

Traditional Recipes from il-Kāf (Northwestern Tunisia)

ABSTRACT My paper presents the transcription and translation of two texts in the dialect of the northwestern Tunisian town of il-Kāf (el Kef). The texts were recorded during fieldwork carried out for the TUNOCENT project. The speaker gives the recipes for traditional dishes and the various kinds of bread typical of the il-Kāf region. Linguistic notes are given in section 3 to show the local linguistic peculiarities of the dialect. Some final remarks will summarise the differences and similarities in linguistics between the featured texts and other Bedouin-type dialects in Tunisia.

KEYWORDS Arabic dialectology, Tunisian dialects, Bedouin dialects, areal linguistics, material culture, field research

1 Introduction

The town of il-Kāf (el Kef) is the administrative centre of the same-named Tunisian governorate in the northwestern part of the country. A short description of il-Kāf and other important towns in the governorate can be found on our project's website: <https://tunocent.acdh.oeaw.ac.at/>. To the best of our knowledge, nothing has been previously published on the dialect of il-Kāf.¹ The following two texts were recorded during fieldwork for the TUNOCENT project by Franziska Schwemmer in August 2019. The speaker is a 45-year-old woman from il-Kāf (Kef₁/f/45). In the texts, she describes the traditional Kefan dish *burzgān* and the different kinds of bread

1 The linguistic material collected during the project of the *Atlas linguistique de Tunisie* is still largely unpublished: 'For the "Atlas linguistique de Tunisie" data have been elicited in 250 localities but, unfortunately, apart from some theoretical articles, nothing has been published so far.' (Behnstedt and Woidich 2011: XVIII, in the footnote).

that are traditionally baked in the governorate of il-Kāf. There are some major differences between the kinds of bread described by our speaker and those listed in Ritt-Benmimoun (2005)² for the South Tunisian region of Douz. In il-Kāf, there is no *xubzat malla*, a type of bread traditionally baked in the sand of the desert, a procedure which, due to the different climate and geology, is not possible in Northern Tunisia. In Ritt-Benmimoun (2005), *xubzat ṭāẓīn* is characterised as one of the most important bread types in Southern Tunisia. Though a tableware for baking bread called *ṭāẓīn* is described by the Kefan speaker, the bread itself is called *mṭālīf*. On the other hand, *xub^{uz} mlāwi* and *xubz abrāẓ* are not known in the region of Douz. Other kinds of bread, such as *ruggāg* and *ṭābūna*, as well as the dishes *rfīsa* and *ṣīda*, are known in both regions. It is remarkable, however, that in il-Kāf, fine semolina (*smīd*) is used for almost all types of bread.³

The dish called *burzgān*, a variant of couscous described in the first text, is typically Kefan. Gobert (1940: 509) described a dish called ‘Bazergan’ as follows:

Kouskous spécial au Kef. C'est un kouskous dont la sauce est faite de lait, de smen, d'oignons et d'épices. La viande préalablement épicée a été cuite à part, à la vapeur, au-dessus d'une marmite remplie d'eau et de romarin. [...] Quand le lait bout, il est versé sur le kouskous, que l'on décore de morceaux de viande déjà cuite, d'œufs durs et de fakia. Pas de légumes.

2 Transcription and translation

Short vowels: *a, i, u*.

Long vowels: *ā, ā̄, ī, ū, ē, ō*.⁴

Epenthetic vowels: *^a, ⁱ, ^u*.

Important linguistic peculiarities of the dialect are explained in section 3.

2 The relevant literature concerning the types of bread in the South Tunisian region of Douz is cited there.

3 Alonso et al. (2014: 26) distinguish between the fine semolina (*smīd*) used for baking bread and the coarse semolina (*zdir* or *glūb smīd*) for preparing couscous.

4 The phonemic status of *ā̄* has not yet been established, but its presence or absence in certain words under certain phonological conditions is a very important criterion for Tunisian dialects. For this reason, though the transcription here is otherwise mainly phonemic, *ā̄* is used. All other relevant information concerning transcription can be found in Ritt-Benmimoun (2014a). Most previously published scholarly work on Tunisian dialects, and especially Bedouin-type dialects, can be found in the reference section of Ritt-Benmimoun (2014a).

