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It was during a semester spent in Cairo that my interest in the Egyptian colloquial was kindled. The importance of the dialect in daily life on the one hand, and the lack of attention and, often, appreciation it received for its prose form on the other were some of the issues that fascinated me. As a result of this initial experience, I decided to write my Master's thesis about *Laban il'aṣṣūr*, a novel by Yūsuf al-Qa'īd which is written entirely in the Egyptian dialect. Later, in 1999, when I was looking for a suitable subject for a dissertation, Professor Manfred Woidich suggested that a facsimile edition of *Daf al-iṣr 'an kalām ahl Miṣr* by Yūsuf al-Mağribī, which he had purchased in Cairo in the sixties, may be of interest to me. I was immediately charmed by the fascinating descriptions of Egyptian daily life set out in this 17th century word list of the Egyptian Arabic dialect, as I also was by the poems composed by al-Mağribī himself and others, and the delightful anecdotes. So, without further hesitation, I decided to prepare an edition and began studying the text.

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