Egyptian Arabic in the seventeenth century: a study and edition of Yusuf al-Magribi's 'Daf al-isr an kalam ahl Misr'

Zack, E.W.A.

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
CHAPTER 3

About Daf al-ʻiṣr ‘an kalām ahl Miṣr

3.1 The contents of Daf al-ʻiṣr

Daf al-ʻiṣr is an important source of the Egyptian dialect used at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries. It is presented in the form of a list of Egyptian Arabic words, which al-Maġribī checked for consistency with Classical Arabic, referring mainly to al-ʻFīrūzābādī’s al-Qāmūs al-Muhājī. As the title of Daf al-ʻiṣr indicates, al-Maģribī’s aim was to prove that many Egyptian dialect words, which were considered to be “incorrect” Arabic, in fact have their roots in the Classical Arabic language. This makes Daf al-ʻiṣr a work of special interest because it is one of very few in this field, as will be shown in §3.3.1.

Since al-Maţribī did not have many precedents to follow, it is interesting to discover more about his motives for writing this work,136 the books that influenced him,137 and his methodology, namely what kind of words he discussed, how he examined them, and whether or not he was successful in doing so.138 Daf al-ʻiṣr has attracted scholarly interest over the years, and the studies that have been written about it will be discussed in §3.4 and §3.5.

In this chapter, only Daf al-ʻiṣr’s linguistic aspects will be considered. Another element of the book is its poetry, both by al-Maţribī and others, as well as its many (rhyming) riddles. Al-Maţribī used these as a way of proving the validity of a word (if it was found in a poem in Classical Arabic). He also utilized them to demonstrate the use of a word, or simply to enliven the text and highlight his prowess at the art. These poems will be discussed separately, in Chapter 4.

Apart from its linguistic and literary interest, Daf al-ʻiṣr contains valuable information about Egyptian culture during the 16th/17th centuries, such as the types of clothing and food that were common, and the new fashion of tobacco and coffee. These aspects will be discussed in Chapter 6.

3.2 Al-Maţribī’s reasons for writing Daf al-ʻiṣr

The actual word list starts at fol. 3b. Fols. 1a-3a contain an introduction in which al-Maţribī mentions his reasons for writing Daf al-ʻiṣr. His aim was:

---

136 See §3.2.
137 See §3.3.
138 See §3.6 and §3.7.
About Da‘f al-‘Isr ‘an kalām ahl Miṣr

بيان الفاظ يحكم الظاهر بخطاتها والحال انها صواب و كلمات تظهر صحتها ولم توافق ما عليه ذو الألباب

“Clarifying words which appear to be wrong, while the fact is that they are correct, and other words which appear to be correct, but about which the intellectuals do not agree”\(^{139}\)

So, his main aim was to prove that words which the intellectuals thought were incorrect, i.e. not the same as in Classical Arabic, or about which there were doubts, in fact were not “wrong” at all. The way in which he wanted to achieve this is explained on fol. 2a:

ان يرتت هذا الكتاب على ابهج ترتيب ويهذب ما يقع من عواو اهل مصر يبرجه للصواب

وهذا هو التَّمْرِب َّمغتَّفا من القاموس والعُبَاب ِمِبتا لما حكَّم بخطاتها انها صواب

“To arrange this book in the most splendid way, and improve what is said by the common people of Egypt, by relating it to the correct form, which is ta‘rīb (“Arabization”), scooping from al-Qāmūs and al-‘Ubāb, and clarifying that what is considered to be wrong, is correct.”

To check the existence of dialectal words in Classical Arabic, al-Maġribī intended to use al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ by al-Fīrūzābādī\(^{140}\) and al-‘Ubāb al-zāhir wa l-lubāb al-fāhir by Raḍī al-Dīn al-Hasan b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaḡānī (577/1181-650/1252)\(^{141}\). Yet, contrary to this statement, al-Maġribī did not actually use al-‘Ubāb as a source for Da‘f al-‘Isr in the section of the manuscript that is left for us to read.

Al-Maġribī realized that what he intended to do was quite unique, as we can read on fols. 2b-3a:

وكل من هذين اى نظام الالفاظ المشتركة وتطبيق الالفاظ الذي يظهر خطأها على الصواب ما صنعه اخذ في علمي وانما الحريبي في درة الغواص بين أوهام الخواص وغالبها يقبل الاجوبة

\(^{139}\) Although the sentence *kalīmāt...al-allāb* seems grammatically incorrect, the meaning is clear.

\(^{140}\) See §1.1.1 for full biographical details.

\(^{141}\) See GAL I pp. 443-4.
“To the best of my knowledge, neither of these i.e. the arrangement of joint words\textsuperscript{14} and the application of the words which appear to be wrong in their correct form, has been done by anybody before. However, al-Hařīrī demonstrated the errors of the elite in his *Durrat al-qlawwās*,\textsuperscript{143} and the majority of these errors need a reply”.

On fol. 3a he tells about an incident which strengthened his determination to pursue this idea:

“The reason for this work is that a boaster heard one of his friends say certain expressions, so he started to make fun of him and ridicule him, although they [the expressions] conveyed the correct meaning, like ‘so and so turned out to be a sly fox (bāqi’ā) in this or that case’; and he heard his messenger say *mrmād* during a chess-game so he laughed at him, but *mrmād* comes from *ramād* ‘inflammation of the eye’, as if he says to him: ‘I did not see in this game,’\textsuperscript{144} so I asked God for proper guidance.”

When reading *Durrat al-qlawwās*, al-Maġribī realised that certain words, which were considered to be incorrect, did in fact not deviate from Classical Arabic. Furthermore, he noticed that people who used this kind of language were being laughed at. He, therefore, felt the need to correct this ignorance by investigating which colloquial words had the same meaning in Classical Arabic. However, on fol. 3a he states that he knows he would not always be able to achieve this goal:

\textsuperscript{14} *muṣṭārik*: al-Maģribī meant: words which have more than one meaning. In the paragraph before this quotation, al-Maģribī discussed the different meanings of the verb *a’rāb* (see fol. 2a).

\textsuperscript{143} For biographical details, see §1.1. *Durrat al-qlawwās* is a specimen of the *lahn al-āmma*-literature, see §3.3.1.

\textsuperscript{144} Apparently this is an exclamation used when somebody loses a piece or is being checkmated. See §5.4.
About Daf‘ al-isr ‘an kalām ahl Miṣr

وليس المراد أن جميع ما صدر من الناس أصححه وإنما ما قبل الصحح نبئه وما لا يقبل أصرح بعدم قوله

“It is not my intention to correct everything the people say, but to throw light on everything that is acceptable, and to clarify everything that is not acceptable, and why that is the case.”

On fol. 133a, at the end of the work, al-Mağribī gives a completely different reason for writing Daf‘ al-isr:

وكان البابت لهذا الأمر الغير الأمر الذي قصدت مطالعة القاموس المحيط

“The incentive for this not so painful affair was that I intended to study al-Qāmūs al-muhīṭ”.

