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# Autour de la langue arabe

Études présentées à Jacques Grand'Henry à  
l'occasion de son 70<sup>e</sup> anniversaire

éditées par

Johannes DEN HEIJER, Paolo LA SPISA et  
Laurence TUERLINCKX

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*LIʿB AL-MANĀR*, AN EGYPTIAN SHADOW PLAY.  
SOME COMMENTS ON ORTHOGRAPHY,  
MORPHOLOGY AND SYNTAX<sup>1</sup>

Liesbeth ZACK  
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**1. Introduction**

In 1907, while in Egypt, the German Orientalist Paul Kahle (1875-1964) acquired a manuscript dating from the year 1119/1707<sup>2</sup>. He obtained it from Darwīš al-Qaššāš, son of the shadow player Ḥasan al-Qaššāš (d. around 1900), who had found it in the Egyptian Delta. The manuscript contains a number of texts, which include a shadow play (*ḥayāl al-ẓill*) entitled *Liʿb al-manār* (“The play of the lighthouse”). In 1930, Kahle published this particular piece with an introduction, a German translation and a modern version of the play in transcription<sup>3</sup>. The play tells the story of a battle between Christian invaders and Muslim soldiers, with the action taking place in and around the famous lighthouse of Alexandria, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Although the manuscript itself dates from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Kahle argues convincingly that the poetry within it can be traced back to the 1500s, basing his conclusion on the information he obtained about the poets who wrote

<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Manfred Woidich for his valuable comments on earlier versions of this article. Of course, any errors remain my sole responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> Kahle worked in Egypt as a priest from 1903 until 1908. See H.S. NYBERG, “Paul Kahle”, in M. BLACK – G. FOHRER (ed.), *In memoriam Paul Kahle*, Berlin, 1968, p. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> P. KAHLE, *Der Leuchtturm von Alexandria. Ein arabisches Schattenspiel aus dem mittelalterlichen Ägypten*, Stuttgart, 1930 (= KAHLE, *Leuchtturm*). During his stay in Egypt, Kahle attended a performance of a modern version of this shadow play and made a transcription of the text. The manuscript Paul Kahle obtained in Egypt and his notes about the play are now kept in the library of the University of Turin. I thank Francesca Bellino for providing me with valuable information about Kahle’s manuscript collection in Turin.

the play<sup>4</sup>, namely, Dāʿūd al-ʿAṭṭār al-Manāwī<sup>5</sup>, his teacher Saʿūd, and ʿAlī al-Naḥla, who was the master of the guild of shadow players (*ṣayḥ al-ṭarīqa*).

The events described in the play took place much further back in time than the 16<sup>th</sup> century; according to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, the lighthouse of Alexandria collapsed in the first half of the 1300s<sup>6</sup>. Kahle argues that since the play describes the lighthouse in detail, it is likely that it dates from the time when this wonder still existed. This is not, however, irrefutable evidence. Although the play does contain some accurate descriptions of the lighthouse (see *Outline of the story* below), this does not mean that its author(s) had seen the structure themselves. There are plenty of Arab eyewitness accounts describing the lighthouse in detail<sup>7</sup>, and these might have come to the attention of the poets. However, some of the shadow figures used in the performance of the play have Mamluk arms. These can be dated back to the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century and do, thus, provide us with convincing evidence of the piece's age<sup>8</sup>.

Shadow figures were made out of leather and sometimes had movable parts. A light source located behind them projected shadows onto a screen, to the rear of which the public was seated. A 19<sup>th</sup> century shadow play figure of the lighthouse of Alexandria can be seen on p. 351<sup>9</sup>.

The last attack on Alexandria by Christians took place in 1365 during the crusade led by Peter I of Lusignan, King of Cyprus and Jerusalem<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> See KAHLE, *Leuchtturm*, p. 3-8\* (\* refers to pages in the German introduction of the book; † refers to the German translation of the play; numbers without a following symbol refer to the Arabic text).

<sup>5</sup> His name implies that he came from the village of al-Manāwāt, a few miles south of Cairo.

<sup>6</sup> He saw the lighthouse when he visited Alexandria in 1326. It was already in a dilapidated condition by then due to earthquakes. When he visited Alexandria again in 1349, the lighthouse had collapsed. See D. BEHRENS-ABOUSEIF, "The Islamic History of the Lighthouse of Alexandria", in *Muqarnas*, 23 (2006), p. 8 (= BEHRENS-ABOUSEIF, "Islamic History of the Lighthouse").

<sup>7</sup> The earliest Arabic description is by Masʿūdi (d. 956), while the most detailed and accurate description, including measurements, is provided by al-Balawī (1132-1207) in his encyclopaedic *Kitāb alif bāʿ*. For details, see BEHRENS-ABOUSEIF, "Islamic History of the Lighthouse", p. 1-14.

<sup>8</sup> See KAHLE, *Leuchtturm*, p. 10-11\*. Pictures of these figures can be found in the introduction to the book.

<sup>9</sup> See Figure 1: Shadow figure of the Lighthouse of Alexandria, dated 1289/1871-2. The figure is reproduced from P. KAHLE, "Islamische Schattenspielfiguren aus Egypten. II. Teil", in *Der Islam*, 2 (1911), p. 181.

<sup>10</sup> See J. VAN STEENBERGEN, "The Alexandrian Crusade (1365) and the Mamlūk sources. Reassessment of the *Kitāb al-ilmām* of an-Nuwayrī al-Iskandarānī", in H.G.B. TEULE – K. CIGGAAR (ed.), *East and West in the crusader states: context, contacts, confrontations*.

However, by that time the lighthouse had already collapsed. The Christian attacks described in the play do not seem to refer to one specific historical event. The shadow play refers to a messenger sent by the Catalans (p. 22), and in the victory song on p. 48-49, an entire troop of defeated nationalities is mentioned: Catalans (الكيتلان), Franks (بنو الاصفر), Genoese (جَنَوِيًّا), soldiers from Rhodos (رودس) and Cyprus (قبرص), the Knights Hospitaller (الاشباتار), the Knights Templar (ديرية), and even the Spanish king (الفرنش)<sup>11</sup>.

