

## NOTES ON THE ALGERIAN ARABIC DIALECT OF DELLYS

LAMEEN SOUAG

The Arabic dialect of Dellys has been generally neglected in North African linguistics, despite the town's age – it was founded by the Phoenicians, and reestablished by the 11th century – and its location, on the sea just kilometers from the Arabic-Kabyle linguistic boundary. It belongs to the little-documented urban north-central Algeria dialect group, and – like most such dialects – it displays traits unusual in pre-Hilalian dialects, in particular the retention of interdental. Berber, Andalusí, and later Bedouin influence are all observable in its lexicon, and occasionally in its grammar. Lexically, the Dellys dialect is particularly noteworthy for its extensive retention of precolonial vocabulary relating to fishing and sea creatures, largely replaced by French loanwords in other towns of the region; some of these terms appear to be unattested outside the town. This paper summarizes points likely to be of interest to dialectologists, in a framework loosely based on Dominique Caubet's dialectological questionnaire<sup>1</sup>; it focuses primarily on points specific to the dialect rather than those common to all Maghreb Arabic dialects.

### 1. Background

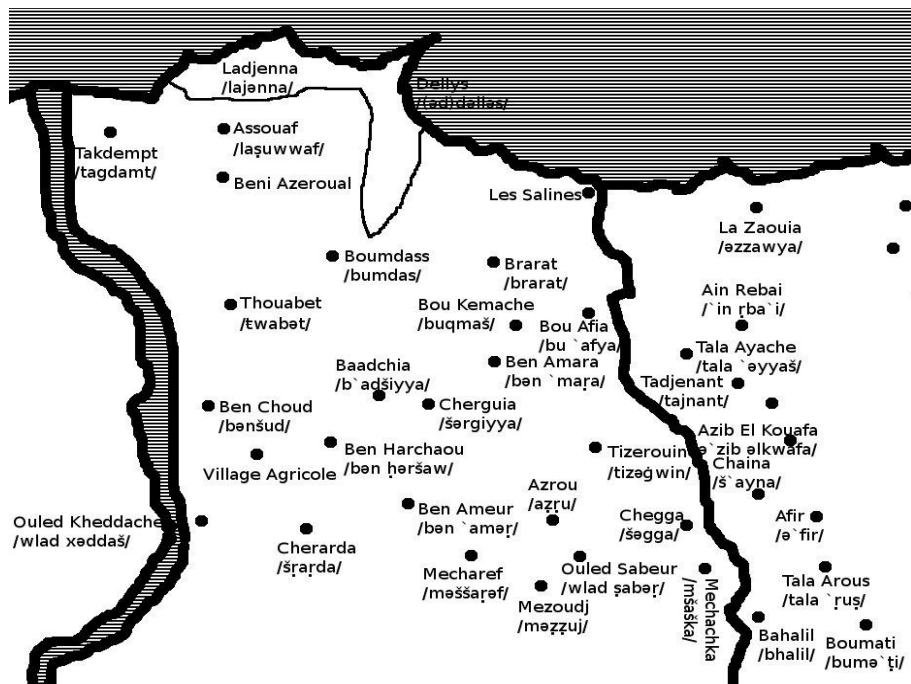
Dellys is a port town on the Algerian coast between Algiers and Bejaia, a few miles east of Oued Sébaou. The town proper extends along the eastern flanks of a small mountain, Assouaf, to the edge of the sea. The small coastal plain on the mountain's northern flanks is termed Ladjenna (officially *Les Jardins/Al-Basātīn*); traditionally the town's agricultural zone, it has now become a suburban extension. Dellys' dialect is on the whole of "sedentary" type, with a close kinship to the older Algiers dialect; it renders *qaf* as *q*, and formerly *t* as *ts*. Like other sedentary dialects of central Algeria (p. 4), it retains the Arabic interdental. Dellys' immediate hinterland is an area formerly called Beni-Thour. It consists of a number of small villages between Oued Sébaou on the west and the smaller Oued Oubaï on the east; the nearest, such as Takdempt at the mouth of Oued Sébaou and Boumdass on the slopes south of Dellys, are increasingly being integrated into the town's suburbs. Judging by those I spoke with, the villages of Beni-Thour speak a dialect distinct from that of the town, with broadly Bedouin traits, such as general realization of *qaf* as *g*, or use of *lga* rather than *ṣab* for "found". Immigration from these villages has brought a number of speakers of the dialect into Dellys proper, particularly since independence.

East of Oued Oubaï begins the Kabyle-speaking municipality of Afir (whose region was formerly called Beni-Slyem), also consisting entirely of small villages,

---

<sup>1</sup> Caubet 2001.

while south and east of Baghlia Kabyle begins in the Taourga region. Judging by an informant from Laâzib n’Kouafa, Abdelhamid Snaoui, the Afir area’s dialect is broadly similar to the better-known southern dialects of Grande Kabylie. Some contractions, such as *-a* replacing first person singular *-eγ* after a consonant, or *u* for preverbal negative *ur*, or *nuhni* for “you (pl.)”, are conspicuous, while the vocabulary displays occasional divergences, such as *xilla* for “a lot”, or *tamwaɣ* for “cow”<sup>2</sup>, neither of which is found in Dallet 1982. A good command of dialectal Arabic, typically using a “Hilalian” *g*-dialect like that of the adjacent countryside, is common in the region. The map below<sup>3</sup>, with Oued Sebaou on the left and Oued Oubai on the right, illustrates the situation:



<sup>2</sup> Body-part terms from one village of the area, Fejdan, are compared to other Kabyle dialects in Basset 1929.

<sup>3</sup> Based on a map of unclear origin used by the local mayorality available for reference at <http://e.lasphost.com/dellys/library/maps/beni.jpg>.

The Arabic-Kabyle linguistic boundary in this region appears to have changed little since 1913<sup>4</sup>. Minor complications, however, are reported by local residents interviewed. Arabic is widely spoken in Ez Zaouia, slightly east of Oued Oubaï on the coast, while further inland, the adjacent Mrabtin villages of Chegga and Mechachka, in Beni-Thour but very close to Oued Oubaï, have both partly or largely shifted to Kabyle. The nearby village of Chaïna in Beni-Slyem is described as speaking an Arabic dialect liberally seasoned with Kabyle words, leading their neighbors to use *taerabt n-ceïna* as a proverbial term for exceptionally bad Arabic. Likewise, Dellys itself has a substantial minority of Kabyle-speakers; however, there is a strong tendency for Kabyle families to shift to Arabic in Dellys' Arabophone environment.

A cursory comparison of the dialects of Dellys and Beni-Thour suggests that, like many another medieval town of the Maghreb, Dellys came to speak Arabic independently of, and prior to, its surroundings. The town cannot plausibly have shifted to Arabic any earlier than about 1100, when it first reappears<sup>5</sup>, as Tedelles, under the Zirids, who refounded many towns of the central Maghreb, including Algiers, Miliana, Médéa, and Bejaïa. These towns speak Arabic dialects of sedentary type, like Dellys, perhaps suggesting that the area's cities shifted to Arabic during the Zīrid/Ḥammādid period. Andalusī influence may have begun even at this period: in 1102, al-Manṣūr gave the former prince of Almeria, Muʿizz ad-Dawla ibn Ṣumādiḥ, land in Dellys<sup>6</sup>.

Berber placenames are prominent in much of the Beni-Thour area, particularly on the southeast (Azrou, Tizeghouine, etc.) and in the north around Dellys itself (Dellys, Takdempt, Assouaf, Zerouali, Tala-Oualdoune, Tala-Ghiyan, etc.); this could be taken to suggest that Arabic entered the countryside from the west, beginning somewhere around Ouled-Kheddache, and expanded outwards, probably during the Turkish period. Local oral tradition has it that at least some families of Beni-Thour (including the founders of Ouled-Kheddache) originally came from the Msila area, providing a possible clue as to the route Arabic must have taken. However, early sources provide only tantalizingly vague glimpses of the past linguistic environment. Before 1381 Ibn Khaldūn describes the Berber tribe of Kutāma as including "other tribes in the Tedelles area, in their hills surrounding it; they are numbered among the taxpaying tribes"<sup>7</sup>, suggesting a Berber-speaking hinterland for the town. By 1842,

<sup>4</sup> «Dans le douar Beni-Thour et dans la ville de Dellys, les indigènes parlent et ont toujours parlé l'arabe. Une faible partie comprend le berbère, mais ne se sert de cette langue que lorsqu'elle se trouve en contact des Kabyles». Doutté and Gautier 1913, p. 41. ("In the douar of Beni-Thour and in the town of Dellys, the natives speak and have always spoken Arabic. A small number understand Berber, but use this language only when they find themselves in contact with Kabyles").

<sup>5</sup> I have found no contemporary Arabic mentions of it earlier than al-Idrīsī (1154); it is not mentioned in Ibn Khurrādādhbih (846), al-Muqaddasī (985), nor even the relatively Maghreb-focused al-Bakrī (1068). See Laporte 1995 for more detail on Dellys' history, or <http://e.lasphost.com/dellys/library/brdesc.html> for pre-modern mentions of the town.

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Khaldūn: "وقدم عليه معز الدولة بن صمادح من المرية فاراً أمام المرابطين لما ملكوا الأندلس فنزل على "المَنْصُورِ وَأَقْطَعَهُ تَدَلْسَ وَأَنْزَلَهُ بِهَا" "And Muʿizz ad-Dawla ibn Ṣumādiḥ left from Almeria fleeing before the Almoravids when they took control of Andalus, and came to al-Manṣūr, who gave him Tedelles as a fief and settled him there".

<sup>7</sup> "ومن بقايا كتامة أيضاً قبائل أخرى بناحية تدلس في هضابه مكتتفة بها، وهم في عداد القبائل الغارمة." He also notes that the Zouaoua proper lived between Bejaïa and Tedelles: "هذا البطن من أكبر بطون البربر..." "This is among the largest Berber" "ومواطنهم كما تراه محتفة ببجاية إلى تدلس في جبال شاهقة وأوعار متسمة"

Carette describes the Beni-Thour and Beni-Slyem in essentially their present position, asserting that the former was considered to be of Arab origin and the latter to belong to the Aït-Ouagennoun; however, he emphasizes Beni-Thour's acculturation to Kabyle ways and vaguely states that "it speaks two languages"<sup>8</sup>. More detail on the local tribes' situation during the Ottoman era is essential if the history of language shift in the region is to be fully understood.

## 2. Phonology

**qāf:** *q* is preserved in Dellys (including Ladjenna) in most words; in surrounding villages such as Takdempt, by contrast, it generally becomes *g*. Examples: *qbal* قبيل "before"; *qmər* قمر "moon"; *ʃaqəl* عاقل "calm, smart"; *səqsi* سقسي "ask"; *ʃəŋqərba* عنقربة "scorpion"; *qaṛəʃ* قارص "sour, lemon"; *qul* قول (Takdempt *gul*) "say". However, as usual, some words have *g*: for instance *gis* فييس "hit, bump"; *gəʃʃa* قشة "autumn"; *gəntɾa* قنطرة "bridge"; *mnagəʃ* مناقش "earrings". In some words the two seem to alternate, eg *qəbli* or *gəbli* قبلي "scirocco"; the two forms were presumably originally used by different groups. However, contrasts such as *gis* فييس "hit, bump" with *qis* قيس "as much as", or *dəgdəg* دغديغ "chop up" with *dəqdəq* دقديق "knock", or *qəɾʃa* قرعة "bald" (presumably from "ringworm", but now synonymous with *fəɾʃas* فرطاس) with *qəɾʃa* قرعة "squash" show the phonemic status of the difference.

Words where *q* > *g* sometimes display compensatory emphasis on other consonants: thus *zlig* زليغ "couscous rolling" (cf. *zləq* زلق "slipped"), rural *ħɾəg* حرغ "burned" for *ħɾəq* حرقي. More interestingly, the converse is also attested, particularly among older speakers: compensatory de-emphasis in words where *q* has remained *q*, as in *triq* تريق "road", *tarəq* تارق "Tarek", *taqa* تاقعة "window" (contrasting with *taqa* طاقة in neighboring rural areas such as Takdempt), *ləsqə* لسفة "glue"<sup>9</sup>. Possibly these originated as hypercorrections by rural speakers emigrating to the city.

**tāʔ:** *t* was pronounced [ts] within the town itself. This pronunciation, while well remembered (its shibboleth being [qoltslu] for *qūltlu* قلت له or rural *gūltlu*, "I told him") has nearly vanished, being retained only sporadically by a few members of the older generation; I heard it personally only in a few consonant clusters among older male speakers and in a personal name diminutive *mxiɾ* [mxi:tsəɾ] مخيئر (of Mokhtar). This common sedentary pronunciation was a feature of the older Algiers dialect, and has vanished just as thoroughly there. Marçais (1977) notes that this was a

---

groupings, and their homeland is bounded by Bejaia and Tedelles, in lofty mountains and rugged peaks").

<sup>8</sup> Carette 1848, p. 120: "En face du k'âidat des Isser, c'est la tribu des Beni-Tour, située sur la rive droite. Considérée comme étant d'origine arabe, elle sortirait, à ce titre, du massif kabyle, si son incorporation dans le k'âidat de Sebaou, et les diverses conditions de parenté signalées ci-dessus, ne compensaient largement la circonstance de son origine. Elle parle d'ailleurs deux langues, habite des villages, se livre à la culture des arbres fruitiers, et partage en tout point les habitudes berbères." ("Across from the Isser qaidate is the tribe of Beni-Thour, on the right bank. Considered to be of Arab origin, it would as such fall outside the Kabyle sphere, if the fact of its origins were not largely compensated for by its incorporation into the qaidate of Sebaou and the diverse conditions of parentage described above. Among other things, they speak two languages, live in villages, grow fruit trees, and partake in Berber habits in every respect").

<sup>9</sup> *Isq* is also attested elsewhere (Cohen 1902: 427).

frequent feature of urban dialects, within Algeria found in “Tlemcen, Nédroma, Alger, Dellys, Djidjelli, Constantine”, while Grand’Henry (1972) documents it for Cherchell as well.

