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

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CHAPTER 6

Linguistic Analysis

6.1 Orthography

Al-Mağribī was a man of letters. He was educated at al-Azhar, and was well versed in language, religion and poetry. We would, therefore, expect that someone like him would know how to spell. It is generally assumed that Middle Arabic is normally found in texts created by people who had either not mastered Classical Arabic, or were unconcerned about whether or not their language and spelling were correct; we would not expect impeccable spelling from a trader writing a business letter, or a woman writing to her sister. In fact, we find many traits known to us from Middle Arabic texts in *Daf al-Iṣr*'s orthography.³¹³ The question is: what were the spelling habits of well-educated people of the time, such as scientists, linguists, or clergymen? We might, perhaps, expect a greater consciousness on this point from a scholar like al-Mağribī. This would mean that we could ask ourselves if the examples of orthography which diverge from the spelling rules of today, and which are pointed out below, were really sub-standard in al-Mağribī's time. Vrolijk (1998) p. 113 points out that "autographs not only reflect the personal [spelling] habits of the author, but probably also, in a more general sense, the habits of his contemporaries. It is as yet impossible to establish which part is purely personal and which part is common practice". The answer to this question is beyond the scope of the present study, but it remains an interesting point that certainly requires further investigation in the future.

When considering the orthography of *Daf al-iṣr*, the fact that we are dealing with two types of text must be borne in mind. Firstly, there are the Egyptian Arabic entries, which are sometimes short sentences or phrases but more often only single words, and secondly, the framework and comments which are in Classical Arabic and include numerous quotations from *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*. Al-Mağribī uses the same spelling for his own text written in Classical Arabic, as well as for quotations from, for instance, *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*.

In this chapter, the focus will be on the idiosyncratic spelling of the Classical Arabic passages. Only cursory remarks will be made about the spelling of the

³¹³ In particular, the spelling of the *hamza* in *Daf al-Iṣr* deviates a great deal from modern spelling standards. Blau (2002) p. 32 mentions the total absence of the *hamza* from ancient papyri, and interprets this as 'reflecting an ancient orthographic habit preserved also through NA [Neo-Arabic] influence'.

Linguistic Analysis

colloquial vocabulary, because this is very much intertwined with the phonology and will, therefore, be discussed at length in §6.2.

6.1.1 *hamza and madda*

In spelling the *hamza*, al-Mağribī does not follow the rules of Classical Arabic, and is inconsistent in the way in which he writes it, even within the same sentence.³¹⁴ The same word is written in different ways, as in the case with *nisā'* “women”, which we find in the same sentence as نساء and نسا (64a), and elsewhere as the variant نسا (31a). These examples highlight three of the four ways of writing the final *ā'* that al-Mağribī employs: آء, آء, آء and آء.³¹⁵ This is a continuous source of confusion. For instance, the frequently found word بها could of course be *bihā* “with her”, but should more often be read *bi-hā'* “with the letter *hā'*” (or actually “with *tā' marbūṭa*”), frequently used in the expression وواحدتها بها *wa wāḥidatuhā bi-hā'* “and its nomen unitatis is with a *tā' marbūṭa*”.

The final *ī'* is, in most cases, written without the *hamza*: مضى (50a) *muḍī'* “bright”, as is final *i'*: الممتلي *mumtali'* “full” (11a) and ay': شي *šay'* “a thing” (to be found in numerous places).

ā' in the middle of the word can be written with a *madda*: الدنآة والقمآة *al-danā'a wa al-qamā'a* “vileness and loweliness” (104b); بنآن *binā'ān* “two structures” (108a). Moreover, words of the patterns *fā'il* and *fawā'il* (mediae infirmae) are often written with a *madda* on the *alif*, followed by either a *hamza* under the *yā'* or without *hamza*, e.g. رايقه لطآيف *laṭā'if rā'iqā* “delightful witticisms” (1a), باعها *bā'i hā'* “her seller” (20a). The *madda* seems to be used for *'ā* at the beginning of the word and for *ā'* in the middle or at the end.

Although the *madda* is often used in unexpected places, it is also omitted from those where, according to the spelling rules of Classical Arabic, it should be used. This is quite a common phenomenon in pre-modern manuscripts,³¹⁶ and there are many examples from *Daf al-Isr*: الاية *al-'āya* “the Qur'ān-verse” (50b); الآلة *'ālā* “instrument” (78b, 104a), الآلات *al-'ālāt* “the instruments” (91a); آخر *'āxir* “the last”,

³¹⁴ This had already been observed by Wehr (1956) p. xv in his edition of *Kitāb al-ḥikāyāt al-'ağība wa l-'ağbār al-ğarība*: “Das Hamza-Zeichen wird völlig unkonsequent verwendet”.

³¹⁵ Compare the orthography of the word *mā'* in Jaritz (1993) p. 65.

³¹⁶ Compare for instance Jaritz (1993) p. 70: “In den meisten Hss. fehlt das Madda ganz”.

Linguistic Analysis

ملان *mal'ān* “filled” (101b), المت *'ālamat* “it hurt” (114a). The word الان can be read as *al-'ān* “now”,³¹⁷ but also as *'alāna* “to soften” (58a). What is unusual is the *madda* written on the *wāw*: سَوّ *sū* “evil” (64a; 76a; 113b) instead of the final *hamza*, or in the middle of a word: وضوّه *wuḍū'uhu* “his ritual ablution” (93a).

The omission of the *hamza* in the middle of a word is quite common in *Daf al-Iṣr*. For instance: جِزا *ǧuz'an* “a part” (6b), القرات (37a) *al-qirā'āt* “the readings”, مملوءة *mamlū'a* “filled” (80b), and باه *bā'a* (57a; 88a) “sexual intercourse”. In الخطية *al-ḥaṭī'a* “the mistake” (78b, in a quotation from *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*) not only has the *hamza* been omitted, but so has its bearer, as is the case in شيا *šay'an* “a thing” (of which there are many instances, e.g. fol. 85a, 103a etc.),³¹⁸ روس *ru'ūs* “heads” (115a), الاميلة *al-as'ila* (93a) “the questions” and مسئلة *mas'ala* (62b; 121b) “question”.³¹⁹ The correct pronunciation for these last words has been indicated by the placement of a *kasra* or *fatḥa* on the *sīn*. Also worth noting is a very interesting observation made by al-Mağribī on fol. 6b: واعلم ان هنا فرقا بين الجزء بالهمز والجزء بالالف اللينة: *al-ǧuz'* with a *hamza* and *al-ǧazā'* with the soft *alif* [i.e., the *alif* without a *hamza*]. In saying this, does he mean with a “soft” *alif* that he would pronounce it as *al-ǧazā'* rather than *al-ǧazā'*, i.e. with *tashīl*, or is he referring to the root of the word, which is ĞZY? The second option is the most likely because al-Mağribī would have been aware that the word ends with a *hamza*.

In the words راس فاس *ra's fa's* “the top of a hoe”, the *hamza* has been omitted. It could be argued that the colloquial pronunciation *rās fās* is reflected here, although this is unlikely since it is a quotation from *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*. There are other cases in which the bearer is written but the *hamza* itself was omitted, such as in: هية *hay'a* “form” (79a), ريس *ra'īs* “leader” (113b), سوال *su'āl* “question” (7b), فوادي (99b) *fu'ādī* “my heart”, تفاولا *tafā'ulan* “regarding it as a good omen” (89b). This can lead to ambiguities. For instance, confusion is caused by كان, which can be read as *kāna* “he was” or *ka'anna* “as if”. The same goes for لان *li'anna* “because”³²⁰ or لان *lāna* “to be/become soft” (113a).

³¹⁷ Attested in several places, e.g. fol. 3b, 9a etc.

³¹⁸ See also Wehr (1956) p. xv.

³¹⁹ This spelling of *mas'ala* is also mentioned in Blau (1966) I p. 100.

³²⁰ This is the spelling which al-Mağribī uses for this word in most of the cases.

Linguistic Analysis

When the *yā'* is supposed to be the bearer of the *hamza*, it is more common to find it written with a dotted *yā'*, as in ليلا *li-'allā* (40a; 64a; 116a) “in order not to”,³²¹ which should not to be confused with ليلا *laylan* “at night” (as in for instance fol. 17a). Other examples are بئر *bi'r* “well” (124a), رية *ri'a* “lung” (47a), and أيذا 'a *idā* (أثذا) “if”, preceded by the particle 'a introducing a question (82a, quotation from the Qur'ān). Often the *hamza* is written under the *yā'* instead of on top of it, e.g. ميق *ma'iqā* “he sobbed” (55a), الزبير *al-za'ir* “the roaring” (108b).

In فنول *fu'ūl* “elephants” (88a) we find a hypercorrection: here al-Mağribī writes a *hamza* where it should be a *yā'*: *fuyūl*. Even if the plural *fu'ūl* had existed,³²² it should have been written فؤول according to the norms of Classical Arabic, although in Modern Standard Arabic the spelling with *yā'* is allowed (for instance مسئول is seen often in newspapers instead of مسؤول).

6.1.2 final *yā'* / *alif maqṣūra*

There are many inconsistencies in the writing of the *alif maqṣūra* and final *yā'*, which both appear either with or without dots.³²³ Instances of the final *yā'* where we would expect *alif maqṣūra* are: the writing of علي *'alā* is used often instead of على, as is حتى *ḥattā* instead of حتى. Some additional examples are: تخطي (126b) *tahattā* “to overstep”, شعبي (46a) *šab'a* “satisfied”; اعطي (78b) *'aṭā* “he gave”, انثي *'untā* “female” (87b), الحبلي *al-ḥublā* “the pregnant woman” (107b), and الاعلي *al-'alā* “the Highest”.

The final *yā'* written without dots can be found all over the text, and just one example is the word في *fi* “in”. This is still a very common phenomenon.

³²¹ Compare Blau (1966) I p. 96.

³²² It does not, according to Lane VI p. 2474c.

³²³ In the edition of the manuscript I have adjusted this spelling, see *Introduction*.

Linguistic Analysis

6.1.3 final ā

6.1.3.1 ي instead of ا

Sometimes a word is spelt with a final *yā* where *alif* would be expected:³²⁴ عَصِي *aṣī* “stick” (51b, 111a and 132b), and الثنايا العليي *al-tanāya al-‘ulyā* “the upper front teeth” (104b). Sometimes, *yā* is used instead of the final *alif hamza*: بخاري (58a) *Bukhārā* “city in Uzbekistan”, and هوي *hawā* (34b and 89a) “air”. The final *yā* instead of *alif hamza* can be seen in المتوضي *almutawaḍḍa* (126b) “having performed the ritual ablution”. As pointed out in §6.1.2, it is quite common to render the final *ā* with ي .

6.1.3.2 ا instead of ي

The spelling with *alif* where *alif maqṣūra* would be expected³²⁵ occurs, although not frequently. Two examples are: الاحلا (21a) instead of الاحلى *al-aḥlā* “the more beautiful”, and الرحا instead of الرحي *al-raḥā* “the handmill” (95a).

6.1.4 tā' marbūṭa

In a few isolated cases ه instead of ة is found in status constructus: لعبه الشطرنج “the chess-game” (3a), زرقه عينيه “the blue of his eyes” (38a), قاعده الشام “the capital of the Levant” (39b), حياه الحيوان “the life of the animals” (56a), حكايه ليلى والمجنون “the story of Laylā and Mağnūn” (108a), ضعيفه الكون “weak of posture” (108a), and لكثره الاستعمال “because of its frequent use” (117b).

ة instead of ه occurs rarely: محروقة *maḥrūqihi* (97b). However, this was probably a mistake by al-Mağribī, because he changed the word from المحروق to محروقه when copying from *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*. There are no instances of ت instead of ة.

6.1.5 Interdentals

In a purely Classical Arabic context, al-Mağribī writes dental plosives in a few cases where we would expect to find interdentals. This is notably in quotations from *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* and classical literature, as in the following examples: المغات =

³²⁴ Compare Blau (1966) I p. 90.

³²⁵ Already attested in texts from the first millennium, see Blau (2002) p. 32.

Linguistic Analysis

كقنفذ = كقنفذ (90b) “and its stern” و كوتلها = و كوتلها (90a) “wild pomegranate” المغاث “like *qunfuḍ* hedgehog” (96b), للطمث = للطمث (109b) “for the menstruation” (109b), and اللادن = اللادن (118a) “*laudanum*” (118a). However, these cases are rare and are probably the result of inaccuracy rather than intent. It could even be that al-Mağribī had an inaccurate copy of *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*. We also find زفر *zafar* “stench” (115b), instead of the correct ذفر, in a quotation from *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*.

6.1.6 Hyphenation

Al-Mağribī sometimes breaks off words at the end of the line, which can be quite confusing. In the following examples the – denotes the end of the line: خا – لطنه *ḥālaṭathu* “she mixed it” (8a), فا – نظر *fa-nẓur* “look up” (11b), صابع – الا *al-aṣābi* “the fingers” (14a), با – لشكير *bi-l-ḡāl* “with the *ḡāl*” (40a), كا – لفسطاط *ka-l-fuṣṭāṭ* “like a large tent” (40b), وفقته *ka-awfaqtuh* “like I put it [the arrow] on the bowstring” (53b), طعمة – الا *al-aṭ’ima* “the foodstuffs” (65b), رسيته *fārisīyatuhu* “its Persian [translation]” (91b), and سد – الا *al-’asad* “the lion” (101b). The reason for this quirk seems to be an attempt to keep the margin neat and not leave a gap at the end, or to not have some lines longer than others.