However, the fact that one reason is given does not mean that any others are invalid. Writing Daf‘ al-isr, therefore, served al-Mağribī’s purposes well in defending the Egyptian dialect, while at the same time it enabled him to study al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ. The outcome of his examination even surprised him on occasions:

ويقولون ويقع كثيرًا من النساء فلان على الحال ما يجعل أي سريع الفيل والعجيب أنه قال في القاموس "الرقوق كفصفور السين الخيول" انتهى محل التعجب موافقتهن للمعنى اللغوي وهذا

ومثله حملني على وضع هذا الكتاب فإن غالب كلمات أهالي مصر يوافق اللغة

“They say, and this is heard often from women, so-and-so ‘alā l-bāb mā yiza’aq, i.e. “he gets angry immediately”, and the amazing thing is that he [= al-Fīrūzābādī] says in al-Qāmūs that “al-зу‘iq with the pattern of ‘uşfūr is somebody who has a bad temper”, end of quotation, and the cause of this amazement is their [= the women’s] conformity with the meaning in the Classical language. This and other similar cases induced me to write this book, because the greater proportion of the words of the people of Egypt is in conformity with the [Classical Arabic] language.”

Unfortunately, this example is based on an error, for al-Qāmūs al-muhīṭ mentions the recluse with the meaning described by al-Mağribī, not al-Fīrūzābādī. However, it demonstrates that al-Mağribī was genuinely pleased when he could relate an Egyptian-Arabic word to Classical Arabic.

145 Fol. 42a.
146 See al-Qāmūs al-muhīṭ p. 801c.
3.3 Works that influenced al-Mağribī

3.3.1 Ḭaḥīn al-ʿāmma-literature

Criticizing the language of certain people, like al-Ḥafrī did in Durrat al-ḡawwāṣ, was common. Works of this genre, generally known as Ḭaḥīn al-ʿāmma,147 or “errors of language made by the common people”, already existed in the second century AH.148 Their design was “to correct deviations by reference to the contemporary linguistic norm, as determined by the purists”.149

Al-Mağribī borrows some of the terminology used in the Ḭaḥīn al-ʿāmma literature, e.g. he introduces the dialect word with yuqūlūn “they say”, and the correct form (if he establishes that the dialect form is not ‘correct’) by wa al-ṣawābā... “whereas the norm is...”.150 This could be an indication that al-Mağribī got his inspiration for Daḥ al-īṣr from the Ḭaḥīn al-ʿāmma literature. We know that he was familiar with at least one specimen of the genre: al-Ḥafrī’s Durrat al-ḡawwāṣ fī awḥām al-ḥawāṣ, of which al-Mağribī produced an arrangement and appendix.151 Nevertheless, al-Mağribī’s purpose was the opposite of that of the Ḭaḥīn al-ʿāmma literature, i.e. defending the colloquial language, instead of attacking it. He introduces a word without prejudice, and then examines whether the word is ‘correct’ Arabic or not. However, this positive attitude does not mean that he completely refrains from pointing out ‘errors’ in the language of the Egyptians.

Maṭar (1966) p. 56 refers to some authors who have devoted part of their Ḭaḥīn al-ʿāmma work to words that were considered to be incorrect, even though they were not,152 as well as to authors who devoted a complete work to the dialectal words that can be found in Classical Arabic. As well as Daf al-īṣr, Bahr al-ʾawwām fīmā ʾasāb fī ar-ar al-ʾawwām by Muhammad b. Yūsuf al-Ḥanbalī (d. 971/1563),153 and al-Qawl al-muqaṭṭāb fīmā wāfaqā luğat ʾahl Miṣr min luğāt al-ʾarab by Ibīn abī al-Surūr154

---

147 This expression, or the similar Ḭaḥīn al-ʾawwāmm, is often used in titles of works of this genre, although different titles can be found as well such as Kitāb ǧulāt al-ʾawwāmm or Kitāb mā tāqlat fihi al-ʾawwām, see Ef’ V p. 606a (Ch. Pellat).
148 According to Ef’ V p. 607a (Ch. Pellat) the Kitāb mā talḥan fihi al-ʾawwāmm or Risāla fī lın al-ʾāmma, attributed to al-Kisāṭī (d. 189/805), is probably the first work of the genre.
149 Ef’ V p. 605 (Ch. Pellat).
150 Compare Ef’ V p. 605 (Ch. Pellat).
151 See Daḥ al-īṣr fols. 3a, 8b, 9a and §1.4.
152 E.g. Ibn Hišām al-Laḥmī, Ibn Makkī in Tı/uni1E6Fqīf ıl-lisān, and Ibn al-Sayyid al-Ba/uni1E6Dalyūsī in ı/uni1E2Bı/uni1E25r ıl-/unie2BFıwwām fīmā wāfıqı luğıt /unie2BEıhl Mi/uni1E63r min luğāt ıl-/unie2BFırıb by Ibn abī al-Surūr154
153 See GAL S II pp. 495-6.
154 For the latter see §3.4.
also belong in this category. However, the latter is an abbreviated version of Dıf al-ısr.

Al-Mağribī does not include the word āmma or āwāmm (“the common people”) in the title of his book. He speaks of kalām ahl Miṣr, “the language of the people of Egypt”, without specifying any particular group. As mentioned in §2.3, al-Mağribī changed the title during the writing process: The original title of the work was al-Fadl āamm wa qāmūs āwāmm, “The general benefit and the dictionary of the common people”. The word āwāmm was often used in the genre of the “language errors” literature, e.g. al-Zubaydī’s Lı-āmmı and the Kitāb mā talḥan fīhī āwāmm, which is attributed to al-KisāT. However, the āwāmm were not always the target, but rather the ḥawāṣṣ, whose feelings were spared by the reference in the title to the āwāmm. Al-Mağribī does not give a clear indication of whose speech he is describing. Usually, when he discusses a word, he does not specify which group uses it. However, he does sometimes mention this explicitly: “This can be heard from the āwāmm”, “this occurs from the āwāmm”, “this is heard from the peasants”, “that can be heard mostly from the women”, etc. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the words which do not have such a specification were those used by all classes of society. This might also be one of the reasons why al-Mağribī decided to change the title of the book.

Moreover, Dıf al-ısr differs from the Lı-āmmı literature in that al-Mağribī not only mentions mistakes and deviations made in attempts to write Classical Arabic, but also pure dialect words whose meaning cannot be found in any Arabic source, as well as words that have a foreign origin.