Text 1: The dish *burzgān*

1. *il-mākla l-mašhūra f-il-kāf fanna il-burzgān. yittaṣmal fi... nṭayybū fi-šhar māy, fi-maṣṭāz māy, w-ṅgūlū-lu fēd mayyu.* 2. *waqtha yuktuṛ il-xass. w-fi-nafs il-waqt il-kāftya, il-wilāyāt il-kullha taṣrif illi kī ṅgūlu burzgān burzgān kāfi. w-yitkīl fi-māy.* 3. *biš nḥaḍḍru l-burzgān w-nṭayybū f-il-kāf nišru l-fākya.* 4. *il-fākya illi hīya lōz w-bunduq w-zōz w-bū frīwa w-dagla w-nišru l-lḥam, ṣallūš.* 5. *w-b-iṭ-ṭbīṣa l-kull l-kāftya ṣandha kusksi f-id-dār, il-ṣōla. w-ḥlib w-zibda. w-sukkuṛ.* 6. *biš nḥaḍḍru burzgān niglu l-fākya nṣarrzōha w-ṅuṣṣu d-dagla flā aṛbṣa w-nṣayydu l-ḥlib w-ṅdawwbu z-zibda.* 7. *w-nṣawwru l-kusksi illi hūwa ṣamsi nṣawwruḥ. w-fi-nafs il-waqt nḥuṭṭu l-lḥam illi baṣd-ma naḡslūh nṣawwruḥ b-ṭarṣif mil-ḥ w-il-klīl.* 8. *yabda klīl axḍar b-iz-žbal yabda fih riḥa fāyḥa w-nḥuṭṭūh nṣawwruḥ nsammūh knāf.* 9. *biš ... baṣd-ma fawwirna l-kusksi nḥillū b-iš-šwayy nṣarrqū b-šwayy zibda w-naṣmlu couche kusksi.* 10. *w-nzayynu l-fākya lli ṣarražnāha illi hīya m-il-lōz, l-il-bū frīwa, l-il-bunduq, l-iz-zōz, 11. fi-nafs il-waqt kaṣbāt id-dagla illi maṣnāha naḍḍafnāha w-gaṣṣīnāha flā aṛbṣa.* 12. *w-nzayynu kīma iz-zīna byūt byūt: bit hāka lōz, zōz, bū frīwa, bunduq, dagla.* 13. *hāka tabda kīma il-ṣaḥn kīma l-warḍa. nzīdu naṣmlu kusksi, couche uxra kusksi, mxallaṭ b-is-sukkuṛ w-iz-zibda.* 14. *w-baṣd naṣmlu ixixir iz-zīna ntāf il-kusksi naṣmlu illa byūt byūt b-āk il-fākya lli ṣarražnā w-illi ṣmannā il-couche l-ūlāniya.* 15. *bit bit bit bit fākya w-dagla. fi-nafs il-waqt fanna l-ḥlib illi hūwa sxun w-ṣanna ṭarṣif iz-zibda illi ḥaṭṭīnā fi-kasarūna ḍābit.* 16. *w-fi-nafs il-waqt fanna l-laḥmāt illi hūma gāṣḍīn yitsammu knāf illi gāṣḍīn yfūru flā l-kaskās b-rīḥit l-klīl tabda riḥitha fāyḥa.* 17. *nṣubbu āk l-ḥlib, nṣubbu couche zibda w-mbaṣdha šwayy ḥlib muš baṣṣa.* 18. *w-baṣd nḥuṭṭu āk l-laḥmāt illi ṭabu yabdu ṭaybīn b-il-gdā nḥuṭṭu laḥma ḥdā laḥma.* 19. *w-yabda z-zīna ntāḥḥa illi maṣnāha šakl warḍa w-bit bit yabda b-āk il-fākya.* 20. *w-āk il-laḥmāt illi ṭabu b-il-klīl illi hūma yitsammu knāf w-hāḍeka l-ḡukla l-kāftya il-[-...].* 21. *kūli b-iš-šfā!* 22. *b-iṭ-ṭbīṣa fōg iṭ-ṭawla yabda maḥṭūṭ xass, maḥṭūṭ rāyib, ḥlib rāyib w-maḥṭūṭ tībsi xāṭir illi kī nḥuṭṭūh nḥuṭṭu l-burzgān nḥuṭṭūh f-it-tībsi.* 23. *yabda ṣaḥn ntāf tībsi, yabda mzayyin. ḥāḍika lli yitsamma ukla kāftya illi hīya l-burzgān.* 24. *w-titkīl fi-šhar mayyu mil-le quinze māy w-aḥṭifāl kbīr baṣṣa fi-wilāyit il-kāf.*

1. The famous food of il-Kāf is called *burzgān*. It is made in... we cook it in the month of May, on the fifteenth of May. We call it “the feast of May.” 2. At that time we have a lot of green salad. At the same time the people of il-Kāf, (the people of) all the (other) governorates know that, whenever we say *burzgān*, (we mean) the Kefi *burzgān*. It is eaten in May. 3. In order to prepare and cook *burzgān* in il-Kāf, we buy dried fruits, 4. dry fruits which are almonds, pine nuts, walnuts, hazelnuts and *dagla* dates. And we buy lamb meat. 5. Of course, all the Kefan people have couscous at home and everything that is needed to cook it, and milk and butter. And sugar. 6. In order to prepare the dish *burzgān*, we fry the dried fruits, we roast them. We cut the *dagla* dates into four, boil the milk, and let the butter melt. 7. We let the sun-dried couscous