**Interdentals:** *t* appears to be retained in all words; *d* in most. Accordingly, the dialect has *ṭ* not *d*. Examples: *tamma* ثَمَّا “over there”; *tum* ثوم “garlic”; *tulal* ثولال “wart”; *təsləb* ثعلب “fox”; *tlata* ثلاثة three; *ktər* كثر “more”; *hṛət* حرث “work land”; *hadā* هَذَا this; *ḍraf* ذراع “arm”; *ḍəbban* ذبّان “fly”; *xud* خوذ “take”; *kḍəb* كذب “lied”. But contrast such common words as *drari* دراري “children”; *dqən* دقن “chin”; *badənjəl* باننجال “eggplant”; or the rarer *qənfud* قنفود “hedgehog”. The retention of interdentals appears to be an original trait of the urban dialect, not a result of colonial-era dialect mixing: Cantineau notes that Dellys is one of the few urban dialects to keep interdentals<sup>10</sup>, and Marçais (1977) notes that, while the interdentals vanish in most city dialects, they are preserved in some Algerian cities such as « le vieux Ténès, Cherchell, Dellys, Constantine » and are unstable in « Miliana, Blida, Médéa, Alger ». Clearly the urban dialects around Algiers preserved interdentals well into post-Hilalian times, perhaps due to a Kabyle substratum. However, place names from Kabyle are consistently borrowed with *t* replacing *ṭ* (a hypercorrection?); thus *tagdamt* تاقدامت *tala-waldun* تالا والدون in the immediate neighborhood, *tizi-wəzzu* تيزي وززو and *tigzirt* تيفزيرت in Kabylie itself. The curious fact that *d* is retained less consistently than *t* is noted for the Cherchell dialect as well by Grand’Henry (1972: 7); it would be interesting to learn whether other central Algerian urban dialects display the same pattern. However, the words which lose it in Cherchell do not appear to be the same ones: there *qənfud* and *badənjəl* coincide, but *ḍəbban* has lost it, while *drari* retains it. As is common, two words – *ila* إيلا from *ida* إدا “if”<sup>11</sup>, and *li* لي from *ḍi* ذي “who” – have undergone a change *d* > *l*.

**jīm:** *j* is pronounced [dʒ], as in Algiers and most of central Algeria<sup>12</sup> (with the allophone [ʒ] before *d*, as in *jdīd* جديد new); note *jaj* جاج “chicken”, with no trace of the original initial *d*, and *dzira* ذيرة “island”, *əddzayər* الذراير “Algiers”.

**New consonants:** As usual for Maghreb dialects, certain new phonemes have emerged. In particular, *r* and *ṛ* are distinct, as shown by minimal pairs such as *dar* دار “he did” – *dar* دار “home, house”, *rbəḥ* ربح “he won” – *ṛbəl* ربع “quarter”. *z* and *ʒ* are distinguished, with the latter appearing not only in Berber loanwords such as the rare word *azayaṭ* أزاياط “hard rain” and words of unclear origin such as *zawəṣ* زاوش

<sup>10</sup> «dans le département d’Alger, les spirantes interdentes ne sont passées aux occlusives qu’à Alger seulement; dans les autres villes à parler sédentaires, Cherchell, Blida, Dellys, Médéa, Miliana, Vieux-Ténès, les spirantes interdentes sont conservées». Cantineau 1960, p. 44. (“in the department of Algiers, the interdental spirants have not turned into occlusives anywhere except at Algiers; in the other towns with sedentary dialects... the interdental spirants are conserved”). Grand’Henry (1972: 7) tentatively suggests that, at least in Cherchell, this is a result of Andalusī influence.

<sup>11</sup> Marçais 1977 notes that *ila*, while common in Morocco, is relatively rare in Algeria; he mentions only Algiers, Cherchell and Laghouat. Dellys, like Cherchell and Algiers (cf. Grand’Henry 1972: 158), also has both *ida* and *wəlla* meaning “if” side by side with *ila*, presumably all from the same root.

<sup>12</sup> Including “Tlemcen, Ténès, Dellys, Constantine, Miliana, Médéa, Blida, Alger, Mila”, according to Grand’Henry (1972: 8).

“sparrow” or *ziyyər* زير “screw”, but also in words of Arabic origin, particularly where a *q* has become *g*, eg *zlig* زليقي “couscous rolling”. It is not clear that *ĉ* has emerged from any Arabic phoneme – or even by borrowing – but its phonotactics force it to be seen as a single phoneme; *čəslula* تشعلولة “swing”, *mčəxčəx* مئشخئشخ “excellent”, *yəččir* يئششير “child”. *!* occurs occasionally in native words, for instance *llah* الله “God” or *nthəlla* انتھلي “take care of”. Even more minor is *h*, if it is even phonemic in native words, occurring in *bakur* باكور “early figs”.

Loanwords, not all well-integrated, have had significant phonological effects. *p*, though usually derived from French (including such well-integrated loanwords as *tippana* تيببانه “a loaf of French bread”), appears even in a few pre-French loanwords, such as *ṭippana* طيببانه “Toppana (a Turkish fortress above Ladjenna)” (from Turkish *tophane* “cannon house”; Benecheneb, 1922: 57 noted the term as following: *ttüb ḥānəh* “maison du canon”), or *rūppa* ربة “dress” (Spanish *ropa*). *v*, too, is found in very well-integrated words, such as *vijyas* فييس “shirked work” (verbal noun *təvyas* تيفياس).

Emphatic vowels, while marginal to the system, are found not only in French loanwords but also in pre-French loanwords such as *čappa* تشاببة “type of digging tool”.

Other new phonemes resulting mainly or entirely from recent loanwords include nasalized vowels (eg *sōntim* سونتيم “centime”), a glottal stop (eg *qūr’an* قرآن “Qur’an”), and *ʒ* (eg *žaval* جافال “detergent”).

**Bilabials + w:** *mw* becomes [m̠m̠°], *bw* [b̠b̠°], and *fw* [f̠f̠°]: this happens in, for instance, *mwaʃən* مواعن dishes, *mwijyas* موييس “little knife”, *bwibəɖ* بويبيض “whitish”, *fwam* فوام mouths, even the fixed phrase *yəṛḥəm waldik* يرحم والدك > [jarḥmm̠ɑːldiːk] “God bless your parents” and the loanword *bwata* بواطة “box”.

Occasionally this is optional; thus [mweːlɪf] and [m̠m̠°ɑːlɪf] for *mwaləf* موالف “accustomed” are both found.

**wl > wml:** *wl* in some speakers has a tendency to become *wml*, particularly in the words *dyawmlu* دياولمه and *tawmlu* تاومغه instead of *dyawlu* دياوله and *tawlu* تاوغه “his (pl.)”; I also recorded *ma yəbqawmlək ḥəttə ḥaja* ما بيقاوملك حتى حاجة “nothing will remain for you”.

Like many other features, this one varies within single families and age groups.

**hāʔ:** Historic *h* vanishes in a few isolated words: in *nuɖ* نوض “get up”, *fakya* فاكية “fruit”, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine suffix *-u* هـ (although in the last named it reappears when further suffixes are added).

Perhaps it also vanishes in *kaf* كاف “cliff”, if this is derived from classical *kaḥf* كهف “cave” rather than from another Semitic language<sup>13</sup>. In general, however, it remains even after and between vowels (eg *fhəm* فهم “understood”).

<sup>13</sup> Note Biblical Hebrew קֶפֶס *keṣ* “rock” (as in the Biblical Cephas = Peter); Hebrew and Phoenician were extremely similar in vocabulary, and this etymon’s reflex in Punic would have been [k<sup>h</sup>ef] (judging by the Latin transcriptions *chyl*, *suffete*, *fel* for what corresponds to Hebrew קֶפֶס, קֶפֶס, קֶפֶס). It appears slightly more similar to the dialect version – not only in sound, but in meaning – than the Classical Arabic term.

**Sibilants:** The words *səms* سَمْس “sun” and *sǰər* سَجْر “trees” seem to show a prohibition on the sequence *š...s, š...j*. In addition, *s/š* and *z* appear not to co-occur. All other combinations of sibilants appear to be permissible: *jaj* جَاج “chicken”, *jīš* جيش “army”, *jbisa* جبيسة “watchtower” (name of a building), *juz* جُوز “pass”, *zəmzi* زَمْزِي “throwing stone”, *zuj* زُوج “two”, *šašiyya* شَاشِيَّة “hat”, *sisnu* سَيْسِنُو “madrona fruit”.

**Short vowels:** The short vowels have for the most part been reduced to *ə* (with various phonetic realizations depending on context) or nothing in the usual way: thus *qbər* قَبْر “tomb”, *fərs* عَرَس “wedding”, *nmər* نَمْر “tiger”. However, in some cases – almost always next to a velar or uvular consonant, but occasionally near a bilabial – *ū* is retained or even innovated; thus *hūqra* حُقْرَة “bullying”, *fūmm* فَم “mouth”, *būj* بُرْج “crescent-shaped slice of fruit, section of orange, tower”, *qūlt* قُلْت “I said”, *yūqtəl* يُقْتَل “he kills”. It is clearly phonemic: *qədd* قَدْ “size of” – *qūddam* قُدَام “in front of”.

This short *ū* is reduced to the ultrashort *°* when it occurs in positions where short vowels are not admissible: thus *b°raj* بُرَاج “towers”, *q°təlt* ~ *qtəlt* قَتَلْت “I killed”. This ultrashort sound does not appear to be totally stable, and is frequently not found.

The short *ū* could be analyzed as an allophone of *ə* next to labialized consonants, as it normally is for Kabyle – such an analysis makes plural formation much easier to understand<sup>14</sup> – but the evanescence of *°* and the formation of causatives are problems for such a view.

**Diphthongs:** The diphthongs *əy* and *əw* have been reduced uniformly to *i* and *u* by most of the younger generation; however, older speakers still retain them in some words and contexts (for instance, in one verse of *tbugir* تَبُوغِير, the partly improvised praise songs traditionally sung at weddings, we find *sərrəḥ əl'əwd* سَرَّح العُود rather than *əlsud* العُود).

A few speakers still say *wayən* وَايْن “where?”, and quite a lot of speakers still use *-ayən* لَّيْن as the dual (rather than *win* وَيْن -*in* or *-əyn* عَيْن); note also some animal names, like *xūttayfa* حُطَّايْفَة “swift”. On the other hand, original *ay* is sometimes reduced to *i*, as in *šiša* عَيْشَة “Aicha” or *ḥit* حَيْط “wall”.

**īmāla:** *a* is fronted in all contexts except where it occurs either in the neighbourhood of an emphatic or at the end of a word, as is typical of the region. Its default phonetic value is about halfway between [ɛ:] and [æ:], with [a:] as an allophone next to emphatics, and [ʌ] word-finally; it is shortened when followed by two vowelless consonants.

**Syllables:** As is common in Algeria, when normal short vowel elision would lead to another short vowel being in an open syllable, we have slight lengthening on the first member so as to change the stress: *yəḍḍəb* يَضْرِب “he hits” > *yəḍḍəḍḍəbu* يَضْرِبُو “they hit”, *rūkba* رُكْبَة “knee” > *rūkkūbti* رُكْبَتِي “my knee”; this gemination need not occur, however, if the consonant to be geminated is one of the sonorants *r, ʀ, l, n*, although for younger speakers it often does. I have the impression that these compensatory geminates are not held as long as normal geminates; this needs further in-

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Souag 2002. Heath 1987 (pp. 27-28, 254-263) discusses the same problem in Moroccan Arabic.

vestigation. This rule is broken to avoid ambiguity in two parts of the regular verb declension:  $\text{ḍərbət} + \text{ək} > \text{ḍərbətək}$  ضربتک “she hit you”;  $\text{ḍərbət} + \text{u} > \text{ḍərbatu}$  ضربائه “she hit him”.

The application of this compensatory lengthening appears to vary from speaker to speaker, and forms such as *yhadru* بهدرو “they speak”, with no audible lengthening, are not infrequent.

### 3. Grammar

The dual has vanished from the verbal and pronominal systems, as usual, and is only partly productive on nouns; gender distinctions have vanished in the plural throughout the system, but in the singular only on the 2<sup>nd</sup> person suffix *-k*.

#### 3.1 Verbs

There are no invariable verbal prefixes analogous to Moroccan *ka-* in normal use, though the Egyptian future marker *ḥa-* is occasionally adopted.

The future can be formed with *rayəḥ* رايح (*-a, -in*), and the continuous with the conjugated copula *ra-* را (realis) or *kun* كون (irrealis) plus the prefix conjugation of the verb (eg *rahi tqul ziduli* راهي تقول زيدولي “She’s saying ‘Give me more’”; *kanu ybumbarḍiw* كانوا بيومبارديو “they were bombarding”)<sup>15</sup>.

**Imperatives:** The imperative in verbs beginning with two consonants prefixes *a- ~ ə-,* or *ū-* if the present tense prefixes take it; thus *akḍəb* أكذب “lie! (m.)”, *ūqqūtlu* أقتلوا “kill! (pl.)”. *a-* ([ɛ] unemphatic, [ɑ] emphatic) appears to be the more traditional form. Suppletive imperatives include *arwah* أرواح (*arwaḥi, -u*) “come!”, *ayya* أيّا (*-y, -w*) “come!”, *bəḥka* بركا (*-y, -w*) “enough!, stop doing that!” (synonymous to the invariant form *barakat* باراكات), *balak* بالاك (*-i, -u*) “watch out!”, *hat* هات (*-i, -u*) “pass!”, *ara* أرا “hand!” Those of these which are transitive can of course take object suffixes.

**Final diphthongs:** For verbs with a final vowel, the vowel generally remains throughout, as in Algiers: *nsaw* نساو “they forgot”, *xəlliw* خلىو “leave alone! (pl.)”, *ma tansayš* ما تنسايش “don’t forget (f.)!”. However, when *-iw* results, it may optionally be abbreviated to *-u*: thus one may say *xəllu* خلو to mean “leave alone! (pl.)”, but not to mean “they left alone”, which would have to be *xəllaw* خلاو.

