

Vowel Harmony in the Armenian Dialect of Marash

Bert Vaux

Harvard University

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1. Introduction

As many of you are aware, the Armenian language does not consist simply of the literary dialects--Classical, Middle, Standard Eastern and Standard Western--but rather includes more than one hundred distinct dialects, many of which are entirely incomprehensible to speakers of Standard Armenian. Sadly, most of these dialects became doomed to extinction in 1915. For the past ten years I have been working with some of the last speakers of these nonstandard Armenian dialects, in an effort to preserve their rich linguistic and cultural heritage for posterity, and hopefully to revivify some of those that still possess a sufficient population of native speakers, by developing writing systems and encouraging speakers to write jokes, anecdotes, songs, and other literary forms in their local dialects.

One of the most interesting and also most endangered dialects is the one that was spoken in Marash until the Armenian community there was annihilated by the Turkish army in 1920.

(1) MAP SHOWING MARASH

It is commonly believed that the Armenian community in Marash had already stopped speaking Armenian several decades before the massacre.¹ However, the truth is that the dialect survived in the refugee camps in Syria, and some of the survivors managed to teach the dialect to their children. For the past two years I have been working with one male and two female Marashcis who learned the dialect in Syrian refugee camps in the 1920's. I know of at least one more speaker of the dialect who is still living in California, but to the best of my knowledge there are no other speakers in the United States. My primary informant is currently 76 years old and in failing health. He learned the dialect from his mother and great-grandmother, who died in 1938 at the age of 110; therefore the form of the dialect that he speaks is quite archaic. My other informants are two sisters who are approximately seventy years of age.

My primary goals in working with these Marashcis have been to record as much of their speech as possible, and to develop a comprehensive description of the Marash dialect. Today I would like to give you a sampling of both of these pursuits. My presentation will be descriptive; those of you who are interested in the analysis of the facts I present today should consult Vaux 1997.

2. Overview of the Marash Dialect

Despite the fact that Marash is one of the more important and interesting dialects of Armenian, it has not received a comprehensive treatment in the literature. Adjarian

¹ David Beg 1896a:204 says that in his time in general only Turkish was spoken by the Armenians; however, inside homes the dialect was still spoken, especially among the women.

ignores it in his unpublished grammar of the Cilician dialect; Karibyan 1953 and Grigoryan 1957 in their brief descriptions of the Cilician dialects use Zeytun forms and mention Marash only in passing. Brief treatments of the Marash dialect appear in a number of sources listed in the references on your handout; the best of these are Dawit^hpēk 1896b and Galustean 1934.

2.1. *The Place of Marash Among the Armenian Dialects*

Marash belongs to the Western group of Armenian dialects, and is generally considered to be one of the Cilician dialects, together with Beylan, Hajin, Kesab, Sivrihisar, and Zeytun (Jahukyan 1972:33-34). Marash shares with several dialects in this area, including Beylan, Svedia, and Zeytun, as well as the remote town of Amasia, the use of the outcome of original *ga* to form the present tense (Karibyan 1953:417-18); this *ga* particle surfaces as [go] in Marash, as in the verb form *go hasgəno* ‘he understands’ in the story in number (4) on your handout. However, most scholars who mention the Marash dialect state that it differs from the other Cilician dialects in belonging to Karibyan’s (1959) group 3, which voices the original voiceless series of consonants but unlike the Cilician (group 4) dialects does not devoice the original voiced series (Karibyan 1953:60, Jahukyan 1972, Petrosyan et al. 1975:212). The historical development of the Marash consonant system is actually a bit more complicated than this, as I’ll demonstrate in a few minutes.

2.2. *Linguistic Features of Marash Dialect*

Marash has at least two subdialects, corresponding to the speech of my male informant on one hand and my female informants and the written sources on the other. The two dialects differ primarily in the extent to which they employ vowel harmony, the phenomenon that I will be discussing in a few minutes, but they also have numerous differences in vocabulary and morphology. I’ve provided some examples of lexical differences between the two dialects in (2).