steam. At the same time, we place the meat that, after washing, we have spiced with a pinch of salt and rosemary. 8. It is green rosemary that (grows) in the mountains and sends forth a nice aroma. We place it (i.e. the meat), let it steam, and we call it *knāf*. 9. After we have let the couscous steam, we open (the couscous chunk) slowly and dissipate it with some butter. We make a layer of couscous. 10. We garnish (it with) the dried fruits that we have roasted, which are the almonds, the hazelnuts, the pine nuts and the walnuts; 11. and at the same time, the pieces of *dagla* dates that we have cleaned and quartered. 12. We arrange it as decoration in (different) sections: a field like this with almonds, (another with) walnuts, (another with) hazelnuts, (one) with pine nuts and (one) with *dagla* dates. 13. Like this, it shapes a rose. We continue with the couscous. We make one more layer of couscous mixed with sugar and butter. 14. After that, we make the last (thing), the decoration of the couscous. We make different sections with those dried fruits that we have roasted and with which we made the first layer. 15. Different sections of dried fruits and *dagla* dates. At the same time, we have the milk that has become hot, and we have the piece of butter that we put in a pan and that has melted. 16. At the same time, we have the pieces of meat that are called *knāf*, that are steaming in the couscous steamer with the smell of rosemary, the smell of which spreads fragrance. 17. We pour that milk, we pour a layer of butter and then a bit of milk, not too much. 18. And then we place those pieces of meat that are cooked, they are cooked very well. We put one piece of meat next to the other. 19. Its beauty lies in its form (which is like) a rose and (in its arrangement) in (various) sections with those dried fruits. 20. And in those pieces of meat that were cooked with rosemary and called *knāf*. That is the dish of il-Kāf [...]. 21. Eat (it) and bon appétit! 22. Of course, there is green salad on the table; there is sour milk; there is an earthen plate because when we serve the *burzgān*, we put it on an earthen plate. 23. It has the form of a decorated earthen plate. That can be called a Kefan dish, the *burzgān*. 24. It is eaten in the month of May, beginning with the fifteenth of May. It is a big celebration in the governorate of il-Kāf.

Text 2: Bread in il-Kāf

1. *f-il-kāf fanna xub^z ruggāg w-fanna xubz abṛāž, xub^z ruggāg w-xubz abṛāž w-fanna l-ⁱmṭālīf. w-fanna il-xub^z l-ⁱmṭabbig b-iz-zīṭ.* 2. *hādūma anwāf il-xub^z illi mawżūda fi-wilāyt il-kāf.* 3. *biš naḥku f-lā xubz ir-ruggāg. xubz ir-ruggāg yžī m-is-smīd w-zīt w-šwayy mil^h muš baṛša biš mā-yžī-š mālah w-mā.* 4. *nuṣṛku il-xub^z b-il-gdā b-il-gdā twalli f-žina faṣon ⁱntāf ^afžina nxallōha tirtāh.* 5. *w-nabdu f-ṛaknāha lilli twalli bāhya baṛša w-nḥuṭtu t-tāžin fōg il-gāz nxallūh yusxun.* 6. *w-ṭamma illi ft... nṭayybu b-iṭ-tāžin il-farbi nṭayybūh fa-l-^aḥṭab. hādāy illi mawżūd f-ir-rīf.* 7. *āma f-il-blād f-il-village nṭayybu fa-l-gāz. illi tawwa fanna mawżūda fanna tāžin ^aḥdīd, faṣon ^aḥdīd. bāh. [...]* 8. *ⁱrtāht āk il-xubza naṣmlōha xubza hāka sḡīra muš kbīra l-^afžina nōxdu nsammu ngūlu guṛša.*

9. *nub^usṭōha nub^usṭōha b-ⁱšwābaḥna ḥatta twalli lāhi xšīna w-lāhi rhīfa*. 10. *b-ⁱt-ṭbīḥa āk il-ṭāžin il-maḥṭūṭ fōg il-gāz yabda sxūn*. 11. *w-nḥuṭṭu āk il-gurṣa ntāf il-xub^uz w-nabdu bēn nṭayybu fāha nḥarrku fāha b-īdīna b-ⁱš-šwayy b-ⁱš-šwayy ḥatta tiḥmār*. 12. *hādāy illi-tsamma xub^uz ruggāg*.

13. *fi-nafs il-waqit ṣanna xubz abrāž. āma xubz l-abrāž yabda mbassis b-iz-zēt w-fih...* 14. *ṭamma ⁱškūn illi yḥibbu b-is-sukkuṛ w-ṭamma illi mā-yḥibbū-š, blāš sukkuṛ*. 15. *nguṣṣūh abrāž maḥnāha murabbaṣāt w-yabda mbassis w-nṭayyibūh kif kif flā ṭāžin l-^aḥdid*.