Shadow plays were written to be performed in front of an audience comprised of people from all walks of life, including those who were not necessarily educated. Accordingly, the language is Middle Arabic rather than Classical Arabic, with a heavy component of the purely colloquial. It is full of interesting samples of Egyptian Arabic. KAHLE (1930) does make some remarks on the language in footnotes to the translation of the text, but no systematic study of the dialectal and Middle Arabic features has been conducted until now. In this article, I will therefore first provide an outline of the story, as well as two samples of text. I will then describe the orthographical, morphological and syntactic features found in the piece.

## 2. Outline of the story

The two main characters in the story are al-Riḥim (nicknamed أبو القطط “Cat Father”) and al-Ḥāziq (nicknamed قَطَطُوا “His Cats”), both of whom commonly appear in Egyptian shadow theatre<sup>12</sup>. The minor characters are the soldiers protecting the lighthouse and the Christian invaders.

Only fragments of the story have been written down, and these are mainly poems which served as an interlude between action scenes. These poems, which were recited, were often followed by a song (*billīq*) which was sung by the performers<sup>13</sup>. The action scenes, however, were in prose and improvised. Since parts of the manuscript are missing as well, the story is far from complete.

III: *Acta of the congress held at Hernen Castle in September 2000 (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, 125), Leuven, 2003, p. 123.

<sup>11</sup> See KAHLE, *Leuchtturm*, p. 66<sup>†</sup> for the explanation of these terms.

<sup>12</sup> The “Cat Father”, a trainer of cats and mice, also appears in the shadow play entitled *ʿAḡīb wa-Ġarīb* by Ibn Dāniyāl (d. 1310). See Muḥammad Ibn Dāniyāl, *Three Shadow Plays by Muḥammad Ibn Dāniyāl*, edited by the late Paul KAHLE, with a critical apparatus by Derek HOPWOOD, prepared for publication by Derek HOPWOOD and Mustafa BADAWI, Cambridge, 1992, p. 77-78 of the Arabic text.

<sup>13</sup> See KAHLE, *Leuchtturm*, p. 12\*.

The play starts with a few introductory verses, after which there is a description of the lighthouse. It is described as follows: two steep slopes built on pillars lead to the entrance of the lighthouse. The door and windows are brown and decorated with gold. The lighthouse is topped with a dome. It contains an armour room for storing shields and swords, helmets and armour. On top of the building are an observer and an archer, a trumpeter and a catapult shooter. There are cannons as well, along with troops waiting to defend their city<sup>14</sup>.

There is a long discussion between Al-Ḥāziq and al-Riḥim, in which the former urges his colleague to climb the tower to investigate what the enemy is doing. Al-Riḥim, being a coward, invents all kinds of excuses not to do as asked.

In the next scene, a North-African trader arrives and warns the Alexandrians of the approach of the Christians. Immediately, the troops are called upon to prepare themselves to defend their town. Then, a messenger arrives with the communication that the Christians intend to invade Egypt. There is a comical confusion of tongues between the Christian messenger and the Muslims. The Christian says: *بشيلشو كناكيس فليقبسوا بلاقيس* (a nonsensical phrase). Al-Riḥim, who volunteers as interpreter, translates this with *جيو انسانيس في فوانيس* “bring monkeys in lanterns”. Then, al-Ḥāziq says: *اعبر قوله جبتوا كم طايفه* “Ask him, how many troops have you brought?” Al-Riḥim asks the Christian: *جبتوا كم قطايفه* “how many pancakes did you bring?” This play on words continues for some time<sup>15</sup>.

One of the Christians tries to lure al-Riḥim to his ship with promises of beautiful clothes, riches, and even the chance to make his daughter, Būma (owl), his wife. Al-Riḥim continues to refuse the offers until he hears of the wonderful food on board the ship, and then agrees to visit.

In the next scene, one of the Muslim soldiers, Ḥirdān, has been taken prisoner. Al-Ḥāziq and al-Riḥim argue about who should go to see the Christians to bail him out. Eventually, al-Riḥim starts negotiations with the Christian al-Ġāḥid about the release of Ḥirdān, but they fail to reach an agreement.

The play ends with a song in which the Egyptians praise God for their victory. Many of their enemies have been killed, while others have been taken prisoner.

<sup>14</sup> Except for the doors and windows that are decorated with gold, all of the other elements in the description are confirmed by eyewitness accounts. See the various accounts in BEHRENS – ABOUSEIF, “Islamic History of the Lighthouse”.

<sup>15</sup> See KAHLE, *Leuchtturm*, p. 26-27.



### 3. Two sample paragraphs of the text

Set out below are two extracts from the text which will give the reader an impression of the language used in the play. The first is a poem in which al-Hāziq tells how a North-African trader warned the Egyptians of the approach of the Christians and then calls upon the Egyptian troops to fight. The second sample is a short fragment from one of the pieces of prose.

#### Fragment 1<sup>16</sup>

قطعه من الحازق لطلب ميمون		
1	يا خل من اقصى البلاد	ينصح لأمت محمد سيّد ولد عدنان
2	واظهرلنا ما قد خفا	من دالكلاب الملاعين وعصبة الطّغيان
3	يجّهزوا لجل <sup>17</sup> القتال	وبالعدد قد تعدّوا يا معشر الخلان
4	وفي طرايد واغربه	وقصدهم ان ينالوا في عصبة الإيمان
5	وكلهم من الرجال	متعودين بالوقايح على مدا الازمان
6	يدل دالقوم الليام	وفي الهلاك يرميهم الواحد الديان
7	ويقهر الأعدا الليام	ولا ينالوا ما رب يا رب يا ديان
8	وفي البحار متفرّقين	ونغنم ادى أتوبوا يا رب يا رحمن
9	بالفتح والتّصر المبين	ويرجعوا منصورين وقلبهم فرحان
10	ومنيّتي يا سادتي	أجمع جميع العساكر مع سائر الفرسان
11	واقولهم تجهّزوا	من اجل حرب التّصاره وملت الصّلبان
12	يجى ويزعق بالتّفير	وننصر الدّين ونربح بالاجر والغفران
13	بالمدهح فى طه البشير	خير الخلايق محمد سيّد ولد عدنان

A piece by Al-Hāziq, summoning Maymūn

1. “This is the North African who has come, o friend, from the most remote country, to advise the nation of Muḥammad, the Lord of the offspring of ‘Adnān<sup>18</sup>.
2. He has brought advice and revealed to us what was hidden about those cursed dogs and the gang of tyrants.