(2)	Main Subdialect	Male Informant’s Subdialect	Gloss
a.	<i>liṛ</i>	<i>läṛ</i>	mountain
	□ <i>ayov</i>	<i>χäkiüs</i>	grape
b.	<i>k^hak^hot^h, dāpän</i>	<i>gador</i>	peak
	<i>andoṛ</i>	<i>jəmək</i>	forest
	<i>bulut^h</i>	<i>omb</i>	cloud
	<i>zibil</i>	<i>äkb</i>	trash, dung
	<i>mug</i>	<i>səč^hon</i>	mouse

I suspect that the distinction between the two dialects may correlate with the speech of the city proper versus that of the surrounding villages, but I have not been able to confirm this.

In order to give you a sense of the dialect, I’d first like to play for you two brief recordings of my male informant’s dialect. The first is the Lord’s Prayer; you can follow the transcription in number (3) on your handout.

(3) The Lord’s Prayer

1 *mir bobə kʰi irginkʰən is, kʰinid adunət surpʰ tʰonno.* **2** *kʰinid tʰäkʰävürütʰünət tʰoχ go.* **3** *kʰinid gomkʰətʰ tʰonno, čʰocʰ kʰi irginkʰi indän e kʰidän i-vərän:* **4** *mir amēnavür hüčʰə ösör miz dur:* **5** *häm mir bordäkʰə miz bavəše, čʰocʰ kʰi minkʰ ä mir bardaganocʰə gə bavəšinkʰ:* **6** *häm miz pʰorjətʰan mi dana, haba čʰorēn miz pʰərge:* **7** *inčʰu kʰi kʰinid e tʰäkʰävürütʰünə, zorutʰyunə, pʰoikʰə, havıdyanəs havıdenicʰ. amēn:*

1 Our father who art in heaven, may your name be holy. **2** May your kingdom come. **3** May your will be [done], as in heaven, so also on earth. **4** Give us our daily bread today. **5** And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. **6** And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. **7** For yours is the kingdom, the power, [and] the glory forever. Amen.

The second recording is a story about a foolish peasant and a swindler; the transcription and translation are in (4) on your handout.

(4) The Foolish Peasant and the Swindler

1 *ör-mə dolandərajə-mə bezór billıll-ikʰen go-hasgəno-kʰi əs mórʰun kʰónə pʰáro-go.* **2** *go-kʰó g-osé-kʰi “don im kʰărăs-əs.”* **3** *án-a gosé-kʰi “čʰe lá-dəvo, is kʰin kʰără čʰim.”* **4** *“čʰe, don im kʰărăs-is; is kʰine čʰim ancʰná.”* **5** *ör-m-ä go-kʰó g-osé-kʰi “kʰära igó isgi kʰebóbəva xanútʰə danım kʰebób gircʰinım.”* **6** *kʰărăn əs ləsójə gimí kʰeflenmiş g-onno.* **7** *kʰărăn u dolandərajən kʰebabəvan xanutʰə g-ortʰón.* **8** *kʰebáb g-udin, sonra dolandərajən g-osé-kʰi “kʰära is i-văr išnám tʰós-mə ayrón biricʰənim xumínkʰ.”* **9** *əs-ä ləsójə gimí kʰără kʰeflenmiş g-onno.* **10** *i-văr igó išná g-osé-kʰi “a is g-ortʰóm.* **11** *i-viri igicʰók mortʰän pʰarən ór acgé.”* **12** *kʰărăn meg bəkʰlämiş g-oné yergu bəkʰlämiş g-oné, son sonra i-văr igo išná go-disná-kʰi dolandərajən gacʰıl-ä, mórʰn-äl tʰəram go-wzé.* **13** *pʰarón jərar go acgé, g-osé-kʰi “hazór dabú əsə-kʰi əs kʰi kʰära čʰim.* **14** *inkʰ əsócʰ-kʰi ‘čʰe, don im kʰărăs-is; kʰine čʰim asná.’”*