16. *ṣanna ṭāni xub^uz illi nsammūh l-ⁱmṭālīf mā-yži-š b-is-smīd*. 17. *yži smīd w-fārīna walla yži b-il-smīd ntāf il-gam^aḥ walla yži b-il-fārīna illi hīya maḥnāha dži fārīna ruṭba muš kīma s-smīd*. 18. *w-dži b-il-^axmīra illi dži fārīna w-^axmīra b-ⁱt-ṭbīḥa šwayya mil^aḥ w-mā mladlīd*. 19. *w-nxallṭu āk l-^ašžīna illi twalli hīya šžīna w-nafmlūha gruṣ gruṣ w-nxallōha tirtāḥ*. 20. *muš kīma r-ruggāg. w-ⁱnṭayyibōha flā ṭ-ṭāžin*.

20. *ṭamma illi talgāha f-il-blād w-talgāha f-ir-rīf illi ygūlu xub^uz ṭābūna*. 21. *xub^uz ṭābūna illi hīya ⁱdži b-is-smīd w-dži b-il-fārīna w-dži b-il-xub^uz il-gam^aḥ illi ygūl xub^uz asmar*. 22. *w-ⁱnṭayyibu il-gōža kī ngūl gōža maḥnāha faṣon illi naḥmlōha b-ⁱt-ṭin w-yabda...* 23. *w-ⁱnṣaxxnōha biš twalli four baṣša ḥṭab lil ywalli āk l-^aḥṭab hādāka rmād w-lassgu kull gurṣa ntāf xubz ⁱt-ṭābūna flā žnab āk ⁱt-ṭābūna*. 24. *hādēka illi naḥna nsammūh xub^uz ṣarbi w-xub^uz ṭābūna, vrai vrai ṭābūna*. 25. *illi⁵ tawwa tqaddmit šwayy maḥnāha id-dīna wallit maḥnāha il-ḥāžāt iž-ždīda w-il-ⁱkwiš is-sūri*, 26. *illi ṭamma kōša sūri yṭayybu bāha xub^uz ygūlu xub^uz ṭābūna. illi hīya maḥrūfa il-ṣak^s abann xub^uz w-aḥsan xub^uz illi hūwa xub^uz ⁱt-ṭābūna*. 27. *illi ṭamma nsā ngūlu gōža. hīya l-kōša illi nṭayyibu bāha*. 28. *maḥnāha ṣanna ṭ-ṭābūna ṣanna r-ruggāg ṣanna xub^uz ⁱmlāwi illi...*

29. *xub^uz ⁱmlāwi yži b-is-smīd. illi kunti inti kliti fih gbīlika w-nṭabbgūh b-iz-zīt w-ⁱnṭayyibūh ṣa-l-gāz flā ṭ-ṭāžin illi ḥaṭṭīnāh fōg il-gāz*. 30. *fi-nafs il-waqit l-abrāž. bāh. ādāy anwāf il-xub^uz illi mawžūda fi-wilāyt il-kāf illi l-ḥāžāt ngūlūha naḥna l-ḥāžāt il-ṣarbi illi kull dār ṭṭayyibha. bāh*.

31. *biš ngūlu flā r-rfisa. biš naḥku šwayya ṣa-r-rfisa*. 32. *ir-rfisa nṭayyibōha fi-sayūr l-ayyām āma l-aktarīt⁶ il-kāfiya ṭṭayyib xub^uz ir-rfisa yaḥni naḥmlu ir-rfisa kī ṭsubb ṣanna baṣša mṭar w-yṣubb ṣanna ṭ-ṭalž. naḥmlu rfis*. 33. *aktarīt il-kāfiya talgi f-ⁱš-štā dīma ṣanna rfis*. 34. *yaḥni s-smīd w-zīt w-mil^aḥ w-mā w-ⁱttatṣarāk āk l-^ašžīna illi twalli šžīna w-kif kif xub^uz yiṭṭabbag ṣa-z-zēt*. 35. *w-ⁱngūlu rrayyšū yaḥni nguṣṣūh šwayy murabbaṣāt šwayy hāka šwayy šwayy šwayy ṣgīr murabbaṣāt ṣgīra*. 36. *w-nišru d-dagla naḡslōha nguṣṣōha murabbaṣāt w-baḥd f-il-gaṣṣa matrit⁷ walla gaṣṣa lōh nṣubbu āk*

5 Besides its function as a relative pronoun and conjunction, *illi* seems to play an important role as a discourse particle, the function of which needs further investigation.

6 The article preceding this word seems to be a lapsus linguae. This is corroborated by the fact that it is not found in sentence 33.

7 In the TuniCo dictionary, citing Singer (1984), *matrid* is found. The *t* in our text may be caused by final devoicing.

ir-rfis illi tayyabnā. 37. āk l-ʿšīna xubz illi fatfitnāh nšubbu flēh is-sukkuṛ nšubbu flēh iz-zibda w-nšubbu flēh šwayy ʿhlib w-āk id-dagla w-nxalltōha. 38. tōkli b-iš-šfā. hādīy ir-rfis.

