... marra səmʕ-a ʕāši raḥabāni
 3 kān byəštəgel bət-təlfəzyōn ʔaw byəštəgel bəl-ʔizāʕa, ma kān fi təlfəzyōn, kān fi ʔizāʕa yafni
 4 rādyo, ʕa-səmf-a ʕam ʔtganni maʕ kōrāl, maʕ fərʔet kōrāl w rāḥ la-ʕand ʔabuww-a w xaṭab-a w
 5 ʔdžawwazu, ʔe. w ġannet ʔktīr, ġannet ʔktīr w la-ktīr šuʕarāʔ. hallaʔ ʔaktar əl-ʕālam
 6 ġannət-l-on ġannet la-žōz-a ṭabʕan, mətʔl-ma ʔəlt-əll-ek, ʕāši huwwe, w ʔaġlab ʔaġāniyy-a lal-
 7 ʔaxawēn raḥabāni, ġannet la-žūzəf ḥarʔb... [mīn?] žūzəf ḥarʔb huwwe šāfer ləbnāni byəktob
 8 bəl-ʕāmmiyye. w hiyye bass... hiyye l-waḥīde lli ġannət-l-o. huwwe kān ma bibīʕ šəʕr-o, ma
 9 byaʕṭi šəʕr-o la-ḥada, huwwe kān šāfer bass xalla fayrūz ʔtgannī-l-o. w ġannət-l-o ʔaḥla
 10 ʔaġāniyy-a bi-rāʔyy-i. ʔana ʔaktar ʔaġāni bḥəbb-a ʔana l-ʔaġāni lli katab-a žūzəf ḥarʔb... žūzəf
 11 ḥarʔb. ġannet la-saʕīd ʕaʔel, saʕīd ʕaʔel kamān šāfer mašhūr ʔktīr bəl-ʕālam əl-ʕarabi yafni.

Vocabulary:

(2) *ʔaxad-a maʕ-o*: he took her with him

(3) *mā kān fi təlfəzyōn, kān fi ʔizāʕa*: there was no television, there was radio

(5) *džawwazu*: they got married

(6) *mətʔl ma ʔəlt-əll-ek*: like I told you

(8) *hiyye l-waḥīde lli ġannət-l-o*: She is the only one who sang (his poetry/work)

(9) *xalla fayrūz ʔtgannī-l-o*: he let Fayrūz sing (his poetry/work)

(10) *ʔana ʔaktar ʔaġāni bḥəbb-a ʔana*: The songs I like the most

Answer the following questions:

- a) šu řařl Fayrřz?
- b) wēn kān byəřtəǵel řāři rařabāni?
- c) řu mařna řizāřa?
- d) mīn ʾdzawwařet fayrřz?
- e) mīn řřzēf řarʾb?

Translation

[What is her name?] Her name is Nihad Haddad. Nihad Haddad, her father emigrated from Syria to Lebanon a long time ago and took her with him. And they lived there, and after she grew up... once Asi Rahbani, who was working in television or radio, there was no television, there was radio, so he heard her singing with a choral, with a choral group, and he went to her father's house, and got engaged to her, and they got married. Yes, and she sang a lot, she sang a lot and for many poets. The one she sang for the most was... she sang for her husband, of course, as I told you, he is Asi, and most of her songs were by the Rahbani brothers. She also sang for Youssef Harb. [Who?] Youssef Harb is a Lebanese poet who writes in dialect. And she only.... She is the only one who sang (his poetry). He didn't sell his poetry, he didn't give his poetry to anyone, he was a poet, but he allowed Fairuz to sing (his work). And she sang his most beautiful songs, in my opinion. The songs I like the most are the ones written by Youssef Harb. She also sang for Said Akl, Said Akl is also a very famous poet in the Arab world.

