

Title: The Definite Article with Proper Nouns in Țuroyo
Presenter 1: Loesov, Sergey, HSE University, sergeloesov@gmail.com
Presenter 2: Häberl, Charles G., Rutgers University, haberl@amesall.rutgers.edu

Uniquely among the surviving modern Aramaic languages, Țuroyo indicates definiteness on substantives (including substantivized adjectives) with a marker that inflects for number and for gender in the singular, e.g., *u+bayto* ‘the house’, *i+qrito* ‘the village’, and *ab+bote* ‘the houses’ but *aq+qaryawoto* ‘the villages’. As the examples illustrate, the coda of the plural marker assimilates to a following consonant; when it precedes an initial consonant cluster, it assumes the form *a+*, e.g., *a+ḳtowe* ‘the books’, due to the simplification of doubled consonants (**ak+ḳtowe*), and when it precedes a vowel, it assumes the forms *aʔ+ʔ* or *ann+*, e.g., *aʔ+ʔənsanat* and *ann+ənsanat* ‘the people’, *ann+odayat* and *aʔ+ʔodayat* ‘the rooms’, evidently in free variation, although apart from *aʔ+ʔənsanat* the *ann+* forms are far more common, e.g., *i+saʕa bann+arbaʕ* ‘four o’clock’, almost never *baʔ+ʔarbaʕ*. The juncture between the marker and the substantive it modifies is indicated with a + as the two form a single prosodic unit, in which the primary stress falls upon the marker.

These markers encode simple reference (i.e., whether the entity is presumed to be identifiable to the speaker’s audience), e.g., *e, hawxa, laḡ+ḡənnat ʕənnə* ‘yes, so, **the** jinns bore it...’, anaphoric deixis (i.e., within the discourse), e.g., *kalá šətlə drəḥane harke, w ḥdo harke, ʔ bu+falgatte kīt ʕulto* ‘here’s a sprout of basil right here, and one here, and in **their** midst there’s a thorn bush’, generic usage (i.e., intending all members of a given category), e.g., *bi+dahole, bi+zərnaye* ‘with *dhol* drums (lit. **the** *dhol*) and *zurna* horns (lit. **the** *zurna*)’ and abstract concepts, e.g., *bu+muklo ʔ bu+štoyo* ‘with food (lit. **the** eating) and drink (lit. **the** drinking)’.

Since 2018, the Russian HSE Expedition to Țur Abdin has been documenting the speech of informants in the villages of that region. During these investigations, the team observed that the village dialects of Kfarze and ʕIwardo, much like the metropolitan Mədyoyo dialect, but unlike those of Bequsyone, Midən, and Arkah, prepose the definite article before simple personal names, with certain exceptions, such as direct address, unaccommodated foreign names, especially those marked as Muslim, and names from the distant past or legends. Complex personal names of all sorts, such as those preceded or followed by titles and kinship terms, are additionally unmarked as definite unless they are in apposition to the personal name. Other exceptions include the title *Mšiḥo* ‘Christ’, hypocorisms, and simple personal names used as past-tense predicates. The team additionally observed that a select few toponyms also receive the article, including bodies of water, e.g., *u+Boḡaz* ‘the Bosphorus’, settlements, e.g., *u+Šām* ‘Damascus’ and *i+Qaməšlo* ‘Qamishli’, and countries, e.g., *u+Fāransa* ‘France’ and *u+Yāman* ‘Yemen’, but these constitute a closed set, and the article is evidently not always obligatory, e.g., *bu+waxt du+Fāransa* vs. *bu+waxt d Fāransa* ‘in the time of France’ within a single text.

Employing data from the published corpus of Țuroyo texts, we will illustrate the geographic distribution of this feature (the definite article on simple proper nouns) and draw conclusions concerning the sociolinguistic conditions under which the definite article is omitted from simple proper nouns.