1 One day a swindler while strolling around the market notices that the man has money with him. **2** He comes and says, “you’re my uncle!” **3** He responds, “No, son, I’m not your uncle.” **4** “No, you’re my uncle; I won’t leave you.” **5** One day he comes and says, “Come, Uncle, let me take you to the kebab shop and feed you some kebab.” **6** The uncle becomes very happy when he says this. **7** The uncle and the swindler go to the kebab shop. **8** They eat kebab, and then the swindler says, “Uncle, I’m going downstairs to order us a bowl of tan to drink.” **9** When he says this, the uncle again becomes very happy. **10** He comes downstairs and says, “I’m leaving. **11** Let the man upstairs pay.” **12** The uncle waits one [hour], two [hours], then comes downstairs and sees that the swindler has gone, and the man wants money. **13** He takes the money from his pouch and says, “I said a thousand times ‘I’m not your uncle.’ **14** He said, ‘No, you’re my uncle; I won’t leave you.’”

I’ll use forms from these texts where possible to illustrate the various linguistic properties of the Marash dialect that we’ll be discussing.

2.2.1. Consonants

As I mentioned earlier, the history of the Marash consonant system is slightly more complicated than is commonly thought. This fact was first noted by Dawit^hpēk (1896b), whose observations for the most part agree with the pronunciations of my informants. It is true that the original voiceless stops become voiced, as all scholars agree; some typical examples are given in (5) on your handout.

(5)	Classical	Marash	Gloss
<i>p</i>	<i>part-k^h</i> <i>kapert</i>	<i>bordäk^h</i> <i>garbid</i>	debts carpet ²
<i>t</i>	<i>tur</i> <i>getin</i> <i>vartik^h</i> <i>p^hayt</i>	<i>dur</i> <i>gidän, k^hidän</i> <i>vardäk^h</i> <i>p^häd</i>	give! earth ³ underpants ⁴ wood
<i>k</i>	<i>karmir</i> <i>erkin-k^h</i> <i>mi-ak</i>	<i>garmar</i> <i>irkink^h</i> <i>meg, mig</i>	red ⁵ heaven(s) one
<i>c</i>	<i>crar</i> <i>çac</i> <i>mec</i>	<i>jəror, jərar</i> <i>çaj</i> <i>minj</i>	pouch bite! ⁶ big
<i>č</i>	<i>čanaparh</i> <i>arčič</i>	<i>čamp^hok^h</i> <i>ärjüj</i>	road lead, bullet, weapon ⁷

As the forms in (6a) show, it is also true that the original voiced stops generally remain voiced in word-initial position; however, they can appear as voiced, voiceless, or voiceless aspirated in non-initial position (6b). As a general rule, they remain voiced after nasals and become voiceless aspirates after *r*.

(6)		Classical	Marash	Gloss
a.	<i>b</i>	<i>bari</i>	<i>bara</i>	good ⁸
	<i>d</i>	<i>derjan</i>	<i>dirc^hon</i>	thread
	<i>g</i>	<i>gerezman</i>	<i>girizmon</i>	tomb
	<i>j</i>	<i>jiwn</i>	<i>jan</i>	snow
	<i>ǰ</i>	<i>ǰur</i>	<i>ǰor</i>	water
b.	<i>b</i>	<i>šabat^h</i>	<i>šapot^h</i>	week
	<i>d</i>	<i>mard</i> <i>ddum</i>	<i>mart, mort^h</i> <i>dətom</i>	man pumpkin

² Cf. *t^hoc^h garbit^h* ‘wet carpet’, used to describe someone who comes in, sits for hours, and moves slowly.

³ Cf. *gidänə mədnos* ‘may you enter the earth!’ (a curse).

⁴ Cf. *vardak^hət gorvanno* ‘your underpants are showing’.

⁵ Cf. *gänäčə garmar guda* ‘rainbow’.

⁶ Cf. *lizat çoj* ‘be quiet!’ (literally ‘bite your tongue’).

⁷ When a child was born in Zeytun in the old days, they would say *ärjüj mən al avilc^hov* ‘another weapon was born’ (literally ‘increased’). [My informant provided the phrase in Marash dialect.]