3.3.2 Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīf

Al-Mağribī admired al-Fīrūzābādī’s al-Qāmūs al-muḥīf. It is almost the only dictionary he refers to in his quest for an explanation of colloquial words. It is safe to say that at least half of Dıf al-ısr consists of quotations from al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīf. Al-Fīrūzābādī was an outstanding and innovative lexicographer, and his dictionary is original in some respects. In order to include as many entries as possible in a limited space, al-Fīrūzābādī left out examples (šıwāhid), and used a system of abbreviations of his own invention, for instance  for mawdi “place” to indicate a place-name in general,  for balad “town”,  for qarya “village”,  for

155 See Ef V p. 605b (Ch. Pellat).

156 Sometimes, notably more towards the end, al-Mağribī also quotes from Muhtar al-ṣhāh, an abbreviation of Ṭag al-ṣuṣa wa ṣhāh al-ṣurā biya by Iṣmā‘īl b. Ḥammād al-Ǧawhārī (d. ca. 398/1008). See GAL S I p. 196 and Ef II p. 495b ff. (L. Kopf).
About Daf' al-Iṣr’ an kālām ahl Miṣr

“plural”, م for ma‘rūf “known” for entries which need not be explained157 (for instance the word raḥi11). In this way, he succeeded in cramming 60,000 entries into two volumes.159 In al-Qāmūs al-muhīṭ, al-Fīrūzābādī criticizes al-Ǧawhari’s al-Šīhāh, and states in his introduction that: “half the language or more escaped him [al-Ǧawhari]”,160 and adds that it contains “clear delusions and shameful mistakes”.161 Al-Maġribī copied these criticisms without any research, and even added some of his own, for instance:

“They say to a small boat zwraq, and this is correct. He said in al-Qāmūs: ‘a zwraq is a small boat’, which is clearer than the words of al-Muḥṭasar: ‘a zwraq is a kind of boat’.”

Nonetheless, al-Maģribī does not criticize al-Fīrūzābādī when the latter includes in his dictionary words which are obviously not of Arabic origin. A good example is the word mūm “wax; candles”, which is Persian.163 Knowing this language, al-Maģribī must obviously have realized this. Nevertheless, he quoted the following without criticism:

“They say mūm for “wax; candles”, and this is often heard from the Turks. It is erroneously believed that this is not Arabic, although it is. He said in al-Qāmūs: “mūm with ḏamm means “wax; candles” and an instrument for the weaver into which he puts the yarn and with which he weaves, and an instrument of the shoemaker; [it also means] the pleurisy”.”

157 See al-Fīrūzābādī’s introduction to al-Qāmūs al-Muhīṭ p. 32d.
158 See al-Qāmūs al-muhīṭ p. 903b.
159 See Haywood (1965) p. 87. The edition I used (published by Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, in 1999) even succeeded in comprising the whole work in one volume.
160 Al-Qāmūs al-muhīṭ p. 32c.
161 Ibid. p. 32h.
162 Fol. 42a.
163 Al-Maģribī used an abbreviated version of al-Šīhāh.
164 Steingass (1975) p. 1348: موم “mom, mūm, wax; a wax-candle”.
165 Daf’ al-Iṣr’ fol. 106a.
Al-Maġribī’s friend and colleague, al-Ḥaǧī, was more realistic when he wrote in *Ṣifā‘ al-ġalīl fīmā fī kalām al-‘arab mīn al-daḥīl* p. 202:

“mūm meaning “wax, candles” is Persian (...) and the words of al-Qāmūs wrongly suggest the contrary, but this is a delusion”.

Another sign of the appreciation al-Maġribī felt for al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ is the fact that he followed the same arrangement for entries in his own work, the so-called rhyme arrangement, which arranges roots according to their last radical. The roots are presented in the normal alphabetical order, with the exception of the wāw, which is given before the hā’. Each new chapter, based on the last radical of a root, is introduced with the word ḥarf or bāb. Each first radical is introduced with the word ṣaḥl, e.g. the word ḡāsin “unjust, tyrant” can be found in ḥarf al-mūm, ṣaḥl al-ġayn. This was the common order in the dictionaries of the time.166 Although other dictionaries used this system, we can assume that had al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ used a different one, al-Maġribī would have followed suit.

Finally, we can detect the significant influence of al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ in the choice of entries in *Da‘f al-‘isr*. Sometimes, al-Maġribī mentions a word which he found in al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ but has a different meaning in the Egyptian dialect, i.e. the word ḡūbūq (fol. 50a) which meant “cloudy” in Egyptian Arabic while ḡībūq means “evening draught” in Classical Arabic. One often gets the impression that al-Maġribī was leafing through al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ, and choosing the entries he found interesting even though he had nothing to add to what al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ had written, other than confirming that the Egyptians used the word in the same way. There are many consecutive pages in which al-Maġribī does not introduce any words that cannot be found in al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ. This could be the reason why many of those included in *Da‘f al-‘isr* are of no interest, or are not even worth mentioning in a dictionary of the spoken Arabic of Cairo. Examples are expressions such as ṣā‘ir muḥīq “an outstanding poet”167 or al-‘awwol wa l-‘āḫir “the first and the last”168.

166 See Haywood (1965) p. 48. This order can be found also in *Lisān al-‘arab*.
167 fol. 53b.
168 fol. 93b.
3.4 Daff al-`ısr and al-Qawl al-muqtaḍaba

As explained in §2.2, the Daff al-`ısr manuscript has lost some quires over the course of time. To a certain extent, what was written in the missing section can be reconstructed with the help of another work, known as al-Qawl al-muqtaḍabab fīmā wāfaqa lajat `ahl Miṣr min lajat al-`Arab (“The abbreviated speech concerning what corresponds in the language of the people of Egypt with the languages of the Arabs”, hereafter referred to as al-Qawl al-muqtaḍaba) by Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Surūr al-Bakrī. Al-Qawl al-muqtaḍaba is a dictionary of the Egyptian Arabic colloquial, and is based on Daff al-`ısr, but in an abbreviated form. It was written in 1057/1647, and its author, who at the end of the work states his name as Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Surūr al-`Ṣiddīqi al-Šāfi′ī Sibṭ ʿĀl al-Ḥasan,169 was a member of a famous Egyptian family, affiliated to the Bakrīya ṣūfī order. Ibn Abī al-Surūr was probably born in 998/1589-90.170 There is disagreement about the exact date of his death. Opinions vary from anywhere between 1060/1650 and 1087/1676, but Rafeq (1975) pp. 25-27 offers 1653 as being the most likely. Ibn Abī al-Surūr is one of the most important historians from the first half of the 17th century.171

Fortunately, Ibn Abī al-Surūr’s abbreviation of Daff al-`ısr is based on the complete manuscript. This helps us to reconstruct some of the entries that were lost. However, he left out all of the words which do not have an Arabic root, depriving linguists of the most interesting aspect of the work. He abbreviated the quotations from al-Qāmūs al-Muqtaḍab, and left out the anecdotes and poetry etc. because he believed that al-`Maḡribī had a habit of elaborating and digressing from the main purpose of the book.172 Al-Qawl al-muqtaḍab is, therefore, a better arranged and more structured document than Daff al-`ısr. However, it lacks much of the charm of its predecessor. We should give Ibn Abī al-Surūr credit for checking the entries in Daff al-`ısr against other dictionaries that were not consulted by al-`Maḡribī, such as Ibn Manẓūr’s Lisān al-`arab, Ibn al-`Anbārī’s al-Zāhir173 and Karā’ al-Naml’s al-Muṣarrad.174 After Ibn Abī al-Surūr, both manuscripts (Daff al-`ısr and al-