**Paradigms:** Except for irregular verbs (discussed below), the full conjugation of the verb can be predicted from the imperative (minus prefixed *a-* where relevant), which I regard as the primary stem of the verb.

The prefix conjugation is built directly on this form by adding the following affixes (with compensatory gemination where appropriate – see “Syllables” above):

<sup>15</sup> This construction is widespread in Algeria. It has been documented in the Cherchell dialect (Grand’Henry 1972: 174: *kənəṭ ḥdāwi ən-nās*, 190, *wāš řāk ṥāwwəs ?*) and briefly described for the Algiers Jewish dialect (Cohen 1912: 258). Precisely comparable constructions can be found in more than one Berber dialect: thus Kabyle (Nait-Zerrad 2001: 116) has *lly tessey ayefki* (I-was I-drink milk) “I was drinking / used to drink milk”, Chenoua (Laoust 1912) has *aqlay teṭṭey* (behold-me I-eat) “I am eating”. The *rahu yqul* construction could well be a calque from Berber, while the *kan yqul* construction is familiar from classical Arabic; is this a case of areal convergence ?



	<i>m</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>pl</i>
1st	<i>n-</i> ( <i>nəktəb</i> نكتب “I write”; <i>nšədd</i> نَشَدَّ “I hold”; <i>nūqtəl</i> نُقِتَل “I kill”; <i>nərqūd</i> نَرُقُد “I sleep/recline”; <i>nxaf</i> نَخَاف “I fear”; <i>ndir</i> نَدِير “I do”; <i>nqul</i> نَقُول “I say”; <i>nəzgi</i> نَزَغِي “I shout”; <i>nənsa</i> نَنْسَا “I forget”; <i>nəkħal</i> نَكْحَال “I turn black”; <i>nħəwwəs</i> نَحْوَس “I look for/around”)	<i>n-</i>	<i>n- -u</i> ( <i>nəkkətbu</i> ; <i>nšəddu</i> ; <i>nūqqūtlū</i> ; <i>nərqədu</i> ; <i>nxafu</i> ; <i>ndiru</i> ; <i>nqulu</i> ; <i>nəzgiw</i> ; <i>nənsaw</i> ; <i>nəkħalu</i> ; <i>nħəwwəsu</i> )
2nd	<i>t-</i>	<i>t- -i</i>	<i>t- -u</i>
3rd	<i>y-</i>	<i>t-</i>	<i>y- -u</i>

The suffix conjugation is constructed using two derived stems: one for the third person and one for the other persons. The 3rd person form is constructed by ablauting any final long vowel, or any long vowel immediately preceding a final consonant, to *a*; the non-3rd-person form is constructed by ablauting any final long vowel to *i*, removing any long vowel immediately preceding a final consonant, and adding *-t* to forms ending in two consonants. The marginal status of *ū*<sup>o</sup> complicates this account: some hollow *-u-* verbs have *ū* in the non-3rd-person past stem, while others, such as *šuf* شُوف “he saw” > *šəft* شَفْتُ “I saw”, do not. There also appears to be evidence that some verbs lose the *ū* of their stem in the suffix conjugation, but the data is inconclusive. The following table should suffice to illustrate the formation:

	<i>m</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>pl</i>
1st	<i>-t</i> ( <i>ktəbt</i> ; <i>šəddit</i> ; <i>qəttəl</i> ; <i>rqūdt</i> ; <i>xəft</i> ; <i>dərt</i> ; <i>qūlt</i> ; <i>zgit</i> ; <i>nsit</i> ; <i>kħəlt</i> ; <i>ħəwwəst</i> )	<i>-t</i>	<i>-na</i>
2nd	<i>-t</i>	<i>-ti</i>	<i>-tu</i>
3rd	<i>-</i> ( <i>ktəb</i> ; <i>šədd</i> ; <i>qəttəl</i> ; <i>rqūd</i> ; <i>xaf</i> ; <i>dar</i> ; <i>qal</i> ; <i>zga</i> ; <i>nsa</i> ; <i>kħal</i> ; <i>ħəwwəs</i> )	<i>-ət</i>	<i>-u</i>

**Irregular verbs:** The least regular verbs are *kul* كُول “eat” and *xud* خُوذ “take”; their suffix conjugation behaves like a regular triradical verb ending in *a*, eg *kla* كَلَا “he ate”, *xđit* خَدَيْت “I took”, while their prefix conjugation behaves like one beginning in *a*, eg *yakūl* يَأْكُل “he eats”, *naxdu* نَأْخُذُو “we take”, and their imperatives like a hollow verb with *u*, eg *kuli* كُولِي “eat! (f.)” and *xudu* خُوذُو “take! (pl.)”. Even their derived forms reflect a variety of stems: *wəkkəl* وَكَّل “feed”, *makla* مَأْكَلَة “food”, *ntkəl* اِنْتَكَلَ “was eaten” (also attested at Cherchell<sup>16</sup>, Jijel), *maxəđ* مَأْخَذَ “taking, taken”<sup>17</sup>. *ja* جَا

<sup>16</sup> Grand’Henry (1972: 64)

<sup>17</sup> *txəđ* تَخَذَ means not “it was taken” but, roughly, “it was a total disaster”.

“he came” also displays slight irregularities (as well as suppletive imperative forms, described above): its participle can be either the regular *jayy* جاي or, more commonly, the slightly irregular *maji* ماجي (the latter is characteristic of urban dialects, and thus presumably older – cf. Grand’Henry 1972:55.)

**Passives:** The passive is in general *t(t)-* or *n-*: eg *ttūqtəl* تُقتل “he was killed”, *ttərfəd* اُترِف “it was lifted”, *təbna* “it was built”; *nftəḥ* انفتح “it opened”, *nzar* انزار “it was visited”. *ntkəl* انتكل “was edible” might reflect a prefixed *nt-*, or might just show another of *kul*’s several pseudo-stems to be *tkəl*. A few verbs irregularly form their passive with an infix *-t-*; *rma* رمى “threw” > *ərtma* ارتمى “it was thrown”, *nsa* نسا “forgot” > *əntsa* انتسا “it was forgotten”.

**Copula:** Morphologically *ra-* belongs in a class of its own, along with *ha-* below, while *kun* is purely verbal. However, their distribution justifies treating them as different manifestations of the same word: *kan* occurs in the past tense, *ra-* or  $\emptyset$  in the indicative present, while *ykun* is reserved for the subjunctive mood and the future. In other words, the derivatives of *kun* express the non-present, while *ra-* and  $\emptyset$  express the corresponding present. *ra-* conjugates as follows: *rani* راني “I am”, *rak* راک “you (m.) are”, *raki* راكي “you (f.) are”, *rahu* راهو “he is”, *rahi* راهي “she is”, *rana* رانا “we are”, *raku/ṛakūm* راكو/راكم “you (pl.) are”, *rahūm* راهم “they are”. The *h* in the third person forms tends to be very faintly pronounced in rapid speech, if not altogether absent. The curious *ku* of *raku*, like the *ki* of *raki*, was probably introduced by analogy with the *-u* and *-i* suffixed in regular verbs’ prefix conjugation forms. To a first approximation, *ra-* is used for impermanent situations while  $\emptyset$  is used for lasting ones, like Spanish *estar* versus *ser* (cf. Cohen 1912:252); Madouni (1993) describes other modal uses of the particle, not all of which appear to be applicable in this dialect. Delineating its full semantic range may require further research.

#### Pronouns:

**Personal:** The pronouns are: *ana* أنا I, *hna* هنا we, *nta* انتا you (m.), *nti* انتي you (f.), *ntuma* انتوما you (pl.), *huwwa* هو he, *hiyya* هي she, *huma* هوما they. *Anaya anaya* انايا انايا, *ntaya ntaya* انتايا انتايا are emphatic forms. Forms like “you and I” are treated as if *w-* were a preposition with the suffixed form *wiyya-*; thus we get *ana wiyyak* انا ويياك, *nta wiyyah* انتا ويياه, etc. In appropriate contexts, some speakers use an oblique pronoun which seems to fulfill the cathartic functions of swearing without having impolite connotations, formed by suffixing the possessive suffixes to *jədd* جدّ, presumably “grandfather”, eg *ʔəffī jəddu* طفي جده “turn it off!”, *ya jəddək* يا جندك “oh you!”; this is not restricted to Dellys, and may have been recently taken from another dialect.

Suffixed object pronouns are: *-ni* ني me, *-na* نا us, *-ək* لك you (m./f.), *-kūm* كم you (pl.), *-u* له him, *-ha* لها her, *-hūm* لهم them. “Him” varies according to context: *-u* after consonants, *-h* after vowels, *-əh* after semivowels, and *-hu-* when followed by an indirect object suffix. Suffixed indirect object pronouns are: *-li* لي me, *-lna* لنا us, *-lək* لك you (m./f.), *-lkum* لكم you (pl.), *-lu* له him, *-lha* لها her, *-lhūm* لهم them; these always follow the direct object suffixes and precede the negative suffix.

**Morphophonology:** When a pronominal suffix beginning with *h* is inserted after a pharyngeal, it assimilates to [ħh]; thus *xləhūm* خلعهم = [xlaħħum] “he scared them”, *ṛuħha* رُوْحها = [ro:ħħa] “herself”.

**Reflexive:** The reflexive is formed using *ruh* روح “soul”; thus *q təl ruhu* قتل رُوحو “he killed himself”, *šra lktab lruhu* شرا الكتاب لروحو “he bought himself the book”. It has no particular plural: *ruhūm* رُوحوهم “themselves”.

**Relative:** The relative pronoun is *li* لي or *alli* اللي; the variants do not appear to be linked to the definiteness of the noun modified. Marçais states that *di* دي “s’entend à Alger, Dellys”; if this was once the case, it is so no longer.

**Demonstratives:** Proximal (this): *hada* هانا, *hadi* هادي, *hadu* هانو; occasionally abbreviated to *ḏ* ذ as in *ḏ-annharat* ذالتهارات, these days. Emphatic forms are *hadaya* هانايا, *hadiyya* هاديا, and *haduya* هادويا / *haduma* هانوما. It normally comes before the noun, eg *hada rrajel* هانا الرجل “this man”, but for emphasis may be placed both before and after or even just after, eg *hada rrajel hada* هانا الرجل هانا or *rrajel hada* الرجل هانا. Distal (that): *(ha)ḏak* هاناك, *(ha)ḏik* هانيك, *(ha)ḏuk* هانوك. Like this: *hakḏa* هانكا, *hakka* هانكا; like that, *hakḏak* هانكاك.

**Deictics:** *ha-w(-lik)* هانويك, *ha-y(-lik)* هانويك, *ha-wm(-lik)* هانومك, *ha-ni* هاني “Here I am”, *ha-k* هانك, *ha-ki* هانكي, *ha-na* هانا, *ha-kūm* هانكم. In other words, *ha-* takes the same endings as *ra-*, but with obligatory rather than optional elision of the suffixed *h*.

**Locatives:** proximal (here): *hna* هنا, emphatic *hnaya* هانايا; medial (there): *hnaḏ* هانك; distal (over there): *tamma* تانما, emphatic *tammak* تانمك, extreme distal (way over there): *lhih* الهية, *lhiha* الهية, *lḥna* لهنا, *lḥnak* لهناك (hither, thither) are stressed as if they were single words, with the accent on the first syllable; likewise *manna* مانا, *mannaḏ* مانانك (hence, thence). *mālhīh* مالهية = from over there.

**Interrogatives:** The basic interrogatives are:

- *aškun* أشكون “who?”
- *(w)aš(ə)n* أش “what?” (but always *(w)ašnu* أشنه / *(w)ašənha* أشنها “what is it?”); whence: *baš* باش “with what?”, *(wə)šlaš* علاش (or *(wə)šlah* علاه “why?”, *ki(fa)š* كيفاش “how?”, *waš bi* واش بي “what’s wrong with?” (with *bi* used, presumably innovatively, before nouns as well as pronouns.)
- *mən* من expresses “who?”, or sometimes “what?”, after a preposition or noun, eg: *taf mən* تاف من “whose?”, *šlammən* علمن or *šlimən* علمين “what about?”, *šlammən* لمن or *šlimən* لمن “for, to whom?”, *mša mən* معا من “with whom?”.
- *ami* أمي or *ama* أما “which?” (also expressed by suffixed *-mən*, especially with time periods, eg *nhar-mən* “what day?”)
- *ašḥal* أشحال “how many?, how much?”
- *qəddaš* قداش “how much?”
- *win* وين or older *wayən* واين “where?, to where?”
- *mnin* منين “whence?”
- *wəqtaš* وقتناش or *wəqt-mən* وقت من “when?, what time?”
- *winta* وينتا “when?”
- *wasm-* واسم- with possessive suffixes = “what name?”.

### 3.2 Adverbs

“Now” is the common Algerian word *ḏūrək* دُروك or variants thereof such as *ḏūrək* دُرك, *ḏūkk* دُك, *ḏūkka* دُكا, and even the intensified *ḏūkkatik* دُكاتيك; eg *ḏūkk ənji!* دُك نجى “I’m coming just now!” The emphatic suffix *-tik* (described by Cohen 1912: 10 as characteristic of the Muslim Algiers dialect) is fairly productive on ad-

verbs ending in *-a*: so we have *gana* فاني “also” > *ganatik* فاناتيك *zəʕma* زعما “that is to say” > *zəʕmatik* زعماتيك *immala* إمالا “so, ...” > *immalatik* إمالاتيك... “Yes” is *ih* إيه (*aywah* أيواه being something like “yes, go on”, while *anʕam* أنعام means “what did you say?” as well as “yes”); “no” is *lala* لا.