39. *ʿanna ngūlu l-ʿšīda. ʿšīda hārṛa, ʿšīda hārṛa walla ʿšīda hlūwa. 40. yaʿni s-smīd nṭayybūh nḥuṭṭu l-mā yabda mlaḍlīd w-b-iš-šwayy b-iš-šwayy nabdu nšubbu f-is-smīd lilli naʿmlu ʿšīda [...]. 41. bāh. baʿd-ma ṭayyibna āk l-ʿšīda f-il-mā illi mlaḍlīd w-tabda twalli mā-yilzimhā-š tkūn mkaʿbra w-mā-yilzimhā-š tkūn yābsa w-mā-yilzimhā-š tkūn žārya tkūn ṭayba b-il-gdā. 42. flāš tabda ṭayba biš [...]. 43. bāh. ṭābit āk il-smīdāt⁸ walla l-fārīna... ʿal-xāṭir tnažžim dži ʿšīda fārīna walla tnažžim dži ʿšīda smīd. 44. ṭābit b-il-gdā. yilzimha ṭṭīb biš kī yōkulha l-ʿabʿd iš-šaxʿš mā-tōžfū-š kiršu. 45. kī ngūlu ʿšīda hlūwa walla ʿšīda hārṛa [...] ʿanna ʿšīda hlūwa w-ʿšīda hārṛa. 46. ṭamma illi yḥibb l-ʿšīda l-ʿhlūwa yaʿmil fāha z-zibda w-is-sukkuṛ wa-ʿilla iz-zibda w-il-ʿsal. 47. ʿsal kī ngūl ʿsal maʿnāha ʿsal ngūlu ʿsal ḥuṛṛ. yaʿni ʿsal ntāf naḥla. [...] 48. w-kī ngūlu ʿšīda hārṛa... ʿšīda hārṛa yaʿni dži b-il-mirgāz w-il-ʿaktariya illi f-il-kāf ngūlu ʿšīda hārṛa nṭayybōha b-il-giddīd. [...]*

49. *bāhi. ʿhkīna flā l-burzgān ʿhkīna flā anwāf il-xubʿz w-ʿhkīna flā l-ʿšīda l-hārṛa w-l-ʿhlūwa illi maʿrūfīn fi-wilāyt il-kāf. 50. w-l-aktariya maʿnāha il-kāfīya l-aḥṛār illi hūma sukkān il-kāf l-ašlīyīn nṭayybu l-ʿšīda xāšṣtan kī yabda kī yṣubb iṭ-ṭalʿz yaʿni fi... tubrud id-dinya baṛša naʿmlu l-ʿšīda w-naʿmlu r-rfis.*

1. In il-Kāf, we have the type of bread called *ruggāg* and we have *abrāz* bread. The bread *ruggāg*, the bread *abrāz*, and we have *mṭālīf*. And we have the bread that is folded with oil. 2. These are the kinds of bread that exist in the governorate of il-Kāf. 3. We will talk about *ruggāg* bread.⁹ The bread *ruggāg* is made of fine semolina, oil and a little bit of salt—not too much, so that it does not become too salty—and water. 4. We knead (the ingredients of) the bread very thoroughly (until) it becomes dough, the consistency of dough, and we let it rest. 5. We have kneaded it until it becomes very good, (then) we put the *ṭāžīn*¹⁰ on the gas stove and heat it. 6. There are those who... When we bake bread with the traditional *ṭāžīn*, we bake it (directly) on firewood. This is how they do it in the countryside. 7. But in the village we bake it on the gas stove. What we have nowadays is the *ṭāžīn* of iron, it is of iron. Okay. [...] 8. After the (dough of) the bread has proved, we make a small bread (of) the dough, like this, not very big. We call it *guṛša*, a flat bread. 9. We flatten (the dough) with our fingers until it becomes neither too thick nor too thin. 10. Of course (meanwhile) that *ṭāžīn* that is placed on the gas stove has become hot. 11. We put that flat bread (in it). While

8 For the suffix *-āt/-āt* as ‘individuation marker,’ see Brustad (2008).

9 For a description of the bread *ruggāg* in Southern Tunisia, see Ritt-Benmimoun (2005: 52, 58, section 72–73).

10 For a description of the *ṭāžīn* and an illustration of it, see Ritt-Benmimoun (2005: 51 f., 56, section 35–36) and Louis (1979: 130).

we are baking it, we move it carefully with our hands until it becomes brown. 12. This is the bread called *ruggāg*.

13. Also we have the bread *abrāž*.¹¹ But *abrāž* bread is soaked in oil and has... 14. There are people who like it with sugar, and there are those who don't like it (that way), (they prefer it) without sugar. 15. We cut it into squares, into quadratic pieces. It is soaked (in oil), and we also bake it on the iron *ṭāžīn*.

16. We also have the bread that we call *mṭālīf*,¹² it is not made of fine semolina. 17. It is possible with fine semolina and flour, or with fine wheaten semolina, or it is possible with flour that is..., it can be made of cake flour, which is not like fine semolina. 18. It is made with yeast, with flour and yeast, of course a bit of salt, and lukewarm water. 19. We mix those (ingredients of) the dough that become a dough, and make flat loaves of bread out of it. Then we let it prove. (It is) not like the *ruggāg*. And we bake it in the *ṭāžīn*.