<sup>16</sup> KAHLÉ, *Leuchtturm*, p. 20-21.

<sup>17</sup> لأجل =

<sup>18</sup> ‘Adnān is considered to be the ancestor of the Northern Arabs. See W. CASHEL, art. “‘Adnān”, in *EP*, vol. I, p. 210a.

3. He informed us that all of them are making preparations to fight and have made their equipment ready, o company of friends.
4. They came with troops in warships and galleys, intending to harm the people of the Faith.
5. They are countless armies and all of them are men who are used to fighting battles for ages.
6. But the God of the Creation will humiliate these reprehensible people and He will throw them into eternal damnation, the One, the Judge.
7. Soon he will put the infidels to shame and conquer the reprehensible enemies, and they will not take control, o Lord, o Judge.
8. They will return broken and scattered over the seas, and we will take the goods they brought with them as spoils, o Lord, o Merciful.
9. The people of the Law will rejoice over the conquest and the clear victory, and they will return victorious with joyful hearts.
10. But my desire, intention and wish, o lords, is to bring together all the soldiers and all the knights.
11. And to stir them up to the battle and to tell them: "Get ready for the war against the Christians and those who follow the religion of the crosses!"
12. But my wish is that Maymūn will come and blow the trumpet, and we will make the religion victorious and gain our wages and pardon.
13. And I conclude my words and prose with praise for Ṭāhā<sup>19</sup>, the bringer of good news, the best of the creatures, Muḥammad, the Lord of the offspring of 'Adnān."

*Fragment 2*<sup>20</sup>

يقول الصانع: يابوا القبط السطل من الفضه والعلاقه من الذهب إحتكت في مقدم  
 دالمركب إنقطع وراح في البحر إغطس عليه هاته أروح بوا الصّاغه بيعه وإقبض ذهبه وقروشه  
 وإعبر خان الخليلي خذ لك قميص نضيف وقبيطيه بيضه وعميمه بيضه وقاووق إعبر إسعد  
 إعبر إسعد إعبر إسعد  
 يقول الحازق: سمعت يابوا القبط ما قال لك دالصانع الزهره بيقول لك: السطل من الفضه  
 والعلاقه من الذهب (.....)

Al-Ṣāni' says: "Abū al-Qiṭaṭ, the bucket is made of silver and the chain is made of gold. It rubbed against the bow of that ship, was cut and fell into the sea. Dive after it, get it, and go with it to the goldsmiths to sell

<sup>19</sup> Ṭāhā is one of the names of Muḥammad.

<sup>20</sup> KAHLÉ, *Leuchtturm*, p. 25-26.

it. Get its gold and its piasters, go to Khan al-Khalili and get yourself a clean shirt, a white robe, a white turban and a dervish hat. Go and good luck, go and good luck, go and good luck!”

Al-Ḥāziq says: “Abū al-Qiṭaṭ, did you hear what this al-Ṣāniʿ, the flower, said to you? He is telling you: the bucket is made of silver and the chain is made of gold (....)”

#### 4. Linguistic Analysis

##### 4.1. Orthography

The text contains many orthographical features that are well-known from other Middle Arabic texts:

- *qāf* instead of *hamza*: قمهار instead of أمهر “most skillful” (with lengthening of the *a* to fit the rhyme of the poem) and قسمر instead of أسمر “brown” (both on p. 3). This is evidence for the fact that the \*q was pronounced as /ʔ/ and that there was some confusion as to which glottal stop corresponded with *hamza* in Classical Arabic, and which with *qāf*<sup>21</sup>.
- The *hamza* is often absent: ريس “master” (1<sup>22</sup>), ياهل “o people” (7), لجل “because of” (= لأجل) (7), اسال “ask” (8), روايح “smells” (24), اللبيمه “the depraved woman” (24), رايه “his opinion” (39).
- *Alif otiosum*: an *alif* is added after any final *wāw*, even if it is part of the root, or the suffix of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person sg.: ابو القطط “Abū al-Qiṭaṭ” (throughout the text), العدوا “the enemy” (2), لوا “it has” (3), إيدوا “his hand” (4), ما رأيتوا “what you have seen” (11), ربوا “his Lord” (31).
- The dots on the *tāʾ marbūṭa* are frequently missing (except in status constructus): جزيره “an island” (1), دوره خمله “a stupid detour” (25).
- The writing of *tāʾ* instead of *tāʾ marbūṭa* occurs regularly: رجالت “the men of the sultan” (1), قاعت سلاح “an armour room” (7), صنعت استاد “the workmanship of a master” (8), شويّت فلوس “a bit of money” (39).

<sup>21</sup> For the discussion on the pronunciation of \*q in Egypt, which is closely related to the pronunciation of \*g, see M. WOIDICH – L. ZACK, “The g/ǧ -question in Egyptian Arabic revisited”, in E. AL-WER – R.E. DE JONG (ed.), *Arabic Dialectology: In Honour of Clive Holes on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*. Leiden, 2009, p. 41-60.

<sup>22</sup> The numbers between brackets refer to the page upon which the feature is found in KAHLE’s edition.

- The final *ā* is sometimes shortened and written with *hā*: مضه “it passed” (7), الرضه “the approval” (7), الوره “mankind” (27), هنه “here” (40).
- There is assimilation of *t* to the following consonant: يصوره “he scales it” (with secondary emphasis) (2), إصايقت “I got into trouble” (25).
- Secondary emphasis: all of the words derived from the root SWR are written ṢWR due to the vicinity of the *ṣ*, e.g.: يصوره “he scales it” (2), اصوار “walls” (13).
- Scriptio plena: دالك “that” (1), لاكن “but” (12), انتى “you” (e.g. 31).
- There are many examples of *alif mamdūda* instead of *alif maqṣūra*: رما “he shot” (2), ترا “you see” (7), انجلا “it is revealed” (29), اعتدا “to be hostile” (31).