### 3.3 Nouns

**Diminutives:** Noun diminutives are normally formed with an infixed *-i(y)-* after the second consonant: thus *kʕliyyəb* كليب “little dog”, *qtiyyəʕ* قطني “little cat”, *šwiyyəx* شويخ “little old man”, *ydida* يديدة “little hand”, *bnita* بنتينة “little girl”, *bwiba* بويبة “little door”, *fwina* فوينة “little eye”, *snidəq* سنيق “little box”, *xnifə* خنيفة “little nose”, *hwinta* حوينتة “little shop”, *mšiməʕ* مصيمر “little nail”, *lhiwa* لحيوة “little beard”, and the adjective *šwibba* شويبة “cute” (from *šabba* شابة “beautiful (f.)”, which has the irregular masculine *šbab* (شباب); note slightly irregular *fwiyyəm* فويم or *fwima* فويمة “little mouth”, *mwəyha* مويهة “a little water”. The diminutive *hmiʕəʕ* حميطر from *hmaʕ* حمار “donkey” is well-known but entirely irregular. In contrast, villages as near the town as Sahel Bouberak use the more classical, or Bedouin, form with a second *-i-* replacing a long vowel in the last syllable: eg *jridinat* جريدينات “little gardens”.

Another method, common with adjectives, further doubles the middle radical if there are only three consonants: *kbibəʕ* كبيب or *kbiwəʕ* كبيور “biggish”, *smimən* سميمن “plump”, *sfifəʕ* صفيفر “yellowish”, *kʕhiʕəl* كحيجل “blackish” (but *khiwəl* كحيول is also attested), *nqiqi* نقيقي “totally clean”, *xtiti* ختيتي “Sis”<sup>18</sup>, *xbibza* خبيزة “little piece of bread”. Marçais suggests that this doubling is of Andalusí origin. Other adjectives take a form with *-iw-*, described by Marçais as specific to the non-bedouin dialects of Morocco and the far north of Algeria (but by Grand’Henry (1972:113) as found all over the Maghreb, including at least one Bedouin dialect, that of Bou-Saada): *šgiwəʕ* صغيور “tiny”, *qriwša* قريوصة “sorrel (*Oxalis pes-caprae*)”, ie little sour stuff. *bwibəʕ* بويوض “whitish”, fits no category perfectly. An odd jocular diminutive I heard spontaneously produced – *aḡʕriwəm* أغريرم from Kabyle *aḡrum* أغرور “bread” – is interesting for the light it sheds on the underlying processes, as is the more normal loanword diminutive *šnibra* شنبيرة “little room”, from *šōmbra* شوئبرة “room” (French *chambre*). The plurals of diminutives are invariably in *-in* (adjectives) or *-at* (nouns.)

As the previous list may suggest, the diminutive is quite productive, although more so in some speakers than others. No spontaneously produced augmentatives were recorded, in stark contrast to the wealth of diminutives: one speaker, on being asked about the diminutive of *xənnufa* خنوفة “nose, snout”, mentioned that it could perhaps take an augmentative *xənfuf* خنفوف “big nose”, but this seems not to be widespread usage in Dellys.

**Elatives:** A few comparative adjectives survive, eg *xir* خير “better”, *ktəʕ* كثر “more”, *qəll* قل “less”; with these, “than” is translated *mən* من, as with reborrowed classical comparatives (which are extremely common). However, most adjectives do not have such a form, and take *ʕla* على for “than”<sup>19</sup>. Thus *kbir ʕla Bašir* كبير على بشير or the reclassicized *kbəʕ mən Bašir* كبير من بشير, *ʕkbəʕ mən Bašir* أكبر من بشير all mean

<sup>18</sup> I elicited *hlili* حليلي “sweetish”, but never heard it used spontaneously.

<sup>19</sup> This common Maghrebi usage seems to be a calque of Berber; cf. Aguadé & Vicente (1997).

“bigger than Bachir”. Superlatives may be constructed by adding *kaməl* كامل or *gəf* فع (eg *əlkbir kaməl* الكبير كامل “the biggest of all”).

**Plurals:** The commonest noun plural is that formed by infixing *-a-* after the second consonant<sup>20</sup>; unlike the more conservative Bedouin dialects, no *-i-* is inserted in the last syllable, so we have *mfatəḥ* مفاتح “keys”, *snadəq* سنادق “boxes”, *jnaʔən* جنابن “gardens”, *swayəf* سوابع “hours, watches”, *twaqi* تواقى “windows” (sg. *taqa* تاقعة), *šyaʔən* شياطن “devils”, *twambəʔ* توائبر “stamps” (from *tambəʔ* تائبر Fr. *timbre*), *kraʔən* كراتن “boxes” (from *kaʔtun* كارطون Fr. *carton*), *kwamən* كوامن “trucks” (from *kamyun* كاميون Fr. *camion*), *jwajla* جواجلة “people from Jijel”, *dlalsa* دلالسة “people from Dellys”; the usual irregulars of this type are *myah* مياه “waters”, *fwam* فوام “mouths”, as well as the less common *drawəj* دراوج “stairs” (side-by-side with *druj* دروج from *dərja* درجة “step”), *grawəj* قراوج “toys” (no attested singular), *bfaʔəʃ* بعاش “bugs” (from *bafuʃ* باعوش), *čwaləq* تشوالق “cleaning rags” (from *čəlliq* تشليق), *qmayəj* قمایج “shirts” (from *qməjja* قمجة). *tqašir* تقاشير “pair of socks” is a singular, with plural *tqaširat* تقاشيرات “dinars” is clearly a reclassification. Rare cases of *-a-* plus final *-a* from nouns not ending in *-i* are attested, eg *rəqqad* رقادة “fish sp.” > *rqaqda* رقاقدة. M. Meouak (p. c.) notes that the situation in M’sila and Biskra is largely identical.

As usual, there is also a small class that take infixed *-u-*, and a smaller one with infixed *-i-*, as well as a semi-external plural by suffixing *-an* with internal ablaut (examples: *byut* بيوت “houses”, *grun* فرون “horns”, *sbuʔa* سيوعة “lions”; *ħmir* حمير “donkeys”, *fsi* عصي “canes”, *kiʔan* كيران “buses”, *təʔan* ترقان “roads”). There are even a number of words which take a plural by long vowel deletion: *zwi* زوي “zaouias”, *qtəʔ* ققط “cats” (or *qtuʔ* ققطوط), *jbəb* جبب “jubbas”, *rwaʔ* زوط “wheels” (from *ruʔa* روطة), *gwər* قور “Frenchmen” (from *gawri* قاورى), *gyəb* غابة “forests, wilds” (from *gaba* غابة), and more problematically *grūbba* عرببة “crows” from *gʔrab* غراب. A few professional nouns have a *fūʔla* plural which may be a subclass of the infixed *-u-* plural, eg *quʔya* قضية “judges”, *tūbba* طببة “doctors” (or homonymously “rat”). Other interestingly irregular plurals include *isumat* إسومات or *(i)smawat* سماوات or *asami* اسامي “names” (traditionally from singular *ysəm* بيسم (“his name” = *yəsmu* (يسمه), but *asəm* اسم is widely used now), *xawa* خاوة “brothers”, *xwata* خواتات “sisters”, *ḥwawat* حلاوات “lights”, *brawat* براوات “letters” (sg. *brīya* برية), *ḥlawat* حلاوات “sweets”. Note should also be made of the strong tendency, also found in Algiers, to replace older *-a* plurals (eg *xəyyaʔ* خياط “tailor” > *xəyyaʔa* خياطة) by plurals in *-in* (*xəyyaʔin* خياطين); usage varies from person to person, and occasionally the same speaker will alternate both forms.

*fīl*-type adjectives usually take plurals by replacing *-i-* with *-a-*, eg *kbir* كبير “big” > *k bar* كبار *mliḥ* مليح “good” > *mliḥ* ملاح *ṭwil* طويل “long, tall” > *ṭwal* طوال but *jdīd* جديد “new” > *jdād* جدد *qdim* قديم “old” > *qdam* قديم. Other adjectives’ plurals (apart from color-type ones) are in *-in*: *fayḥ* فايح “stinking” > *fayḥin* فايحين *ḥlu* حلو “sweet” > *ḥluwwin* حلويين *wafər* واعر “difficult” > *wafrin* واعرين *šaʔər* شاطر “smart” > *šaʔrin* شاطرين

<sup>20</sup> Souag 2002 gives a more in-depth treatment of this issue, but may require elaboration. While its model accounts for nearly all plurals in the dialect, it does not account for a few of the plurals I give here. In *čwaləq* and *qmayəj*, the irregularity appears to be motivated by avoidance of a C<sub>1</sub>VC<sub>1</sub> sequence – even though such sequences are perfectly possible in the dialect. Comparison with Cherchell (Grand’Henry 1972: 106) allows us to dismiss the irregularity of *bfaʔəʃ* as the result of an irregular degemination of the singular. But only use of the root-template model can account for *kraʔən*; I suspect dialect borrowing.

شاطرين. Exceptions, at least for some speakers, include *ṣaqəl* عاقل > *ṣūqqal* عُقال “calm, smart”, *jahəl* جاهل > *jūhhal* جُهْهال “ignorant”. The short adjectives *nqi* نقى “clean” and *ṣma* عما “blind” have plurals *nqaya* نقاية or *nqiyyin* نقيين, *ṣmuya* عموية.

The basic color adjectives are *byəḏ* بيض “white”, *kḥəl* كحل “black”, *ḥmər* حمر “red”, *ṣfər* صفر “yellow”, *xḏər* خضر “green”, *zrəq* زرق “blue”; secondary colors are mainly derived from French (eg *gri* قري “gray”), with exceptions including *čini* تشيني “orange”, *xuxi* خوعي “pink”. The plurals of basic color adjectives are of the form *fūla*, eg *byuḏa* بيوضى “white (pl.)”, *kḥula* كحولى “black (pl.)”, etc. This appears to be unusual – plurals in *fūl* (urban Maghreb dialects) or *fūll* (Bedouin or non-Maghreb dialects) are more widely attested – but brings them more closely into line with the regular infixed *-u-* plural.

**Gender:** Most body parts which come in pairs are feminine, as is *kərš* كرش “stomach”: eg *yədd* يد “hand”, *ṣin* عين “eye”, *wəḏn* وذن “ear”, but curiously not *rjəl* رجل “leg”. *qəlb* قلب “heart”, not being among these, is masculine. *bab* باب “gate”, *dar* دار “house”, *bit* بيت “room”, *zit* زيت “oil”, *tirzəḏt* تيرزذت “small wasp”, *ṣuf* صوف “wool”, *səms* سמש “sun”, *naḥ* ناه “fire”, *ləḏ* الارض “earth”, *triq* تريق “road” are feminine (but not eg *mus* موس “knife”, *qmər* قمر “moon”, *ḥanut* حانوت “shop”). *ma* ما “water”, *nda* ندا “dew”, *nba* نبا “echo”, *dwa* دوا “medicine”, *hwa* هوا “air”, *šta* شتا “winter” are masculine; contrast *šta* شتا “rain”, *ṣša* عشا “dinner”, *ḡda* غدا “lunch”, *ṣša* عصي “stick”, *sma* سما “sky”. Although the vast majority of nouns’ gender can be most simply predicted with a phonological rule (if it ends in *-a* آة or less reliably *-t* تة, it is feminine), the principal influence on recent French loanwords’ gender seems to be neither their gender in the original language nor the phonological form, but the gender of the Arabic term they substitute for: *jat liməḏ* جات ليماذ “the image has come” (of a broken TV), after *ṣura* صورة, but *laplaḏ kbir* لابلاذ كبير “the beach is big”, after *ṣəḏḏ* شط and *laparay? jibha* لاپاراي جيبها “The camera ? Bring it” after *ṣəwwara* تصويرة<sup>21</sup>.

**Possession:** The state of annexion is frequent, conveying the idea of an inalienable possessive: *mərṭ xuya* مرّت خويا “my brother’s wife”, *ṣan əṣṣufur* لسان العصفور “bird’s tongue” (also a type of pasta). Alienable possession is expressed with *taf* تاع or more traditional *ntaf* نتاع, eg *əlkəbš taf əmmi* الكبش تاع عمي “my uncle’s ram”. However, with the pronominal suffixes *dyal* is most often used; so we can say *dyali* دياي or *tafi* تاعي to mean “mine”, with no obvious difference in meaning. These forms vary according to the number of the possessed (with plurals (*n*)*tawəl* تواع<sup>22</sup>, *dyawəl* دياول), but not according to its gender.

Family terms, as well as *ṣahəb* صاحب “friend”, express their possessives using a special construction with the personal suffixes (although most, like *baba* بابا and *yəmma* يما, can also use construct forms: *babat* بابات and *yəmmat* يمات): so for instance *jəddət yəmmaha taf amina* جدّة يماها تاع أمينة “Amina’s mother’s grandmother”; *xuh taf kamal* خوه تاع كمال “Kamal’s brother”; either *babat xuya* بابات خويا or *babah taf xuya* باباه تاع خويا, my brother’s father (but not \**əlbaba ntaf xuya*, which highlights one underlying reason: many kinship terms cannot take *əl*, and – although not tech-

<sup>21</sup> Contrast the Moroccan Arabic situation described by Heath 1989, where “In European borrowings... those which lack /-a/ are masculine” (p. 131).

<sup>22</sup> Apparently not common in the Maghreb, but attested in several other areas (cf. Grand’Henry 1972: 121).

nically inalienable – can be “alienated” only with a first-person meaning). This pre-Hilalian construction is exactly paralleled in Kabyle, eg *gma-s n Yidir*, “Idir’s brother” (Naït-Zerrad 2001:47); it is also recorded for the much more strongly Kabyle-influenced Jijel Arabic dialect by Marçais (1956).

**Articles:** Invariant *waḥd əl-* means “a” or “some” with singulars: eg *waḥd əḥraja* *واحد الرجال* “a man” or “some guy”, *waḥd əlmra* *واحد المرا* “a woman”; it can also be used appreciatively or emphatically (like English “some”). Invariant *kaš(i)* *كاش* means “some... or other”, and can be used with plurals: eg *kaš ḥaja* *كاش حاجة* “something or other”, *kaš ktub* *كاش كتوب* “some books or other”, *kaš waḥəd* *كاش واحد* “someone or other”. Indefiniteness can also be expressed, most simply, by simply leaving the noun unmarked. M. Meouak (p. c.) notes that the situation in M’sila and Biskra is largely identical.