6.1.7 Historical versus phonetic spelling of the colloquial material

In the spelling of dialect words, al-Mağribī alternates between historical and phonetic spelling. As an example, words will be taken which had originally contained interdental, but had become stops in the dialect used at that time.³²⁶ This development is often reflected in al-Mağribī’s orthography: اتل *atl* (63a) < اتل *at̪l* “tamarisk”, مثل *mitl* (91b) < مثل *mit̪l* “similar”, ندل *nadl* (92b) < ندل *nat̪l* “despicable”, and شاذليية *šādiliyya* (81a) < شاذليية *šādiliyya* “belonging to the *šādiliyya* *šūfi* order”. In other instances where a dialect word had originally contained an interdental, al-Mağribī uses historical orthography: هذا *haḍā* and هذيان *haḍayān* “to rave” and “raving” (132b), مرثية *martīyya* “elegy” (127b), and قيتا *qittā* “*cucumis sativus*” (9b).

³²⁶ As pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, this is only a cursory overview of the orthography of colloquial words; these points will be discussed at length in §6.2.

Linguistic Analysis

Phonetic orthography can also be found in the reflection of the shortening of long end vowels which had occurred in the Egyptian dialect, e.g. بَكَّةٌ *bakka* (56b) from بَكَّاءٌ *bakkā* ‘cry-baby’.³²⁷ The final glottal stop has disappeared and the preceding long *ā* has shortened. This pronunciation is reflected in the orthography with *hā*’ at the end of the word instead of *alif*.

There is also an example of phonetic spelling in the shortening of a long vowel followed by two consonants: حفة (21b) *ḥaffa* instead of حافة *ḥāffa* ‘edge’.³²⁸

At a certain point, al-Maḡribī writes the colloquial ايدِه *īdu* then crosses out the *alif*, thereby turning the word into the classical يده *yaduhu* (24b). This indicates that he hesitated about whether or not to reflect the colloquial pronunciation. No hesitation at all can be found in the colloquial مَنُو *minnu* (twice on 51b); the metrics of the poem in which it occurs demand this form of colloquial pronunciation.

6.1.8 *taškīl*

Al-Maḡribī does not make much use of *taškīl*, and either leaves words completely without vowels or uses other methods to describe them (as explained in §3.7). Sometimes, he goes a long way in his simplification, as demonstrated in the following sentence (90a): *فان قلت ما الفرق بين القمل والقمل فالجواب ان القمل عرف* “if you said ‘what is the difference between *al-qml* and *al-qml*’, the answer is: *al-qml* is well-known, and *al-qml* as [mentioned] in *al-Qāmūs* are small insects”. It is left to the reader to check *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* to discover that the first is supposed to be *qaml* ‘lice’ and the second *qummal* ‘ticks’!³²⁹ Unfortunately, whenever Al-Maḡribī does use *taškīl* it is mostly in Classical Arabic and not in the colloquial passages where it is needed.

³²⁷ For more details, see §6.2.10.2.

³²⁸ See §6.2.10.1.

³²⁹ See *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* p. 946a-b.

6.2 Phonology

6.2.1 *qāf* and *ǧīm*

In Egypt, the pronunciation of *qāf* and *ǧīm* are closely connected. In Cairo, Alexandria, and along the Damietta branch of the Nile they are pronounced as /ʔ/ and /g/, while in other dialects they are pronounced as /g/ and /ǧ/.³³⁰ There has been a discussion ongoing for some time about when the inhabitants of Cairo started to pronounce *qāf* as /ʔ/ and *ǧīm* as /g/. There are two conflicting theories:

1. Behnstedt and Woidich suggest that the Cairene pronunciation /ʔ/ - /g/ is an ancient feature.³³¹ The fact that it is also found along the Damietta branch of the Nile is because of the importance Damietta had as a port in medieval times. Two theories are proposed to explain this phenomenon. The first is that the existence of the trade route resulted in the Cairene pronunciation of /ʔ/ - /g/ spreading along this branch of the Nile, while the surrounding regions kept /g/ - /ǧ/. Another possibility is that the entire Delta used /ʔ/ - /g/ at some stage, but this was replaced by /g/ - /ǧ/ in certain areas because of the influence of the influx and settlement of speakers of Bedouin dialects. The areas along the Damietta branch, however, resisted this change because of the strong influence of the Cairo dialect. Some other features, such as a relic area with /q/ - /g/ at the periphery of the Delta, support this second option.³³² This theory is also supported by Davies, who mentions that in *Hazz al-quḥūf* the following is said about a certain peasant: *يقول يا قاضي بحرف الجيم* “He says, ‘O Gāḏī’, [pronouncing the initial *qāf* of *qāḏī*] with the letter *ǧīm*”, meaning that the peasant says *gāḏī*, which again implies that al-Širbīnī himself pronounced the *ǧīm* as /g/.³³³

2. The second theory, which was first proposed by Blanc (1981), is that the pronunciation of *ǧīm* as /g/ is relatively new to Cairo, and that the final stage of depalatalization of *ǧīm* was not completed until the period 1800-1860.³³⁴ Palva (1997) supports this theory,³³⁵ as does Hary (1996), who suggests that a shift has taken place in the pronunciation of the *ǧīm* not once, but twice: from /g/ in the 6th/7th centuries to /ǧ/ in the 12th-17th centuries and back to /g/ in the 19th-20th

³³⁰ See Behnstedt-Woidich (1985) II maps 7, 11 and 15.

³³¹ See Behnstedt (1978) p. 65 and Behnstedt-Woidich (1985) I p. 31-32.

³³² See Woidich (1996) pp. 346-7.

³³³ See Davies (2005) p. xxxv.

³³⁴ See Blanc (1981) pp. 189-193.

³³⁵ See Palva (1997) p. 157.

Linguistic Analysis

centuries.³³⁶ Blanc, Hary and Palva mainly used Judeo-Arabic documents from the Cairo Geniza as their sources of information. These were usually written in the Hebrew script. The *ǧīm* is indicated by the letter *gimel*, to which is added either a supralinear dot $\dot{\aleph}$ or a sublinear dot \aleph to indicate a more fronted pronunciation.³³⁷ However, caution is required when using the language of these Judeo-Arabic documents as proof of the pronunciation of Egyptian Arabic in general. First of all, it is not at all certain if the reported speech really reflects the dialect of Cairo. Secondly, it is not definitely known whether the Jews of Cairo spoke the same dialect as the Muslims at that time, or if there were any differences. What is, however, known is that the Jewish dialect in Cairo in the twentieth century differed in several ways from the dialect spoken by the Muslims.³³⁸

Blanc (1981) pp. 192-3 quotes two passages from *Daf al-iṣr* in support of his theory. The first is the word *raġl* “man”, and al-Maġribī mentions the following about the pronunciation of the *ǧīm* in it:

ويقولون ويسمع من اهل الريف فلان ما دلاً رَجُل بفتح الراء وسكون الجيم الغير العربية كجيم ابن جني المنصوص عليها في شرح جمع الجوامع الاصولي للعلامة المحلي.³³⁹

“They say, and this is heard from the people of the countryside, ‘so-and-so *mā dillā raġl*’, ‘what kind of man is that’, with an *a* after the *rā*’ and no vowel after the un-Arabic *ǧīm*, which is like the *ǧīm* of Ibn Ginnī, about which is written in the traditional *Šarḥ ǧam‘ al-ǧawāmi‘* by the famous al-Maḥallī.³⁴⁰

The passage from *Šarḥ ǧam‘ al-ǧawāmi‘* which is referred to is the following:

³³⁶ See Hary (1996) p. 153.

³³⁷ See Hary (1996) p. 155, Blanc (1981) p. 189 and Palva (1997) p. 157.

³³⁸ Blanc (1974) discusses the *niktib-niktibu* feature of the dialect of the Cairene Jews, although he avoids using the term “Jewish Cairene”. Rosenbaum (2003) p. 546 states: “The language they [i.e. the Jews of Cairo and Alexandria] speak, while of course influenced by the local Arabic dialects, also contains many common elements which are not to be found in the dialects of the non-Jews”.

³³⁹ *Daf al-iṣr* fol. 75a.

³⁴⁰ Abū ‘Alī Ġalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī al-Šāfi‘ī al-Maḥallī, born and died in Cairo (791/1389-864/1459). He became famous as co-author of *Tafsīr al-Ġalālayn* (together with Ġalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī). See *EI* V p. 1223a (Ch. Pellat).

Linguistic Analysis

وَلَيْسَ الْمَجَازُ غَالِيًا عَلَى اللُّغَاتِ خِلَافًا لِابْنِ جِنِّي) بِسُكُونِ الْيَاءِ مُعَرَّبٌ كِنِّي نَيْنَ الْكَافِ وَالْجِيمِ³⁴¹
“(And the metaphor is not predominant in the languages, contrary to Ibn Ginnī) with no vowel after the *yā*, Arabized from Kinnī, between the *kāf* and the *ǧīm*.”

The description “between *kāf* and *ǧīm*” was the usual way of describing the pronunciation /g/.³⁴² According to Blanc (1981) p. 192, this is an indication that this was not the common way to pronounce the *ǧīm* in Cairo at that time. However, al-Maǧribī was speaking of a rural dialect in which this might indeed have been an unusual feature, but this provides only indirect information about the dialect of Cairo. There is also the possibility that the *ǧīm* in this particular example was pronounced in a way that was unusual for the rural dialect al-Maǧribī was speaking of. He might have expected to hear /ǧ/ and, therefore, found the /g/ worth mentioning. In some modern Egyptian Arabic dialects the *ǧ* is pronounced in a different way before the *l*. In the West Delta, for instance, the *ǧ* is pronounced as /d/ when it is followed by an *l*,³⁴³ while in Middle Egypt it is pronounced as a slightly palatalized *g*.³⁴⁴ It is possible that al-Maǧribī was speaking of this type of case because it is quite likely that he, with his interest in linguistics, would have noticed such a change.

The second example quoted by Blanc³⁴⁵ concerns the following passage:

ومن العجيب ان اللكن بالكاف العجمية ظرف مخصوص باللغة التركية وكذلك في العربية قال
(ولكن كجبل ظرف معروف، اي بالكاف العربية)³⁴⁶

“And it is astonishing that *lakan* with the Persian *kāf* is a certain vessel in Turkish, and also in Arabic. He [=al-Fīrūzābādī] said: ‘and *lakan* with the same vowels as *ǧabal* is a well-known vessel’, i.e. with the Arabic *kāf*.”

Blanc’s assumption that this is also a special case where *ǧīm* = /g/ was discussed is incorrect. Al-Maǧribī does not say that the Egyptians use this word, only that it is used in Turkish, and that in the Classical Arabic language it is pronounced with

³⁴¹ Downloaded in Word-format from the internet from the following website: <http://www.aslein.net/showthread.php?t=2926> (no hard copy was available to me).

³⁴² See Blanc (1969) p. 21.

³⁴³ See Behnstedt-Woidich (1985) I p. 70, note to map 11.

³⁴⁴ Doss (1981) p. 27 speaks of a “[g] très faiblement mouillé”.

³⁴⁵ See Blanc (1981) p. 193.

³⁴⁶ *Daf al-iṣr* fol. 188b.

Linguistic Analysis

/k/. Neither of these arguments, therefore, provides us with any information about the pronunciation of *ǧīm* in Cairo at that time.

As well as the two passages mentioned by Blanc, there is a further example in which al-Mağribī discusses the pronunciation of the *ǧīm* in a certain word:

جأجأ بالابل دعاها للشرب وقد سمعت بعضهم عند الحوض وهو سقى الجمال يقول چوچو
بالجيم الغير العربية القريية للشين³⁴⁷

“‘ǧa’ǧa’ *bi-l-ibil*”³⁴⁸ means ‘he called them [= the camels] to drink’. I heard one of them [= the Egyptians] say at the basin while he was giving his camels to drink, ‘ǧūǧū’ with an un-Arabic *ǧīm* which is close to the *šīn*.”

The *ǧ* in *ǧūǧū* should probably be interpreted as /č/, because it is said to be close to /š/. We can conclude from this passage that the normal Cairene pronunciation of *ǧīm* was not at all like /č/ because al-Mağribī perceived this as being “un-Arabic”.

These are the only three passages in *Daf al-iṣr* where al-Mağribī mentions something about the pronunciation of the *ǧ*. He never states explicitly that the *ǧīm* was pronounced as /g/ in Cairo at that time. However, proof of this is indirectly provided in *Daf al-iṣr* in the form of the following *mawwāl*:³⁴⁹

جبييت موال في المحبوب وهو جاب بيت
الورى جبييت قال ولي حسودي جبييت
والحب في قهوته قال لي عليك جبييت
هو جاد بيوسه ومصه قمت انا جبييت

*gabbyta*³⁵⁰ *mawwāl fi-l-maḥbūb wa hū gāb byt*
gabbyt ḥasūdī wa lī qāl alwarā gabbyt
wa-l-ḥabbā fī qahwātuh qāl lī ‘alyk gabbyt
wa gād bi-bōsuh wa maṣṣuh qumt anā gabbyt

I brought up a *mawwāl* for the beloved and he brought up back one;

³⁴⁷ *Daf al-iṣr* fols. 6b-7a.

³⁴⁸ Quoted from *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* p. 35a.

³⁴⁹ *Daf al-iṣr* fol. 11b.

³⁵⁰ The metre is *basīṭ*; the schwa has to be added here to fit the metre. See also §4.1.