20. You find people in the village and the countryside who (have what) they call *ṭābūna* bread. 21. The *ṭābūna*¹³ bread is made of fine semolina or flour, and it is possible with bread, with wheat, which is called a brownish bread. 22. We bake (the bread in the oven we call) a *gōža*. When I say *gōža*, I mean the way we make it with clay and it is... 23. We heat it with a lot of firewood so that it becomes an oven, until that firewood becomes ash. (Then) we attach every flat loaf of *ṭābūna* bread to a side of the *ṭābūna* stove. 24. That is what we call traditional bread, the *ṭābūna* bread, this is the real *ṭābūna*. 25. Nowadays, the world has developed: there are new things (now) and modern bakeries. 26. There are even modern ovens (in the bakeries) with which they bake bread which they call *ṭābūna*. But the opposite is well known: the most delicious bread and the best bread is the (real) *ṭābūna* bread. 27. Some of us women say *gōža*. It is the oven in which we bake it. 28. We have *ṭābūna*, we have *ruggāg*, we have *mlāwi* bread which...

29. *Mlāwi* bread is baked with fine semolina. It is the one you have eaten before. We fold it with oil and bake it on the gas stove, in the *ṭāžīn* that we have put on the gas stove. 30. At the same time (we have) *abrāž*. Okay. These are the kinds of bread that exist in the governorate of il-Kāf, the ones that we call traditional, which every family bakes. Okay.

31. We will tell (you) about *rfīsa*. We will talk a little bit about *rfīsa*.¹⁴ 32. We can make *rfīsa* on all the days (of the year), but most of the Kefan people bake the bread

11 The word *abrāž* (SG *burž* 'slice [of a melon, of a cake]') refers to the form of the bread that is cut into square pieces.

12 Cf. Louis (1979: 131), Saada (1981: 27), and Gobert (1940: 567), where this bread is called *maṭlūsa*.

13 For a detailed description of *ṭābūna* bread in Southern Tunisia, see Ritt-Benmimoun (2005: 52 f., 56 f., section 37–61).

14 For a description of *rfīsa* in Southern Tunisia (where they have *rfīsa* and *marfūsa*), see Ritt-Benmimoun (2005: 52, 59, section 90–93).

rfisa... we make *rfisa* when it rains a lot and when it is snowing. (Then) we make *rfis*. 33. Most of us Kefan people have *rfis* all the time in winter. 34. (We need) fine semolina, oil, salt and water. (The ingredients of) that dough, that will become a dough, are kneaded. It is also a bread that is folded with oil. 35. We say we pluck it—that is, we cut (the bread) into small pieces, small like this, very small, small squares. 36. We buy *dagla* dates, wash them and cut them into squares. Then we pour that *rfis* which we have cooked, into a bowl, an earthen one, or in a wooden bowl. 37. The dough, the bread that we have crumbled, we pour sugar, we pour butter on it, and we pour some milk and those *dagla* dates on it and mix it. 38. You can eat (it now) and bon appétit! This is *rfis*.

39. We have what we call *ṣṣīda*. Spicy *ṣṣīda*, spicy *ṣṣīda* or sweet *ṣṣīda*.¹⁵ 40. We cook the fine semolina, we put the water (until) it becomes lukewarm, and (then), little by little, we pour the fine semolina (into it) until we make *ṣṣīda* [...]. 41. Okay. After we have cooked that *ṣṣīda* in the lukewarm water, it must not form lumps, it must not be too dry, and it must not be too runny. It must be well cooked. 42. Why must it be cooked? So that [...]. 43. Okay. When that fine semolina or the flour is cooked... Because it can be *ṣṣīda* made of flour or it can be *ṣṣīda* made of fine semolina. 44. Is it well cooked. It must be well cooked so that, when someone eats it, he does not get a bellyache. 45. When we say sweet *ṣṣīda* or spicy *ṣṣīda* [...]. We have sweet *ṣṣīda* and spicy *ṣṣīda*. 46. The people who like the sweet *ṣṣīda*, (then) add butter and sugar or butter and honey. 47. Honey... When I say honey, I mean natural honey—that is, bee honey. 48. When we say spicy *ṣṣīda*... Spicy *ṣṣīda* is cooked with sausages called *mirgāz*.¹⁶ Most of us Kefan people mean by spicy *ṣṣīda* (that which) we cook with corned sun-dried meat [...].¹⁷

49. Okay. We have talked about *burzgān*, about the (different) kinds of bread, and we have talked about the spicy and the sweet *ṣṣīda*, (dishes) that are known in the governorate of il-Kāf. 50. And the most... The indigenous Kefan people who are the original residents of il-Kāf, we cook the *ṣṣīda* especially when it snows: when it is very cold, we make *ṣṣīda* and *rfis*.

