CHAPTER ONE

A DESCRIPTION OF THE DIALECTS OF THE ĜBĂLIYYAH, AWLĀD SAʻĪD, ṢAWĀLḤAH, GARĀRŠAH AND ḤAMĀS\(\text{d}\) WITH REMARKS ON THE DIALECTS OF THE HANĀDWAH AND ‘LĔGĀT

INTRODUCTION

In 1992 Tetsuo Nishio published a basic vocabulary of the dialect of the Ĝbáliyyah tribe in the central south of Sinai. More recently Roy Bernabela of the University of Leiden sent me his BA-thesis (2009) which contains four highly entertaining ġūl-stories recorded from Ĝbáliy speakers near St Catherine’s monastery. Many references in this chapter will be made to Nishio 1992 and I have also included remarks on data found in Bernabela 2009. We shall see that many of the information listed there for ĜbA is corroborated by the findings of the research lying at the basis of this chapter. Where differences do turn up, many of these can be ascribed to differences in interpretation of the phonological system and therefore also in methods of transcription. To refer to forms listed in Nishio 1992 I shall use my own phonological transcription (such as ǧ for j, ș for f, d for Ӛ, etc., except where differences—mainly in representations for vowels—between Nishio’s transcription and my own may be relevant for a variety reasons, e.g. final -e has not been replaced by (in my transcription) -i(’), -e(’) or -a and the vowels e or ə have not been replaced by a or i, etc. Where phonological implications are connected to adaptations in transcriptions, these are expounded in accompanying lines.

In this chapter I hope to shed some more light on the questions that may have arisen from Nishio 1992, and additional material is presented including material on neighbouring dialects: the dialects spoken by the Awlād Saʻīd, Șawālḥah and Garāršah. With some reservation, I have also added the dialect of the Ḥamādāh to this group, which I have numbered as VII. Although there are some differences, these dialects show a large number of similarities justifying their treatment as one typological group. In addition, the chapter contains remarks on the Hanādwah, who are one of the families said to be of non-Bedouin origin living in Wādiy at-Ṭūr (just to the northeast of the town of at-Ṭūr).
I have not made recordings in the town of aṭ-Ṭūr, since it is a mixing bowl of various Egyptian dialects from the mainland.

For the sake of brevity, the dialects of the Ğbāliyyah, Awlād Saʿīd, Šawālḥah, Garāršah and Ḥamādah will be collectively referred to as ṬwA (Ṭuwara Arabic). The dialect of the ‘Lēgāt is not included in ṬwA here, although often (in other publications) the tribe of the ‘Lēgāt is also regarded as part of the Ṭuwara (i.e. tribes inhabiting the region known as aṭ-Ṭūr). The ‘Lēgāt are a relatively large tribe, and live on the Gulf of Suez and farther inland as direct neighbours with the much smaller tribe of Ḥamādah. Their neighbours to the north are the Taṛābīn of Ṛās Ṣadr. In a dialect-typological sense, their dialect takes up a middle position between the dialects of ṬwA and HnA on the one hand, and group VI on the other (see MDS plots in the appendix). The dialect of the ‘Lēgāt, which is concluded to be a separate group (VIII) in this study, will be referred to as ‘LA.

The dialect of the Mzēnah and that of the Baniy Wāṣil are treated separately in chapter II (as group VI).

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1 Being the capital of the governorate South Sinai, a large proportion of its inhabitants are mainland Egyptians, who work there as civil servants.

2 This is not to say that the dialectal varieties found there, or whatever has resulted so far from contact between the different varieties, would be uninteresting. A description of the linguistic dynamics found in this town would however deserve much more space than can be afforded in this study.

3 Von Oppenheim 1942:156 mentions the tribes of Șawālḥah, ‘Lēgāt, Ğbāliyyah and Mzēnah as parts of the Ṭuwara. For a brief summary of their history, see Von Oppenheim 1942:156–166. See also Malberger 1984:139–149 on the different tribal collectives that inhabit the region of southern Sinai. Ibid.:156–157 mentions Baniy Wāṣil as an off-shoot of Baniy ‘Ugbah of the Ḥiǧāz and as one of the oldest tribes of the Ṭūr area, having arrived there after the Ḥamādah.

4 Although the dīrah of the Taṛābīn of Ṣadr borders directly on that of the ‘Lēgāt to their south, the majority of Taṛābīn live in the northern part in and around Rās Ṣadr and Aḥwū Ṣwayrah leaving the southern part of Tuṛbāniy territory (along the coast on the Gulf of Suez) near ‘Lēgiy territory virtually uninhabited.

5 I have concluded on linguistic grounds that the dialects of the southern part of Sinai (i.e. excluding group I dialects) can be assigned to three different groups.