Linguistic Analysis

I threw out my envious (adversary) and all mankind said to me: you won (you gave
the final answer);
So the coffee beans (nipples) inside his coffee (areola) said to me: we give ourselves
to you for free;
He was generous with kissing and sucking, therefore I came.³⁵¹

The point of this *mawwāl* is the pronunciation of the word *gabbyt*. The first word in the first line could be interpreted as the 1st person sg. of the verb *gāb*. Although in modern Cairene Arabic this would be *gibt*, the form *gabbēt* is still found in the Ḥarga-oasis and the Sudan.³⁵² The last word of the first line, *gāb byt*,³⁵³ sounds the same as *gabbyt*. In the fourth line, it should be read as *kabbyt* “I came, ejaculated”.³⁵⁴ This rhetorical device is called *ǧinās*, “paronomasia” or *tawriya*, “double entendre”³⁵⁵ and is still encountered in *mawāwīl* in Egypt today. In fact, the fun of the *mawwāl* lies in the discovery of the hidden meanings of the verse. This is an indication that in al-Maǧribī’s time, the *ǧīm* was pronounced as /g/, because the association of /g/ with /k/, from voiced to voiceless velar plosive (*gabbyt* – *kabbyt*), is very plausible. That /ǧ/ could be associated with /k/ is less so. In fact, Cachia (1989) p. 142 mentions an example of alternation between /g/ and /k/ in a *mawwāl*: *gamkann* (*kām kān*). Moreover, Eisele (1997) p. 754 notes that in the *zahr*³⁵⁶ puns, “the most common type of feature change involves voicing or devoicing, and less often a change in emphasis”. He also states that “there are cases INTERDIALECTALLY where the reflex of a word in one dialect might have a vowel with a different quality”.³⁵⁷ It is possible that al-Maǧribī uses these dialectal alternations, i.e. *gabbyt* – *gibt*, in this *mawwāl* to fit the paronomasia.

As mentioned above, the pronunciation of *ǧīm* and *qāf* are closely related in Egypt. In areas where *ǧīm* is pronounced /g/, *qāf* is pronounced /ʔ/.³⁵⁸ Whether this was the case in Egypt in the 17th century cannot be known for certain. There is one

³⁵¹ I thank Ellie Kallas for his suggestions for the translation of this poem.

³⁵² See Behnsted-Woidich IV p. 55a “*ǧabbēt* ich brachte (zu *ǧāb*, *yǧīb*)”.

³⁵³ The *šadda* on the *bā*’ only indicates that the following letter is a *b*, i.e. no vowel should be read after *gāb*.

³⁵⁴ For both translations see Hinds-Badawi (1986) p. 729a-b.

³⁵⁵ See Cachia (1977) p. 91-2. Al-Maǧribī uses both terms in *Daf al-iṣr*. Another term used by Cachia (1977) but not by al-Maǧribī is *zahr*.

³⁵⁶ A word play which involves phonetical modification. On *zahr* in Egyptian popular poetry, see Cachia (1989) p. 60ff. and Eisele (1997).

³⁵⁷ Eisele (1997) p. 755.

³⁵⁸ See BW II: Compare map 6 “Reflex von */q/” and map 10 “Reflex von */ǧ/”.

Linguistic Analysis

instance from *Daf al-iṣr* which could indicate that the *qāf* was pronounced as /ʔ/. Al-Mağribī mentions that the Egyptians say: *فلان عائق والديه* *fulān ‘ā’iq wālidih* “so-and-so is disobedient towards his parents” (49b). In Egyptian Arabic, the active participle of verbs mediae geminatae is *fā’il*, e.g. *ḥāsīs*,³⁵⁹ therefore the active participle form I of the root ‘QQ would be عائق *‘āqiq / ‘ā’i*, while in Classical Arabic, this would be عاق *‘āq*. The only explanation why al-Mağribī would have written عائق, is because it was pronounced ‘ā’i’ and he wrongly interpreted the medial glottal stop as belonging to the pattern of the active participle of the verbs mediae infirmae.

6.2.2 Interdentals

It has previously been confirmed that the interdentals in Cairo Arabic had disappeared long before *Daf al-iṣr* was written. Some instances thereof can be found in the 15th century texts by Ibn Sūdūn.³⁶⁰ In the Judeo-Arabic *zağal* entitled *Ḥikāya fī ḍamm al-nisā’*, which is supposed to be from the 14th century, all interdentals are represented in the text by postdental plosives.³⁶¹ Satzinger (1972) p. 42 mentions the occurrence of *tā’* for *ṭā’* in the 13th century, and Blau (1982a) p. 101 notes that most early Middle Arabic texts show signs of the shift from interdentals to plosives. Yūsuf al-Mağribī even mentions explicitly that the *ṭ* was pronounced as *t* in the dialect of Cairo:

المحدثين بالتا المشاة فوق اعني بهم العوام
“those who speak with a *tā’* with two dots, I mean the common people.”³⁶²

There are many examples of words in *Daf al-iṣr* in which the change from interdentals to plosives is visible. Some of these have been discussed briefly in the section on Orthography (§6.1.7). As in the present day, the pronunciation of the *ḍāl* in al-Mağribī’s time was /d/ and examples are: نذل [*NDL] *nadl* (92b) “despicable”, شادلية [*ŠDL] *šādiliyya* ((81a) “belonging to the *šādiliyya* sufi order”, حَدَا [*HDY] *hadā* “close to” (125a), يهدرم [*HDRM] *yihadrim* “to speak quickly” (108a), and دبل [*DBL] “to wilt (flowers)” (72a). We have only one example of /ḍ/ > /z/, namely زرق [*DRQ] *zrq* “bird droppings” (fols. 40a and 42a). In general, al-Mağribī uses the

³⁵⁹ See Woidich (2006) p. 83.

³⁶⁰ See Vrolijk (1998) p. 141.

³⁶¹ See Palva (1993) p. 179.

³⁶² *Daf al-iṣr* fol. 11a.

Linguistic Analysis

historical spelling for sibilants which were originally interdental, i.e. *ḏ* for what we assume was pronounced as /z/, for instance: هذا *hazā* “to talk deliriously” (132b), ذل *zull* “humiliation” (74a), and رذل *razil* “despicable” (75b).

The same rule applies for the *tā'* as for the *dāl*, and in *Daf al-iṣr* we find proof that it was pronounced as /t/. Some examples are: اطل [**TL*] *atl* “tamarisk trees” (63a), نفل [**TFL*] *tifl* “dregs” (67a), يتَمَنَّ [**TMN*] *yitammin* “to fix the price of” (110a), توم [**TWM*] *twm* “garlic” (96a), and مثل [**MIL*] *mitl* “like” (91b). The last one is interesting because in present-day Egyptian Arabic only the pronunciation *misl* is used,³⁶³ which is a direct loan from MSA. However, in the dialects of the Levant, the pronunciation *mətʰl* is still in use.³⁶⁴ The expression من حيتن *min hytən* “since, because” (111b) from حيت is also fascinating. It is unclear exactly what the *nūn* at the end indicates; it could be *inn*, as in *hēs inn*,³⁶⁵ or it could be an old case ending, as can still be found in Egyptian Arabic these days in expressions such as *jaṣbin ‘anni* “against my will”³⁶⁶ and *nadrin ‘alayya* “I vow (to do so-and-so)”.³⁶⁷ It is all the more interesting because al-Mağribī mentions that this expression is used by the town dwellers, whereas the country folks say *hyṣən* (111b), which would be a rare case of /*t*/ > /*ṣ*/.

It is likely that the pronunciation as /s/ in loanwords from Classical Arabic also existed, but this is not evident from the orthography because al-Mağribī never writes a *sīn* in such cases. However, in the proverb قطع بليق لا حرث ولا درس *qaṭaʿ Bəlyq lā ḥaraṭ wala daras* “he removed Bulayq because he neither ploughed nor threshed” (37b), the rhyme indicates that the pronunciation of *ḥaraṭ* must have been *ḥaras*. The trend of using the historical spelling of *s* < *t* with *tā'* can still be observed today. It would, for instance, be unacceptable to write a word like *tawra*, which is pronounced *sawra* in Egypt, with a *sīn*: سورة; the word's image would change too much. In the case of *dāl* – *zāy*, this is less problematic (see ذرق < *زرق > but the historical orthography is often still preferred.³⁶⁸

³⁶³ See Hinds-Badawi (1986) p. 823b.

³⁶⁴ Barthélemy (1935) p. 777.

³⁶⁵ Hinds-Badawi (1986) p. 235b.

³⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 624a.

³⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 855b.

³⁶⁸ This is for instance the case in *Laban il'asfūr* by Yūsuf al-Qa'īd. This is a novel written entirely in the Egyptian dialect, yet the author sticks to the etymological orthography of *t* > *s*. See Zack (2001a) p. 200.

Linguistic Analysis

The shift from *z* to *ḍ* is reflected in the word *ḥanḍal* < *ḥanzal* “colocynth” (71b).

6.2.3 hamza

6.2.3.1 Initial hamza

In *Daf al-isr*, we find evidence that the initial glottal stop had already disappeared. Where this occurs, it is replaced by a *wāw*, such as *وذن* *widn* “ear” (119b) < *'udn*, *وريت* *warryt* “I showed” (132a)³⁶⁹ and *وجنة* *waḡna* “cheek” (119b) (originally *'aḡna*, but *waḡna* already attested by Lane VIII p. 3049c). This phenomenon can still be observed today in several dialects.³⁷⁰ In the word *ḥuwwa* (127a) < *'uḥuwwa* “brotherhood” (also attested by al-Ḥafāḡī (1865) p. 88) the initial syllable with the glottal stop as its onset has disappeared altogether. There are several examples of this feature in modern Cairene Arabic, such as *ḥad* < *'aḥad* “to take” and *ṭār* < *'iṭār* “frame”.

6.2.3.2 Intervocalic hamza

كَنَّ *kann* (from *ka'ann* - *ka'inn*) “as if” (117b) is still attested in Egypt: Behnstedt-Woidich (1994) p. 422b “*kann* als ob: *kannak* als ob du”. *عيلة* *'ayla* or *'ēla* “dependents” (84b) reflects the disappearance of the *hamza* so *'ā'ila* became *'āyila* and then *'yla*. For the issue of the diphthong see §6.2.8. The word *عَدِّنْ* *'iddinn* “let's assume that...” (117a) is a contraction of *'idd 'inn* in which the *hamza* has disappeared.

6.2.3.3 Final hamza

Unfortunately, Al-Maḡribī's spelling of the *hamza* is so haphazard (see §6.1.1) that it is impossible to reach a conclusion about either its pronunciation or its disappearance. Instead, we have to rely on those instances where he explicitly mentions that it has vanished, or looks up a word under the *wāw* or *yā'* where in Classical Arabic it would have a *hamza*. Such is the case in the entry *حبيبت* *ḥabbyt* “I hid” (126a), which al-Maḡribī placed in the chapter *wāw* and *yā'*. He looked it up under *ḤBY*³⁷¹ but did not find it there. Other cases of the disappearance of the final

³⁶⁹ According to 'Abd al-Tawwāb (2000) p. 359 the origin is *رأيت*, with disappearance of the *hamza*, so it became *رويت*, and after metathesis of *rā'* and *wāw* it became *وريت*. The same theory is supported by Davies (1981) p. 71.

³⁷⁰ See Watson (2002) p. 18 and Davies (1981) p. 71.

³⁷¹ This is remarkable, because he had already mentioned the verb *حبا* in the chapter *hamza*.

Linguistic Analysis

hamza are: رديّ *radī* “bad” (127b), رفا *rafā* “to darn” (9a), ملو *malw* “a ... full” (111b), ملاية *milāya* “bedsheet” (10b), نبي *nayy* “raw” (131b), هتاك *hetāk* “may God grant you good health” (11a), دفييت *daffyt* “I warmed up” (127a).

6.2.4 Emphasis

Both emphatization and de-emphatization are attested in *Daf al-iṣr*. We find the following examples of the latter:

سقيع *saqī* “chilly” (44a) (صقيع <), سَكَّ *sakk* “to hit” (61a) (صَكَّ <), صندوق *sandūq* “box” (46a) (صندوق <), نطق *nātiq* “endowing with speech (God)” (55b) (ناطق <), نطق *nata*’ “to endow with speech” (55b) (نطق <), يزدق *yizdaq* “to speak the truth” (41b) (يصدق <) (in combination with partial assimilation of the *s*, see §6.2.5), and ساققاف *saqqaf* < *ṣaffaq* “to applaud” (25b) (with metathesis of *qāf* and *lām*, see §6.2.7).

The only example of emphatization is the word صرم *ṣurm* “arsehole” (102b) (سررم). This is a case of secondary emphasis due to the vicinity of the *rā*.³⁷²

6.2.5 Voicing of *s* and *ṣ*

The voicing of *s* and *ṣ* is attested in *Daf al-iṣr*. For instance, in يزدق *yizdaq* “to speak the truth” (41b) (يصدق <) the *ṣ* has lost its emphasis and has become partially assimilated to the following voiced *d*. Voicing at the beginning of the word is found in زحاق *zihāq* “lesbianism” (سحاق <) and زحافة *zahḥāqa* “lesbian” (سحافة <) (both 43a), in زعلوك *za'lūk* “pauper” (61a) (صعلوك <), and زحلفة *zəhləfa* < *sulahfā* “tortoise” (23b) (with metathesis of the *ḥ* and *l*).³⁷³ In these four examples, it is unclear why the initial *s* and *ṣ* would be voiced, because there is no assimilation to a following voiced consonant.

6.2.6 Assimilation of *t*-

In modern Cairene Arabic, the *t* of the passive-reflexive forms (V, VI and VII) can be assimilated to the following letter if this is a *s ṣ ṣ̣ t ṭ d ḍ z ẓ g* or *k*.³⁷⁴ The following

³⁷² See 'Abd al-Tawwāb (2000) p. 362 and Woidich (2006) p. 24.

³⁷³ Al-Mağribī suggests a connection with the word *zahālif* “Small ذَوْبٌ [i.e. reptiles, or insects], having legs, that walk, resembling ants” (definition from Lane III p. 1220c), to which it is not related. See also Ḥiğāzī (1969) p. 119 and §6.2.7.