Text 7

- 1 [mən wən huwwe?] ləbnāni kamān. ləbnāni bass kamān... huwwe w žūzēf ḥarʿb qawmiyyīn
 2 _____ yafni sūriyyīn byəftəbru ḥāl-on, ʔe, fa-... ġannet la-žūzēf ḥarʿb, ġannet _____ baʔdēn
 3 ʔāxer fatra. hallaʔ ʔāxer fatra, ʔāxer ʔarbaʔ ʔalbūmāt taʔrīban ʔəməl-on ʔəbn-a, ʔəbn-a zyād,
 4 zyād raḥabāni huwwe ʔəbn-a, huwwe bilaḥḥen _____ w byəktob, w huwwe kān yəktəb-l-a w
 5 ylahḥən-l-a kamān, bass hāda muʔaxxaran yafni ʔāxer ʔarbaʔ ʔalbūmāt. hallaʔ ʔāxer ʔalbūm
 6 ʔəmʔl-t-o kān mən ʔarbaʔ ʔsnīn, tlət ʔsnīn _____.
- 7 [bass?] ma ʔādet ʔəmlet, kbīre, la-ʔənn-o hallaʔ ʔəmṛ-a fōʔ _____ səne hiyye fa-ma ʔād fi ʔōt
 8 yafni, bass mən ʔabʔl kānet ʔktīr... ʔe, w ġannet laš-šām ʔktīr kamān, ġannet ʔaktar mən ʔašʔr
 9 _____ laš-šām, kəll-on katab-on saʔīd ʔaʔel bəl-fuṣḥa. hallaʔ saʔīd ʔaʔel kamān katab-l-a
 10 ʔaġāni bəl-ʔāmmiyye, bass əl-ʔaġāni lli ġannət-on ʔan əš-šām kānu _____ w mašhūrīn ʔktīr.

Vocabulary

- (1) *qawmiyyīn*: natives (from)
 (2) *byəftəbru ḥāl-on*: they consider themselves
 (4) *bilaḥḥen*: he composes
 (5) *muʔaxxaran*: recently / lately
 (7) *ma ʔādet ʔəmlet*: she no longer did
 (7) *ʔōt*: voice

Fill the gaps with the following words:

bəl-fəṣḥa: in Standar Arabic

ʔaġāni: songs

la-ʔəbn-a: for her son

as-sabʿīn: the seventies

sūriyyīn: Syrians

taʿrībān: approximately

kamān: also / too

Translation

[Where is he from?] He's also Lebanese. Lebanese, but also... he and Youssef Harb are natives of Syria, meaning they consider themselves Syrians, yes, so... she sang (the work of) Youssef Harb, she sang (the work of) her son later, in the final stage. The final stage, the last four albums approximately, were made by her son, her son Ziad. Ziad Rahbani is her son, he also composes and writes, and he wrote for her and also composed for her, but at the end, I mean, the last four albums. The last album she made was about three or four years ago, approximately. [Only?] She didn't make any more, she's old, because now she's over seventy, so she no longer has voice, but before she had a lot. Yes, and she also sang a lot about Damascus, she sang more than ten songs about Damascus, all written by Said Aql in Standard Arabic. Said Aql also wrote songs for her in dialect, but the songs she sang about Damascus were in standard Arabic, and they are very famous.

Text 8

1 ھا-ژەھکێ-لەک یۆم مەن ژایەم ئەش-شەتە لێ ژانا بەشتەگەل فیی-ون. ژانا بەشتەگەل ەمفەلەت
 2 ژەبتیدای، شافە ژاوەل و تانی. بێ؟ ئەش-شەبھ ئەس-سەفا سەتە، بەشەلێ ل-فەژەر و بەلبەس و بەفتەر و
 3 بەگەسەل و بەنەزەل ئەش-شەگەل. ئەس-سەفا سەبەا بیکۆن ئەل-بەش تەھتە ئەند-ی، بەش ئەل-مەدرەسە. بڕۆھ مەف
 4 لە-وەلەد و مەنەزەف مەف لە-وەلەد کەمەن. [ئەل-بەس بەیەژێ لە-هۆن؟] ژەددەم ئەل-بەت، شەگەلێ لە-ژەنن-و
 5 ئەشەرین دەرێژا ئەن بەت-ی تەرێبان، مەووەسەلەت هەدا بەش-شەم یەفەتەبەر ەبەید، مە کتێر ژەرێب. و
 6 ەبڕۆھ و بەدەل بەش-شەگەل لە-تەلەتە و نەشە تەرێبان. بەرژەف ئەل-بەت ژەرەبەا ژەللا رەبەف، بەتەگەدا بە-
 7 سەرەا و بەفەود سەفەت زەمەن و بەنەزەل لە-ژەنن-و بیکۆن ئەند-ی وەلەد، شافە خەشە یەفەنی، بەدەرەس
 8 دەرەس خەشە. بەفەدەن بیکۆن ئەندی بەل-مەکەز ئەس-سەقەفێ ل-ژەمەرکی ALC⁴ کۆرس. بەفەمەل ئەل-کۆرس
 9 تەبەف-ی و بەرژەف ئەت-تەسەا تەرێبان. بەرژەف تەفبەنە کتێر، بەهەتتە رەسی و ەبەنەم ەمەشەن تانی یۆم
 10 رەدەد فێ ئەس-سەتە مەرەا تەنە. [و مە بەتەکلی شێ بەل-مەسە؟] لە؟، بەکۆل وەژبە وەهەدە لێ هییە ئە-
 11 تەلەتە و نەشە، ژەرەبەا، بەس. [مەن بەهەتەبۆک؟] مەمەا بەهەتەبۆک. مەمەا بەفەمەل کەل شێ، ژەللا یەخەللی-ل-
 12 نە یەهەا، بەفەمەل ئەل-بەت و بەفەمەل ئەت-تەخەت و بەفەمەل کەل شێ مەمەا.