⁸ Cf. *bara las* ‘good morning’.

	<i>ǰardel</i>	<i>ǰartil</i>	massacre
	<i>burd</i>	<i>burt^h</i>	wool
<i>g</i>	<i>hing</i>	<i>hing, hänk^h</i>	five
	<i>hingšabt^hi</i>	<i>hikšapt^hi</i>	Thursday
	<i>aregakn</i>	<i>arikog</i>	sun
	<i>hogi</i>	<i>hik^hä</i>	soul
<i>j</i>	<i>brinj</i>	<i>bəkanç</i>	rice
<i>ǰ</i>	<i>ařaj</i>	<i>äräč^h</i>	before

The voiceless aspirates remain unchanged, but as in many other Armenian dialects, they often lose their aspiration after other aspirated segments, as you can see in (7).

(7)	Classical	Marash	Gloss
	<i>ač^hk^h</i>	<i>äč^hk</i>	eye
	<i>ałjik</i>	<i>lałčin</i>	girl
	<i>χaš-p^hayt</i>	<i>χašpäd</i>	wooden club used to beat wet laundry
	<i>mitk^h</i>	<i>madk</i>	mind

As a general rule, the rest of the consonants remain unchanged.

2.2.2. Vowels

The history of the vowel system is not nearly so clear-cut as that of the consonant system. Thanks primarily to two changes in its vowel system, the Marash dialect has become largely unintelligible to speakers of Standard Armenian. The most important change was a **Vowel Shift** which essentially realigned the entire vowel system, as I have depicted in (8): among the simple vowels,⁹ *a* became *o* in stressed syllables (8a) and *ä* before rhotics and *č^h* (8b); the mid vowels *e* and *o* became high (8c). High vowels initially diphthongized, and the outcome of original *i* remains as such in many monosyllables (8d); in other environments it underwent the same development as original *ay*, becoming *ä* (8e) or *a* (8f); original *u* first became the diphthong *aw* and then turned into *o* (8g).

(8)	Classical	Marash	Gloss
a.	<i>astuac</i>	<i>asdvoj</i>	god
b.	<i>lein</i>	<i>läř</i>	mountain
	<i>kanáč^h</i>	<i>gänäč^h</i>	green
c.	<i>eres</i>	<i>iris</i>	face
	<i>osk(o)r</i>	<i>üsgür</i>	bone
d.	<i>ji</i>	<i>jay</i>	horse
e.	<i>getin</i>	<i>kidän</i>	earth
f.	<i>šapik</i>	<i>šabag</i>	shirt ¹⁰
g.	<i>gluχ</i>	<i>gəloχ</i>	head

⁹ I do not consider the original diphthongs here, because their outcomes are slightly more complicated.

¹⁰ Cf. the saying *ösör zadag vorə hadag, χivən hak^hilə irgu šabag* ‘today is Easter, tomorrow is boiled wheat; the insane man is wearing two shirts’, said of someone for whom every day is a feast.

Marash appears to share this vowel shift with the other Cilician dialects, the Syrian dialects, and the Agulis dialect.

Note that the rule responsible for changing *a* into *o* is still active in the dialect, as shown by the fact that it affects recent loanwords (9a) and produces paradigmatic alternations (9b).

- (9) a. *šovro* ‘soup’ < Turkish *šovra*, *čorba*
zəndon ‘prison’ < Turkish *zindan* (< Persian)
- b. *mort^h* ‘man’ : *mart^hun* ‘man-genitive/dative-definite’

The second important change in the vowel system resulted from the development of Vowel Harmony, a process also found in Turkish, which requires that all vowels in a word share certain features. Though the Marash dialect, as well as the other Armenian dialects with harmony systems (such as Agulis, Karchevan, Meghri, and so on) presumably developed their harmony systems under the influence of Turkish, I’d now like to suggest that the Marash system is actually slightly more subtle and complex than its Turkish counterpart.