3 Linguistic notes

Phonology

- *g*: *ygūl* ‘to say,’ *gāṣid* ‘sitting; staying (in a certain place)’; (four *q*-words in the texts: *waqtha* ‘at that time’; *bunduq* ‘pine nuts’; *nfarrqu* ‘we separate’; *tqadmit* ‘it developed’).

15 See Gobert (1950: 547 f.) for an ethnographic description of *ṣṣīda*; al-Marzūgi (1984: 152), and Marçais and Guiga (1925: 184 f., 193 f.).

16 See Gobert (1940: 501 f.) for an ethnographic description of *mirgāz*.

17 See Gobert (1940: 499 ff.) for an ethnographic description of *giddid*.

- *ž*: *ʕžīna* ‘dough’; *yžī* ‘to come’; *talʕž* ‘snow.’
- Interdentals are retained: *talʕž* ‘snow’; *tamma* ‘there is’; *ʕndawbu* ‘we let melt’; *naḍḍafnāha* ‘we cleaned it.’
- Monophthongisation: *aw* is generally monophthongised as *ō*; *ay* more frequently as *ī* than *ē*: *lōz* ‘almonds’; *zōz* ‘walnuts’; *lōḥ* ‘wood’; *bīt* ‘field’; *kīf kīf* ‘the same, also’; *zīt/zēt* ‘oil.’
- Influenced by a certain vowel harmony caused by the suffix *-ha*, the long vowels *ī* and *ū* are realised as *ā* and open *ō* respectively: *ṇṭayybōha* (< *ṇṭayybūha*) ‘we cook it’; *nubʕstōha* ‘we flatten it’; *fāha* (< *fīha*) ‘in it’; *bāha* (< *bīha*) ‘with it.’
- *Imāla* of stressed word final *ā*: *mā* ‘water,’ *b-il-gdā* ‘thoroughly, well’; *nsā* ‘women’ (whereas the *imāla* has developed a step further in the South Tunisian Bedouin-type dialects, resulting in *mē*, *b-il-gdē* and *nsē*).
- No traces of a short *a* in open pre-stressed syllables: *ʕhlib* ‘milk’; *smīd* ‘fine semolina’; *ʕḥtab* ‘firewood.’
- The distribution of short vowels does not follow the Classical Arabic pattern but is subject to consonantal influence, as seen in the passive participles *mbassis* ‘soaked,’ *mzayyin* ‘decorated’; *mṭabbig* ‘folded’; in the perfect forms *fatfitnāh* ‘we crumbled it’; *ṭayyibna* ‘we cooked’; and in the adjective *mālah* ‘salty.’
- Epenthetic vowel between two word final consonants: *xubʕz* ‘bread’; *mīlʕh* ‘salt’; *gamʕh* ‘wheat.’
- Pausal forms: glottal stop between a long vowel and a final consonant, e.g. *gāʕz* (context form: *gāz*); *tirtāʕh* (context form: *tirtāḥ*); *zīt* (context form: *zīt*). In pausa final *-h*, the suffix of the 3MSG following a vowel, is pronounced very clearly (e.g. *w-nfawwṛu l-kusksi illi hūwa šamsi nfawwṛūh*), whereas it is pronounced very weakly or not heard at all in context, when only the stress which shifts to the final vowel makes the form recognisable (e.g. *biš ṇḥaḍḍṛu l-burzgān w-ṇṭayybū f-il-kāf*).

Morphology

- Personal pronouns: *inti* ‘you (F)’; *ḥiya* ‘she’; *hūwa* ‘he’; *naḥna* ‘we’; *hūma* ‘they’; (no feminine plural forms in the texts).
- Gender distinction in 2SG: *talgi* ‘you find (F)’ (M: *talga*); *tōkli* ‘you eat (F)’ (M: *tōkul*); *kūli* ‘eat (F)’ (M: *kūl*); *kunti* ‘you were (F)’ (M: *kunt*); *inti* ‘you (F)’ (M: *inta*).¹⁸
- 3MSG pronominal suffix after -(C)CC or -VC is *u*: *yḥibbu* ‘he wants it’; *kiršu* ‘his belly’; *ʕngūlū-lu* ‘we call it.’