## 4.2. Morphology

### 4.2.1. *The demonstratives*

#### 4.2.1.1. Attributive use

There is great variety in the attributively used demonstratives. As well as purely Classical Arabic forms, there are also some Middle Arabic forms, with all kinds of variations: هذاالكلام “this speech” (p. 1) (note the merger of the two *alifs*), دالك البلاد “that country” (1) (with scriptio plena of the *alif*, *d* instead of *ḍ* and no agreement in gender between demonstrative and noun), هذى القضييه “this matter” (19).

Other forms are purely dialectal. As has been observed in other works on the historical sources of Egyptian Arabic, the usual place for the demonstrative was before, not after, the noun<sup>23</sup>. This is unlike Egyptian Arabic today, where the demonstrative is placed after the noun, e.g. *ilbēt da*, except in some exclamations such as *yādi lhēba* “what a nuisance!”<sup>24</sup> The attributive demonstrative in *Liʿb al-manār* always consists of the letter *ḍ* directly followed by the article, regardless of whether the following word is masculine, feminine or human plural. A few examples

<sup>23</sup> See E.W.A. ZACK, *Egyptian Arabic in the seventeenth century: a study and edition of Yūsuf al-Maḡribī’s Daḡ al-iṣr ‘an kalām ahl Miṣr*, Amsterdam – Utrecht, 2009, p. 101-103 (= ZACK, *Egyptian Arabic*), and the literature mentioned therein.

<sup>24</sup> See M. WOIDICH, “Vorangestellte Demonstrativa im Kairenischen”, in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 15 (1992), p. 195-219, and M. DOSS, “The Position of the Demonstrative *da*, *di*, in Egyptian Arabic: a Diachronic Inquiry”, in *Annales islamologiques*, 15 (1979), p. 349-357.

are: دالمينه “this harbour” (1), دالبرجين “these two towers” (4), دالمنار “this lighthouse” (2), دالأعيان “these notables” (5), دالقاعه “this hall” (7), دالكلاب الملاعين “those cursed dogs” (20), دالوقت “now” (34). It is unclear if this should be read as *da-l-* or *di-l-*, since no vowel signs are provided. It is, however, known from other works from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries that *د* was found much more frequently than *دا*, even before masculine nouns<sup>25</sup>.

There is also a case of postponed *دول*: *دول: دالكفار دول* “and those infidels” (30).

#### 4.2.1.2. Independent use

The forms *دا*, *دى* and *دول* can all be used independently. Some examples of the independent use of *دا* are: *دا ييجى بسيفه ودا ييجى برمحه ودا ييجى بدرقته ودا ييجى بقوسه* “This one comes with his sword, and this one comes with his spear, and this one comes with his shield, and this one comes with his bow” (24), *أصل دا فى الاسكندريه يا رجال أسسوه*, (7) “because this one, o men, they founded it in Alexandria” (7), *كل دا من أجل نصر المؤمنين*, (8) “all this is for the victory of the believers” (8), *إش دا كلام المجانين*, (6) “what is this speech of madmen?” (6).

Examples of the independent use of *دى* include: *دى دوره خمله* “that is a stupid detour” (25), *دى تقدمه للملك* “this you will present to the king?” (26). The second example shows that the feminine form *دى* agrees with a masculine suffix. It is therefore probable that *دى* functioned as a neutral form. The same phenomenon is found in the case of the feminine form *ʾanhi* “which” in modern Egyptian Arabic, which can be used in combination with masculine and feminine words (see 4.2.6 below).

*دول*, the plural demonstrative, is also used independently: *عندك شى بابوا* “Do you have something of those, Abū al-Qiṭaṭ?” (24). Other variants are utilised as well, e.g. *دولا مراكب البحر المالح: دولا* “these are the boats of the Salty Sea<sup>26</sup>” (23), *دولا لئام* “these are evil” (45), *دولا ملاعين* “those are cursed” (45). This plural form of the demonstrative

<sup>25</sup> For the 15<sup>th</sup> century, see A. VROLIJK, *Bringing a laugh to a scowling face: a study and critical edition of the “Nuzhat al-nufūs wa muḍḥik al-ʾabūs” by ʿAlī Ibn Sūdūn al-Bašbuḡāwī (Cairo 810/1407 – Damascus 868/1464)*, Leiden, 1998, p. 151 (= VROLIJK, *Bringing a laugh*). For the 17<sup>th</sup> century, see ZACK, *Egyptian Arabic*, p. 102 and H.T. DAVIES, *Seventeenth-Century Egyptian Arabic: a Profile of the Colloquial Material in Yūsuf al-Širbīnī’s Hazz al-Quḥūf fi Šarḥ Qaṣīd ʾAbī Šādūf*, Berkeley, 1981, p. 163 (= DAVIES, *Seventeenth-Century Egyptian Arabic*).

<sup>26</sup> As opposed to the River Nile, which is also called *baḥr*.

*dōla* is still found in Egypt today<sup>27</sup>. Another variety found in the play is *dōlik* “those are heroes” (24)<sup>28</sup>.

#### 4.2.2. *The demonstrative particle*

The form *ādī* is used as a demonstrative particle: “here is the day of the booty” (15), *ādī* الحكاية والسؤال “these are the story and the question” (42). This particle is also found in the 17<sup>th</sup> century text *Daf‘ al-iṣr ‘an kalām ahl Miṣr*<sup>29</sup> and in the 15<sup>th</sup> century work *Nuzhat al-nufūs*<sup>30</sup>. It is still found in Cairo today as *‘ādi*.

#### 4.2.3. *The relative pronouns*

The Classical Arabic relative pronoun *al-ẓī* can be used after feminine nouns, e.g. *al-qā‘ah al-ẓī fīhā aṣf* “this hall which I describe” (7). The relative pronoun *ma* is used frequently as well.