3. Vowel Harmony

Vowel harmony systems cross-linguistically fall into three categories--root harmony, word harmony, and epenthetic harmony--based on the domain in which vowels must agree for harmonic features. In root harmony systems, the vowels within a given root must agree for the harmonic features, which in Armenian and Turkish are backness and lip rounding. Word harmony systems require the same type of agreement throughout the entire word. Epenthetic harmony systems require that epenthetic vowels share harmonic features with neighboring vowels. I’ve given an example of each of these harmony types in (10).

- (10)
- a. **root harmony** *Grigor* ‘Gregory’ > *Gük^hür* (Marash rounding harmony)
anjrew ‘rain’ > *ünjriv* (Marash backness harmony)
- b. **word harmony** *oda-lar-dan* ‘from the rooms’ : *köy-ler-den* ‘from the villages’
(Turkish backness harmony)
- c. **epenthetic harmony** *šabag mə* ‘a shirt’, *lär mi* ‘a mountain’, *mug mu* ‘a mouse’,
üsgür mü ‘a bone’ (Marash backness harmony)

The subdialects of Marash fall into two groups with respect to the harmony types in (10): the main subdialect possesses both root and epenthesis harmony, and my male informant’s subdialect has only root harmony. I will focus here on the main subdialect, since its harmony system is more extensive.

The workings of the Marash harmony system crucially depend on the structure of their vowel inventory, given in (11).

- (11) Marash vowel inventory
- i* *ü* (ə) *u*

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e *ö* *o*
ä *a*

For the purposes of harmony, these vowels divide into two classes for backness and rounding, as schematized in (12) and (13) respectively; I have enclosed vowels that do not contrast for the feature in a given row in curly brackets.

(12) [-back] {*i* *e*} *ä* *ü* *ö*
 [+back] *a* *u* *o*

(13) [-round] *i* *e* {*ä* *a*}
 [+round] *ü* *ö* {*u* *o*}

Note that *i* and *e* do not have [+back] counterparts, and {*ä a o u*} do not have counterparts with the opposite value for lip rounding. Unpaired vowels of this sort are called **neutral vowels**, and typically do not participate in harmony systems.

3.1. Root Harmony

With these preliminaries in mind, let us turn to the distribution of Marash roots. We can begin with the generalizations in (14):

- (14) root harmony conditions
 a. all vowels in a root have the same value for [back]
 b. all vowels in a root have the same value for [round]

According to the conditions in (14), roots of the type in (15) are well-formed, whereas those in (16) are not.

(15) harmonic roots

a. [back]	Marash	Standard	Gloss
	<i>k^hana</i>	<i>k^hani</i>	how many/much
	<i>änür</i>	<i>anor</i>	his
	<i>hünär</i>	<i>hunar</i>	art
	<i>äk^hä</i>	<i>aygi</i>	vineyard
	<i>äsäḵ</i>	<i>aseḵ</i>	needle
	<i>p^hätäk</i>	<i>p^het^hak</i>	beehive
	<i>ärin</i>	<i>aryun</i>	blood
	<i>hik^hä</i>	<i>hogi</i>	soul
	<i>c^hirin, cirin</i>	<i>c^horen</i>	grain
b. [round]	<i>ösör</i>	<i>aysor</i>	today
	<i>Gük^hür</i>	<i>Grigor</i>	Gregory
	<i>übür</i>	<i>yerb vor</i>	when
	<i>ur(u)nog</i>	<i>orinak</i>	example

(16) disharmonic roots

a. [back]	*CuCü	*CuCö
	*CüCu	*CüCo
	*CoCö	*CoCü
	*CöCo	*CöCu
b. [round]	*CeCü	*CiCü
	*CeCö	*CiCö
	*CöCe	*CöCi
	*CüCe	*CüCi

Roots of the type in (16) are not attested; thus the generalizations in (14) hold. However, there are two classes of apparent exceptions. The first exception is that *a* and *ä* freely cooccur in roots, as in *aväč^hk^h* ‘song’ < Classical *awač^h*, though according to the scheme in (12) and (14a) this should not be possible. In fact, the *ä* behaves as if it were phonologically ϵ , the lax counterpart of *e*. I will not go into this problem here, however.