---

169 See Rafeq (1975) p. 25 for his full name.
170 Ibid. p. 27.
171 Detailed information can be found in Rafeq (1975). He does not, however, mention al-Qawl al-muqtaḍab.
173 Full title al-Zāhir fī ma`ānī kalimāt al-nās by Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim al-Anbārī (231/885-328/940), see GAL S I p. 182.
174 Full title al-Muṣarrad fī ṣāhib kalim al-`Arab wa luqāthāhā by Abī l-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥusayn al-Hunāfī al-Ruḍa, known as Kurā’ al-Naml (d. 922/1516), see GAL S I p. 201. See e.g. the entry igsawāt which
Qawl al-muqtaḍāb fell into the hands of Yūsuf al-Mallawī, known as Ibn al-Wakīl. He copied Ibn Abī al-Surūr’s al-Qıwl ıılm-muqtıbıb, while keeping Dıf-ul-ısr open next to it, and added some of the entries that Ibn Abī al-Surūr had left out. The version of al-Qawl al-muqtaḍāb referred to hereafter is the version published in 1962 by al-Sayyid Ibrāhīm Sālim, and introduced by Ibrāhīm al-Ibyārī. This version contains Ibn Abī al-Surūr’s text, including that added by Ibn al-Wakīl.

Al-Qawl al-muqtaḍāb contains 863 entries. As calculated previously, Dıf-ul-ısr must, originally, have contained around .560 entries. This means that al-Qıwl ıılm-muqtıbıb includes only one third of the entries of Dıf-ul-ısr, since Ibn Abī al-Surūr and Ibn al-Wakīl did not believe that the rest fit the purpose of al-Qıwl ıılm-muqtıbıb, and discarded them.

Not only did Ibn Abī al-Surūr choose which entries to include, but he also often reworded them and made considerable changes to the text. Set out below are four examples which demonstrate how he changed the wording and the effect this has on the meaning of the text:

1. In Dıf-ul-ısr fol. 26a: “they say: so-and-so is mıšġūf and in the [Classical Arabic] language mıšġūf means ‘crazy’”. Al-Qıwl ıılm-muqtıbıb p. 111 rewords this as follows: “they say: so-and-so is mıšġūf, i.e. made him go out of his mind, and it is correct in the Classical Arabic language”.

2. Dıf-ul-ısr fol. 69a: “they use the word ġımīl ‘beautiful’ also as an insult”. Al-Qawl al-muqtaḍab p. 134: “they say: so-and-so is ġımīl ‘beautiful’ of shape for instance”.

3. Dıf-ul-ısr fol. 107a: “they say: so-and-so sleeps much (kıı-nıyām), and it is correct as well, just

for more information about this person, see §2.1.

See the introduction to the edition of al-Qawl al-muqtaḍab, p. 7, where the introduction which the copist Ibn al-Wakīl added to the work is published. These additions to the text led Ibrāhīm al-Ibyārī, who wrote the introduction to the edition of al-Qawl al-muqtaḍab, to believe that he held in his hands a work which contained the complete contents of Dıf-ul-ısr. This is understandable, because he had not seen Dıf-ul-ısr so could not compare the two, but he was incorrect.

See §2.2.
In the first example, Ibn Abī al-Surūr simply changed the way in which the word is represented, from the passive participle to active perfect. In the second example, he totally missed the point of mentioning the specific use of the word ġamlīl as an insult, and left us with the less interesting, well-known, meaning of “beautiful”. In the third example, he ignored the information that in the Egyptian dialect, two muqātablāt of the verb nām are used: niyām and niwm. He only mentioned the second, more common one, while al-Maġribī’s point was that the more striking niyām should be referred to. In the fourth example, Ibn Abī al-Surūr turned the interesting form V with prefix it- into an ordinary form I. Unfortunately, these kind of changes happen a lot, and therefore it must be concluded that as a linguistic document, al-Qawāl al-muqtaḍāb is far less interesting than Daf’ al-īṣr.

3.5 Earlier studies of Daf’ al-īṣr

Undoubtedly, Ibn Abī al-Surūr and Ibn al-Wakīl were the first to study Daf’ al-īṣr. After these two efforts, it remained unnoticed for almost two centuries, even when it came into the hands of Muhammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī, who took it with him to Russia, along with the rest of his manuscript collection, but did not, apparently, publish anything about it. This is remarkable, since al-Ṭanṭāwī was interested in the Egyptian dialect, as can be seen in his Traité de la langue arabe vulgaire.

After Daf’ al-īṣr was added to the collection of the university library in St. Petersburg, the first to note the importance of the work was Victor Romanovič Rosen (1849-1908). In 1875, he wrote a letter to the German orientalist Heinrich Thorbecke (1837-1890), in which he described the manuscript and quoted some interesting passages from it, with the aim of encouraging Thorbecke to study the text. This seemed to work, and Thorbecke copied the manuscript, albeit excluding the quotations from al-Qāmūs al-muhīṭ. After his death, along with Thorbecke’s
About *Daf 'al-ṣIRR an kalām ahl MiṣR*

other scholarly papers, this copy was bequeathed to the library of the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft. It is now kept in the University of Halle’s library.¹⁷⁸

The next person to take an interest in the manuscript was Ignatij Julianovič Kratchkovsky (1883-1951), who wrote an excellent article about *Daf 'al-ṣIRR* and its author in 1926. Subsequently, it seems that the existence of *Daf 'al-ṣIRR* escaped the notice of many scholars outside Russia. Ibrāhīm al-Ibyārī, who wrote the introduction to the printed edition of *al-Qawl al-muqtadab*, mentions that *Daf 'al-ṣIRR* had been lost.¹⁷⁹ This was because it had initially been in private hands, and had apparently never been copied and circulated; it was then taken to Russia. If al-Ibyārī had checked Brockelmann’s *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, he would have discovered that the manuscript is still in existence.

In 1968, *Daf 'al-ṣIRR* was published as a facsimile by the Publishing House Nauk (“Science”), in Moscow. The text was introduced by ‘Abd al-Salām Awwād in Russian and Arabic. He also produced extensive indices of the entries, Qur’ān-verses, *ḥadīṯ*, proverbs, poetry by al-Maḡribī and others, songs, riddles, famous people, sects and tribes, places, and books by al-Maḡribī and other authors. Awwād worked as a teacher of Arabic at the University in St. Petersburg (Leningrad at that time) between 1961 and 1965. In 1964, he received a Doctorate for his introduction to and indices of *Daf 'al-ṣIRR*. In his nine page Arabic introduction, Awwād provides some information about al-Maḡribī’s life, and a description of the manuscript. It was only after the publication of the facsimile edition that the work attracted the attention of scholars. According to some witnesses, it was distributed in a bookshop in Cairo, and a number of reviews and articles were thus published about it. A few are mentioned below:

- In 1969, Sharbatov presented *Daf 'al-ṣIRR* in a colloque, and an abbreviation of his lecture was published in French, while in 1970 the full text was published in Arabic. In the Arabic article, he discusses several of the linguistic characteristics of the Egyptian dialect which can be found in *Daf 'al-ṣIRR*, such as placing the interrogatives at the end of the sentence, the frequent use of certain word patterns, such as fa'‘āl, changes in vowels, proverbs and expressions.