Another form of the relative pronoun which is used regularly is *iddī*: *iddī* خلف *ādī* مضه: “another door behind the last one” (lit. “the one that passed”) (7), *wa-ḍī ‘alīṣār aḥṣn*, “and the one which is on the left is better” (9), *wa-ḍī ḥṣbtih ṣār*, “and what I expected, happened” (13), *iddī* يعاديك في عمرك ما يعرفني “whoever acts hostilely against you doesn’t know me!” (16), *al-maḡribī ‘ādī qd atī*, “this North African who has come” (20). There are many other examples throughout the text. What is surprising is the complete absence of *illi*, the relative pronoun used in Egypt these days<sup>31</sup>.

To my knowledge, no other instances of *iddi* have been found in historical sources of the Egyptian dialects. It likewise does not exist in modern Egyptian Arabic<sup>32</sup>. *iddi* and *illi* have a common origin: they are both contractions of *\*alladī*<sup>33</sup>. An intermediate form, *aldi*, is found in a

<sup>27</sup> See M. WOIDICH, *Das Kairenisch-Arabisches: Eine Grammatik*, Wiesbaden, 2006, p. 44 (= WOIDICH, *Das Kairenisch-Arabisches*).

<sup>28</sup> Variants of the demonstrative with *-k* are still found today in Egypt, e.g. *dawwak*, *dihīyyak*, *dōlak*, etc. See M. HINDS – E. BADAWI, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic, Arabic-English*, Beirut, 1986, p. 273a. The variants are numerous. However, I did not come across a form *dōlik*.

<sup>29</sup> See ZACK, *Egyptian Arabic*, p. 103.

<sup>30</sup> See VROLIJK, *Bringing a laugh*, p. 151-152.

<sup>31</sup> *illi* was already in use in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. See VROLIJK, *Bringing a laugh*, p. 153.

<sup>32</sup> It is not mentioned in P. BEHNSTEDT – M. WOIDICH, *Die Ägyptisch-Arabischen Dialekte*, Wiesbaden, 1985-1999.

<sup>33</sup> See W. FISCHER – O. JASTROW, *Handbuch der arabischen Dialekte*, Wiesbaden, 1980, p. 84, and K. EKSELL, “On the development of *d*-particles as genitive exponents

letter written by a Moroccan Jew dating from the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>34</sup>. In Northwest Africa, *iddi* used to be the common relative pronoun, while in Andalusia, the short relative pronoun forms, *allí*, *addí* and *iddí*, were used along with *alladī*<sup>35</sup>; *di* was used in Northern Tunisia until at least the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>36</sup>. In Morocco, (*i*)*ddi* was in use alongside (*i*)*lli* in the urban dialects until recently<sup>37</sup>. According to Heath<sup>38</sup>, *lli* has now replaced *ddi* in all Muslim dialects in Morocco, while *ddi* and *di* are still extant in the Jewish dialects. It is possible that *iddi* and *illi* existed alongside each other in Egypt, like in the Maghreb, with *illi* eventually prevailing.

#### 4.2.4. *The personal pronouns*

The personal pronouns correspond to those found in modern Egyptian Arabic. The personal pronoun 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. is frequently written as انتّه (e.g. 11) and انتى (e.g. 11). Also: إحتنا “we” (14), انتوا “you (pl.)” (26), هُمّا “they” (26), and هوا “he” (27). و أنا + و is frequently written as ونا (e.g. 16).

#### 4.2.5. *The genitive exponent*

The genitive exponent is العسكر تباعك: “your soldiers” (18), المال تباعك “your money” (47). There are two possible explanations of this form. The first is that it is the equivalent of *tabaʿ* in modern Egyptian Arabic, which is interchangeable with *bitāʿ* and is not declined for gender or number<sup>39</sup>. This does not, however, explain the *alif*. The other explanation is that it is a metathesis of *bitāʿ*, under the influence of *tabaʿ*.

#### 4.2.6. *The interrogatives*

The interrogatives are the same as in modern Cairo Arabic, except that *ē* and *lē* still ended in *š*<sup>40</sup>:

in Arabic dialects”, in *Acta Orientalia*, 45 (1984), p. 25 (= EKSELL, “Development of *d*-particles”).

<sup>34</sup> See EKSELL, “Development of *d*-particles”, p. 24.

<sup>35</sup> See F. CORRIENTE, *A Grammatical Sketch of the Spanish Arabic Dialect Bundle*. With a prologue by Emilio GARCÍA GÓMEZ, Madrid, 1977, p. 98.

<sup>36</sup> See C. VON LANDBERG, *Études sur les dialectes de l'Arabie méridionale. Vol. II Daḡīna, deuxième partie: Commentaire des textes prosaïques*, Leiden, 1909, p. 414.

<sup>37</sup> See Ph. MARÇAIS, *Esquisse grammaticale de l'arabe maghrébin*, Paris, 1977, p. 204.

<sup>38</sup> J. HEATH, *Jewish and Muslim Dialects of Moroccan Arabic*, London, 2002, p. 494.

<sup>39</sup> WOIDICH, *Das Kairenisch-Arabisches*, p. 233.

<sup>40</sup> These forms with *š* existed in Cairo until the nineteenth century and can still be found today in rural areas. See ZACK, *Egyptian Arabic*, p. 105.