³⁷⁴ See Woidich (2006) p. 69.

Linguistic Analysis

examples of this assimilation, which is often indicated with a *šadda*, are found in *Daf al-iṣr*:

t > s: يَسْكَعُ *yissakka* ‘to hang around’ (44a), يَسْلَعُ *yissalla* ‘to try hard to sell his goods’ (44b), يَسْلِقُ *yissallaq* ‘to climb’ (46a), and يَسْوِقُ *yissawwaq* ‘to go looking for’ (46a).

t > ṣ: يَصْنَطُ *yiṣṣannaṭ* ‘to eavesdrop’ (46a).

t > š: يَشْدُقُ *yiššaddaḡ* ‘to be diffuse in speech’ (46b).

t > z: اِزْقَمُ *izzaqqam* ‘to be force-fed’, and يَزْأُولُ *yizzāwil* ‘to imagine’ (79a).

t > d: يَدْشَى *yiddaššā* ‘to belch’ (127a).

t > g: اِجْهَرَمُ *iğğahram* ‘to be bold’ (96a).

6.2.7 Metathesis

In the case of metathesis, two consonants change places. A well-known example in modern Cairo Arabic is the root GWZ < ZWĠ, e.g. *gōz* ‘husband’. There are a few instances of it in *Daf al-iṣr*: معلقة *ma‘laqa* < *mil‘aqa* ‘spoon’ (fols. 49b and 54b), موايمة *muwāyima* < *muyāwama* ‘day labour’ (108b), صافعه *ṣāq‘a* < *ṣā‘iqa* ‘lightning’ (47a), زحلفة *zəhləfa* < *sulahfā* ‘tortoise’ (23b) (with voicing of the *s*³⁷⁵), and سقّف *saqqaf* < *ṣaffaq* ‘to applaud’ (25b) (with de-emphatization of the *ṣ*, see §6.2.4.).

6.2.8 Diphthongs

When al-Mağribī vocalizes a word that originally contained a diphthong, he often places a *fatḥa* on top, e.g. يا دُوبه (folio 13b) *ya dawbu / dōbu* ‘just’, nowadays *ya dōb* or *ya dōbak*, روك *rawk / rōk* ‘public property’ (59b), زَبَبِقُ *zaybaq / zēbaq* ‘mercury’ (41b), سَيْفُ *sayf / sēf* ‘sword’ (26a), عَيْلَةُ *ayla / ‘ēla* ‘family’ (84b), هَوْنُ *hawn / hōn* ‘mortar’ (120a), and هَيْفُ *hayf / hēf* ‘open air’ (36a). However, as Blanc pointed out, the use of the *fatḥa* ‘may or may not stand for diphthongs’.³⁷⁶ Writing the *fatḥa* before a *wāw* or *yā’* could simply be conventional for /ō/ and /ē/. This is certainly the case with the word بُوْسَه *bōsa* ‘kiss’ (88b), which was never a diphthong originally because it derives from the Persian *bosa*.³⁷⁷ Perhaps al-Mağribī vocalizes

³⁷⁵ See also §6.2.5.

³⁷⁶ See Blanc (1981) pp. 195-6.

³⁷⁷ See Steingass (1975) p. 207.

Linguistic Analysis

it as *bawsa* because, since all *ō*'s were initially *aw*, it could be argued that *bōsa* must have been *bawsa*. Something similar was noted by Woidich (1997) p. 186-7:

“In the areas of Fayyūm and Bani Swēf, the diphthongs /aw/ and /ay/ are preserved, unlike in Standard Egyptian, the dialect of Cairo. Speakers “know” that Cairo /ō/ corresponds to /aw/ at home. Thus, all words taken over from Standard Egyptian are given an /aw/, even loanwords that historically never contained a diphthong: *'awḍa* for *'ōḍa* ‘room’, *ṣawbar* for *ṣōbar* ‘fertilizer’, *talafawn* for *tilifōn*, and so on.”

Therefore, it cannot be concluded with any certainty whether the diphthongs had developed into long vowels in the dialect of Cairo by this time. Blanc (1981) p. 195 supports the theory that *ay* was still retained in urban lower Egypt in the 17th and 18th centuries. An argument against this is the word *'ayš* - *'ēš*, which is written four times as *اش* in *Daf al-iṣr*.³⁷⁸ This suggests that the pronunciation is *'iš* or *'eš*, i.e. a shortening of the vowel *ē*. Based on similar evidence from *Hazz al-quḥūf*, Davies (1981) p. 87 suggests that *ay* and *ē* coexisted in the 17th century. Diem (1985) p. 77-8, however, mentions an example of monophthongisation of the *aw* dating from the first century AH.

6.2.9 Lengthening of short vowels

A few cases of the lengthening of short vowels are mentioned in *Daf al-iṣr*. That of *kām* < *kam* (fols. 106a and 106b) is well documented³⁷⁹ and can be attributed to the need “to give normal length to exceptionally short words”.³⁸⁰

The explanation of why the word *na'ām* < *na'am* (106b) would have a lengthened second *a* could be, that like in modern Cairene Arabic, it should be understood not as “yes” but as “excuse me?”, with a rising intonation. However, *na'ām* with a long *a* is already attested in *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*.³⁸¹

Spitaler (1967) p. 404, noted that some words with the pattern KaKūK have the plural pattern KawāKīK, which normally belongs to words with the pattern KāKūK. We can find two instances in *Daf al-iṣr* in which the pattern KaKūK has become KāKūK: *ḥarūf* < *ḥārūf* “sheep” (21b) and *qādūm* < *qadūm* “adze” (104a).

³⁷⁸ On fols. 57a, 62a, 73b, and 125b.

³⁷⁹ See Davies (1981) p. 86.

³⁸⁰ Blau (1965) pp. 71-2.

³⁸¹ On p. 1049c: *وَنَعَمٌ، بفتحِ نين، وقد تُكْسَمُ العَيْنُ، وَنَعَامٌ، عمُّ المُعَاظِي بن زكريا: كلمةٌ كَبَلِي*.

Linguistic Analysis

These are probably hypercorrections following the same pattern as خازوق *ḥāzūq* (39a) and خاتون *ḥātūn* (112b). From these examples, it may be concluded that long vowels were shortened in open, pre-stressed syllables, because otherwise this confusion would not arise.

6.2.10 Shortening of long vowels

6.2.10.1 Word-internal

In modern Cairene Arabic, the rule that a long vowel followed by two consonants is shortened applies.³⁸² That this rule was already in existence in al-Mağribī's time is attested by the entry حفة *ḥaffa* "edge" (21b). The same principle is also confirmed in *Hazz al-quḥūf*, in the words *al-ḥagg* and *al-ḥagga*.³⁸³

Another rule is that an unstressed long vowel is shortened.³⁸⁴ There is an example of this in *Daf al-iṣr*: حشاك ظهرك *ḥašāk ḏahrak* "mind your back!" (7b) < *ḥāšāk*.

6.2.10.2 Word-final

There are five cases where the loss of the final *hamza* and the shortening of the *ā* are found: بكاء *bakka* < بكاء *bakkā* "somebody who is always weeping" (56b), حلفه *ḥalfā* < حلفاء *ḥalfā* "alfa" (21a), عزلة *azla* < عزلاء *azlā* "mouth of the water bag" (83b), وكه *wikā* < وكاء *wikā* "walking stick?" (132a),³⁸⁵ and وطفه *watfa* < وطفاء *watfā* "having bushy eyebrows" (35a). There can be no doubt about the pronunciation because the *-a* is written with *hā*. However, in cases where *alif* is written, nothing can be said about the pronunciation, because of the defective way of writing the *hamza* employed by al-Mağribī.³⁸⁶

6.2.11 Pausal *imāla*

In modern-day Cairo, no traces remain of pausal *imāla*, although this is not the case in many other dialects in Egypt.³⁸⁷ There are indications that the loss of pausal *imāla* in Cairene Arabic is a recent development. Blanc (1973-4) p. 375 states that

³⁸² See Woidich (2006) p. 31.

³⁸³ See Davies (1981) p. 101.

³⁸⁴ See Woidich (2006) p. 31.

³⁸⁵ See the next paragraph for the pausal *imāla*.

³⁸⁶ See §6.1.1.

³⁸⁷ See Behnstedt-Woidich (1985) II maps 35-37.

Linguistic Analysis

this process must have taken place at the end of the nineteenth century, because no sources from the nineteenth century mention the forms without *imāla*.³⁸⁸ Moreover, from Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī’s³⁸⁹ *Traité* p. vii we learn that there was pausal *imāla* in the nineteenth century:

La lettre qui précède l’alef se change quelquefois en kesra, p. ex. سما le ciel, prononcez: *samèh* (bref).

From the seventeenth century, we have two examples from *Hazz al-quḥūf: qarrūfih* (name of a vessel) and *libbih* “solidified milk and beestings”³⁹⁰ There are three more in *Daf al-iṣr*: *tərkih*³⁹¹ “inheritance” (57a), *zarāfih*³⁹² “giraffe” (24a), and *wikih* “walking stick?” (132a). These are the only three words that were pronounced with the final *imāla*, which al-Maḡribī indicates with a *kasra*. There are, however, many others which would have been pronounced in the same way about which nothing is mentioned concerning the *imāla*.

6.2.12 Vowel changes

Although al-Maḡribī rarely vocalizes the Egyptian-Arabic entries, he does often compare the vocalization of Egyptian-Arabic words with Classical Arabic.³⁹³ This provides us with some information about the distribution of the vowels.

6.2.12.1 *i > u*

Words which have the pattern *fi’āl* or *fi’lāl* in Classical Arabic have *fu’āl* or *fu’lāl* in *Daf al-iṣr*, which corresponds to normal usage today: *ṭuḥāl* “spleen” (82a), and *ḡurbāl* “sieve for grains (coarse-meshed sieve)” (84b).

³⁸⁸ Blanc (1973-4) p. 378.

³⁸⁹ See §2.1.1 for more information about al-Ṭanṭāwī.

³⁹⁰ See Davies (1981) p. 81.

³⁹¹ فيكسرون الكاف “and they put an *i* after the *kāf*”, see *Daf al-iṣr* fol. 57a.

³⁹² فيكسرون الفا “and they put an *i* after the *fā*”, see *Daf al-iṣr* fol. 24a.

³⁹³ His system is explained in detail in §3.7.1.

Linguistic Analysis

6.2.12.2 *i > a*

Quadriliteral words which have the pattern *fi'lil* in Classical Arabic have *fa'lil* in both *Daf al-iṣr' al-iṣr* and modern Cairene Arabic. Some examples are: برطيل *bartīl* “bribe” (65b), قندیل *qandīl* “oil lamp” (90b), and زنديق *zandīq* “heretic” (42b).

Words with the pattern *mifal* and *mifala* in Classical Arabic have *maf'al* and *maf'ala* in *Daf al-iṣr' al-iṣr*:

maf'al:

محمل *maḥmal* “camel litter” (70a), مردن *mardan* “spindle” (114a), and معصم *ma'ṣam* “wrist” (103a). This final example is interesting because under the influence of Modern Standard Arabic it has again become *mi'ṣam* in modern Cairene Arabic.

maf'ala:

مدخنه *madḥana* “smoke funnel” (113b), مصطبة *maṣṭaba* “stone bench” (15b), and مصقلة *maṣqala* “burnisher” (81a).

6.2.12.3 *u > i*

Daf al-iṣr has the patterns *KuKāK(a)* and *KiKāK(a)* for words with the meaning of “waste”. In modern Cairo Arabic, words with this meaning have the same patterns,³⁹⁴ while in Classical Arabic only the pattern with *u* is used. In *Daf al-iṣr* we find: رذاب *riḏāb* “spittle” (14a), and ميشاق *mišāq* “residue that is left after the flax has been combed” (55b), as well as زبالة *zubāla* “garbage” (77a), قمامه *qumāma* “sweepings” (105b), نخاله *nuḥāla* “siftings of flour” (92a), and غسالة *ḡusāla* “washing water” (85a).

6.2.12.4 *u > a*

Quadriliteral words with the pattern *KuKKūK* in Classical Arabic have the pattern *KaKKūK* in modern Cairo's dialect. There are a few examples of this phenomenon in *Daf al-iṣr*: بالوم *bal'ūm* “gullet” (96a), خرطوم *ḥarṭūm* “hose, elephant's trunk; Khartoum” (96b), صندوق *ṣandūq* “box” (47b), and عربون *'arbūn* “down payment” (116b).

³⁹⁴ See Woidich (2006) pp. 93 and 98.

6.2.12.5 *a > u*

Words with the pattern KaKūK in Classical Arabic, have in *Daf al-iṣr* the pattern KuKūK like in modern Cairo Arabic: سفوف *sufūf* “medicinal powder” (25a); لُعُوق *lu‘ūq* “electuary” (54b); زُبُون *zubūn* “customer” (114b).