In modern speech, compound nouns in *bu-* take the definite article perfectly normally, and indeed the plural: thus *buslamat* *بوسلامات* “dolphins”, *əlbuzəlluf* *البوزلوف* “the sheep’s head” (pl. *zlaḥəf* *زلالف* or *zlaḥfa* *زلالفة*). This is unusual, and surprising given their etymology; according to my father, their taking the article is a relatively recent development, although their taking the plural is older.

Marçais mentions Dellys as a region which has adopted the Berber masculine prefix *a-* with a few nouns; however, my experience provides little support for this claim. Placenames in the immediate vicinity that once featured this – *ašuwwaf* *أشواف*, *agiwaz* *أغيواز* – are giving way to the alternative forms *lašuwwaf*, *lagiwaz* (though another, *ansəm* *أنسم*, seems to be stable), and the very rare word *azayaḥ* *أزاباط* “hard rain” cited earlier seems to be an adverb rather than a noun (*əššta tīḥ azayaḥ* *سيسنو الشتا تطيح أزاباط* “the rain is falling in sheets”). Most Berber loanwords – eg *sisnu* *سيسنو* “madrona”, *bərkukəs* *بركوكس* “rough-grained couscous” – drop it, although the Berber feminine is retained in *tirzeḥt* “a type of small wasp”. The noun *asəm* *أسم* “name”, as a recent alternative to older *ysəm* *يسم*, can scarcely be cited in this connection. If anything, the morning greeting *axir* *أخير* is perhaps the only commonly used possibility – although the rare word *aqsil* *أقسيل* “grass sp.” may be a case in point.

### 3.3 Numbers

The dual per se seems to be restricted to Arabic measure nouns, where it may be *-ayən* or *-in*; the latter is only superficially similar (though historically identical) to a plural found mainly on nouns denoting body parts – usually but not always ones which come in pairs – of the form *-in* (*-i-* before personal suffixes). On units of time it is required, while on a few measure other words it is optional; thus we can have *yumin* *يومين* or *yumayən* *يومين* “two days”, *ṣamin* *عامين* or *ṣamayən* *عامين* “two years”, where the dual is necessary, and *məḥḥtin* *مرتين* or *zuj məḥḥrat* *زوج مرات* “twice”, *wəḥḥtin* *ورقتين* or *zuj wəḥḥat* *زوج وقفات* “two pieces of paper, two leaves” where it is optional, but never, say, *\*kiluwwin* for “two kilos”, or *\*rajlīn* “two men”, or *\*zuj əyyam* “two days”. The former dual on such words as *yəddin* *يدين* “hands”, *ṣinin* *عيني* “eyes”, *ṣbəlṭin* *صبعتين* “fingers”, *jnaḥṭin* *جناحتين* “wings” is now a true plural, eg: *jana waḥəd əlwəḥš* *جانا واحد الوحش* *عنده عشرة عيين* “A monster with ten eyes came to us.”

“Two” is *zuj* *زوج* although *tnin* *ثنين* is still used to form higher numbers (eg *tnin u* *ʔəšrin* = *ثنين وعشرين*). So we have *zuj əktub* *زوج كتوب* “two books”, *zuj xūbzat* *زوج خبزات* “two loaves of bread”, *zuj drari* *زوج دراري* “two kids”.

The numbers from 1 to 20 are: *waḥəd* *واحد*, *zuj* *زوج*, *tlata* *ثلاثة*, *ṣəbʔa* *ربعة*, *xəmsa*

*səttə* (١٥) خمسة, *səbfa* (١٦) سبعة, *tmənya* (١٧) ثمانية, *təsf'a* (١٨) تسعة, *ʔəʃra* (١٩) عشرة, *ħdaʃ* (٢٠) حداث, *tna* (٢١) سطااش, *səttə* (٢٢) خمسطاش, *xəms'ta* (٢٣) خمسطاش, *ʔəb'ʔaʃ* (٢٤) ربعطاش, *tlətt'a* (٢٥) ثلثاش, *ʔəb'ʔa* (٢٦) سبسطاش, *tmənt'a* (٢٧) ثمنطاش, *tsəʔ'taʃ* (٢٨) تسعطاش, *ʔəʃrin* (٢٩) عشرين. The numbers 3-10 have shortened forms used with nouns and other numbers: *təlt* (٣) ثلاث, *ʔəb'ʔ* (٤) ربيع, *xəms* (٥) خمس, *sətt* (٦) ست, *səb'ʔ* (٧) سبع, *təmn* (٨) ثمن, *təsf* (٩) تسع, *ʔəʃr* (١٠) عشر. eg *təlt-əmlayən* ثلاث ملايين three million, *təmn-əyyam* ثمن أيام eight days, *təmn-əktub* ثمن كتوب "eight books". 11-19 have construct forms used in general when they precede a noun, made by adding *-ən*, eg *tlətt'aʃən sna* ثلاثاش سنن thirteen years, *xəms'taʃən ktāb* خمسطاشن كتاب fifteen books. Above 19, the noun is in the singular: *ʔəʃrin ktāb* عشرين كتاب "twenty books".

### 3.4 Prepositions

*l- / li-* is "to". With pronominal suffixes, both *-li* لي, *-lak* لك, *-lu* له etc. attached to verbs to express the dative and *liyya* ليّا, *lik* ليك, *lih* ليه etc. as independent forms which usually do not express the dative (except in cases of emphasis) are found; thus for instance we have *aʔt'ihuli* أعطيهولي "give it to me!" but *ʔtah liyya (maʃi lik!)* عطاها (ماشي ليك) "he gave it to me (not to you!)".

*mən* من (with suffixes *mənn-*, with the article *mə-*) is "from": *mən tizi-wəzzu* من تيزي وزو "from Tizi-Ouzou", *məʃaʃima* ملعاصيمة "from the capital", *mənnu* منه "from him", *mən(n)hūm* منهم "from them".

*b-* (with suffixes *bi-*) is "with (instrumental)": *ja ddiḅ bəʃsatu* جا الذيب بعصائه "the jackal came with his stick" (from a children's rhyme); *fṛəḥt bik* فرحت بيك "I'm happy with you".

*fi* في or *f-* (invariably *f-* with the article, *fi-* with suffixes, but either independently) is "in": *win künt əlbarəḥ? fi jnan bu-ʃaləḥ* وين كنت البارح؟ في جنان بو صالح "Where were you last night? In Bou-Salah's garden" (from the same children's rhyme); *fəddar* فددار "at home"; *fiha* فيها "in it (f.)", *f-furgu* في فورقو "in a bus".

*ʔla* (ʔli- with suffixes, contracted to *ʔə-* with the article) is "on": *dik əlyasmina li mʔərrša ʔəḥuʃ* ذيك الياسمينية لي معرشة علحوش "that jasmine vine hanging on (the wall of) the courtyard" (from *tbugir* (تبوغير); *wəʃlik əsslam wəʔṛəḥma* وعليك السلام والرحمة "and on you be peace and mercy" (from a children's rhyme).

*muṛ* مور (*muṛa-* with suffixes) is "after" or "behind": *muṛ ma tsəllək* مور ما تسلك "after you finish", *muṛaya* مورايا "behind me".

*bin* بين "between" has an irregular suffixed plural form *binat-*; so we have *bini w binək* بيني وبينك "between you and me", *bin ənnas* بين الناس "between people" but *binatna* بيناتنا "between us".

Other prepositions – *məʃa* معا "with", *ʔənd* عند "at", *fuq* فوق "on top of", *təḥt* تحت "under", *daxəl* داخل "inside", *qəbəl* قبل "before", *qədd* قدد "size of", *qis* قيس "as much as", *qūddam* ققدم "in front of" – are regular (except that the article does not assimilate on *əltəḥt* التحت, *əldaxəl* الداخل)

### 3.5 Negation

Verbs (including prepositional verbs) and pronouns are negated by *ma... ʃ(i)* ما... ʃ(i) where the *i* is rarely retained by the younger generation: *ma rquḍtʃ(i)* ما رقتش "I didn't sleep", *ma qritʃ həda lktāb* ما قريتش هادا الكتاب "I haven't read this book", *ma ʔəndiʃ ktāb* ما عنديش كتاب "I haven't got a book", *ma ʔəndəkʃ əzzhəṛ* ما عنديش الزهر "You haven't got good luck", *ma bgiʃ nuxrəj* ما بغيتش نخرج "I don't want to go out", *ħməd ma rəhuʃ(i) mriḥ* حمد ما راهوش مريض "Hmed is not sick", *ma ranaʃ nʃəyydu* ما رانايش نصيدو "We aren't fishing". But, as usual, *ma ʔəndi ḥəttə ḥaja* ما عندي حتى حاجة "I haven't got a thing; *ma qritu wala məʔra* ما قريتو ولا مرة "I haven't read it once.

*ma rəhuʃ* ما راهوش, *ma raniʃ* ما رانيش, etc. can be abbreviated to *mahuʃ* ماهوش



*maniš* مانيش, etc.

Nouns and adjectives are negated by *maši* ماشي “not”; *hađa maši mliħ* هذا ماشي مليح “This is not good”, *huwa maši šəyyad* هو ماشي صياد “He’s not a fisherman”, *hađi xbibza, maši xūbza* هاندي خبيزة، ماشي خُبزة “This is a morsel of bread, not a loaf!”

#### 4. Sociolinguistics

**Baby talk:** Several words are used specifically in addressing small children, notably *ħəmmi* هَمِي “eat”, *kəxxi* كَخِي “yuck !, don’t put that in your mouth !”, *nənni* نَنِي “sleep”, *tittit* تَيْتَيْت “car”, *məħħa* مَحَّة “kiss”, *dəddi* دَدِي “wound”, *čəčči* تَشَشَشِي “sit down”. Of these, “eat” and “sleep” are conjugated as regular verbs. In such contexts, there is an additional tendency to simplify phonology in ways seemingly analogous to children’s own speech: eg *r, r > l* (eg *luħ* for *ruħ* رُوح “go”), *š > s* (eg *was əflih* for *waš əflih* وَاش عَلَيْهِ “it’s OK”).

**Triglossia:** Algeria in general is currently in what could reasonably be described as a situation of triglossia, with two competing learned prestige languages, Modern Standard Arabic (Fusha) and French, operating side by side with the low-prestige dialect of everyday life (Darja). Educated speakers generally supplement their dialect with extensive use of one or both languages’ resources. A small minority go so far as to code-switch, with a substantial proportion of their conversation being pure French or pure MSA; the language chosen depends at least on educational background (itself varying strongly with age, as a result of the gradual Arabization of the system following independence), religiosity (generally correlating with a preference for Arabic), and residence in other countries (whether Western or Arab). A compromise solution, in which a dialect sentence is partially “reclassified”, is also used by some – eg *əlʔan nəhtəllu* الْآن نَهْتَفْ لَهُ “I will phone him now”, corresponding to MSA *saʔahtifu lahu alʔān* سَأَهْتَفْ لَهُ الْآن and dialect *đūrk ntilyfunily* تَتِيلِيْفُونِيلِي<sup>23</sup>. The use of French or MSA words, whose pronunciation is accommodated to the dialect to a varying degree, to fill lexical gaps is nearly universal; the choice in this case depends on subject matter as well as on the factors previously mentioned. For example, a humanities or religion-related topic would tend to provoke more Arabic and less French than a scientific or technological one. Dellys, as a socially conservative Arabic-speaking small town with a high literacy rate relative to the country as a whole, uses rather more Arabic in public environments, such as shop fronts, than nearby centers such as Algiers or Tizi-Ouzou; however, French retains a high public profile. This impressionistic summary merely recapitulates what is locally obvious; a more detailed investigation would require a carefully chosen larger sample.

**Polite formulae:** Greetings include *axir* أَخِير, *šbəħ əlxir* صَبِيح الْخَيْر (more recently introduced) *šbəħ ənnur* صَبِيح النُّور “good morning!”, *təšbəħ bxir/ʔla xir* تَصَبِيح بَخِيرًا عَلِي “good night!”, *ʔəslama* عَسَلَامَة “hello!”, *waš rak* وَاش رَاك “how are you?”, *labas* لَابَاس “fine”, *əllah yʔawnək* اَللّٰهُ يَعْاوَنُكَ “God aid you” (said to person hard at work), *bqa ʔla xir* بَقَا عَلِي خَيْر “goodbye! (to person staying)”, grammatically imperative; *əllah ysaħħəl* اَللّٰهُ يَسْهَلُ “goodbye! (to person leaving)”, *bəsslama* بِالسَّلَامَة “goodbye”, *səlləm ʔliħum* سَلِّم عَلِيْهِمْ “tell them I say hi”, to which may be added the MSA *ahlən* أَهْلًا, *əssalamu ʔaləykūm* السَّلَام عَلَيْكُمْ, *maʔassalama* مَعَ السَّلَامَة, *ilalliqa* إِلَى الْقَاءِ and the French *šava* (< “ça va”). In requests, one may use *əllah ysaħħik* اَللّٰهُ يَسْجِّحْكَ “please”, *šəħħa* صَحَّا

<sup>23</sup> Compare the Moroccan situation presented in Heath 1989, ch. 4.

*ṣaḥḥit* “thank you”, *ysəlmək* بِسْمَلِك “you’re welcome”<sup>24</sup>, as well as the MSA *ṣukrən* شُكْرًا, *ʿafwən* عَفْوًا. Condolences to the family of the deceased use the formula *baraka fikūm* بَرَكَتُهُ فَيْكُمْ “blessings be upon you”, and a familiar dead person’s name is typically followed by *əllah yrəḥmu* اللهُ بِرَحْمَتِهِ “God have mercy on him”. “Excuse me” is *əsməḥni* اِسْمَحْنِي. Mention of an “unclean” subject, such as garbage or donkeys, may be preceded by *ḥaša-k(ūm)* حَاشَاكَ “pardon the phrase”, while mention of a bad possibility may be followed by *bʿid əššəṛr* بَعِيدَ الشَّرِّ “far be the evil”. When something is accidentally spilled, the formula *faḍ əlxir* فَاضَ الْخَيْرَ “fortune has overflowed” can be used. A number of formulas, such as inshallah, bismillah, alhamdulillah, etc., are used in more or less the manner prescribed by Islam.