- *what*: different spellings are found: اش (2), أيش (13, 15), أش (13). The shortened form اش has been attested in other texts from this period and suggests that the diphthong *ay* had become *ē* by this time, which was then shortened to *e*<sup>41</sup>. Note also the word order in the following sentence: “your people are coming to do what?” جماعتك يجوا ايش يعملوا: (24). In modern Cairo Arabic, the only possible word order would be *yi‘milu ’ē*, since the interrogative particle is the object and therefore needs to follow the verb.
- *whatever*: واشما رأيتوا بعينك قُولي: اشما: “and whatever you see with your eye, tell me” (14).
- *who*: هو أنا مين لَمَّا تطلعني. مين: e.g. “who am I, that you send me up?” (10).
- *why*: ليش ما تعزم عليه. ليش: e.g. “why don’t you invite [me] to it?” (25).
- *which*: إنت من أنهي قبيله: أنهي: “from which tribe are you?” (19). *’anhi* is still used in Cairo today and has a masculine counterpart *’anhu*, although both can be used in combination with masculine and feminine nouns<sup>42</sup>.
- *where*: انت فين يابوا القلط: فين اس in modern Cairo Arabic: “where are you, Abū al-Qiṭaṭ?” (23), أنا ظهري فين شجاعه وباس: “where did boldness and courage appear to me?” (38).
- *how*: إزّي مانتى راجل: إزّي: “how is that, aren’t you a man?” (28) and كيف ما أعلّى مقامك: كيف: “how could I not exalt your position?” (28). The latter could be a classicism, but since it is still used in Middle and Upper Egypt<sup>43</sup>, it is also possible that إزّي and كيف existed side by side in that period.

#### 4.2.7. The prepositions

The following phenomena are noteworthy with regard to the prepositions as used in the text:

- *b*: the *i* is lengthened to *ī* when a suffix follows: بيهم “with them” (4). When followed by the suffix of the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg. it becomes بوا *bū* “with it” (4)<sup>44</sup>. In modern Cairo Arabic, this is normally *bī*, but *buh* can also be heard<sup>45</sup>; *buh* is also found in the eastern Delta and Middle Egypt<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> See ZACK, *Egyptian Arabic*, p. 94.

<sup>42</sup> See WOIDICH, *Das Kairenisch-Arabische*, p. 51.

<sup>43</sup> See P. BEHNSTEDT - M. WOIDICH, *Die Ägyptisch-Arabischen Dialekte. II: Dialektatlas von Ägypten*, Wiesbaden, 1985, map 187 (= BEHNSTEDT – WOIDICH, *Dialektatlas*).

<sup>44</sup> The orthography و for ه occurs very frequently in this text, e.g. حسنوا “its beauty” (4). See 4.1. *Orthography*.

<sup>45</sup> WOIDICH, *Das Kairenisch-Arabische*, p. 138.

<sup>46</sup> See BEHNSTEDT – WOIDICH, *Dialektatlas*, maps 378 and 379.



- مع: there are some forms with *ā*, like in modern Cairo Arabic: معاهم (39), معايا (39), معايه (19). There are, however, also forms without the long *ā*, such as معوا (10). It is unclear whether these are classicisms, or whether these long and short forms existed alongside each other in the dialect. The same has been noted by Davies<sup>47</sup>.
- من: with a doubling of the *n* when a suffix follows: منك “from you” (11), منهم “of them” (25).
- ل: ل is often attached to the verb قال, e.g. اقولهم “I tell them” (21), قوله “tell him!” (26). The verb جا can be used without a preposition: جانا بشير “he came to us as a messenger of good news” (21), جيتك رسول “I came to you as a messenger” (43). In modern Cairo Arabic, this is possible as well, but the verb can also be combined with *li*, e.g. *gāni* or *gāli* “he came to me”.
- على: can be abbreviated to ع when followed by the article: عايسار “on the left” (9)<sup>48</sup>.

#### 4.2.8. Particles in combination with suffixes

The particles و “by...” (introducing an oath) and بس “enough” can be followed by suffixes: واك “by you!” (29), بسك “enough now!” (45). This is not possible in modern Cairo Arabic. However, بسك can be compared with the use of *kifāya* with a suffix today: *kifayāk* “enough now!”<sup>49</sup>

#### 4.2.9. The verbs

##### 4.2.9.1. أراح and راح

Both the forms أراح and راح “to go” appear: راح مكسور “it is gone, broken” (3), أراح خيرك “your good name went away” (13), راح غضبان “your brother has left you in anger” (35). أراح is found as well in al-Mağribī’s *Daf’ al-iṣr*<sup>50</sup>, and in the twentieth century, it was still used by the native Cairene Jews<sup>51</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> DAVIES, *Seventeenth-Century Egyptian Arabic*, p. 185-186.

<sup>48</sup> As in modern Cairo Arabic, see WÖDICH, *Das Kairenisch-Arabische*, p. 22-23.

<sup>49</sup> See WÖDICH, *Das Kairenisch-Arabische*, p. 299.

<sup>50</sup> See ZACK, *Egyptian Arabic*, p. 100.

<sup>51</sup> See H. BLANC, “The *nekteb* – *nektebu* imperfect in a variety of Cairene Arabic”, in *Israel Oriental Studies*, 4 (1974), p. 215; cf. also G. Rosenbaum’s contribution to the present volume, p. 271.

It might seem that أراح is a form IV<sup>52</sup>; however, this is contradicted by the fact that the imperative is أروح with *ū*, while form IV would have *ī*: هاته أروح بوا الصّباغه بيعه: “get it, and go with it to the goldsmiths to sell it!” (26), أروح عجل “go, make haste!” (40). It is therefore more likely that the *alif* is a prosthetic *alif*, indicating the *bukara*-syndrome (insertion of a vowel in clusters –Crv). The *bukara*-syndrome can appear at the beginning of a word as well; this variety of the syndrome is found in Middle Egyptian today: e.g. *arāḡil* “a man” and *arama* “he threw”<sup>53</sup>. There are other examples from Middle Arabic texts of this prosthetic *alif*, which gives the impression of a form IV where a form I would be expected. This was often caused by the elision of the unstressed vowel in the first syllable, which gave rise to an initial consonant cluster. This was then solved by adding the prosthetic *alif*: *zahār* > *zhar* > *ažhar*<sup>54</sup>.

#### 4.2.9.2. Stem V

The verbs of stem V have the prefix *it-*: اتحقق “make sure” (4)<sup>55</sup>. Assimilation of the *t* to the next consonant occurs: وان جا العدو يصّوره “and if the enemy came to climb it” (2) (note also the secondary emphasis of the *s*).

#### 4.2.9.3. *Primae wāw*

The imperfect of وصل keeps the *wāw*: حتى اوصل إليكم “until I arrive at you” (17). The imperative of وقف is إقف “stand still!” (25). In modern Cairo Arabic this is *uʿaf*.