The second class of exceptions also involves roots that contain both specifications for a harmonic feature; the roots in (17a) contain both front and back vowels, and the roots in (17b) contain both round and non-round vowels.

(17) (apparently) disharmonic roots

	Marash	Classical	Gloss
a. [back]	<i>agiš</i>	<i>akiš</i>	iron shovel for fire or ashes
	<i>anij</i>	<i>anic</i>	nit
	<i>arikok</i>	<i>aregakn</i>	sun
	<i>ariv</i>	<i>arew</i>	sun
	<i>adin</i>	<i>aten</i>	time
	<i>avil</i>	<i>awel</i>	broom
	<i>(l)a□čīn</i>	<i>ačjik</i>	girl
	<i>jəmirog</i>	<i>jəmeruk</i>	watermelon
	<i>havej</i>	--	hot pepper
	<i>hiru</i>	<i>heru</i>	last year
	<i>irgom</i>	<i>erikam(unk^h)</i>	bowels
	<i>irgon</i>	<i>irikun</i>	evening
	<i>irgot^h</i>	<i>erkat^h</i>	iron
	<i>irgu</i>	<i>erku</i>	two
	<i>iroz</i>	<i>eraz</i>	dream
	<i>išadog</i>	<i>yišatak</i>	souvenir
	<i>isdog</i>	<i>ystak</i>	clean
	<i>izod</i>	<i>zat</i>	separate
	<i>ižom</i>	<i>žam</i>	church
	<i>lat^hir</i>	<i>lat^her</i>	clothing
	<i>lizo</i>	<i>lezu</i>	tongue
	<i>mävu</i>	<i>mevu</i>	bee
	<i>nugi</i>	<i>unki</i>	ounce
	<i>barigom</i>	<i>barekam</i>	friend
	<i>benjor</i>	<i>banjar</i>	leaf of white beet-root

	<i>bezor</i>	<i>bazar</i>	bazaar
	<i>biron</i>	<i>beran</i>	mouth
	<i>učäl, uč^hil</i>	<i>oĵil</i>	louse
	□ <i>eĭu</i>	<i>heĭu</i>	far
b. [round]	<i>ku^hfa</i>	--	bundle of thread
	<i>č^höyän</i>	--	soap-wort root that foams in hot water
	<i>ärĵüĵ</i>	<i>arčič</i>	lead, bullet, weapon
	<i>ärp^hüšüm,</i>	<i>aprišum</i>	silk thread
	<i>abəršom</i>		
	<i>hängüç^h</i>	<i>hangoyç^h</i>	knot
	<i>guda</i>	<i>gōti</i>	belt
	<i>lokačə</i>	--	wooden tool for dragging stone-rollers
	<i>minnöç^h</i>	--	without cause
	<i>bädühiin</i>	<i>patuhan</i>	window
	<i>sälür</i>	<i>salor</i>	plum
	<i>t^haso</i>	--	worry
	<i>t^häk(ä)vür</i>	<i>t^hagawor</i>	king
	□ <i>ar</i> □ <i>ud,</i>	□ <i>ar</i> □ <i>ul</i>	shaky
	<i>χäχüid</i>		
	□ <i>ayov</i>	□ <i>avov</i>	grape
	<i>χävüv</i>		
	<i>k^hüläg</i>	--	wooden basket
	<i>k^huräg</i>	<i>k^huräk</i>	baby donkey

Now, how do we account for exceptions of the type in (17)? The answer lies in the structure of the vowel system as I set it out in figures (12) and (13). Comparison of the forms in (17) against the tables in (12) and (13) reveals that all of the problematic roots contain neutral vowels, which as you recall are the vowels that have no harmonic counterparts, and therefore cannot alternate. Thus, for example, the *ä* in *sälür* ‘plum’ cannot change to agree in rounding with the *ü*, because the vowel system does not contain a round version of *ä*.