**Verbal arts:** Many traditional verbal arts – stories (*mḥajjiyyat* مُحَاجِيَّات), riddles (*lügz* لُغْز), and most nursery rhymes – have fallen into disuse since the introduction of television. *tbugir* تَبُوغِير – the partly improvised chants in praise of the bride and groom sung by women at weddings – are still in use, but it is unclear whether they will survive the next generation. Proverbs remain in common use. A local poet, Amer Chabani عَامِر شَعْبَانِي, has written some lengthy dialect poetry describing the town and its traditions (not as yet published) in addition to his published corpus in literary Arabic, and has compiled a book (also unpublished) containing a number of local folktales, proverbs, riddles, and rhymes, as well as extensive vocabulary lists for particular semantic fields (fish, fruit, traditional clothing, placenames, etc).

## 5. Vocabulary

**Sea life:** The Dellys dialect is noted for the diversity of its marine terminology, some of which can be traced back to late Latin via Andalusi Arabic<sup>25</sup>. Notable invertebrates include *mujnib* مَوْجَنِيْب “crab”, *qəmrun* قَمْرُون “shrimp”, *pappaṣ* بَاتِيَاص “flat lobster sp.”, *lüggi* لُغْي “sea urchin”<sup>26</sup>, *ḥərrayəq* “sea anemone, jellyfish”, *qərniṭ* قَرْنِيْط “octopus”, *qalamar* قَالَامَار “squid”, *sipyā* سِيْبِيَا “cuttlefish”, *kaṣamar* كَاتَزَامَار or *ḥmar* حَمَار “sea cucumber”, *nəjmət ləbhəṛ* نَجْمَةُ الْبَحْرِ “starfish”. Sea urchin eating being an important local custom<sup>27</sup>, at least two types have specific names: *šadiyya* شَادِيَا (large with short blunt spikes), *yhudiyya* يَهُودِيَا (dark black with long spikes, no meat). Shellfish include *buq* بُوْق “conch”, *srəmbəq* سَرَنْبِق “mussels”, *ḡolal* غُلَال “periwinkle”, *mḥar* مَحَار “limpet”, *bčūq* بَشُوْق “shellfish”. At least five species

<sup>24</sup> Grammatically, this should have a geminate *l*. In practice, gemination is rarely noticeable here.

<sup>25</sup> Corriente (1997) gives etymologies for a number of these.

<sup>26</sup> The etymology of this distinctively Dellys term long puzzled me. It turns out to derive from Berber, as first suggested by Salem Chaker (p. c., 2004): specifically, Kabyle *ilggʷi* “cytise (bot.)” (cytisis, laburnum: Dallet 1982). The direction of borrowing is confirmed by a number of cognates further afield: Haraoua Berber (Basset 1895:151) *tilouggith* تِلُوْغِيْث “genêt” (needle-furze), Middle Atlas Tamazight (Taifi 1991) *alggʷa* pl. *ilggʷa* “genêt, cytise”, and even Tamajeq (Alojaly 1980) *əlogi* “esp. de plante”. The semantic shift – from a spiny plant to a spiny sea creature – is natural enough.

<sup>27</sup> This custom itself cannot be attributed to the French; Thomas Shaw already makes note of it in the eighteenth century Maghreb. However, the method – eating them with bread and lemon – is likely of French inspiration; Shaw observed them being eaten with pepper and vinegar. The urchins are gathered with a *qūrāša* قُرْأَشَة “trident”.

of seaweed are named: *trif* طريع (long flat dark straight leaves), *tubrint*<sup>28</sup> توبرينت (small, olive green, and branching), *xəzz* خَزْ (green threadlike leaves, named after the thick dirty mud, *xəzz* خَزْ, in which it grows), *ʕsila* عسيلة (yellowish-green, branching), and *ʕanqud* عنقود (large, brown and furry, shaped like a bunch of grapes). Cetaceans include *bustama* بوسلامة “dolphin” and *balina* بالينة “whale” (< Fr. *baleine*).

As for fish, collecting names proved much easier than finding translations...

– Identified with some certainty, by comparing photographs taken to those in Froese & Pauly 2000: *buzəllayəq* بوزلايق “blenny” (probably *Parablennius incognitus*), *sərdin* سردين “sardine”, *šağər* شَاغَر “sea bream” (*busnan* بوسنان young *šağər*), *ʕanqərba* عنقربة “scorpionfish”, *qaruş* قاروص “sea bass”, *gʕrəng* قُرْنَق “conger” (regarded by fishermen as a male *səlbəħa*), *mustila* موستيلة “forkbeard”. A school of fish is *gʕlaf* قُلاَف<sup>29</sup>.

– Identified by showing pictures to occasional fishermen, and somewhat less certain: *jaja* جاجة “gurnard”, *čuču* تُشوشو “ray” (bigger than *dərga*), *dərga* دَرْقَة “ray”, *zənkur* زَنْكُور “wrasse”, *spada* سِيَادَة “swordfish”, *şul* صُول “sole”, *čarniyya* تَشَارِنِيَّة “grouper”, *friyyxa* فَرِيخَة (very young *čarniyya*), *fərxə* فَرْخَة (young *čarniyya*), *qətt əlbəħər* قَطُّ الْبَحْرِ “spotted dogfish”, *kəlb əlbəħər* كَلْب الْبَحْرِ “dogfish”.

– Identified verbally: *buniṭ* بُونِيْط “bonito” (*bakuṭ* بَاكُور: young *buniṭ*), *dəns* دَنْس (Fr. “dentée”, so English “dentex” or “seabream”), *ʕayda* رَعَايَة “electric ray”, *ruži* رُوْزِي “mullet”, *zarniyya* زَارِنِيَّة (Fr. “liche”, so English “derbio” or “leerfish”), *səlbəħa* سَلْبَاخَة “moray eel”, *ṭəyyar* طَيَّار “flying fish”, *ləncuba* لَنْتَشُوبَة “anchovy”, *mərnus* مَرْنُوس “whiting”.

– Unidentified: *bərdəmbaluq* بَرْدَمْبَالُوق, *bəgrət əlbəħər* بَغْرَة الْبَحْرِ, *busif* بُوْسِيْف, *buməxyəṭ* بُوْمَخِيْط, *bumənsar* بُوْمَنْشَار, *čalba* تَشَالِبَة (a fish said to induce hallucinations if eaten to excess), *qūṛraʕ* قُرَاع (young *čalba*), *dib* دِيْب (small), *ʕanya* رَانِيَا (resembles *čuču*), *rəqqad* رَقَاد, *zərrayqa* زَرَايْقَة, *zriṛga* زَرِيْرَقَة, *şukla* شُوكْلَا (spiny, resembles *kəħla*), *ṭəms* طَمَس (said to sleep on the surface)<sup>30</sup>, *ʕin əlħəjla* عَيْن الْحَجْلَة, *ʕəħħam* فَحَام (like *dib*, but greyer), *qajuṭ* قَاچُوج (like *šağər* but reddish), *gʕmiri* قَمِيْرِي, *buri* بُوْرِي (young *gʕmiri*), *kəħla* كَحْلَة (like *busnan*, but blacker), *luq* لُوق, *mürsiṭ* مُرْسِيْط (resembles *buniṭ*), *nəhri* نَهْرِي (a very bony river fish).

While existing dictionaries of fish names made this task far easier, they also revealed that dictionary comparison alone was not an adequate basis for fish identification: in two cases, *rəqqad* and *fərxə*, Moroccan homonyms (from Lataoui 1999) proved to refer to entirely different fish. Dictionaries could thus be used with confidence only when photographs of the fish in question were available. This list is far from complete; Amer Chabani lists several more fish names in his unpublished work mentioned above. I was told that the government had made a survey of the local fish names some years back, but have not as yet found out whether it was ever published.

**Loanwords:** French and standard Arabic loanwords are better treated under the heading of sociolinguistics (above); some examples can be seen in the brief texts gi-

<sup>28</sup> The form of this word almost surely implies a Berber origin, but I have found no convincing comparison. The best match so far seems to be Tamajeq (Alojaly 1980) *tebāremt* “esp. de plante persistante” (Tuareg *e* regularly corresponds to northern *i*, and *ā* in an open non-initial syllable to Ø.)

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Kabyle *agʕlaf* (Dallet 1982) “essaim (d’abeilles, de guêpes, etc.)” (swarm); Tamajeq (Alojaly 1980) *gəʕuləf* “è. entièrement réuni.” (be completely reunited).

<sup>30</sup> Misidentified in Souag 2002 as “seal”. A more plausible – though still uncertain – word for “seal” is *bumnir* بُوْمَنْيْر, said to be dolphin-like and to climb onto rocks.

ven below. Of greater historical interest are precolonial loanwords.

Berber has contributed a substantial number, particularly botanical terms such as *timəlwin* تيملوين “a type of fig” (Kabyle *imelwi* “a pole for picking figs” < *elwi* “gather (fruit)”), *sisnu* سيسنو “madrona” (Kabyle *isisnu*), *lūggi* لفي “sea urchin” (Kabyle *ileggʷi* “cytissus”, see note above), *magraman* ماقرامان “*Inula viscosa*” (Kabyle *amagraman*), and zoological terms such as *tirzəzət* تيرززت “small wasp”, *zərdi* زردى “weasel” (Kabyle *izirdi*), *gənduz* قندوز “calf” (Kabyle *agenduz*), but including other terms such as *zəmzi* زمزي “throwing stone” (Kabyle *azəmzi*), *buğər* “recite praise verses at a wedding” (Kabyle < *sbugər*<sup>31</sup>), and even kinship terms: *lusa* لوسة “sister-in-law” (Kabyle *talwest*), and quite possibly even *yəmma* يما “mother” and *baba* بابا “father”. Direct calques are also to be found, such as *ʕərs əddib* عرس النيب “rain falling from a sunny sky”, after Kabyle *tameyɾa bbʷuccen*; both forms mean “jackal’s wedding”. (All these Kabyle forms are from Dallet 1982). Kabyle’s very extensive borrowings from Algerian Arabic make it harder to detect loanwords in the opposite direction with certainty, but this list is doubtless far from exhaustive.

In Dellys as elsewhere, several layers of Romance loanwords are discernible. A few were certainly borrowed via Berber, notably *fəllus* فلوس “chick”. Many of these terms are well-attested in Andalusī Arabic, where Corriente (1997) traces them directly to late Latin: these are conspicuous in marine vocabulary, eg *qərniṭ* قرنيط “octopus” (< *cornetum*), *čarniyya* تشارنية “fish sp.” (< *aceria*), *šluqi* شلوقي “southeastern wind” (< *salus* + pejorative *-ok*) but are also found in other semantic fields, eg *gnina* قنينة “rabbit” (< *cuniculus*), *bərrayəq* برابقي “insect sp.” (< *bruchus*), *bərdlaqa* بردلاقة “flower sp.” (< *portulaca*). Others seem likely to derive from Spanish at a later period, possibly via Lingua Franca (Lévy 1992:71-74): *timpu* تيمبو “good weather” (< *tiempo*), *malu* مالو “bad weather” (< *malo*), *čuču* تشوشوشو “ray sp.” (< *chucho*), *duɾu* دورو “douro” (< *duro*), *fišta* فيشطة “festival”<sup>32</sup> (< *fiesta*), *batata* باطاطة “potato” (< *patata*), *ʕumətiš* طوماطيش “tomato” (< *tomates*), *šlaḏa* شلاظة “lettuce”, *ruḏa* روظة “wheel” (< *rueda*), *gusṭu* فوسطو “taste (personal preference)” (< *gusto*), or from other Romance languages, eg *lənčuba* لنتشوبية “anchovy” (compare Portuguese *anchova*)<sup>33</sup>.

Finally, the Ottoman period left a number of Turkish loanwords behind, eg *burak* بوراك “bourak (food)” (< *börek*), *baylak* بايلك “government, State” (< *beylik* “provincial government”), *tqašir* تقاشير “pair of socks” (< *çakşır* “a type of trousers”), *bərzəmbaluq* برجمبالوق “fish sp.” (cf. Turkish *balık* “fish”).

**Calendar:** Traditionally, as elsewhere in North Africa and previously in Moorish Spain, two calendars were used: the Julian “Berber” calendar, for timing agriculture, and the Islamic lunar calendar, for timing religious activities. The former, still common in Kabyle, has disappeared from local usage, leaving most of its month names effectively irrecoverable. Only a few of the more prominent months were recalled by my consultants; for example, *yənnayər* يناير and *fuɾar* فورار were encountered in a folktale of transparently Kabyle origins, while closer questioning revealed *məğɾəs*

<sup>31</sup> Salem Chaker (p. c., 2004) confirms that this root is a borrowing from, rather than into, Berber, deriving from the root *ḡr* “call, cry out” plus the augmentative derivational prefix *b-*.

<sup>32</sup> Noted for Cherchell in Grand’Henry 1972: 165 as likely to be of Andalusī origin.

<sup>33</sup> Most of these are also found in Algiers, and as such discussed in Cohen 1902: 415 – as are many of the Turkish loanwords (see Belguedj 1971).

*yəbrir* بيريير, *gūšt* عُشت and *dujəmbəɟ* دوجمبر. A number of vaguer traditional calendrical expressions relating to the solar year are, however, still in use: for example, *smayəm* سمايم for a hot period in August, and *šlah̄t ənnwadər* صلاحة التوادير for the first big rains of autumn.

The dialect words for the lunar months, apart from Ramadan, have also disappeared from regular use (being replaced by MSA terms, when used at all), but are still recalled by older people. According to my aunt, Khira Souag, they were as follows:

<i>əlʿašura</i>	العاشورا	Muharram
<i>šīʿ əlʿašura</i>	شيع العاشورا	Safar
<i>əlmulud</i>	المولود	Rabiʿ I
<i>šīʿ əlmulud</i>	شيع المولود	Rabiʿ II
<i>jumad əlluwwəl</i>	جوماد اللول	Jumada I
<i>jumad əttani</i>	جوماد الثاني	Jumada II
<i>əɟəb</i>	رجب	Rajab
<i>šəʿban</i>	شعبان	Shaʿban
<i>ɾəmədan</i>	رمضان	Ramadan
<i>ləfɾar</i>	القطار	Shawwal
<i>ləɟəb</i>	الجنب	Dhul-Qaʿda
<i>əlḥəjj</i>	الحج	Dhul-Hijja

Nowadays, the Gregorian calendar with French month names is in general use. Other basic calendrical terminology is as typical elsewhere in Algeria.