18 The respective masculine forms are not found in these two texts but in questionnaires recorded in il-Kāf.

- 3FSG of verbs in the perfect is *-it*: *dābit* ‘it melted’; *ṭābit* ‘it is well cooked’; *wallit* ‘she became.’ This vowel *i* is prone to omission, resulting in forms like *ʿrtāht* ‘she/it rested, proved.’
- Status constructus of *-a* is *-it*: *rīḥitha* ‘its smell.’
- 3PL of III-weak verbs of the I. form in the perfect is *-ū*: *klū* ‘they ate’; *zū* ‘they came’ (as opposed to *zāw* in sedentary dialects).
- Plural forms of III-weak verbs in the imperfect are formed with *-u*: *naḥku* ‘we talk’ (as opposed to *naḥkīw* in sedentary dialects); *nišru* ‘we buy’; *niglu* ‘we fry.’
- Irregular verbs ‘to take’ and ‘to eat’: *yōxuḍ* and *yōkul*.
- Passive verb forms: prefixed *t* (in the imperfect occasionally *tt*) as in sedentary dialects: *yittasmal* ‘it is made,’ *yitkil* ‘it is eaten’; *ʿttaṣṣāk* ‘it is kneaded.’
- Prepositions: *kīma* ‘like’; *ḥdā* ‘next to’; *ʿand* ‘at’ (*ʿanna* ‘we have’).
- Adverbs: *tawwa* ‘now’; *ṭamma* ‘there is’; *baṣṣa* ‘very; a lot’; *b-il-gdā* ‘thoroughly, well’; *hāka* ‘like this’; *ṭāni* ‘also’; *gbīlika* ‘previously, before.’
- Subordinating conjunctions: *biš* ‘so that, in order to’; *kī* ‘when(ever)’; *baʿd-ma* ‘after’; *illi* ‘that’; *lil*, *lilli* ‘until’; *ʿal-xāṭir*, *xāṭir* ‘because.’
- Interrogative pronouns and adverbs: *ʿškūn* ‘who’; *ʿlāš* ‘why.’
- Demonstrative pronouns: (*h*)*ādāy* ‘this (M)’; *hādīy* ‘this (F)’; *hādūma* ‘these’; *āk* (invariable) ‘that,’ *āk l-^aḥṭab hādāka* ‘that firewood.’
- Relative pronoun: *illi: kaʿbāt id-dagla illi maʿnāha naḍḍafnāha* ‘the pieces of *dagla* dates that we have cleaned.’
- Genitive marker: *ntāf* (*ntāḥḥa* ‘her(s)’) (no gender distinction): *ʿsal ntāf naḥla* ‘bee honey’; *w-nḥuṭtu āk il-gurṣa ntāf il-xub^z* ‘we put that flat loaf of bread.’
- Future marker: *biš: biš naḥku šwayya ʿa-r-rfisa* ‘We will talk a little bit about *rfisa*.’
- Negation: *mā-yḥibbū-š* ‘he doesn’t want it; they don’t want’; *mā-yilzimbā-š* ‘she must not’; *lāhi xšīna lāhi rḥīfa* ‘neither thick nor thin’; *muš kbīra* ‘not big (F).’

Syntax

- Progressive with *gāʿid*: *illi gāʿdīn yfūru ʿlā l-kaskās* ‘which are steaming in the couscous steamer.’
- Agreement with plural heads: *w-^aḥkīna ʿlā l-^aʿšīda l-ḥārṣa w-l-^aḥlūwa illi maʿfrūfīn fi-wilāyt il-kāf* ‘and we have talked about the spicy and the sweet *ʿšīda*, (dishes) that are known in the governorate of il-Kāf’; *w-b-iṭ-ṭbīʿa l-kull l-kāfīya ʿandha kusksi f-id-dār* ‘of course, all the Kefan people have couscous at home.’

Lexis

- French words: *façon*; *couche*; *four*; *vrai*; *le quinze*; *village*.

4 Final remarks

The voiced realisation of *q* as *g*, gender distinction with independent pronouns and with verbs and the conjugation of III-weak verbs (*naḥku* as opposed to *naḥkīw* in sedentary dialects) clearly mark the dialect of il-Kāf as a Bedouin dialect (W. Marçais 1950: 212). Within W. Marçais' categorisation, it forms part of the so-called Tunisian Hilāl dialects (H-dialects) that are spoken in Central Tunisia. Certain phenomena, as the 'lighter' *imāla* of word-final *ā*, as in *mā* 'water,' distinguish them from what Marçais called the Tunisian Sulaym dialects (S-dialects) in which the word is realised as *mē*.¹⁹ Further differences are the use of the suffix *-u* for the 3MSG in the dialect of il-Kāf (e.g. *kiršu* 'his belly'), whereas the suffix is *-a* in the S-dialects; and the realisation of the verbs 'to take' and 'to eat' as *yōxuḍ* and *yōkul*, which correspond to *yāxid* and *yākil* in the S-group. No traces are found in these two texts of the VII. form for the passive that is used in the S-dialects; but we do find some examples with a prefixed *t(t)-* (e.g. *yittaḥmal* 'it is made'), the so-called T-stem, that is also found in Tunisia's sedentary dialects.

Thus, some linguistic Kefan features mark the dialect as clearly different from both urban dialects and the Bedouin dialects further south. These features will be crucial for achieving a re-classification and re-naming of the Northwestern and Central Tunisian dialects.

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19 According to W. Marçais (1950: 211, 214), Group H comprises the dialects spoken in Central Tunisia, extending from north of the region of the Chotts to the Medjerda River in Northern Tunisia. The dialects of Group S are to be found in Southern Tunisia, along the eastern coastline and in the north between the Medjerda River and the Mediterranean Sea.

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