6.2.12.6 Assimilation of vowels to vowels

In مَعَدَّل *ma‘addil* < *mu‘addil* “somebody who puts another straight or corrects his faults” (83a), we see the assimilation of the /u/ to /a/. This is a phenomenon that takes place when the two vowels are separated by a pharyngeal, in this case the ʿ. Other examples observed in modern Cairene Arabic are *Muḥammad* - *Maḥammad* “Mohammed” and *mi’ayyaḥ* - *ma’ayyaḥ* “festering”.³⁹⁵

6.3 Morphology

6.3.1 The verb

6.3.1.1 The prefix of the imperfect

The vowel of the prefix of the imperfect is *i*.³⁹⁶ It is twice written with *kasra* in *Daf al-iṣr*: يَسَّلَع *yisalla* “to be successful in selling one’s goods” (44b), and يَشْوَلِم *yišwlām* “to rage, scream” (102a). Širbīnī also explicitly mentions that the prefix is *yi-* in his comment on Y’F “it settles (of a fly)”.³⁹⁷ An ancient example of this feature has been discovered in a Judaeo-Arabic letter from the 12th/13th century: *yigī* “it comes”,³⁹⁸ and many other instances can be found in the 15th century text *Nuzhat al-nufūs*.³⁹⁹

6.3.1.2 The prefix of form V, VI, quadrilaterals

The prefix *it-* instead of *ta-* in forms V and VI and the quadrilateral verbs occurs frequently: يَدَّشَّى *yiddaššā*⁴⁰⁰ “to belch” (127a), اِتْرَسِم *itrassim* ‘*ala* “to guard someone” (97b), اِزْقَم *izzaqqam* “to be force-fed” (98b), يَسْكَع *yissakka* “to loiter” (44a), يَسَّلِق *yisliq*

³⁹⁵ See Woidich (2006) p. 19.

³⁹⁶ This phenomenon, called *taltala*, is an old feature. It was already widespread among the pre-literary dialects of the Arab peninsula. Rabin (1951) p. 61 mentions that “the tribes of Qais, Tamīm, ʿAsad, Rabīʿa, and the ‘*āmmat al-ʿarab*’ had *i*”.

³⁹⁷ See Davies (1981) p. 105.

³⁹⁸ See Blau-Hopkins (1985) p. 453. This letter is written in vocalized Hebrew script.

³⁹⁹ See Vrolijk (1998) p. 145.

⁴⁰⁰ The assimilation of the *t* to the following consonant is discussed in §5.3.6.

Linguistic Analysis

yissallaq “to climb” (46a), *yissawwaq* “to go looking for” (46a), *yiššaddaq* “to be diffuse in speech” (46b), *yiššannaṭ* “to eavesdrop” (46a), *itmaqqaḷ* “to look” (92a), *yizzāwil* “to imagine” (79a), *ittahtih* “to stammer” (121a), *itfaškil* “to act incorrectly” (87a), *itmaṭraq* “to lay down” (36a), *itmalml* “to be restless” (92a), and *itharkin* “to be worn out” (120a).

There are also fourteen instances of *ta-*, but given the proof of *it-* it is clear that *ta-* must be a classicism.

6.3.1.3 The prefix of form VII

The prefix of the passive-reflexive form VII is always *in-*. A few examples are:

inbašam “to feel nauseated” (95b), *inḡabah* “to be embarrassed” (121b), *inḡazā* “to be embarrassed” (126b), *inḡaṭaf lwnuh* “he became pale” (lit. “his colour was snatched away”) (22a), *indakk* “to be weakened (voice)” (58b), *indalaq* “to throw oneself on” (39b), *inṡaraf* “to be hurt (the eye)” (29b).

The form with *it-*, which occurs frequently in *Hazz al-quḥūf*,⁴⁰¹ is not attested in *Daf al-iṣr*, where all form VII-verbs have the prefix *in-*, as in *Nuzhat al-nufūs*.⁴⁰² The prefix of form VII is *it-* in Cairo these days, while *in-* can be found in a few verbs such as *inbasaṭ* “to enjoy oneself”. In the Šarqīya, the prefix is *in-*.⁴⁰³

6.3.1.4 Vowels of form II, V, and quadrilaterals

In modern Cairene Arabic, the same rule applies to the second vowel of forms II and V, and the quadrilateral roots: if one, or both, of the surrounding consonants are emphatic, laryngeal (not *h*), pharyngeal, or postvelar fricatives, the vowel is *a*. In all other cases it is *i*.⁴⁰⁴ Therefore, it is *nazzil* “to bring down”, *tallaʿ* “to bring up”, *bahdil* “to mess up”, but *laḡbaṭ* “to confuse”. There are a few indications from *Daf al-iṣr* that in al-Maḡribī’s time the distribution of the vowels was the same as it is today: *yitnaḡḡam* “to defecate” (106b), *yisallaʿ* “to be successful in selling one’s goods” (44b), *itharkin* “to be worn out” (120a), and *ḡarbaq* “to tear apart” (39a). More evidence of this distribution of the vowels can be found in

⁴⁰¹ See Davies (1981) p. 118.

⁴⁰² See Vrolijk (1998) p. 148.

⁴⁰³ See Behnstedt-Woidich (1985) I map 242.

⁴⁰⁴ See Woidich (2006) pp. 64, 67.

Linguistic Analysis

Vrolijk (1998) p. 147, from the 15th century text *Nuzhat al-nufūs*. For example: *yiṣayyah* “he shouts” and *aḥadditak* “I will tell you”. The only instance in *Daf al-iṣr* where this rule does not apply is *تحسَّب taḥassab* “to be entrusted to the protection of s.o.”. However, because the classical prefix *ta-* is used for form V in this example, it could be argued that the vocalization of this word is also classical.

6.3.1.5 Form IV

As explained in detail by Davies (1981) pp. 117-8, the causative role of form IV has been taken over by form II in the dialects, while other form IV verbs have been reinterpreted as form I.⁴⁰⁵ An example from modern Cairene Arabic is the pair *ti'ib*, *yit'ab* “to become tired” and *ta'ab*, *yit'ib* “to tire” (< *at'ab*, *yut'ib*), whereas two instances from *Daf al-iṣr* are: راق *rāq* “to pour” (40b) < أراق *arāq* and طَلَّ *ṭall* “to look down” (82b) < أَطَّلَّ *aṭall*. Five examples of form IV can be found in al-Mağribī's glossary: ارهق *arhaq* “to delay” (41a), اسرع *asra'* “to hurry” (44a), اولم (107b) *awlām* “to give a banquet”, اقرف (32a) *aqraf* “to disgust”, أومي (3b) *'awmā* “to make a sign”. From a total of 1406 words, these few instances referred to above seem to indicate that form IV was used infrequently, and that this could be due to the effect of elevated speech. Note also that the form IV *aqraf* has become form I in modern Cairo Arabic, forming a pair like *ti'ib* and *ta'ab*: 'irif, yi'raf “to be disgusted”, and 'araf, yi'rif “to disgust” (< *aqraf*, *yuqrif*).⁴⁰⁶

A special case is the verb “to go”, which is *rāḥ* (6b and 132a), but is mentioned once as *'arāḥ*: كلاه *yaqūlūn arāḥ bi-šahm kilāh* “they say: he went away energetically” (101b). This variant can also be found in a text from 1707, a shadow play edited by Paul Kahle: *'aḥūk 'arāḥ mimmak ḡaḍbān* “your brother has left you in anger” and *'arāḥ lak šī ḍāyi'* “have you lost something?”.⁴⁰⁷ In the twentieth century dialect of the Jews of Cairo, the same *arāḥ* is found for the 3rd sg. masc.⁴⁰⁸ In Classical Arabic, we find both راح and اراح with the meaning “[he] returned in the evening, or afternoon, to rest”, see Lane III 1179b.

⁴⁰⁵ See also Brockelmann (1961) I p. 523.

⁴⁰⁶ See Woidich (2006) pp. 62-3.

⁴⁰⁷ Quoted in Blanc (1974) p. 215.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

6.3.1.6 The internal passive

The internal passive occurs in only two entries: عيل صبري *īl ṣabrī* “I lost my patience” (84b) and قتل *qutil* “to be killed” (89a). The first one can be explained as an expression borrowed from Classical Arabic, and the second by its appearance in the context of Classical Arabic: يقولون فلان العدو مات ويقول بعض لم يموت انما قتل ولا فرق *yaqūlūn fulān al-‘adaww māt wa yaqūl lam yamut innamā qutil wa lā farq* “they say: ‘so-and-so (may it happen to your enemy) died’, and some say, ‘he did not die, he was killed’, and there is no difference”. In addition, the internal passive can sometimes be found in the context of an entry, e.g. فلان مُسِيك بعملته *fulān musik bi-‘amlatuh* “he was caught red-handed” (84b) (the entry here is *بعملته*), but this can be explained by al-Mağribī’s habit of placing the entries in a classical context.⁴⁰⁹

6.3.2 The pronoun

The only two personal pronouns worth mentioning here are: *iḥnā* in ما احنا من دي *ma iḥnā min dī lqabal* “we do not belong to this type of people” (88b), and *huwwā* in اذ هوَّ *‘ad huwwā* “there he is” (3b). Both can be found in the list of personal pronouns of Davies (1981) p. 177.

The use of the word *iyyāh* is interesting. It can be used as a demonstrative particle (see §6.3.3.), but al-Mağribī mentions its usage by the Bedouins with the meaning of “he”: وهذه الكلمة يستعملها غير الحضرة في معنى هو كأنهم يقولون هو بعينه: “this word (i.e. *iyyāh*) is used by the non-town dwellers with the meaning of ‘he’, as if they say: ‘he himself’”.

6.3.3 The demonstratives

The demonstratives *dā*, *dī*⁴¹⁰ and *dwlāh* occur in *Daf al-iṣr*. The latter is used independently: *wa yaqūlūn dwlāh kazā aw iṣ fi dwlāh ṭayyib* “they say: ‘those are so-and-so’, or ‘which of those is good?’”. Davies (1981) p. 161 suggests that the *-h* of *dwlāh*, which also occurs in *Hazz al-quḥūf*, “may

⁴⁰⁹ See §3.6.1.

⁴¹⁰ These are spelt *dā* and *dī*, but because interdentals had already disappeared at this time (see §6.2.2) it can be concluded that this is historical spelling and should be pronounced *dā* and *dī*. Furthermore, *dī* is written once as *دي*.

Linguistic Analysis

indicate pausal *'imāla*". Also *dā* appears only independently: *ما ذا الا شكل mā dā illā šikl* "that is nothing but coquetry", *ما ذا هلال واكبر ذا مليح mā dā hilāl wa-akbar dā maliḥ* "that is the crescent and even bigger, that is beautiful" (100b). The demonstrative *dī* occurs once in combination with *illā*, like the aforementioned *dā*: *ما ذي الا زلة mā dī illā zilla* "it is nothing but a mistake" (78b). In two other cases, *dī* / *dī* appears as a preposed⁴¹¹ demonstrative, once in combination with a feminine noun: *اش ذي اللبكة iš dī l-labka* "what is this confusion?" (62), and once with a masculine noun: *ما احنا من دي القبل mā iḥnā min dī l-qabal* "we do not belong to this type of people" (88b). This confirms Davies' findings that "there is no strict correlation between the form of the demonstrative and the gender of the noun", and that "especially frequent preposed is DY".⁴¹² In *Hazz al-Quḥūf*, we find examples such as *dī l-'amal* "this act" and *dī l-qwl* "these words".⁴¹³

In modern Cairene Arabic, the normal order is noun - demonstrative. However, Doss (1979) shows that the word order demonstrative - noun also occurs, and she refers to three constructions in which this can be found:⁴¹⁴

1. noun phrases following the vocative *ya*, e.g. *ya di lhēba* "what a nuisance!"
2. strongly worded commands, e.g. *ḥallaṣūna min di ššuḡlāna* "rid us of this job!"
3. curses, e.g. *yil'an abu di l'iša* "damn this life!"

The function of this positioning, Doss argues, is "that of emphasis which is usually to express a negative feeling".⁴¹⁵ However, Woidich (1992) contradicts this with some examples with a positive meaning, e.g. *yādi ššudfa ssa'īda* "what a happy coincidence!".⁴¹⁶ He argues that rather than expressing a negative feeling, the combination of demonstrative - noun causes an "increased intensity of awareness" because of its contrast with the normal word order.⁴¹⁷ Davies (1981) proves that the same applies to the examples found in *Hazz al-quḥūf*, and that the function of the preposed demonstrative is "to mark a general intensity of feeling on the part of the speaker towards the object referred to".⁴¹⁸ This is probably also the case in

⁴¹¹ No instances of postponed demonstratives are found in *Daf al-iṣr*.

⁴¹² Davies (1981) p. 163.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ See Doss (1979) pp. 350-351.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid. p. 353.

⁴¹⁶ See Woidich (1992) p. 199

⁴¹⁷ Ibid. p. 214.

⁴¹⁸ Davies (1981) p. 168.

Daf al-iṣr, although there are not enough examples thereof to establish a general rule.

A very interesting feature is *dillā* دَلَّ. It only appears after *mā* in *Daf al-iṣr*, which initially suggested to me the meaning of “nothing but”. However, in *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, the word occurs several times as a demonstrative in combination with a noun, e.g. *dillā l-raḡul* دَلَّ الرَّجُلُ “this man”, but also independently.⁴¹⁹ It never occurs in combination with *mā* though. Therefore, in the examples in *Daf al-iṣr*, the expression *mā dillā* could be translated as “what kind of a ... is this”: *mā dillā laklūk* مَا دَلَّ لَكْلُوكُ “what kind of careless person this is!” (62a), *fulān mā dillā raḡl* فُلَانٌ مَا دَلَّ رَجُلٌ “so-and-so, what kind of man is he!” (75a), and *mā dillā qisma* مَا دَلَّ قِسْمُهُ “what kind of fated lot is this!”.⁴²⁰ Vrolijk was unaware of its usage in *Daf al-iṣr* and, therefore, concluded that this feature had become obsolete before the 17th century.⁴²¹ Spiro (1999) p. 550a mentions the similar *ma illa*: *ma illa rāḡil* مَا اِلَّا رَاغِلٌ “what a man!”, which is also referred to by 'Amīn (2002) p. 501: *mā* مَا, and El-Ṭanṭāvy (1981) p. xxiv: *mā* مَا.