¹⁷⁸ See Müller-Socin (1891) p. 480, nr. 124. Ms. Th. A93. I gratefully thank the library of the Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg for providing me with a digital image on CD Rom of Thorbecke’s copy of *Daf 'al-ṣIRR*.

¹⁷⁹ See §3.4.

¹⁸⁰ See Ḥiğāzī (1968) p. 117.
- Ramaḍān ʿAbd al-Tawwāb published an article in 1969-1970 about َّف al-ʾizr, in which he discusses at length several of the linguistic phenomena that appear in it, such as emphasis, metathesis, loss of interdentals, change of vowels etc.
- A review of َّف al-ʾizr was published by Maḥmūd Faḥmī Ḥiḡāzī in 1969. He begins with a statement about the title of the manuscript, when it was written, and for what reason. He then proceeds to discuss a number of linguistic characteristics, such as the loss of interdentals and َّنما, the words of foreign origin, and the words that are specific to certain classes, which al-Maḡribī discusses.
- An interesting book by Nāṣir ʿAbd Allāh ʿUṭmān, about the sciences in Egypt in the 17th century, was published in 2006. In it, a chapter is devoted to the work of linguists. َّف al-ʾizr is mentioned as one of the most important linguistic documents of that time. Unfortunately, ʿUṭmān was unable to consult the manuscript or the ’Awwād edition, and therefore only refers to the aforementioned article by Sharbatov.\footnote{See ʿUṭmān (2006) p. 275 footnote 81.}

So far, the interest in َّف al-ʾizr had been purely linguistical. The first to shed light on another aspect of the work was Olga Frolova, who wrote a number of articles about the َّنما in َّف al-ʾizr.\footnote{See Frolova (1982), Frolova (1995) and Frolova (1997).} The dialectal poetry in َّف al-ʾizr will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. In 2003, Nelly Hanna used َّف al-ʾizr in her study of the culture of the middle classes in Ottoman Egypt. In this work, she gives us clear insight into the reasons for the rising interest in colloquial language at that time. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the middle classes in Egypt were living very comfortably due to thriving trade and low taxes, which gave them the means to spend more time and money on matters such as education and books. In order to communicate their ideas to these ordinary people, the َّلما started to adapt their style and subject-matters to a non-academic readership.\footnote{Hanna (2003) p. 112-113.} At the same time, the culture of the middle classes also started to influence scholarly work.\footnote{Ibid. p. 113-114.} It therefore seems that al-Maḡribī’s َّف al-ʾizr was part of a wider trend of incorporating non-scholarly content, i.e. the middle class culture, into a scholarly form. The fact that al-Maḡribī was from this class certainly played a part in his choice of subject.

According to Hanna, a similar interest in the dialect appears in three works that were also written during the 17th century, although somewhat later than َّف al-ʾizr. Two of these concern the loanwords that had entered the Arabic language.

One is from Egypt, the aforementioned Šīfā‘ āl-ġālīl fīmā fī kalām āl-‘ārab min al-dāhil by Šīhāb al-Dīn al-Ḥafāği, and the second, from Syria, is by al-Muḥībbī (d. 1111/1699), Qaṣd al-sabīl fīmā fi al-luġa al-‘arabiyya min al-dāhil. Hanna describes the last work as follows: “One of his (al-Muḥībbī’s) aims was to pinpoint colloquial words that were used by the āmma. He distinguished them from imported words (dāhil) with the aim of showing them to be distortions (tahrist), or Arabic words that the āmma distorted. He considered the use of the colloquial to be a negative development and one he disapproved of. His work nevertheless indicates that the question had by his lifetime become one of open debate, a significant phenomenon in itself”.

Here we see the difference to the approach of al-Maġribī, who did not disapprove of the colloquial.

3.6 Al-Maġribī’s methodology

As mentioned in §2.3, the first title al-Maģribī gave to his work was al-Faḍl al-‘āmm wa qāmūs al-‘awāmm. The word qāmūs “dictionary” implies an attempt at an exhaustive word list, with an explanation of the meaning of every word. Al-Maģribī does not, however, follow the principle of listing all of the words and giving their meanings. For instance, he does not mention personal pronouns in separate entries. Moreover, many simple, everyday objects are left out. For instance, he gives us the words mi‘laqa “spoon” and mağrafa “ladle” but not the one for knife. Apart from using al-Qāmūs al-Muḫībī as a source of inspiration, it remains unclear which criteria al-Maģribī used to select the words he went on to discuss. He states that it is his intention to comment on words which were believed to be incorrect, even though they do in fact conform to Classical Arabic. However, this is not always the case, because he also discusses many words which he proved did not so conform, or which are not Arabic at all. Al-Maģribī, probably, discussed words that raised doubts, whatever the result of his research might be. His love of anecdotes and poetry might also have played a role in his choice of material. I assume that if a certain word had inspired him to compose a clever muwwāl, it would then be tempting for him to include it in his work, in order to demonstrate his poetical skills.

It certain cases, al-Maģribī mentions a word, followed by his opinion on its correctness by referring to al-Qāmūs al-Muḫībī, but without explaining its meaning. It remains unclear whether al-Maģribī considered that the meanings of these words were commonly known, or whether he believed that they had the same meaning as given in al-Qāmūs al-Muḫībī, and therefore believed it to be unnecessary.

185 Ibid. p. 131.
to explain them. As an example, we can consider the entry *kittān* “linen” (117b). In this case, al-Maġribī omitted to give a definition of it, and simply corrected its form:

“They say *kittān* with an i after the *kāf*, but it is *kıttān* with an a”.

This case presents no problem because the meaning of the word *kittān* / *kıttān* is known, but when the word or expression is not, as in the following example from fol. 123a, it becomes very difficult to guess its meaning:

“They say: so-and-so has no *idāw/unie1DDt nās*, and this is unknown. He says: ‘*idāwa* with an i is a washroom, pl. *’adăwā*, like *fıtāwā*, and *’adăh* is a tool, pl. *’adawăt*. So perhaps the origin of their expression *idāwat nās* is *’adawār*, which was subject to a change”.

Unfortunately, in most cases al-Maġribī does not vocalize the entries of his word list, which makes it difficult to determine how they should be pronounced. Another problem is the spelling, especially of the *hımzı*, as well as the placement of diacritical points, which is sometimes inaccurate.

Al-Maģribī considered any word to be correct Arabic if it could be retraced to an Arabic root, while its meaning has a resemblance, no matter how distant, to the meaning of it. The root should not have undergone any phonetic changes, such as a change from interdental fricative to dental stop. If a word does not have an Arabic root, al-Maģribī normally states that it is “unknown” to him, meaning that he did not find it in the Classical Arabic dictionaries. Al-Maģribī knew Persian and Turkish, as is obvious from the translations he had carried out (see §1.4). Therefore, he was able to trace back some of the dialect words in these languages. When a word was derived from a language like Turkish or Persian, al-Maģribī does not label it “incorrect”, which is a sign that he cannot be considered as a purist who wished to keep the Arabic language “clean” of foreign influences.

