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Sommario/riassunto

Maaloula, the last place in the world where the language of Christ, Aramaic, is spoken ... Nestled in the hollow of the Qalamoun mountains, the small village has never ceased to fascinate all travelers since the end of the 18th century. Indeed since that time, it has remained a sort of Orientalist "commonplace" where European scholars and missionaries thronged until the first half of the 20th century. The greatest orientalists like Theodor Nöldeke, adventurers such as Richard Burton and even Alexandre Dumas knew about the existence of Maaloula and devoted a few pages to him. Today, Maaloula has become a major tourist center which attracts no less than 150,000 annual visitors, Europeans of course but especially Iranians who come to seek in addition to the picturesque places, the illusions of a return to the sources. By crossing archives and speeches on Maaloula for almost two centuries, Frédéric Pichon brings to light, along with the Christian memory of a rural Syrian community, the multiple facets of the identity of the last "Aramaeans" in Syria.

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