6.3.4 The demonstrative particles

In modern Cairene Arabic, there are two demonstrative particles with the meaning “there is...” which are used as presentatives: *ahú* (m.), *ahé* (f.), *ahúm* (pl.) and the invariable *ādi*.⁴²² we also find two such particles in *Daf al-iṣr*. The first is *ādī*: *yaqūlūn ādī* يَقُولُونَ *ādī* “they say: ‘here I am’, or ‘here, I’m going’” (109a). Fischer (1959) p. 176 states that this demonstrative is a combination of the interjection *’ā*, and the old relative pronomen *ḡī*. In modern Egyptian, *ādi* can stand alone or be followed by a suffix for the 1st or 2nd person.⁴²³

The second demonstrative particle found in *Daf al-iṣr* is *’ad* followed by the personal pronoun: *’ad huwwā* أَدُّ هُوَاْ *’ad huwwā* أَدُّ هُوَاْ *’ad huwwā* أَدُّ هُوَاْ *’ad huwwā* أَدُّ هُوَاْ “here, he did such-and-such”, or “here he is.” (3b). It is possible that this is a shortened form of *ādi*, since there are examples of *ad* + personal pronoun in

⁴¹⁹ See Vrolijk (1998) p. 152.

⁴²⁰ In *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, no example of *dillā* + fem. noun can be found, see Vrolijk (1998) p. 152.

⁴²¹ See Vrolijk (1998) p. 152.

⁴²² See Woidich (2006) pp. 48-9.

⁴²³ See Woidich (2006) p. 49 and Fischer (1959) p. 176.

Linguistic Analysis

modern Cairo Arabic, such as *adik* ~ *ad-ínta*, *adiki* ~ *ad-ínti*, *adīna* ~ *ad-iḥna* etc.⁴²⁴ In the Dakhla-oasis a form without *-i*, e.g. *ādni*, is still in use today.⁴²⁵ As mentioned above, *ādi* can nowadays only be followed by suffixes of the 1st and 2nd person, but this was, perhaps, not the case in the 17th century.

The particle *إِيَّاهُ* was, according to al-Mağribī, used as a demonstrative referring to a person or thing and meaning “that one”, “the aforementioned”:

ويقولون إِيَّاهُ على صورة ضمير النصب المنفصل يريدون ما هو الا كذا هيئة المستفهم انسان
“They say ‘*iyyāh* in the shape of an object suffix. They mean with this: ‘he is nothing but such-and-such’, in the form of the person who inquires, [e.g.] a person tells another person something, and then he doesn’t understand his story so he repeats it, until he understands it, so he says ‘that’s it!’, as if he is saying, ‘now I understand’” (3b).

It is explained a second time: *“they say, when they mention a thing, *iyyāh* ‘the aforementioned’, with an *i* after the hamza and a double *yā*”* (123b). It could, however, also be interpreted as an interjection.

At the present time, the particle *iyyā* seems to have only negative connotations,⁴²⁶ which does not appear to be the case from either al-Mağribī’s explanation, or the examples he provides.

6.3.5 The interrogatives

6.3.5.1 ‘*izzāy*

إِزَاي ‘*izzāy* “how?” was used in al-Mağribī’s time (see 127b). He correctly retraced it to *اَيُّ شَيْءٍ زِيَّهٍ* *ayy šy ziyyuh* “how is his attire?”

⁴²⁴ see Woidich (2006) p. 49.

⁴²⁵ See Behnstedt-Woidich (1999) p. 359a.

⁴²⁶ Hinds-Badawi (1986) p. 47a mentions that it is often used “with a pejorative connotation”, while Woidich (2006) p. 235 mentions its use when the speaker wants to avoid saying a certain thing, e.g. *iṣṣuwar iyyāha* “certain photos” for “pornographic photos”.

Linguistic Analysis

6.3.5.2 *iš - ayš / ēš*

اش *iš* “what?” occurs four times in *Daf al-iṣr*, while *ayš / ēš* occurs only once: اش اش *iš dī l-labka* “what is this confusion?” (62a), اش اش *iš dī l-labka* “what is this confusion?” (62a), اش اش *ayš / ēš hādīhi l-ḥuzu‘balāt* (72a) “what are these superstitions?”, اش اش *iš fī dawlāh ṭayyib* “which of those is good?” (73b), and اش اش *iš ḥilātuh* “what does he look like?” (125b). *ēš* is a contraction of *ayy šay’* “which thing” and has become *ē* in modern Cairo Arabic. *ēš* was common in Cairo until the 19th century,⁴²⁷ and can still be heard today in the Egyptian countryside. As mentioned before,⁴²⁸ the writing of اش with a short vowel suggests the shortening of the vowel ‘*ē*. *ayy šay’* instead of *mā* as an interrogative is an ancient feature which has already been attested to in texts from the first millennium.⁴²⁹ This was, according to Blau, due to the “very heavy functional load of *mā* (which had become the standard negative particle)”.⁴³⁰

6.3.5.3 *'ymtā*

اش *'ymtā* “when” occurs once in *Daf al-iṣr*: اش *'ymtā yikūn* “when will it be?” (3b). Al-Maḡribī explains that this is either *matā* plus an extra ‘*ay*, or that ‘*ay* on its own is اش *جواب* “a particle of reply” i.e. *ay* “yes”. This would suggest that the pronunciation is *'aymtā*. Note that El-Ṭanṭāvy also uses the spelling with an initial *alif* plus *yā*: اش *إيمتي*.⁴³¹

6.3.5.4 *anā*

اش *anā* “which” is an entry in *Daf al-iṣr*: اش *انا مقشره* هذا جا من انا داهيه من انا كروه من انا مقشره *hādā ḡā min anā dāhya min anā karwa min anā maqšara* “this came from which

⁴²⁷ See Spiro (1999) p. 26a.

⁴²⁸ See §6.2.8.

⁴²⁹ See Blau (2002) p. 36 and 130. Corriente (1975) p. 53 mentions many early examples of *ayšī* and *ayš* from *Kitāb al-aḡānī* by Abū al-Faraḡ al-Iṣfahānī (4th century AH). Spitta-Bey (1880) p. 80 mentions he found *ēš* in a manuscript from the 3rd century: *Kitāb naṭr al-durr* by Maṣūb b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ābī.

⁴³⁰ Blau (2002) p. 36.

⁴³¹ See El-Ṭanṭāvy (1981) p. 75.

Linguistic Analysis

disaster, from which ...⁴³²” (3b). Its meaning is explained: *وَأَمَّا قَوْلُهُمْ مِنْ أَنَا مَحَلِّ مَثَلًا* “and concerning their saying *min anā maḥall* for instance, they mean with it *min ayy maḥall* ‘from which place’” (3b). *anā* can be compared with the present-day *āni*,⁴³³ which Woidich (2006) p. 51 mentions in a similar context to al-Maḡribī: *sāfir f-āni dahya* “to which damned place did he travel?”. No instances of *anā* were found in other old texts that I consulted.

6.3.5.5 *fyn*

في *fyn* “where” was used by the Egyptians, while the Arabs and North Africans said *wayn* according to al-Maḡribī: *يقولون ويسمع من العرب والمغاربة وَيُنْ هُوَ أَيَّ أَيْنَ* “they say, and this is heard from the Arabs and the North Africans: *wayn*, which means ‘where’, and this is a mispronunciation of *fyn* which is *fī ayn*” (120a). It is interesting that al-Maḡribī considers *wayn* a *taṣḥīf* of *fyn*, which he apparently approves of because it is a contraction of *fī ayn*. An earlier stage of *fyn* can be found in *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, where it is spelled *فيَيْنَ fiyayn*.⁴³⁴

6.3.6 The diminutive

In modern Cairene Arabic, the diminutive patterns are no longer productive, but survive as relics.⁴³⁵ Most common is the pattern KvKayyvk, which is found in words such as *kuwayyis* “good”, *ṣuḡayyar* “small”, *ʿulayyil* “few” etc. Davies (1981) p. 132 notes the high frequency of diminutive patterns in *Hazz al-quḥūf*. In *Daf al-iṣr*, however, there are only a few:

KvKyKvK

This pattern is used for the diminutive of quadriliteral roots: *بَعِيرِقْ baʿyzaq* “squandering” (38a) and *قَرِيَطَمْ qərytəm* “safflower” (104b). The latter is also mentioned in *Hazz al-quḥūf*, as the second element of a *kunya*.⁴³⁶

⁴³² The meaning of the words *مقشرة* and *كروه* in this context is unclear. Al-Maḡribī states his intention to explain them in their proper place, but *كروه* was not explained and *مقشرة* would have been in the part of the manuscript that got lost.

⁴³³ See Spiro p. 22b *any*. Hinds-Badawi (1986) p. 42a only mentions *anhu*, *anhi*.

⁴³⁴ See Vrolijk (1998) p. 154.

⁴³⁵ See Davies (1981) p. 131.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 136.

Linguistic Analysis

KvKvy(a)

This pattern is used for roots with a final *yā'*: *دُوَيّ* *duwayy* “sound” (127a) and *شَوَيْتِه* *šəwayya* “a little” (128a).

KvKKūK

For the diminutive of quadriliteral roots: *بَلْبُول* *balbūl* “nightingale” (66b).⁴³⁷

KvKyK(a)

لَوَيْلَات *lawylāt* “nights” (91b), and *أَبُو فَرْيُوَة* *abū fərywa* “chestnut” (89a). Following the same pattern are: *شَرِيَك* *šəryk* “type of bread” (60b) and *بَرِيَك* *bəryk* “small pastries” (56b), which are from the Turkish *çörek* and *börek*. These loanwords, with a pattern that is unknown in Egyptian Arabic, adjusted to an existing pattern with vowels which resembled the original.⁴³⁸

KvKK

يَا بَيِّ *yā bəyyī* “o my father” (124a) could be a diminutive.

6.3.7 The adverbs

The adverb *هَوْن* *hwn* “here” (120b) sounds decidedly Levantine to modern ears.⁴³⁹ However, it is also mentioned in *Nuzhat al-nufūs*,⁴⁴⁰ and is still used today in the oases in Egypt.⁴⁴¹

Al-Mağribī mentions that the *šawāmm* say *هَيْك* *hayk* “like this” (63a), but fails to reveal what the Egyptians say. We find a few instances of its Egyptian equivalent, *كِدِه* *kidih*, in *Nuzhat al-nufūs*.⁴⁴²

The adverbs *جُوّه* *ǧuwwa* “inside” (4a; 123b; 124b) and *بَرَا / بَرَّة* *barra* “outside” (4a, 123b; 125a) occur frequently in both *Daf al-iṣr* and *Nuzhat al-nufūs*.⁴⁴³

⁴³⁷ See Woidich (2006) p. 96 KaKKūK and p. 100 KaKKūKa for more examples with this pattern.

⁴³⁸ See Woidich (2006) p. 93.

⁴³⁹ See e.g. Frayha (1995) p. 191a.

⁴⁴⁰ See Vrolijk (1998) p. 155.

⁴⁴¹ Behnstedt-Woidich (1994) p. 494b “hawn hier: *min hawn hier lang*”.

⁴⁴² See Vrolijk (1998) p. 155.

⁴⁴³ Ibid. p. 154.

Linguistic Analysis

- subject + imperfect: الله يرحم سلفك *allāh yirḥam salafak* “may God have mercy on your ancestors” (25b), and الله يتلته *allāh yitaltiluh* “may God put him in hardship” (67a).

- perfect + subject: قاتله الله *qātalahu allāh* “may God fight him” (126b), and هتاك الله *hannāk allāh* “may God grant you good health” (11a).

The wishes with the imperfect are an ancient feature because examples can be found in texts from the first millennium.⁴⁴⁷ The use of the perfect in the expression of wishes is, however, still common today, and can be explained as loans from Standard Arabic.⁴⁴⁸ An example which is frequently heard in Egypt is *kattaṛ ḥērak* “many thanks!” (lit. “may God increase your bounty”).

6.4.4 The place of the interrogative

As can be seen from the examples in §6.3.5, all colloquial interrogatives occurring in *Daf al-iṣr* are placed at the beginning of the sentence. Sharbatov (1969) p. 312 states that the fact that al-Maḡribī places *imtā* and *iš* there, while nowadays they are placed at the end, is proof of the final struggle between Coptic and Arabic in the 16th and 17th centuries. This is, however, extremely unlikely. In modern Egyptian Arabic, there is no rule that the interrogative must be placed at the end of the sentence; its position is *in situ*, i.e. it takes its position according to the function it has in the sentence.⁴⁴⁹ For example, if the interrogative is the subject it takes the position thereof at the beginning of the sentence: *mīn šāf ‘Ali fi lmadrasa?* “who saw ‘Ali in school?”. If it is the object, it will be placed after the verb: *Ḥasan šāf mīn fi lmadrasa?* “whom did Ḥasan see in school?”.⁴⁵⁰ In the examples from *Daf al-iṣr*, the interrogative *iš* has the function of the subject in all instances and is, therefore, placed at the beginning of the sentence. The temporal interrogative

⁴⁴⁷ See Blau (2002) p. 45.

⁴⁴⁸ See Woidich (2002) p. 272.

⁴⁴⁹ See Woidich (2006) p. 359; the following two examples are also taken from there. More examples can be found in *EALL I* p. 502 (P. Behnstedt).

⁴⁵⁰ More examples from older sources can be found in Singer (1958) pp. 135-6. Also Munzel (1950) p. 573 notes that *ēš*, when used as the subject of the interrogative sentence, is placed at the beginning thereof. He also points out (pp. 566-8) that in some other Arabic dialects, and even in Classical Arabic, cases have been found where the interrogative is placed at the end of the sentence, thereby ruling out Coptic influence. Diem (1979) pp. 51-2 also finds it unlikely that the influence of the Coptic language has caused this word order. He does, however, suggest that given two possible alternatives, the Coptic substratum may have caused a preference for the construction closest to Coptic. This is also the opinion of Versteegh (1997) p. 106.