**Toponymy:** Dellys' name itself is variously pronounced *dəlləs* دلس or *əddəlləs* الدلس, revealing an interesting case of reanalysis. Historically, the *əd-* in the latter must derive, not from the definite article, but from the *t-* in \**tdəlləs* (the name recorded by the medieval Arab geographers as *Tadallas* تادلس)<sup>34</sup>. The Turkish name of the town, as recorded by Piri Re'is (1544), was Tillis (written in the text with a presumably non-distinctive long *î*, as *تيليس*, but in the map with a short *i*); the /i/ of the French name, /delis/ (Dellys), presumably derives from this Turkish pronunciation. The name itself seems to derive from a Berber plant name widespread in toponyms, akin to the Dellys-dialect word *dalis* داليس "thatch" (called *dis* outside Dellys) or the Kabyle equivalent *adles*.

In general, most place names in Dellys derive from Arabic, with a significant minority from French; however, particularly around the border between Dellys and Ladjenna and in the mountains above, names of Berber or unidentifiable origin are frequent. As might be expected, every neighborhood has its own name; within the town itself, these are usually named after a local saint.

The coast of the Dellys area being unusually rocky, most of the larger rock islands immediately offshore also have their own names, particularly those used for swimming. Notable examples include *ḥəjra kəḥla* حجرة كحلة "Black Rock" off Sahel

<sup>34</sup> As Dallet 1982 briefly suggests. The name *تدلس* is used by al-Idrīsī, Ibn Saʿīd al-Maghribī, Ibn Khaldūn, and al-Ḥimyarī; see <http://e.lasphost.com/dellys/library/brdesc.html>. In an Ottoman land deed of the early nineteenth century shown me by its owner Mahmoud Belhaoua, I observed the hybrid spelling *التدلس*.

Bouberak, *dzirət ərjəb* رجب نذيرت “Rajab Island” west of Sid el-Medjni, *həjrət baba ššix* البواننة حجرة بابا الشيخ east of Sid el-Medjni, the two *mğazəl* مغازل, *əlpwanta* الطواننة and *həjrə twila* حجرة طويلة “Long Rock” off Qari-Achour (the beach around Oued el-Guettar), *əsstuḥ* السطوح “the Roofs” between Qari-Achour and el-Kouss, *əssənsəl* السنسل “the Chain” off el-Kouss, and *ruši di mul* روشي دي مول (ie. Rocher des Moules) and *ruši di krapp* روشي دي كراپ (ie. Rocher des Crappes) north of Lagiouaz.

The Latin name for the town, adopted from Punic, was *Rusuccuro*<sup>35</sup>, probably Phoenician for “partridge cape”; the name *Addyma*, attested in Ptolemy for a site between Dellys and Djinet, may refer to the mouth of Oued Sebaou (Laporte 1995). I am aware of no toponym in the area that can plausibly be seen as reflecting either of these.

**Comparative vocabulary:** The following wordlist is provided to facilitate comparison with other dialects, after Caubet 2001. For verbs, the imperfect stem is given – that is, the imperative minus any prefix.

do:	<i>dir</i> دير, <i>ʕməl</i> عمل, <i>wasi</i> واسي
go down:	<i>ḥbəf</i> حبط
go up:	<i>ʔləʕ</i> طلع
go in:	<i>dxəl</i> دخل
go out:	<i>xʕrəj</i> خرج
want/like/love:	<i>ḥəbb</i> حبّ, <i>bgi</i> بغي
find:	<i>ʕib</i> صيب, <i>lqi</i> لقي
wait:	<i>ssənna</i> استنى
take away:	<i>ddi</i> ادّي (bring: <i>jib</i> جيب)
take:	<i>xud</i> خوند (irregular; see above)
see:	<i>ʕuf</i> شوف (gaze: <i>xʕzəf</i> خزر)
listen, hear:	<i>sməʕ</i> سمع
sleep:	<i>rqūd</i> رقد (dream: <i>num</i> نوم)
sit:	<i>qʕəd</i> قعد
stand:	<i>wqəf</i> وقف
work:	<i>xdəm</i> خدم
send:	<i>bʕəʔ</i> بعث
throw:	<i>rmi</i> رمى
catch:	<i>ḥkəm</i> حكم, <i>gbəʔ</i> قبض
cough:	<i>sʕəl</i> سعل (sneeze: <i>ʕtəʕ</i> عطص)
stop:	<i>ḥbəs</i> حبس
come back:	<i>wəlli</i> ولي
tell a story:	<i>ḥaji</i> حاجي, <i>ḥki</i> حكي
become:	<i>wəlli</i> ولي
close:	<i>ḡləq</i> غلق
ask:	<i>səqsi</i> سقسي

<sup>35</sup> Attested variants include *Rusucurium*, *Rusuccuro*, *Rusuccuru*, possibly *Ascurum*, and the Greek *Ρουσοκκόρου* for the town, and *Rusucuritani* and *Rusuccuritani* for its citizens; see <http://e.1asphost.com/dellys/library/brdesc.html>, Viré 1912.

hide:	<i>xəbbi</i> خَبِي
put down, place:	<i>ḥəft</i> حَط
look for:	<i>ḥəwwəs ʔla</i> حَوَس عَلَى
hurt:	<i>wjəʔ</i> رَاصِي يَوجَعِي ( <i>ni</i> ) رَاصِي يَوجَعِي, my head hurts
quickly:	<i>bəlxəff</i> بِالْخَفِّ, <i>bəlg̃ ʔəb</i> بِالْغَصْبِ, <i>bihbih</i> بِيهْبِيه (slowly: <i>bləʔqəl</i> بِالْعَقْلِ)
all:	<i>küll</i> كُلُّ, everything <i>külləš</i> ~ <i>küll-ši</i> كُلُّ شَيْءٍ
someone:	<i>kaš waḥəd</i> كَاش وَاحِد
no one:	<i>ḥəttə waḥəd</i> حَتَّى وَاحِد
nothing:	<i>walu</i> وَالْو, <i>ḥəttə ḥaja</i> حَتَّى حَاجَة
good:	<i>mliḥ</i> مَلِيح
woman:	<i>mra</i> مَرَا (my wife: <i>mərṭi</i> مَرْتِي)
people:	<i>nas</i> نَاس (with plural accord, except occasionally in <i>tbuǧir</i> )
carrots:	<i>zrudiyya</i> زَرُونِيَة
tomatoes:	<i>tumaṭiṣ</i> طُومَاتِيْش
oranges:	<i>čina</i> ثَشِينَة
lemon:	<i>qarəš</i> قَارَص
pear:	<i>lənjaš</i> لَنْجَاص
walnut:	<i>juz</i> جُوز
nut:	no attested term other than MSA <i>mukassirat</i> مَكْسِرَات
pumpkin:	<i>qəʔʔa kbira</i> قَرَعَة كَبِيرَة (but in surrounding countryside <i>kabuya</i> كَابُويَة)
gourd:	<i>qəʔʔa taʔ elm ʔxiq</i> قَرَعَة تَاعِ الْمُخْبِضِ, ie for churning. (but in surrounding countryside <i>šəkwa</i> شَكْوَة)
courgette:	<i>qəʔʔa</i> قَرَعَة
spinach:	<i>səʔq</i> سَلَق (also “chard”)
artichoke:	<i>qəʔʔnun</i> قَرْنُون
lentils:	<i>ʔdəs</i> عَدَس
watermelon:	<i>dəllaʔ</i> دَلَا ع
pepper:	<i>fəʔfəʔ</i> فُفْل (ḥlu حلو sweet, ḥəʔʔ حر hot)
salt:	<i>məʔḥ</i> مَلْح
mint:	<i>nəʔnaʔ</i> نَعْنَاع
key:	<i>məʔtaḥ</i> مَفْتَاح (pl. <i>mfaṭəḥ</i> مَفَاتِيْح)
breakfast = coffee:	<i>qəḥwa</i> قَهْوِي (verb: <i>tqəḥwi</i> تَقَهْوِي). Ramadan breakfast = <i>šḥur</i> سَحُور
lunch:	<i>ǧda</i> غَدَا (verb: <i>tǧəddi</i> تَغْدِي)
dinner:	<i>ʔša</i> عَشَا (verb: <i>tʔšəšši</i> تَعَشِي). Ramadan dinner = <i>ftuʔ</i> فُطُور
evening:	<i>ləʔšiyya</i> لَعَشِيَة
rain:	<i>šta</i> شَتَا (it's raining: <i>əššta ttiḥ</i> الشَّتَا تَطِيح)
yesterday:	<i>əlbərəḥ</i> الْبَارِح
day before yesterday:	<i>lul-bərəḥ</i> لُول بَارِح
two days before:	<i>qbəl lul bərəḥ</i> قَبْل لُول بَارِح
tomorrow:	<i>ǧədwa</i> غَدْوَة
day after tomorrow:	<i>bəʔd ǧədwa</i>
two days after:	<i>bəʔd bəʔd ǧədwa</i> بَعْدُ بَعْدُ غَدْوَة or the more rural <i>bəʔd</i>

	<i>ġəddəwtin</i> بَعْدُ غَدَوْتَيْن
here:	<i>hna</i> هنا
mouth:	<i>fūmm</i> فَمُّ (pl. <i>fwam</i> فَوَام)
nose:	<i>xənnufa</i> خَنْوْفَة; <i>nif</i> نَيْف (also pride)
throat:	<i>ġəɾjuma</i> قَرْجُومَة
horse:	<i>ʕud</i> عود (pl. <i>ʕwad</i> عَوَاد)
pig:	<i>ħəlluf</i> حَلُوف (pl. <i>ħlaləf</i> حَلَالَف); wild boar: <i>ħəlluf əlgaba</i> حَلُوف الْغَابَة
fish:	<i>ħut</i> حُوت (sg. <i>ħuta</i> حُوتَة)
rooster:	<i>səɾduk</i> سَرْدُوك (pl. <i>sradək</i> سَرَادَك)
hen:	<i>jaɟa</i> جَاڟَة (pl. <i>jajət</i> جَاڟَات)
chick:	<i>fəllus</i> فَلُّوس (pl. <i>flaləs</i> فَلَالَس)
chicken:	<i>jaɟ</i> جَاڟ
sheep:	<i>ġnəm</i> غَنَم
rug:	<i>zəɾbiyya</i> زَرْبِيَّة (pl. <i>zɾaba</i> زَرْابَة)
blanket:	<i>fəɾsada</i> (pl. <i>fɾaʂəd</i> ); traditional wooly blanket: <i>ħayək</i> حَايَك
village:	<i>dəʂɾa</i> دَشْرَة (pl. <i>dʂur</i> دَشُور)
hot:	<i>sxun</i> سَخَانَة (heat: <i>sxana</i> سَخَانَة)
small:	<i>sg̣iɾ</i> صَغِير
turn white:	<i>byaɟ</i> بِيَاض
turn red:	<i>ħmaɾ</i> حَمَار
get fat:	<i>sman</i> سَمَان
get thin:	<i>ɟʕaf</i> ضَعِيف or <i>ɟʕəf</i> ضَعِيف
get better:	<i>tħəssən</i> تَحَسَّن (a reclassicization), <i>bɾa</i> بْرَا (recover from an illness)
thicken:	<i>xʂan</i>
ripen/become cooked:	<i>tjib</i> طَيِّب
father:	<i>baba</i> بَابَا (the <i>b</i> is not emphatic)
mother:	<i>yəmma</i> يَمَّا, Mom! <i>a yi!</i> أَيِي! (vocative)
grandmother:	<i>mwani</i> مَوَانِي, <i>mammwani</i> مَامَمَوَانِي, <i>mamma</i> مَامَمَّا, <i>jədda</i> جَدَّة
maternal uncle:	<i>xal(i)</i> خَالِي
any male in-law of a male (son-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law):	<i>nsib</i> نَسِيب
step-son:	<i>rbib</i> رَبِيب
daughter-in-law:	<i>ʕruʂa</i> عَرُوصَة (=bride)
enough!	<i>bəɾka!</i> بَرَكَا
watch out!	<i>balak!</i> بِالَاك
maybe	<i>waqila</i> وَاقِيلَة, <i>yəmkün</i> يَمَكُن, <i>qadər ykun</i> قَادَر يَكُون, <i>tənjəm tkun</i> تَنْجَم تَكُون, <i>balak</i> بِالَاك
must:	<i>bəssif</i> بَالْسَيْف strong necessity (borrowed into Kabyle);
you must come:	<i>bəssif əʕlik ətji</i> بَالْسَيْف عَلَيْكَ تَجِي or <i>lazəm(lək) ətji</i> (لازَم لَكَ تَجِي)
there is:	<i>kayən</i> كَايْن
there is not:	<i>maka(n)ʂ</i> مَاكَاش (n here lost within living memory.)
nearly:	<i>qrib</i> قَرِيب ( <i>qrib nsellek</i> قَرِيب سَلَكْت I'm almost done.)



he just left:	ضُك لي خُرج <i>ḍūk elli x °rəj</i>
he/she/they hasn't/haven't come yet:	مازال ما جاوش <i>mazal ma ja(t/w)š</i>
he's still sleeping:	مازاله راقد <i>mazalu raqəd</i>
she's still sleeping:	مازالها راقدة <i>mazalha raqda</i>
they're still sleeping:	مازالهم راقدين <i>mazalhūm raqdin</i>
a lot:	<i>bəzzaf</i> بزّاف, sometimes <i>nəzzah</i> نزّاه (both terms have been borrowed into Kabyle; the latter is originally rural, while the former is characteristic of Algiers and neighboring cities.)
a lot of water:	بزّاف الماء <i>bəzzaf əlma</i>
a lot of people:	بزّاف الناس <i>bəzzaf ənnas</i>
a lot of girls:	بزّاف البنات <i>bəzzaf əlbnat</i>
a little:	شويّة <i>šwiyya</i>
a little water:	شويّة ما <i>šwiyya ma</i>
a few people:	شويّة ناس <i>šwiyya nas</i>

### Text samples

#### Speech samples:

(A man in his thirties)

*lala lazəmli nwərrihūmlək. kayn ḥajat, kayn ḥutat li lazəmli nwərrihūmlək, li baš təqdər naxdu... taxūd əlʔism ntaʔhūm. ʔimma kaš məʔra nəʔləʔ mʔak, nʔəʔlu ləlməʔši, wəlla fəʔqhawi, otō nʔəʔfu fwəʔt əlməʔši wəlla, təqdər tšəwwəʔhūm, tšəwwəʔhūm u nə... u nwasiwḥūm; nqūllək əlʔismawat tawəʔhūm.*

لالا لازملي نوريهمك. كايين حاجات، كايين حوتات لي لازملي نوريهمك، لي باش تقدر ناخذو... تاخذ الاسم نتاعهم. اما كاش مرة نطلع معاك، نطلعو للمارششي، ولا للقهاوي، أو طو نعرفو فوسط المارششي ولا، تقدر تصورهم، تصورهم ون... ونواسيهم، نقلالك الإسموات تاوعهم.