---

186 I.e., it cannot be found in *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*
188 See §6.1.1.
189 For instance *mi/uni1E6Fl* → *mitl*, see *Dıf al-İsr* fol. 91.
About Dař al-īṣr 'an kalām ahl Miṣr

Al-Maġribī’s treatment of the interdentals will serve as an example of his attitude towards language changes. It is known that in al-Maģribī’s time, the interdentals had disappeared from the dialect of Cairo. Although he does not make a general statement about this matter, he gives evidence of the shift from interdentals to dentals in several entries. The only time he explicitly mentions this change is when, on fol. 11a, he wrote by mistake faš al-bā' al-muṭannāh ("Chapter of the bā' with two diacritical points") and then changed it into al-muwāhhdā ("with one diacritical point"). He then added the following comment in the margin:

"The people who say the tā' with two diacritical points on top, with them 1 mean the 'awāmm.'"

He therefore acknowledges that the shift tā' → tā had indeed taken place. Some examples of the loss of interdentals from Dař al-īṣr are:

- يقلون على الشجر اثنين بالمنة وانما هو اثنان بالمثلثة "they call the tree atl ("tamarisk") with two diacritical points, while it is aj with three points"; 191
- يقلون توم بالمثلثة وانما هو توم بالمثلثة "they say tom ("garlic") with two points while it is tūm with three points". 192

The following fragment is also interesting, because it is a typical example of al-Maģribī’s methodology:

"They say hanḍal ("colocynth") to hanǰal with a stroke, and this has no cognate [in the literary language], because hanǰal is a small brook, and hanǰala is water in a rock."

190 Proofs of this can be found in earlier texts than Dař al-īṣr, see Davies (1981) p. 66. For more details see §6.2.2.
191 Fol. 63a.
192 It is not clear whether al-Maģribī means tūm or tūm, since the Arabic script has no way to distinguish between the ā and ā-sounds.
193 Fol. 96a.
194 Fol. 71b.
Although al-Maġribī realised that the colloquial /qita/ “Armenian cucumber”\(^{195}\) (note also the kasra, while Davies (1981:437) attests 'attāya for the late 17\(^{th}\) century), where one would have expected قتا (nowadays pronounced 'atta in Cairo);\(^{196}\) 
- نظيف صليف /nəzīf səliʃ/ “spotless”,\(^{197}\) instead of present-day niṣīf; 
- رذل ككف /raḍil ka-katif/\(^{198}\) “despicable”.

Due to the fact that the shift from interdental to dental had happened much earlier,\(^{199}\) we may conclude that the above are examples of historical orthography.

Sometimes, al-Maġribī’s explanation of a word is incorrect, mainly because he did not realise (or did not like to admit) that the word had been subjected to certain phonetic changes.\(^{200}\) A good example is the word /miːlʕaː/ “spoon”, which had become /maːlaːqa/ in the Egyptian dialect of al-Maġribī’s time (see fol. 49b), and is nowadays pronounced /maːlʕaː/. Instead of immediately admitting that in the word /miːlʕaː/ metathesis of the /ʕ/ and /l/ has taken place, he gives an explanation that the word has something to do with the verb /miːliːqa/ “to hang”. He mentions only as an afterthought that it was said to be derived from /miːlʕaː/:

\begin{quote}
ويقولون معلقة لالآ يوكول بها وبشر ولم أرها في القاموس والذي فيه دجل ذو معلقة كمرحلة يعلق بكل ما اصابه انهه ومسك بالقياس ان تكون اللال معلقة بالكسر تعلق الطعام والشراب أو يقال إنها معلقة بتقديم اللام اللعى
\end{quote}

\(^{195}\) Fol. 9b. 
\(^{197}\) Fol. 28a. 
\(^{198}\) Fol. 75b. Sometimes al-Maġribī used a well-known word with the same vowel pattern as the explained word, instead of vocalizing the word; see the next paragraph. 
\(^{199}\) See §6.2.2. 
\(^{200}\) See for instance the example رحلة and its explanation as mentioned by Ḥigāzī (1969) p. 119.
“They say ma’laqa to the tool with which they eat and drink. I did not find it in al-Qāmūs, but it says: ‘a man endowed with ma’laqa, like marhala, hangs on to everything he achieves’, end of the quotation. So perhaps in analogy to this the instrument mi’laqa with kasr hangs on to the food and drink; or it is said that it is mil’aqa with preceding lām from ‘licking’.”

Therefore, we may conclude that al-Maġribī knew the proper explanation of the word ma’laqa, but in his eagerness to prove the correctness of the Egyptian language, he preferred to retrace the word to the root ‘LQ, and make-up a far-fetched explanation, rather than admit that the Egyptians had ‘corrupted’ the word mil’aqa. Later, he mentions the word again (fol. 54b):

وقد علمت أن قول أهل مصر معلقة لا يصح بخلاف قول أهل مكة بلععة يكسر العيم كما سمغته منهم في مكة وغيرها

“I learnt that the word ma’laqa of the Egyptians is incorrect, contrary to the word mil’aqa with kasr of the mīm of the people of Mecca, as I heard them say in Mecca and other places”.

Al-Maġribī uses this kind of reasoning often. Another example is the following:

يفلون夸 كنا كذا من المعلوم أن مرادهم كان كذا خفف لكثره الاستعمال والكتابة بالإفتاح امرأة الأبن أو الأخ (....)

“They say knn kadā. It is known that they mean ka’ānn kadā, which has become lighter [i.e., the hamza has disappeared] because of its frequent use. And ‘al-kanna with an a is the wife of the son or of the brother’.”

There was no reason for al-Maġribī to quote the entry KNN from al-Qāmūs al-muḫīṭ, because he had already sufficiently explained the etymology of the word knn. It is possible that he used the quotation here to underline the fact that the word did not have an equivalent with the root KNN in Classical Arabic, or simply to enlighten the reader on the ‘real’ meaning of the root KNN.

It is clear that al-Maġribī had some understanding of the changes that had affected the language. Therefore, it is sometimes surprising that he did not

---

201 When al-Maġribī was a child, he went on pilgrimage to Mecca with his father, see Daḥ al-ʿīsr fol. 70a and §1.1.
mention the obvious, as in the following example, where he did not realise (or did not like to mention!) that a verb \textit{tertiiae hamza} had become \textit{tertiaie yā}:

"They say, I ḥabyyt the thing, i.e. I have hidden it and concealed it. ḥabyyt is not in the language with this meaning, but with another meaning. He said: ‘ḥābī’ is the singular of ‘ahbiya (…); ‘istahbyanā the tent, i.e. we pitched it and we entered it, and ‘ahbıytu the tent and ḥabıytu (…).’"