Linguistic Analysis

'*ymtā*, is mostly found where temporal adverbs are placed, i.e. at the end of the sentence. However, variety in word order is possible, and the interrogative can be placed at the beginning of the sentence in order to stress its meaning.⁴⁵¹

Another argument against Sharbatov's statement relates to the fact that if at the beginning of the 17th century the interrogatives were still placed at the start of the sentence, whereas they are now at the end, this cannot be due to the influence of Coptic because it was already a dead language in al-Mağribī's time. In general, it is supposed that the Coptic language ceased to be a living language in the 12th century.⁴⁵²

6.4.5 *dann*

The particle *dann* (also *tann* in modern Cairo Arabic⁴⁵³) is used to describe the continuation of an action: كذا *dannuh yiqūl kaḏā* "he says so-and-so all the time" (113b). The origin of *dann* / *tann*⁴⁵⁴ is **ta'anna* "to stay",⁴⁵⁵ not *dann* "to buzz" as al-Mağribī suggests. *dann* is used in the example in combination with an imperfect, while nowadays it is almost exclusively used with the active participle (and sometimes with the imperative).⁴⁵⁶

6.4.6 *šā*

In Yemeni Arabic, the word شا *šā* has undergone a change from a verb meaning "to want" to a future marker. This process is called grammaticalisation, which is "[T]he change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions".⁴⁵⁷ This grammaticalisation of *šā* had already taken place in al-Mağribī's time: يقولون شا افعال شا اروح وهم اهل اليمن وهي صحيحة اي: "The people of Yemen say اريد افعال او اراد في شا يفعل وارتدت في افعال لان شا ماض دائما

⁴⁵¹ See Woidich (2006) p. 360.

⁴⁵² At least, this has been the case in Cairo since the 12th century according to MacCoull (1985) and Rubenson (1996), while *EALL* I p. 495 (T.S. Richter) names the 13th century. Relics of Coptic have been reported later than that in Upper Egypt, see *EI*² V p. 92b (A.S. Atiya). On the influence of Coptic on Egyptian Arabic, see also Diem (1979) pp. 50-52.

⁴⁵³ See Hinds-Badawi (1986) p. 139a and Woidich (2006) p. 324.

⁴⁵⁴ In the Delta, we find *dann* east of the Damietta-branch of the Nile, and *tann* in the other areas. See BW II map 393.

⁴⁵⁵ See Woidich (2006) p. 324.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Brinton-Traugott (2006) p. 99.

Linguistic Analysis

šā aḥal šā arūḥ which is correct, i.e. “I want to do”, or “he wanted” in the case of *šā yifal* and “I wanted” in the case of *aḥal*, because *šā* is always in the perfect tense”.

Since “to want” expresses an intention, and therefore makes it probable that an action will take place in the future, it is easy to imagine how *šā* became the future marker. In the Yemeni dialects of today, the prefix *š-* or *ša-* is still used to express the future or an intention. Watson (1993) p. 62 mentions that *šā*-expressing intention and the future tense is only used in the first person, which fits al-Mağribī’s first two examples. Deboo (1989) p. 215 only refers to its use as the verbal prefix for future or intention, without specifically mentioning the first person. Piamenta (1990) I p. 242b gives an example in the third person: “شياكل *ša-yākul* he will eat”. Al-Mağribī’s translation of *šā aḥal* with “I want to do” is inaccurate and should have been “I will do”, because if “to want” was the meaning the speaker intended to convey, then the verb would have to be conjugated. On the other hand, *شا يفعل* could mean “he wanted to do”, as al-Mağribī states, because as well as being used as a future marker in modern Yemeni dialects, the word *šā* is also still used as a verb, with the meaning “to want”.⁴⁵⁸ The same situation could have existed in al-Mağribī’s time.

It is a common phenomenon in many languages that the verb “to want” becomes the future marker. This is for instance the case in English, where the word “will” originates from Old English *willan* “want”. More examples can be found in Modern Greek, Swahili, and Bulgarian, as well as in several other languages.⁴⁵⁹

6.4.7 *qā'id* as an auxiliary verb

In the following sentence, *qā'id* is used as an auxiliary verb expressing continuity: *فلان قاعد مُسَّهِّم* *fulān qā'id musahhim* “so-and-so is frowning” (101a). *'ā'id*, with the function of an auxiliary verb, still has the meaning of “to keep doing something” in modern Cairene Arabic.⁴⁶⁰ It can be followed by an imperfect, bi-imperfect or participium: *wi 'a'adt' mistanniyya lbitt* “and I waited for the girl”, *'a'adt' māši māši māši* “and I walked farther and farther,⁴⁶¹ and *innās 'a'adu ynādu 'a-ttaksi* “the people kept calling for the taxi”.⁴⁶² Interestingly, the same process has taken place in

⁴⁵⁸ See Deboo (1989) p. 215.

⁴⁵⁹ See Heine-Kuteva (2002) pp. 310-311.

⁴⁶⁰ See Woidich (2006) p. 310 and Hinds-Badawi (1986) p. 710a.

⁴⁶¹ Examples from Woidich (2006) p. 323.

⁴⁶² Example from Hinds-Badawi (1986) p. 710a.

Dutch, where one can say, for example: *zit niet zo te zeuren!* “stop nagging!” (lit. “don’t sit there nagging”) even if the person doing the nagging is standing. This can also be seen in a number of other languages, for instance Danish and Korean.⁴⁶³

6.5 Vocabulary

One of *Daf al-iṣr*’s appealing elements is its focus, not only on the speech of the intellectuals of the day, but also on that of various other social classes such as the artisans, working classes, country people, those from other Arab-speaking countries, and even women and children. Moreover, al-Maǧribī also discusses a number of loan words, mainly from Persian and Turkish. An overview of these various categories can be found in this section, which will conclude with research into the question of to what extent words mentioned in *Daf al-iṣr* are still in use in present-day Egypt.

6.5.1 Words used by the various social classes

6.5.1.1 Women and children

It is interesting to note that *Daf al-iṣr* pays attention to the speech of women and children. Despite this, it is possible to conclude that reporting the speech of the latter was somewhat problematic for al-Maǧribī: في لغة الاولاد عند ارادة مشيهم تاتا (fol. 4b) “In the language of children, when they want to walk, [they say] *tātā*. The amazing thing is that while writing I hesitated in recording it and said that the language of children should not be written.” The expression *tāta* is still in use in Egypt in exactly the way al-Maǧribī describes it: to encourage a little child who is just learning how to walk.⁴⁶⁴ Ḥiǧāzī (1969) p. 120 suggests that al-Maǧribī hesitated to mention this word because he did not know how to write it in Arabic. This seems unlikely, however, because al-Maǧribī clearly had no problems in writing the dialect down. It can thus be concluded that he was bothered by the question of whether or not to include this entry in his word list because it was “not the done thing” to transcribe children’s language. This is still a live issue today.⁴⁶⁵

There is no further speech by children in *Daf al-iṣr*, although some expressions used when communicating with them are mentioned. For instance, when a child is

⁴⁶³ See Heine-Kuteva (2002) pp. 276-278.

⁴⁶⁴ For detailed information about etymology, present-day use etc. about all of the entries mentioned in this section, the reader is referred to the Glossary.

⁴⁶⁵ For more information about the use of dialect in modern Egyptian literature, see Zack (2001a).

Linguistic Analysis

being naughty people call him معسّف *mu'assaf* “a nuisance” (30b). When they want to scare a child they say ياكلك البعو *yāk(u)lak al-ba'aww* “may the bogeyman eat you!”.⁴⁶⁶ Women say to one another: هُنْهِنِي لِلطِفْلِ حَتَّى يَنَامَ *hanhini liṭ-ṭifl ḥattā yinām* “rock and sing to the baby until he sleeps” (120a). Al-Mağribī also writes about the سَبُوع *subū'*, the “ceremony marking the seventh day after the birth of a child” (43b), which is still a common ritual.

There are a few entries which address the speech of women. An interesting one is مَلِيحٌ هَائِلٌ *malīḥ hāyil* “terribly beautiful / beautiful, wonderful” (95a), in which al-Mağribī notes that the original meaning of *hāyil* was “terrifying”. It is unclear what exactly the meaning of *hāyil* is in this context. The first possibility is that it is used as an intensifier or adverb, like 'awi “very” is today, although this is unlikely because it no longer has the same meaning. Indeed, it would be improbable if the word first acquired this meaning in al-Mağribī's time and then lost it again. The second possibility is that it should be understood as “wonderful”, i.e. that it had the function of an adjective. This reflects its present-day usage, in which one can, for instance, say: *ilfilm kān hāyil* “the movie was great”. It is clear from *Daf al-iṣr* that the meaning of the word *hāyil* had just begun to shift from “terrifying” to “wonderful”, and it is interesting to note that this change was, apparently, first manifest in women's speech.⁴⁶⁷ The same development can be found in the Arabic word *fazī'*, which nowadays can mean both “terrible” and “tremendous, terrific”.⁴⁶⁸

The following is an overview of all the entries concerning women in *Daf al-iṣr*:

- غَبْبَةٌ *ğabba* “menstruation” (18a). It is related to the verb *ğabba* “to return at regular intervals”.⁴⁶⁹ This is not used in Egypt nowadays: the term that is, is *āda* as in *alēha l-āda* “she has her period”, which also means “habit” or “something that returns regularly”;
- سَبَسِبَ *sabsib* “to be lank (hair)” (15a);
- يَشْفَشِفُ عَلَيهِ قَلْبِي *qalbī yišfašif 'alyh* “my heart longs for him” (26b);
- وَحَمَ *waham* “craving (of pregnant women)” (107b);
- عَلَي الْحَالِ مَا يَزْعَقُ *alā l-ḥāl mā yiza'qaq* “he gets angry quickly” (42a);

⁴⁶⁶ Still in use nowadays, as well as the variety *bu'bu'*.

⁴⁶⁷ Dozy (1927) II p. 770b mentions its use with the meaning “beau, magnifique” in *1001 Nights*. For this semantic shift, see §6.5.4.1.

⁴⁶⁸ See Hinds-Badawi (1986) p. 663b.

⁴⁶⁹ See Lane VI 2221a.

Linguistic Analysis

- *أَوْه* *uwwih* “exclamation of anger” (120b; 123a);
- *بقيت سمائم من كذا* *baqyt samā'im min kaḏā* (101a); the meaning is not entirely clear, but could be “suffering from the heat”, since *سمائم* means “hot wind”, although it could also have a metaphorical meaning;
- *ام طبق* *umm ṭabaq* “calamity; serpent” (47b);
- *عيضه* *yḏa* “misery” (122a).

6.5.1.2 The working classes

The language of the working classes is by no means neglected by al-Mağribī, who includes the following expressions used by artisans, traders and construction workers (*فعلة* *fa'ala* (87b)):

- *سلفه* *salfa* “advance payment” (25b);
- *يقوق* *yiqaḡwaq* “to have no customers” (54a);
- *ماطي* *māṭī* “seller of blankets, mattresses etc.” (131a);
- *مدماك* *maḏmāk* “course of bricks” (58b);
- *صرفان* *ṣarfān* “block of limestone” (27b).

Furthermore, we also find expressions used by camel and donkey traders:

- *حاحا* *ḡāḡā* “sound made to urge on a donkey” (7a);
- *چوچو* *čūčū* “sound made to encourage the camels to drink” (6b);
- *تِنك* *tink* “strong” (57a) (used by the stablemen);
- *صطبل* *iṣṭabl* “stable” (63a).

This interest in the speech of the working classes could be explained by al-Mağribī's background: he grew up in a family of artisans who used to deal with traders and the people from the caravans, and he was also the owner of a shop for a brief period. Yet, al-Mağribī's interest went further than this since he also mentions a number of instances of peasants' speech:

- *حنك* *ḡanak* “mouth” (57b), which is still used today in rural Egypt with this meaning, while in Cairo it is considered vulgar;
- *هلف* *hilf* “coward” (35b);
- *تَوّه* *tawwuh ḡā* “he has just arrived” (124a);

Linguistic Analysis

- طلع فوق التل *ṭalə' fwq al-tall* “he went up the hill” (presumably to defecate)⁴⁷⁰ (67a);
- من حيشن *min hyšən* “since” (111b), which is the same as the modern *ḥēs < ḥayt*. It is very interesting that it was pronounced with a *šin*.⁴⁷¹ Al-Mağribī also mentions that people in Cairo said *min hytin*;
- حشني *ḥušnī* “rough (person)” (113a);
- حوة *ḥuwwa* “brotherhood” (< *uḥuwwa*) (127a);
- رَجُل (75a) *raǧl* “man”;⁴⁷²
- رَفّ *raff* “shelf” (23a);
- يضيف، ضاف، *ḍāf, yidīf* “to be a guest” (29a);
- غوش *ǧūš* “bracelets” (101a);⁴⁷³
- قنيف *qinif* “disgusting?” (32b);
- وَطْفَه *watfa* “having bushy eyebrows (used as insult to a woman)” (35a).

There are also a number of nautical expressions:

- the names of different types of small boats: زورق *zuraq* (42a), سنبوق *sənbwq* (46a), سنبوك *sənbwk* (46a; 60b);
- different parts of a boat: حِنّ *ḥinn* “storage space in a boat” (113a), طارمة *ṭārma* “cabin in a boat” (102b), كوتل *kwtal* “stern of a ship” (90b);
- the people who worked on these boats: the رِبّان *rəbbān* “captain” (114a), the كَرّاني *karrānī* “scribe” (117b) and the نواتية *nawātiyya* “sailors” (131a).

Finally, mention is also made of the speech of the lowest class in society, the slaves. When they are in pain slaves say وَيّ *way* “ai!” (132a), and when they believe somebody is hideous, they say he is فَسَل *fasl* (87a).