Find the following words within the text:

winter

teacher

in front of

course

bed

bus

⁴ = American Language Center.

Match the verbs from both columns:

To wake up	<i>byətgadda</i>
To pray	<i>binām</i>
To dress on	<i>bifī?</i>
To breakfast	<i>byəḡsel</i>
To wash	<i>byəlbəs</i>
To work	<i>byəʕmel</i>
To go	<i>birūḥ</i>
To come back	<i>biṣalli</i>
To have lunch	<i>byəftar</i>
To sleep	<i>byərʒaʕ</i>

Answer the following questions:

- a) šū btəštəḡel əl-mara?
- b) ʔayy sāʕa bətfī??
- c) kīf bətrūḥ ʕa-š-šəḡʕl?
- d) la-ʔəmta btəḡdall təštəḡel?
- e) wən ʕand-a kōrs?
- f) ʔayy sāʕa btərʒaʕ bəl-masa?
- g) kam marra btākol bəl-yōm?
- h) mīn byəṭbox bəl-bēt?
- i) ʕand-a walad?

Translation

I'm going to tell you about one of the winter days on which I work. I am a primary school teacher, for first and second grade. I wake up in the morning at six, pray the dawn prayer, get dressed, have breakfast, wash up, and go to work. At seven, the school bus is below my house. I go with the children, and we also return with the children. [Does the bus come all the way here?] In front of the house, because my workplace is about twenty minutes from my house, this in Damascus is considered far, not very close. And I go and stay at work until around three-thirty. I return home at a quarter to four, eat quickly, sit for an hour, and go down because I have a child, meaning a private lesson. I give the private lesson, and then I have at the American Cultural Center an ALC course. I go to the course and come back at around nine. I return very tired, go to bed, and sleep because the next day I wake up at six again. [And don't you have dinner?] No, I only have one meal at three-thirty or four, that's it. [Who cooks?] My mother cooks. My mother does everything, may God preserve her. She takes care of the house, makes the bed, and does everything.

Text 9

- 1 halla? bən-nəsbe la-sūrya ma fi ktīr məšʔkle la-ʔənn-o ma fi farʔ bən əl-ʔəslām wəl-masīhiyye.
 2 yaʔni ktīr fi ʔəhtirām lad-dīn əš-šaxši lli... ət-tāni yaʔni. yaʔni halla? ʔana ka-bənʔt masīhiyye
 3 masalan yəmken ʔktīr bəldān ma zāyrīn sūrya ʔāxdīn fəkra ʔənn-o kəll əl-banāt lāzem yḥəṭṭu
 4 ḥžāb, kəll əl-banāt lāzem ʔtkūn lābse ləbs ʔktīr ʔktīr məḥtašam w ma fiyya təṭlaf masalan ʔb-
 5 kəmm ʔašīr...
- 6 bass waʔʔt byəžu la-hōn byəsʔalū-na ʔənn-o: “ʔəntu ʔan žadd masīhiyye? ʔan žadd ʔəntu ʔāyšīn
 7 hək bi-ṭabīʔiyye yaʔni?” bīš ka-ʔənn-o b-balad ʔādi yaʔni ma fi ši, bəṭlaf bidūn ʔīšārb, bidūn
 8 ʔḥžāb, brūḥ ʔa-lə-kniše kəll ʔaḥad masalan, mnəžtəmeʔ dāyman masalan fi mətʔl əl-kaššāf,
 9 hiyye ʔifbāra ʔan mažmūfa masīhiyye yaʔni bi-qiyādet kanīše muʔayyane w ʔmnəʔmel
 10 našāṭ-na bəl-ʔaʔyād ʔktīr... bəl-ʔīd masalan lə-kbīr, bəl-ʔīd lə-kbīr dāyman fi ʔanna masalan
 11 ṭalʔāt masīhiyye, məndəʔʔ w mnəḥtəfel bi-... mənʔūl taratīl masalan, mnəṭlaf žamāfa mənʔūl
 12 tarātīl bəš-šāreʔ.