\subsection*{3.6.1 Entries and their context}
Al-Maġribî often presents the entries in context, in order to demonstrate the use of a word. The following entry will illustrate how useful such a context can be:

"The pure common folk say, ‘we are not of this type (qıbıl)’, with an \textit{i} after the \textit{qāf} and the \textit{bā’}. They mean qıbıl, i.e., belonging to the group of people who behave like this”.

The entry here is qıbıl, and the context in dialect is \textit{mā i/nā min dī-l-qıbıl}. This sentence provides us with a great deal of information: it contains the words \textit{i/nā} “we” and \textit{dī “this, that”, both of which al-Maġribî does not mention as separate entries in his word list. This example highlights that al-Maġribî, sometimes, provides us with much more information than he intended to.

Unfortunately, one sometimes has to ask whether al-Maġribî’s examples always reflect the speech of the day, since he regularly used classicisms, as in the following:

"They say: what are these ḥüzü’ bālāt (‘superstitions’), which means these things which have no foundation”.

\footnote{Fol. 88b.}
\footnote{For more details on \textit{i/nā}, see §6.3.2. For preposed \textit{dī}, see §6.3.3.}
The entry here is the word ḥuzu’balāt, and the Egyptian Arabic element is the interrogative ‘ayš / ēš “what” (nowadays ē in Cairo, but in many parts of Egypt still pronounced as ’ēš). Note the use of ḥādīhī in this example, which is a classicism, unlike the word dī in the previous example.

3.7 Metalanguage
Yūsuf al-Maḡribī uses a system of terminology for describing the phonological, orthographical, linguistic and lexicographical phenomena which are encountered in Dafʼ al-Iṣr. This terminology, called the metalanguage, will be discussed in this chapter.

3.7.1 Describing the vocalization of a word
Al-Maḡribī uses two systems to describe the vocalization of a word:
- Vowel signs and description of the vowels
- Comparison with well-known words with the same pattern as the colloquial words that are described.
These two methods will be enlarged upon in the following two paragraphs.

3.7.1.1 Vowel signs and description of the vowels
Al-Maḡribī makes use, albeit infrequently, of the signs fatha, damma, kasra, sadda and sukūn to indicate the pronunciation of a vernacular word. He also uses a variety of terms to reflect the pronunciation of the colloquial words he describes. This terminology was not invented by him, but was based upon the system of vocalization used by al-Fīrūzābādī in al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ, who in turn relied heavily on the system devised by al-Ǧawharī in Tāǧ al-luğā wa šīḥā al-ʿarabīya.

Al-Maḡribī often describes in words which vowel was added to which letter. This can be done with verbs, like kasara “to provide with the vowel i”, damma “to provide with the vowel u”; fataha “to provide with the vowel a”, or simply with the following: bi-l-kasr “with an i”, bi-l-damm “with an u”, bi-l-fath “with an a”, bi-l-ḥarakāt “with two a-s”, bi-l-sukūn “without a following vowel” etc. The word muṭallaṭ is used to indicate that a word can have an a, i or u (note that muṭallaṭ can also mean that a letter has three diacritical dots, while al-Maḡribī also uses it to describe a certain kind of poem, see §4.2.1). Some examples are:

---

204 For more details on ‘ayš/ēš, see §6.3.5.2.
About Daf’ al-Iṣr’an kalām ahl Miṣr

“They say ‘innāb ‘jujube’, but those who pronounce an _i_ after the ‘ayn are wrong; he says in al-Qāmūs: ‘unnāb like rummān is a well-known fruit’”.

“They say to ‘medicinal powder’, _sufūf_, with a _u_ after the letter _sīn_”.

“They say, to him happened _nāf_ ‘justice’, with an _ı_ after the first and second radical”.

“They say Dimiṣq of the Levant, pronouncing an _i_ after the _dāl_ and the _mīm_, while in Classical Arabic an _a_ would be said after the _mīm_”.

“They say, so-and-so is a _zındīq_ ‘atheist’, pronouncing an _ı_ after the _zā_/ _dāl_ , but it is with an _i_”;

“They say _lu_/ _fūq_ ‘electuary’ with a _u_ after the _lām_ while it is with an _a_”;

“They say ‘so-and-so is _riṭil_ ‘weak’, pronouncing an _ı_ after both [the _rā_/ _rāʾ_ and the _tā_/ _tāʾ_]”;

“They say _mḥṣaf_ sometimes with an _a_ after the _mīm_ and sometimes with a _u_; however, the _mīm_ can have the three vowels”.

“It is said that _ḥizāna_ cannot have a _fatha_ [i.e., be pronounced as _ḥazāna_], and that _maḥzan_ cannot have a _kasra_ [i.e., be pronounced as _mḥzan_]”.

---

206 Fol. 17b.
207 Fol. 25a.
208 Fol. 34a.
209 Fol. 39b.
210 Fol. 42b.
The last example is a pun on the words *kāsr* and *fatḥ*, and could also be translated as “it is said that the safe cannot be opened and that the warehouse cannot be broken into”. This is one of the little linguistic jokes that al-Maḡribī likes to make.

The word *sahhala* means that a word should be read without a *hamza*. The verbs *šadda* and *haffa* and their derivatives, indicate whether a word contains a *šadda* or not:

(8b) “They say *mārṭiyā* ‘elegy’ with a *šadda* [of the *yā*], and correct would be without a *šadda*”;

(127b) “They say, I lamented him in a *mārṭiyā* ‘elegy’, which they pronounce with a *šadda*, while it is *mārṭiya* without a *šadda*”.

### 3.7.1.2 Comparison with well-known words

The second method al-Maḡribī employs in order to clarify the vocalization of a word, is to use comparison with well-known words with the same pattern as those he is discussing. When using this method with a noun or adjective, the well-known word which is used to demonstrate the pattern is introduced with *kı*—“like”. A few examples from *Dafʾ al-İṣr*:

(14a) “They say *rūḍāb* ‘saliva’ with an *i*, and correct would be *ruḍāb* like * Şi ŭ a b*”;

(75a) “They say, and this occurs often from the people of the Levant, *raǧǧāl ‘man’* like *šaddād*”;

(75b) “They say, so-and-so is *raḏīl* ‘despicable’ like *kātf*”.

---

211 For more jokes of this type, see §6.5.3.

212 Although for the word *kātf* the vocalizations *kātf*, *katf* and *kitf* are possible (see WKAS I p. 48a), comparison with al-Qāmūs al-Muhīṭ learns that the vocalization *kātf* is meant here.
Although al-Maġribī himself uses this method only sparingly, it is frequently employed in the numerous quotations from al-Qāmūs al-Muhìf that can be found in Daf al-Isr.

When a verb is compared to a well-known verb, the expression (wa huwa min bāb... or wa bābuhu... “belonging to the category of...” is used alongside the aforementioned ka. An example:

(105b) “They say, ‘so-and-so yiktum, holds a secret, with a u after the tā’, and it is indeed like this, belonging to the category of yanṣur”.

A list of the most frequently used, well-known words from Daf al-Isr can be found at the end of this chapter (§3.7.6).