#### 4.2.9.4. *Primae ʿalif*

There are several examples of the word أخذ “to take” without the initial *ʿalif*: خدت مدحه كنزي “I took his praise as my treasure” (18), حردان خذوه الرّجال “the men took Ḥirdān” (38). Instead of a *hamza* we find *yāʾ* in استأسر “to take prisoner” (e.g. 40) (from أسأسر), which indicates that

<sup>52</sup> In Classical Arabic, both form I and IV of the root RWH have the meaning of “[he] returned in the evening, or afternoon, to rest”. See E.W. LANE, *An Arabic-English Lexicon, derived from the best and the most copious Eastern sources*, New York, 1955-1956 (repr. of ed. London, 1863-1893), vol. III, p. 1179b.

<sup>53</sup> See BEHNSTEDT – WÖDICH, *Dialektatlas*, maps 47 and 48.

<sup>54</sup> See J. BLAU, “Middle and Old Arabic Material for the History of Stress in Arabic”, in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 35/3 (1972), p. 479.

<sup>55</sup> See also VROLIJK, *Bringing a laugh*, p. 148, for examples from the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

the *hamza* may have been replaced by *yā'*, not necessarily in this particular form, but possibly in the *maṣḍar*, استيسار > استيسار, and from there استيسر.

#### 4.2.9.5. Plural of the imperfect

The plural forms of the imperfect do not have *n*: يجهّزوا “they prepare” (21), ياخذوا “they take” (39), يقدرّوا “they have power” (45).

#### 4.2.9.6. The participle of جا

In the participle of جا, the *ā* is shortened before the two consonants: دالمركب جيّا “that ship is coming” (25), as in modern Cairo Arabic: *gayy*, *gayya*, *gayyīn*.

### 4.3. Syntax

#### 4.3.1. The *bi*-imperfect

There are a few examples of the *bi*-imperfect: فيه موج بتلعب بوا الأرياح: “in it (= the sea) are waves with which the winds play” (7)<sup>56</sup>, قل لي اش, “tell me what you see up there on the wall, inform me about it” (16), بانتظر فوق الصوّر<sup>57</sup> بوا خيرني “I see a sea” (16), بانظر بحر, “he is telling you” (26), ونا بأعلم بالخبر, “and I know all about it” (30).

#### 4.3.2. The future marker

The future marker *ḥa-*, which is used in Cairo these days, does not occur in this text. Instead, *rāyih* is used, from which *ḥa* developed at a later stage<sup>58</sup>: رايح أموت “I will die” (6), هما رايحين يموتوا من العطش, “they will die from thirst” (25), رايح ارواح للنصراني, “I will go to the Christian” (35). The last example is clear evidence that at this point in time رايح no longer meant “to go”, but had already achieved the status of a future marker.

<sup>56</sup> On p. 16 almost the same sentence occurs, but without agreement between verb and subject: والموج ييلعب بوا الأرياح

<sup>57</sup> I.e. السور, but is consequently written with *ṣād*, with secondary emphasis of the *s*. See 4.1. Orthography

<sup>58</sup> See WOIDICH, *Das Kairenisch-Arabische*, p. 280.

The future could also be expressed with the participle of verbs of movement<sup>59</sup>: “tomorrow we will leave from here” (40). *وبعد بكرة من هنه راحلين*

### 4.3.3. The negation

#### 4.3.3.1. ما and لا

The negation ما is the form most commonly used before verbs in the perfect, imperfect and in nominal and prepositional sentences: *ما يوم طلعت* “why don’t you invite [me] to it?” (25), *ما هوا جهول* “he is not ignorant” (8), *ما لوا مثيل* “it does not have an equal” (7).

لا is found sometimes before the imperfect: *لا تلقى مثلى* “you will not find my equal” (11).

#### 4.3.3.2. ما...شى

There is one instance of the negation *ma-...šī*: *إن الرسول ما...شى* “the messenger does not deserve blame” (22 and 23). The negation *ma-...šī* is now the usual way to negate the perfect, imperfect, bi-imperfect and prepositional sentences in Egyptian Arabic. Proof of the existence of the negation *mā-...šī* in the 17<sup>th</sup> century is found in *Hazz al-quḥūf*<sup>61</sup>.

#### 4.3.3.3. لم

Although *lam* is utilised to negate sentences in *Li‘b al-manār*, it is not used according to the rules of Classical Arabic. It seems to have the same use as *mā*, i.e. negating all kinds of sentences, which is a feature of Middle Arabic:

- *لم شفت لك*: *لم* + the perfect are used as a negation of the past tense<sup>62</sup>: *لم شفت لك* “I didn’t see anything of value in you” (33).
- *لم* + the imperfect indicative are used for negating the present tense: *لم تختشى* “don’t you fear?” (10), *لم تنطفى* “it is not extinguished” (10).

<sup>59</sup> As in modern Cairo Arabic, see WOIDICH, *Das Kairenisch-Arabisches*, p. 295.

<sup>60</sup> = *اسوار* with secondary emphasis.

<sup>61</sup> See DAVIES, *Seventeenth-Century Egyptian Arabic*, p. 284-288.

<sup>62</sup> This is a general trend seen in Middle Arabic texts. See BLAU, *The emergence and linguistic background of Judaeo-Arabic: a study of the origins of Middle Arabic*, London, 1965, p. 106.

- لم is also used to negate prepositional sentences: لم فيك كلام “you don’t say anything” (10), and nominal sentences: لم ناس مثلك “there are no people like you” (34).

#### 4.3.4. Agreement

Agreement is often against the rules of Classical Arabic, but is in accordance with modern Egyptian Arabic:

- The human plural can agree with the feminine singular: فيها رجال اعتدت لقتل الاعداء “in them (= the ships) are men who are prepared to fight the enemies” (36)<sup>63</sup>.
- The non-human plural can agree with an adjective or verb in the plural: بنديات يكسروا “rifles that destroy” (39), القيود الثقيل “the heavy chains” (45)<sup>64</sup>.
- كثير can always remain masculine, as in modern Egyptian Arabic<sup>65</sup>: مناكب كثير “many helpers” (38).
- For the (lack of) agreement between a noun and its demonstrative, see: *The demonstratives*.