No, I need to show them to you. There are things, there are fishes that I need to show you, so we can... so you can take their name. Either some time I'll go up with you, we'll go up to the market, or in el-Qhawi. As far as we know, in the middle of the market or the like you can photograph them; you photograph them and we'll... we'll do them; I'll tell you their names.

(An woman in her sixties)

*wəllat ʔəḥət, qaltəʔha wahiba ana majya. bayni<sup>36</sup> ʔayḥa əʔšbəḥ fatma zzūḥra. qaltəʔha wafa, qaltəʔha hani majya nūqʔəd ə... yəwmayən, qaltəʔha w yjibni xuya. qalt immalt məʔruḥši ḥəttə yji wəʔruḥ mʔah. hakḍak ʔala yji ḥal.*

ولات راحت، قالتها وهيبه أنا ماجية. بايني رايحة الصبح فاطمة الزهرة. قالتها وفاء، قالتها هاني ماجية. نقعد... يومين، قالتها ويجيبني خويا. قالت إمالة ما نروح شي حتى يجي ونروح معاه. هاكذاك على أي حال.

She went again, and Wahiba told her “I’m coming”. Fatma-Zohra was supposed to go in the morning. Wafa told her, she told her “I’m coming to stay, uh, two days”, she told her “and my brother will bring me”. She said “In that case, I won’t go until he comes, and I’ll go with him.” Like that, in any case.

<sup>36</sup> This obsolete adverb means “apparently” or “supposedly”, and is not inflected for person.

(A man in his sixties)

*ṛak ətʃuf hədi l'əšša? hna dūrka xaṭəṛ saxət. fəndha fəmin məlli ṛahət, fəmin bərk. li kəmməl ṛah, kəmməl ṛah əlḥit. kan q'əd əlḥit məbni bəlyajuṛ, mjiht ə...fṛab. həda fəndu fəmin wəlla tlata məlli ṛah. əssəmma əddyəṛ kanu apöpri ywəşlu ḥətta lləhnaya. u hədi kamla misaḥa ə... ḥjəṛ.*

راك تشوف هادي العشة؟ هنا ضركا خاطر ساخت. عندها عامين من اللي راحت، عامين برك. لي كمل راح، كمل راح الحيط. كان قعد الحيط مبني بلياجور، من جبهة التراب. هادا عنده عامين ولا ثلاثة من اللي راح. اسمى الديار كانو أ بو بري يوصلو حتى للهنايا. وهاذي كاملة مساحة حجر.

You see this hut? It's here now because there was a landslide. It's two years since it went, just two years. It went completely, the wall went completely. The wall was built of brick, from the side of the... ground. It's been two or three years since it went. I.e., the houses used to practically reach as far as here. And this whole place was an expanse... of stone.

### Proverbs

1) *əlfas byədd ənnas*

الفاس بيد الناس

The axe is according to people's hands. (A tool is only as good as its user)

2) *əlqəbayli lli yətbəlda ki tṭbəl əlli yətmədda*

القبائلي اللي يتبدا كي الطبل اللي يتدى

A citified Kabyle is like a drum ruined by dew. (It's better to be authentic.)

3) *əlli yəstənnə xir məlli yətmənnə, wəlli yətmənnə xir məlli yəqtəf layas*

اللي يستنى خير من اللي يتمنى، واللي يتمنى خير من اللي يقطع لاياس

He that waits is better than he that hopes, and he that hopes better than he that despairs.

4) *ūgšəb təfət*

أغصب تعطل

“festina lente” (More haste, less speed.)

5) *əlqəššut əlli trəgbu yəfmik*

القشوط اللي ترغبه يعميك

*orəlfud li thəgru yəfmik*

العود لي تحفره يعميك

The twig you despise may blind you.

6) *yənfəl d-ərray li ydəbbəṛ li fiḥ: jəbt li yəxdəm fliyya, fədt nəxdəm fliḥ!*

ينعل ذالراي لي يدبر لي فيه: جبنت لي يخدم علنا، عدت نخدم عليه

Cursed be this advice that he gave me on it: I got someone to serve me, and ended up serving him !

7) *ja yṭəbbu fmah*

جا يطنبه عمه

He came to cure him and blinded him.

8) *ja yəsfa wəddəf təsfa*

جا يسعا ودر تسعة

He came to try (to help find something) and lost nine (more.)

9) *afʔini bəntək u zidi ʔulətha dgig*

أعطيني بنتك وزيدي عولتها دغيش

Give me your daughter, and add a year's food for her in flour (someone asking for a big favor and then topping it off with a totally unreasonable request.)

11) *ma yəkbər raş hətta yšib raş*

ما يكبر راص حتى يشيب راص

No one grows up without turning someone else's hair white.

12) *mul əlful yqul ʔəyyab*

مول الفول يقول طياب

A bean-seller will always say [the beans] are ready-to-cook.

13) *atgədda wətmədda, atʔəšša wətməšša*

أتغدى وتمدى، أتعشى وتمشى

Eat lunch then lay down, eat dinner then walk around.

14) *ki təšbəʔ əlkərs, ətqul ləʔraş gənni*

كي تشبع الكرش، تقول للراص غني

When the stomach is full, it tells the head to sing.

15) *wəjh əlxruf məʔruf*

وجه الخروف معروف

A lamb is known by its face.

16) *aḏḏərbu yəʔraf məḏḏərbu*

أضربه يعرف مضربه

Hit him and he'll know his place.

17) *həjra mən yədd əlhəbib təffaḥa*

حجرة من يد الحبيب تفاحة

A stone from a friend's hand is an apple.

18) *kul ma yʔəjbək wəlbəs ma yəʔjəb ənnas*

كول ما يعجبك والبس ما يعجب الناس

Eat what you like, wear what other people like.

19) *yḏəbbəʔ fi ḥmar mijyət*

يطبع في حمار ميت

Pushing a dead donkey (“flogging a dead horse”)

20) *məʕza walu ʕarət*

معزة ولو طارت

It's a goat even if it flies (a metaphor for stubbornness)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

I gratefully acknowledge the help of all my Dellys relatives in collecting and correcting the data on which this essay is based, and the encouragement and feedback of Dominique Caubet. Any mistakes or faults that remain are entirely my own.

- AGUADÉ, Jordi & VICENTE, Ángeles. 1997. «Un calco semántico del bereber en árabe dialectal magrebí: el uso de la preposición *ʕla* en el comparativo» in *Estudios de dialectología norteafricana y andalusí 2*, pp. 225-240.
- ALOJALY, Ghoubeid. 1980. *Lexique touareg-français*. Akademisk Forlag: Copenhagen.
- BAKRĪ, ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-. 1068. *Kitāb al-Masālik wal-Mamālik*. Partially reproduced and translated in Mac Guckin de Slane, 1913, *Description de l’Afrique septentrionale*. Adolphe Jourdan: Algiers.
- BASSET, André. 1929. *Études de géographie linguistique en Kabylie (I. Sur quelques termes berbères concernant le corps humain)*. Librairie Ernest Leroux: Paris.
- BASSET, René. 1895. *Étude sur la Zenatia de l’Ouarsenis et du Maghreb central*. Ernest Leroux: Paris.
- BELGUEDJ, Mohammed S. 1971. «Les mots turcs dans le parler algérien», *Turcica*, III, pp.133-142.
- BENCHENEB, Mohammed. 1922. *Mots turks et persans conservés dans le parler algérien*. Jules Carbonel: Algiers.
- BOUCHERIT, Aziza. 2002. *L’arabe parlé à Alger. Aspects sociolinguistiques et énonciatifs*. Peeters: Paris-Louvain.
- CANTINEAU, Jean. 1960. *Cours de phonétique arabe*. Klincksieck: Paris.
- CARETTE, Ernest H. 1848. *Exploration scientifique de l’Algérie pendant les années 1840, 1841, 1842 : Sciences historiques et géographiques IV. Études sur la Kabylie. (sic)*. Imprimerie Nationale: Paris.
- CAUBET, Dominique. 2000-2001. «Questionnaire de dialectologie du Maghreb», in *Estudios de dialectología norteafricana y andalusí 5*, pp. 73-92.
- CHABANI, Amer. (p. c.), 2003. Notes towards a book about Dellys’ history and traditions (as yet untitled); currently seeking publisher.
- CHAKER, Salem. 1996. *Manuel de linguistique berbère - II: syntaxe et diachronie*. ENAG – Editions: Algiers.
- COHEN, Marcel. 1912. *Le parler arabe des Juifs d’Alger*. Champion: Paris.
- CORRIENTE, Federico. 1997. *A Dictionary of Andalusí Arabic*. (Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1. The Near and Middle East, 29). E.J. Brill: Leyden.
- DALLET, Jean-Marie. 1982. *Dictionnaire kabyle-français*. SELAF: Paris.
- DOUTTE, Edmond and GAUTIER, Émile-Félix. 1913. *Enquête sur la dispersion de la langue berbère en Algérie, faite par l’ordre de M. le Gouverneur Général*. Gouvernement général de l’Algérie: Algiers.

- FROESE, Rainer & PAULY, Daniel. 2000. *FishBase 2000*. <http://www.fishbase.org/> (accessed October 2005).
- GATEAU, Albert. 1966. *Atlas et glossaire nautiques tunisiens*. Dar El-Machreq: Beyrouth.
- GRAND'HENRY, Jacques. 1972. *Le parler arabe de Cherchell (Algérie)*. Université Catholique de Louvain, Institut Orientaliste: Louvain-La-Neuve.
- HEATH, Jeffrey. 1987. *Ablaut and Ambiguity: Phonology of a Moroccan Arabic Dialect*. SUNY: Albany.
- HEATH, Jeffrey. 1989. *From Code-Switching to Borrowing: A Case Study of Moroccan Arabic*. (Library of Arabic Linguistics no. 9) Kegan Paul International: London/New York.
- IBN KHALDŪN, 'Abdurrahmān ibn Muḥammad. 1381. *Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn*. (available online from <http://www.alwaraq.com/>)
- IBN KHURRADĀDHBIH, 'Ubaydallāh ibn 'Abdallāh. 846. *Al-Masālik wa-l-Mamālik*. (available online from <http://www.alwaraq.com/>)
- IDRĪSĪ, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-. 1154. *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-āfāq*. (available online from <http://www.alwaraq.com/>)
- LAOUST, Émile. 1912. *Étude sur le dialecte berbère du Chenoua*. Algiers.
- LAPORTE, Jean-Pierre. 1995. «Dellys», in *Encyclopédie Berbère XV*. Edisud: Aix-en-Provence, pp. 2255-2261.
- LATAOUI, Abderrahim. 1999. *Ichtyonymie marocaine: étude historico-linguistique des noms des poissons marins au Maroc*, Université Mohammed V – Agdal: Rabat.
- LÉVY, Simon. 1992. «Ports, parlars portuaires et importation linguistique. Place des hispanismes dans la problématique de l'emprunt», in A. Kaddouri (coord.), *Le Maroc et l'Atlantique*. Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines: Rabat, pp.59-74.
- MADOUNI, Jihane. 1993. «Les valeurs de la particule *ṛā* à Sidi-Bel-Abbès». *MASGELLAS*, 5, pp. 123-136.
- MARÇAIS, Philippe. 1956. *Le parler arabe de Djidjelli*. Publications de l'Institut d'études orientales d'Alger, XVI. Adrien-Maisonneuve: Paris.
- MARÇAIS, Philippe. 1977. *Esquisse grammaticale de l'arabe maghrébin*. Maisonneuve: Paris.
- MUQADDASĪ, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad. 985. *Aḥsan at-taqāsīm fī ma' rifat al-aqā-līm*. (available online from <http://www.alwaraq.com/>)
- NAÏT-ZERRAD, Kamal. 2001. *Grammaire moderne du kabyle*. Karthala: Paris.
- PIRI RE'IS 1544. *Kitāb-i Bahriye*. Reprinted in *Türk Tarihi Araştırma Kurumu Yayınlarından - no. 2*, Devlet Basimevi: Istanbul, 1935.
- SOUAG, Lameen. 2002. «Broken Plurals – or Infixes ? The Case of the Algerian Arabic of Dellys», in *Estudios de dialectología norteafricana y andalusí* 6, pp. 19-34.
- TAÏFI, Miloud. 1991. *Dictionnaire tamazight-français (parlers du Maroc central)*. Awal-L'Harmattan : Paris.
- VIRÉ, M.-C. 1912. «Découverte d'une borne milliaire». in *Bulletin Archéologique du Comité*, p. CCXL. URL: <http://e.1asphost.com/dellys/library/vire.html>.

**ABSTRACT**

Dellys was founded by the Phoenicians and reestablished by the 11th century: its dialect belongs to the little-documented urban north-central Algeria dialect group and displays features unusual in pre-Hilalian dialects, in particular the retention of interdental. Berber, Andalusi, and later Bedouin influence are all observable in its lexicon, and occasionally in its grammar. This article focuses primarily on points specific to the dialect and is based on Dominique Caubet's dialectological questionnaire.