Vocabulary

(3) *ʔāxdīn fəkra*: they adopt an idea

(4) *məḥtašam*: modest, respectable

(7) *ʔīšārb*: scarf

(11) *ṭalʔāt*: outings

(11) *tarātīl*: litanies (sg. *tartīla*)

Find these words within the text:

personal

there is no difference

short sleeved

to meet / to gather

activities

to celebrate

Answer the following questions:

a) lēš mā fi mašākel bēn əl-ʔəslām wəl-masīḥiyye bi-sūriyya?

b) šū byəsʔaluw-a n-nās?

c) kif btəṭlaʔ ʔaš-šāreʔ?

d) šu mafna “əl-kaššāf”?

Translation

Well, regarding Syria, there aren't many problems because there is no difference between Islam and Christianity. There is a lot of respect for each person's religion... that is, for the other. Let's see, I, as a Christian girl, for example, (people) from many countries who haven't visited Syria might adopt an idea that all girls must wear a hijab, that all girls must dress in a very, very decent way, and that they can't go out in short sleeves, for example.

But when they come here, they ask us: "Are you really Christians? Do you really live normally?" I live like in a normal country, I mean, there's nothing unusual, I go out without a scarf, without a hijab, I go to church every Sunday, for example, we always gather, for example, there are like the Boy Scouts, which is a group of young Christians organized by a certain church, and we do many of our activities during holidays... at Christmas, for example, at Easter. During Easter, we always have Christian outings, we play (drums) and celebrate with... we sing liturgies, for example, a group of us goes out and sings liturgies in the street.

Text 10

- 1 halla? ʔiza btətmašši bəš-šāreʔ bi-ʔaʔyād əl-mīlād, _____, bətšūfi kəll əš-šawāreʔ fi-ha
 2 zīne mən barra. kəll əl-maḥallāt ḥāṭṭa _____ zīne, ḥāṭṭa šažara, ḥaṭṭa mgāra, ḥāṭṭa ʔuḡnye
 3 yaʔni ʔənn-o farḥānīn bəl-ʔīd. w kamān yaʔni ma fi ʔayya _____, mənʔiš bi-kəll ḥərriyye w
 4 ʔana ka-bən^ət masīḥiyye fi-ni ʔətšarraʔ bi-šak^əl ṭabīʔi yaʔni w əbšalli w əbšūm w fi ktīr _____
 5 ḥāfzīn ʔəmta lə-šyām tabaʔ əl-masīḥiyye w lēš bišūmu w ḥāfzīn masalan šwayy mən əš-šalā
 6 _____, yaʔni fi ktīr... bəl-ʔab^əl yəmkən ma ktīr, fa-yəmkən ʔāxdīn fəkret... fi ktīr ʔālam ʔaxde
 7 fəkret kif kānet ʔāyše l-masīḥiyye ʔab^əl, bass halla? əktīr _____, əl-masīḥiyye ktīr ʔāyšin bi-
 8 ḥərriyye.

Vocabulary(2) *zīne*: decoration / adornment(2) *mgāra*: cave(3) *ḥərriyye*: freedom(4) *ʔətšarraʔ*: I behave / I act(5) *ḥāfzīn*: they memorize**Fill the gaps in the text with the following words:**məš^əkle

masalan

ʔəslām

b-ʔīd əl-mīlād

məxtəlef

əl-masīḥiyye

Translation

Well, if you walk down the street during the Christmas holidays, at Christmas you see that in every street there are decorations outside. All the stores put up, for example, decorations, put up a tree, put up a cave, play songs, meaning they are happy about the holiday. And also, there is no problem, we live with full freedom. And I, being a Christian girl, can behave naturally, I pray, fast, and there are many Muslims who have memorized when Christian fasting is and why they fast, and they have memorized a bit of the Christian prayer, meaning there are many... before maybe not many, so maybe they adopted an idea of... many people adopted an idea of how Christian life was like before, but now it's very different, Christians live with a lot of freedom.