#### 4.3.5. Asyndetic clauses

A subordinate clause can follow a verb without a conjunction, as in let him go” (38). Like in modern Cairo Arabic, خليه يروح followed by the object, which is the subject of the subordinate clause<sup>66</sup>. In the subordinate clause, the verb is in the imperfect.

Final clauses, i.e. clauses indicating a purpose, are also asyndetic: نروح نشتره, “and if the enemy came to climb it” (2) وان جا العدو يصوره “we will go to buy him” (39). In modern Cairo Arabic, these kinds of sentences can be made either with *‘a(la)šān* or asyndetically, e.g. *nizilt issū’ (‘ašān) aštiri wizza* “I went to the market to buy a goose”<sup>67</sup>.

## 5. Conclusion

*Li‘b al-manār* is a 16<sup>th</sup> century Egyptian shadow play which contains a number of typical Middle Arabic features. The negation لم is used in

<sup>63</sup> See WOIDICH, *Das Kairenisch-Arabische*, p. 249.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 197.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 325.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 379.

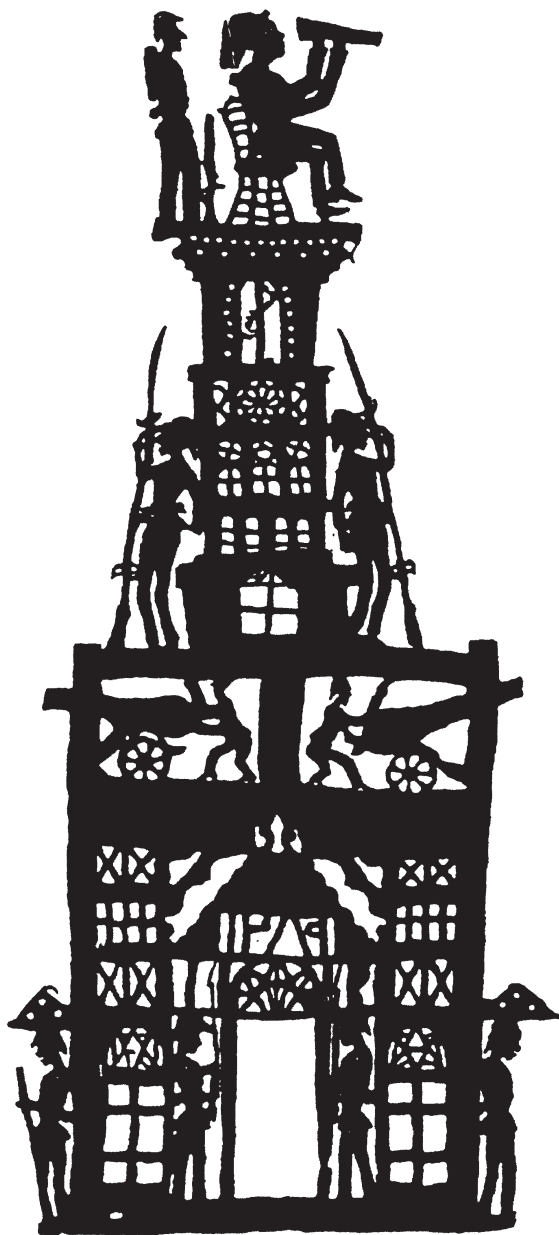
combination with the perfect to negate the past tense, and in combination with the imperfect indicative to negate the present tense. It can even be used to negate prepositional and nominal sentences. *الذی* can be used in combination with feminine nouns and, in general, the rules of agreement are not applied in the way that they should be in Classical Arabic.

The text also has many features that can be found in modern Egyptian Arabic. Some examples are the personal pronouns, the interrogatives, and the use of the *bi*-imperfect. There is also one instance of the negation *mā-...šī*, although the negation *mā-* is the form most commonly used. There are other features which highlight that certain developments in the language had not yet been completed at the time *Li'b al-manār* was written. An example is *rāyih*, which by that point in history had developed into the future particle, and eventually resulted in the prefix *ḥa-* that is used in modern Egyptian Arabic. Another example is the attributively used demonstrative. This was preposed in that period, while it is postposed now. In this text, the preposed demonstrative is always written as *د* followed by the article, regardless of whether the following word is masculine, feminine or plural, e.g. *دالقاعة*. The independently used demonstratives are *دا*, *دی* and *دول*, like in modern Egyptian Arabic. *دول* has the varieties *دولا* and *دولیک*.

Another interesting feature is the use of the relative pronoun *ادی*, which has never before been attested in Egypt, but used to be very common in Andalusia and North Africa. It is, like *illi*, a contraction of *\*allaḍī*. It is likely that *iddi* and *illi* have existed side by side in Egypt, with *illi* eventually prevailing, as happened in Morocco during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Abstract**

The Egyptian shadow play *Li'b al-manār* ("The play of the lighthouse") is one of the texts in a manuscript acquired by the German Orientalist Paul Kahle (1875-1964) in 1907. Although the manuscript dates from 1119/1707, the text of the play can be traced back to the 1500s. It tells the story of a battle between Christian invaders and Muslim soldiers, with the action taking place in and around the famous lighthouse of Alexandria, which collapsed in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Shadow plays were written to be performed in front of an audience comprised of people from all walks of life, including those who were not necessarily educated. Accordingly, the language of this play is Middle Arabic rather than Classical Arabic, with a heavy component of the purely colloquial. *Li'b al-manār* is full of interesting samples of Egyptian Arabic. In this article, the orthographical, morphological and syntactic features found in the play are described.



*Figure 1:* Shadow figure of the Lighthouse of Alexandria, dated 1289/1871-2. The figure is reproduced from P. KAHLE, "Islamische Schattenspielfiguren aus Egypten. II. Teil", in *Der Islam*, 2 (1911), p. 181. Reproduced with permission of the publisher, De Gruyter, Berlin.