3.2. Epenthetic Harmony

The second type of harmony in Marash involves the epenthetic vowel schwa (*ə*), which as in Turkish can surface as *ə*, *i*, *u*, or *ü*, depending on the quality of the vowel in the preceding syllable. For example, one of my female informants produced the phrases in (18):

- (18) a. *maziri ĵirmigil ä* ‘my hair is turning white’ (Standard Armenian *mazerə*)
 b. *mózu irgän ä* ‘her hair is long’ (Standard Armenian *mazə*)

In (18a), the definite article surfaces as [*i*], in order to agree in backness and rounding with the *i* of the preceding syllable. In (18b), the definite article surfaces as [*u*] in order to agree in backness and rounding with the *o* in the preceding syllable.

We can see the activity of epenthetic harmony most clearly in the present tense prefix /g-/, the definite article /-n/, and the indefinite article /-m/, depicted in (19-21).

(19) present prefix /g-/

	surface form	before	examples
a.	<i>g</i>	vowels	<i>g-änim</i> ‘I do’
b.	<i>gə</i>	C + <i>a</i>	<i>gə gart^hom</i> ‘I wear’
c.	<i>gi</i>	C + <i>i, e, ä</i>	<i>gi sirim</i> ‘I love’
d.	<i>gu</i>	C + <i>o, u</i>	<i>gu t^hu^hum</i> ‘I allow’
e.	<i>gü</i>	C + <i>ü, ö</i>	[no cases available]

(20) definite article /-n/

	surface form	after	examples
a.	<i>-n</i>	vowels	<i>dəv^hä-n</i> ‘boy’
b.	<i>-ə</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>mas-ə</i> ‘meat’
c.	<i>-i</i>	<i>i, e, ä</i>	<i>agiš-i</i> ‘iron shovel for ashes’ □ <i>äč^h-i</i> ‘cross’ instrumental <i>-ev-i</i>
d.	<i>-u</i>	<i>o, u</i>	<i>dək^hol-u</i> ‘spoon’ <i>bon-u</i> ‘thing’
e.	<i>-ü</i>	<i>ü, ö</i>	<i>üsgür-ü</i> ‘bone’ <i>dön-ü</i> ‘festival’

(21) indefinite article /m/

	surface form	after	examples
a.	<i>mə</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>šabag mə</i> ‘shirt’
b.	<i>mi</i>	<i>i, e, ä</i>	<i>a□č^hin mi</i> ‘girl’ <i>p^häd mi</i> ‘wood’
c.	<i>mu</i>	<i>o, u</i>	<i>danog mu</i> ‘knife’ <i>mug mu</i> ‘mouse’
d.	<i>mü</i>	<i>ü, ö</i>	<i>üsgür mü</i> ‘bone’ <i>ör mü</i> ‘day’

In order to account for the alternations in (19-21), we simply postulate that the epenthetic vowel is prespecified as being a high vowel, and then assimilates its specifications for backness and rounding from the preceding vowel.

4. Conclusion

Today I’ve tried to give you an idea of the richness and complexity of the Marash dialect, and slip in a few tidbits of its culture as well, in the belief that the material of this, as well as the other Armenian dialects, is perhaps the greatest and yet scarcely tapped body of primary sources in the Armenian tradition, and its study is one of the great desiderata of

our field. I'd like to close by expressing the hope that none of you leave this talk sharing the sentiments of the anonymous Marashci who coined the aphorisms in (22).¹¹

- (22) *անթրպա կուլօղ, անատին խուլօղ*
ant^həba gusöḳ, anadin χusöḳ
 ‘the rooster of Ayntab doesn’t crow on time’
 (used when someone says something they shouldn’t have at that particular time)

նե կուտի նե կը կիրցինի, քորթ թերեկը գի հիտըցընի
ne gudi ne gə girč^hini, k^hok^hə t^härägə gi hidəc^həni
 ‘he doesn’t eat, he doesn’t let others eat, his shit smells up the hearth’

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¹¹ Versions in Armenian script use Marash (Western) orthography.