### 3.7.2 Diacritical dots

To indicate either the number of dots on top of or underneath a letter, or the absence of dots, the following terms are used: mutallāṭ “having three diacritical dots”, mutannā “having two diacritical dots”, muḥām “having one diacritical dot”, and muḥmāl “having no diacritical dots”. To specify the upward stroke of the zā’ the word mušāl is used (although only once in the whole work). Some examples:

(96a) “They say tvm ‘garlic’ with two dots, but it is tvm with three dots”;

(91b) “They say ‘it has no miṭl ‘equivalent’ with two dots on top, but it is miṭl”;

(40a) “They say zirq aṭ-tā’īr ‘bird droppings’; however, it is dirq with a dāl with a dot”;

(71b) “They say ḥandal ‘colocynth’ for ḥanṣal with the zā’ with a stroke”.

### 3.7.3 Linguistic terms

Some linguistic terminology found in Daf al-Isr includes words like muta’addī “transitive” and lāzìm “intransitive” (although only used in quotations from al-
Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ, as*

intensification by repeating a word with its initial consonant changed, such as *kaṣīr baṭūr*, and *muṣṭarāk* “homonym”, and *dīd*, pl. *‘addād*: “(a word) having two mutually exclusive meanings”.

Al-Maġribī was very fond of using a *tawwīya* or “double-entendre” in his poems.

Al-Maġribī used the expression *wa ḥakam al-taṭlīf* “here rules tripllication” to indicate that a word exists which can have a *ḵisr*, *faṭ* or *damm*, each with its own meaning, which often inspired him to use the three words in a poem. This is the case with, for example, the words *mulla* “hot ashes”, *mulha* “religion” and *mulla* “basking stitch” (92a), which he arranged in a *mawwāl*.

The expression *wa hiya bi-hā* means that the regular feminine of a given word takes the *tā marbūṭa*.

The word *luġa* originally meant “dialect”, “dialectal word” in the Arabic grammatical tradition, but Al-Maġribī uses it with the meaning of the “Classical Arabic language”. Therefore, a dialectal word that, according to him, is *luğa*, can be found in *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*. He also uses the word *luġawi* with the same meaning. If a word is *gāyir luġawi* this means it is not in accordance with Classical Arabic.

Al-Maġribī uses the term *al-ǧīm al-gāyir al-‘arabīya* “the un-Arabic ǧīm” to indicate the pronunciation /č/ or /g/ (see §6...1), and it can therefore be concluded that the Arabic ǧīm for Al-Maġribī was /ǧ/.

### 3.7.4 Classification of colloquial words

Al-Maġribī uses a set of terms to describe the conclusions he reached about the origin of colloquial words used by the Egyptians. When a certain word or expression was used by only one group of people e.g. those from a certain class or profession, he used the expressions *wa yusma‘ min* “this is heard from”, *wa ḥādā yaqa‘ min* “this occurs from” and the like. When a word had the same meaning and pronunciation in the Egyptian dialect as in Classical Arabic, he uses such expressions as *wa huwa saḥīḥ* “and this is correct”, *wa lahu munāṣaba / nisba* “it has something that corresponds to it [in Classical Arabic]”, *wa lahu ‘aṣl* “it has an origin”. The expression *wa fih luğaṭ* is used to indicate that a word has several meanings. When explaining what the Egyptians meant to say with a certain word,
he uses wa yuridūn or wa ya'nūn “they mean”. When a word diverged from Classical Arabic in meaning or pronunciation, it got the classification wa laysa lugawiyān “this is not linguistically correct”. When al-Maġribī does not find a word at all in al-Qāmūs al-muhīf, he describes this fact in a number of ways: wa lam yu'lam “it is not known” or wa lam yu'lam min al-lu gauche “it is not known from the [Classical Arabic] language”; wa lam 'a lam lahu munāسام / nisba “I do not know anything that corresponds to it”, wa laysa ka-dālik “it is not like this”, wa laysa lahu wağh “it does not have a meaning”. When correcting a “deviation” from Classical Arabic, the following expressions are used: wa al-ṣawāḇ “and the correct [form] would be”; wa innamū hawwa “however, it should be...”. For “to mispronounce / misread”, the verb sahhaifa and its derivatives are used: yuṣahhiffān “they mispronounce”, tašīf ‘an “it is a mispronunciation of”, muṣahhaf ‘an “mispronounced from”. Sometimes al-Maṟrī makes use of the “telegram style”, for instance when using the word luğa to indicate that something can be found in Classical Arabic: والائي لغة الرجل الخسيس (124a) “and al-bayy in Classical Arabic means ‘the contemptible man’.”

3.7.5 Other terms and expressions used by al-Maṟrī

When quoting from al-Qāmūs al-muhīf, al-Maṟrī often simply mentions qāl “he said”. Every now and then he instead uses a phrase like wa al'am anna “I know that...” (e.g. 78b) or wa fī al-luğa “and in the Classical language [can be found...]” (e.g. 79a). The end of a quotation is marked with intahā “[the quotation] is finished”. Al-Fīrūzābādī was the first one to introduce a number of abbreviations, as mentioned in §3.3... Even though quotations from al-Qāmūs al-Muhīf form a substantial part of Daf al-İsr, al-Maṟrī did not follow al-Fīrūzābādī’s example of using abbreviations, instead writing them in full, perhaps for the sake of readability or clarity.

When al-Maṟrī wrote an afterthought or correction in the margin, this is followed by the word sahā (sometimes abbreviated to صحا,217 which is very common in manuscripts. The word faida “nota-bene”218 is often employed by al-Maṟrī to elaborate on topics of interest that are only indirectly connected to the entry under discussion. He used انظر zuvar in the margin to indicate that he is unsure of an entry, and wants to double-check it or consult other dictionaries.

---

217 “when used for an omission/insertion or evident correction”, EALL I p. 2 (A. Gacek).
218 See EALL I p. 2 (A. Gacek).
3.7.6 List of common nouns and verbs used to indicate word patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>karuma, yakrumu “to be noble”</td>
<td>āmīr “prince”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manā’a, yamma’u “to hinder”</td>
<td>katīf “shoulder”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>samī’a, yasma’u “to hear”</td>
<td>hamza “the letter hamza”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ūtariba, yāṭrābu “to become affected with emotion”</td>
<td>tannūr “oven”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raṣara, raṣṣuru “to render victorious”</td>
<td>Zubayr personal name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daḥala, Yadḥulu “to enter”</td>
<td>rummān “pomegranate”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḍaraba, Yadṛibu “to hit”</td>
<td>kisā “garment”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḍalasa, yadḥısū “to sit”</td>
<td>‘inab “grapes”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rāddā, yaraddu “to bring back”</td>
<td>Šaddād personal name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wadda, yawaddu “to love”</td>
<td>qirtās “scroll of paper”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bā’a, yabī’u “to sell”</td>
<td>šabār “patient”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘adā, ya’dā “to pass”</td>
<td>šurad “sparrow-hawk”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ramā, yarmī “to throw”</td>
<td>‘utull “glutton”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šadiya, yasḍā “to be very thirsty”</td>
<td>nardus “sharp-minded”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>