⁴⁷⁰ This is described in *Hazz al-quḥūf*, see Davies (2005) pp. 391-2.

⁴⁷¹ See also §6.2.2.

⁴⁷² See also §6.2.1.

⁴⁷³ Nowadays, the diminutive *ǧiwēša* is used in Cairo for the singular “bracelet”.

Linguistic Analysis

6.5.1.3 Non-Egyptian Arabic speakers

The language of people from other Arabic-speaking countries does not escape al-Mağribī's attention. The following are the words al-Mağribī heard used by the people from North Africa:

- مكحلة *makhla* “rifle” (91a). Nowadays this word, pronounced *mkeħla* or *mkohla*, is still used with the same meaning in Morocco.⁴⁷⁴ It is so called, as al-Mağribī explains, because gunpowder looks like kohl;
- دربال *darbāl* “garment” (72b);
- زعلوك *zə'lūk* “pauper” (59b);
- وین *wyn* “where” (120a)⁴⁷⁵ (which is also used by the Arabs according to al-Mağribī);
- زاملة *zāmila* “she-camel” (78b), which was also used by the Sudanese traders.

Al-Mağribī also mentions the vocabulary of those from the Arab peninsula, whom he sometimes simply calls *al-'arab*, and sometimes specifies as the people from the Ḥiğāz or the people of Mecca:

- مسطول *masṭūl* “intoxicated” (80b);
- سلمة *sulma* “kiss” (100b);
- زال *zall* “to pass, to leave” (78a);
- ذال *dāll* “lost” (active part.) (81b);
- هني *hannī* “stuff, things” (120a);
- خصفة *ħaṣfa* “mat of palm leaves, used in the Ka'ba” (22a);
- فصی *fāṣy* “date pit” (130a);
- ملعقة *mil'aqa* “spoon” (54b).

There are also words used by the people from the Levant:

- رجال *rağğāl* “man” (75a);
- هيك *hyk* “like this” (63a);
- شقفة *šaqfa* “piece”⁴⁷⁶ (26b).

⁴⁷⁴ See Harrell-Sobelman (2004) p. 81.

⁴⁷⁵ Harrell-Sobelman (2004) p. 204b “wayn (not common Moroccan) same as fayn”.

⁴⁷⁶ In Egyptian this means “potsherd”, see Hinds-Badawi (1986) 471b.

Linguistic Analysis

It is remarkable that some words, which would nowadays be classified as typically Levantine, were used by Egyptians at that time:

- هون *hwn* “here” (120b);
- غبوق *gubūq* “cloudy” (50a);
- نقائق *naqāniq* “small sausages” (56a);
- يبزم *yibzām* “to speak” (95b).

Lentin (1995) discusses the phenomenon of “Egyptian” linguistic traits in Levantine texts from the Ottoman period, and vice versa. He offers two possible explanations. The first is that there was an inter-dialectal koine, which facilitated communication made necessary by the extensive contact between the two regions in this period.⁴⁷⁷ The second explanation is that these linguistic traits were common in both dialects, but for some reason disappeared from one of them, while they continued to be used in the other. This led to the general assumption that they are typical of only one of the dialects.⁴⁷⁸ Trade between Egypt and al-Šām (Syria and Lebanon) has gradually dwindled and many of the *šawām* who were still using these terms until the beginning of the last century have gradually left Egypt and emigrated to other countries. This explains why these terms are still in use in al-Šām but not in Egypt.

Only one item of vocabulary which is specific to Yemen is mentioned in *Daf al-iṣr* (9a), namely the future marker *šā*. This has been discussed in §6.4.6.

6.5.1.4 Loan words

Daf al-iṣr highlights the language of people from outside Egypt which could be heard in the metropolis of Cairo. Firstly, there is the Arabic language spoken by the Turks who, as al-Mağribī points out in a very funny anecdote, do not always master the language.⁴⁷⁹ A second anecdote illustrates another example of how Egyptians sometimes made fun of their Turkish fellow-countrymen (37b):

فان كثيرا من الناس يقول بحضرة الترك شربت قدر بقّ مثلا فيسخرّون منه لان عندهم البقّ هو القدر

⁴⁷⁷ See Lentin (1995) p. 134.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 137.

⁴⁷⁹ See §5.1.3.

Linguistic Analysis

“Many people say in the presence of Turks: ‘I drank as much as a *buqq*’ for instance. So they make fun of them, because for them [= the Turks] *buqq* means ‘filth’.”

This is a pun: in the Egyptian dialect *buqq* means “mouth”. However, the word بوق *boq*, which to the Egyptians sounds like *buqq*, means “shit” in Turkish.⁴⁸⁰ Therefore, the meaning is ambiguous: “I drank a mouthful”, or “I drank an amount of shit”.

However, al-Mağribī does more than just laugh at the Turks and their language, instead mentioning many words of Turkish origin that had entered the Egyptian dialect. From the way in which he discusses this, it is clear that he does not disapprove of this development, but rather seems to consider it an enrichment of the language. Especially well represented in the category of Turkish loanwords are foodstuffs: بريك *baryk* “small pastries” (56b) from the Turkish *börek*, سوبيا *subyā* “a sweet drink” (9a) from the Turkish *sübye*, and شريك *šaryk* “a type of bun” (60b) from the Turkish *çörek*. The same can be said of Persian loanwords, which came into the Egyptian language through Turkish, e.g. سنبوسك *sanbūsak* “triangular pastry filled with cheese or meat” (60b) from the Persian خشکنان, سنبوسه or سنبوسك خشکنان *huškānān* (10a) or خشکنانك *huštānānak* (58a) “a kind of sweet-meat” (58a) from خشك نان *hushk-nān*, (lit. “dry bread”⁴⁸¹), كحك *kaḥk* “cookies” (62a) from كاك *kāk*, and كشك *kišk* “a dish made of wheat and milk” (62a) from كاشك *kašk*.

Not all of the loanwords from Turkish and Persian involve food. There are also several references to musical terms: يگاه *yakāh* “the first note, C” (63a), دوگاه *dwkāh* “the second note, D” (63a), سگاه *sikāh* “the third note, E” (63a), چارگاه (63a) *čārkhāh* “the fourth note, F”, from the Persian يك *yak* “one”, دو *dū* “two”, سه *sih* “three”, چار *čār* “four” + گاه *gāh* “time, place” (amongst others).⁴⁸²

Here is a list of all of the other words of Turkish or Persian origin that are referred to:

- اساطوين *asāṭawīn* (109a) “craftsmen”;
- اشنان *ašnān* “potash” (109a);

⁴⁸⁰ See Redhouse (1992) p. 405a.

⁴⁸¹ See Steingass (1975) p. 468a.

⁴⁸² See Steingass (1975) p. 1074a.

Linguistic Analysis

- براسم *bārāsəm* “silk” (95a);
- برشق *bāršəq* “belt?” (36b);
- برغل *burgul* “crushed wheat” (65b);
- بستان *bustān* “field” (109b);
- بوسه *bwsa* “kiss” (88b);
- خان *hān* “large shop” (113a);
- خجا *həǰā* (8b), خوجا، خجی (126a) *həǰā, hʷǰā* “scholar; important man”;
- خاتون *hātūn* “woman of noble origin” (112b);
- خوان *həwān* “table” (113a);
- دایه *dāya* “midwife” (88b);
- رۆشن *rwšən* “air-hole, sky-light” (114a);
- بون “customer” or “disease” (114b), the first from the Persian *zubūn*, the second from *zabūn*;
- زرباب *zarbāb* “cloth of gold” (15a);
- زردمه *zardama* “throat” (98b);
- زرفن *zarfən* “to curl” (114b);
- زلیه *zəlliyya* “carpet, blanket” (78b; 127b);
- زنبه *zanbara* “whoremonger” (103b);
- زنبیل *zənbīl* “basket” (77a);
- زنجبیل *ziŋǰabīl* “ginger” (78a);
- سلجم *salǰam* “turnip” (101a);
- سوسبان *sysabān* “sesban tree” (15a);
- سروال *širwāl*, سروال *sirwāl* “drawers, long trousers” (80b);
- شيله بيله *šyla byla* “heave-ho!” (128a);
- فرا *firā* “para (coin), 1/40th of a piaster” (9a);
- فرزان *firzān* “the queen in the game of chess” (117a);
- فینجان *fiŋǰān* “coffee cup” (117a);
- فندق *funduq* “hazelnut” (53b);
- قرطاق *qərtaq* “tunic” (53b);

Linguistic Analysis

- قَزْمَة *qazma* “pick-axe” (104b);
- قُلَانْبَارَة *qulanbara* “sodomite” (103b);
- كَر كَدَن *karkaddan/karkadann* “rhinoceros” (117b);
- مِزْرَاب *mizrāb* “spout for draining water from a roof or balcony” (15a);
- مَوْم *mūm* “wax; candles” (106a);
- نَمَك *namak* “salt” (62a) in the expression *wala al-namak* “nothing at all”;
- هِنْدَام *hindām* “the way somebody looks, his shape” (108a).

As examples of words originating from Greek, Al-Mağribī mentions the following:

يقولون اهيا شراها قال وهو خطأ وانما هو اهايا بكسر الهمزة اشر اهيا بفتح الهمزة والشين اي الازلي الذي لم يزل يونانية والناس يغلطون فيقولون اهيا شراها وهو خطأ على ما يزعمه احبار اليهود (121b)

“They say *ahya šarāhya*. He (=al-Fīrūzābādī) says: ‘this is wrong; it should be *ihyā* with *kasr* of the *hamza*, *ašar ihyā* with *fath* of the *hamza* and the *šīn*, meaning ‘the eternal one who has not ceased to be’, which is Greek. The people say incorrectly *ahya šarāhya*, and this is wrong according to what the Jewish rabbis declare.’”

This expression derives from the Hebrew אֲנִי הֵי אֲנִי “I am who I am” (the name of God, Exodus 3:14⁴⁸³). ‘Abd al-Tawwāb (2000) p. 365 misunderstands al-Mağribī when he writes that he (al-Mağribī) was under the false impression that the expression is Greek. The whole entry is (almost) completely taken from *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* p. 1124a. ‘Abd al-Tawwāb refers to the fact that the formula is used in magic, something both *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* and al-Mağribī leave unmentioned. There are many examples of this formula in Islamic magical amulets, sometimes almost unrecognisably corrupted, such as *šarāšā šarā*, *hanšarāhyā*, *hī šarāhī* etc.⁴⁸⁴

A second word which al-Mağribī believes (rightly) to be Greek is علم الموسيقى *ilm al-mūsīqā* “the science of music” (52b), from the Greek μουσική. Yet, there are also other words of Greek origin which al-Mağribī did not recognise as such: ازميل

⁴⁸³ “And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you”. Translation: King James Bible.

⁴⁸⁴ See Winkler (1930) p. 30ff.

Linguistic Analysis

azmīl (78b) “chisel” from *σμίλη* / *ζμίλη*, *افیون* *afyūn* (117a) from *οπιον*, *بطاقة* *biṭāqa* “message sent by pigeon” (37b) < *πιτάκιον*, *بطريق* *bəṭrīq* “leader of a Greek army” (37a) from *πατριχίος*, *بطرك* *batrak* “Patriarch” (56b) from *πατριάρχης*, *بلان* *ballān* “bathhouse attendant” (110a) from *βαλανειον*, *منجنيق* *manǧanīq* “catapult” (38b) from *μαγγανιχιον*, and *نوايتية* *nawātiyya* “sailors” (131a) from *ναυτης*.

A few words of Latin origin can be found as well: *اصطبل* *iṣṭabl* “stable” (63a) from *stabulum*, *صابون* *ṣābūn* “soap” (116a) from *sapo*, and *كوفية* *kūfiyya* “square piece of fabric worn on the head” (33b) from *cofea*. Al-Maǧribī does not recognise the first two as loan words, because they are mentioned in *al-Qāmūs al-muḥiṭ* without further comment. He qualifies *كوفية* as “unknown”.

A few words are mentioned in *Daf al-iṣr* whose Coptic origin is confirmed by several authors:⁴⁸⁵ *حالموم* *ḥālūm* “white cream cheese” (96b), *شونة* *šwna* “storage place for grain” (115b), *طوب* *ṭūb* “bricks” (16b), and *اردب* *ardabb* “dry measure” (11a). These words were integrated into the Arabic language to such an extent that they found their way into *al-Qāmūs al-muḥiṭ* and were, therefore, not recognised as foreign by al-Maǧribī. The only word not mentioned in *al-Qāmūs al-muḥiṭ* is *بكله* *bakla* “vessel holding water for washing one’s backside” (66a) which is therefore labelled “unknown”.

6.5.2 Curses and insults

Striking is al-Maǧribī’s interest in slang, especially insults and abuses. Just to mention a few examples:

زبل مفرك *zibl mufarrak* “crumpled dung” (61a), *قحبة* *qaḥba* “whore” (18b), *قطيم* *qaṭīm* “passive sodomite” (105a), *وغل* *wāǧl* “parasite” (93b), *نغف* *niǧif* “dry snout” (34b), *ممحون* *mamḥūn* “catamite” (119a), and *عجينة* *‘aǧīna* “weak (like dough)” (116b).

Many words with the meaning “to insult” are included: *اكتال* *iktāl* “to heap insults (on s.o.)” (91b), *يناطي* *yināṭī* “to insult each other” (131b), *سب* *sabb* “to insult” (15a), *شتم* *šatam* “to insult” (101b), *يسحل* *yishḥal* “to slander” (80a), *يرغل*, *رغل* *rəǧəl*, *yirǧəl* “to insult s.o. in his face” (76b), *شطف* *šaṭaf* “to insult” (lit. “to wash”)

⁴⁸⁵ Such as Hinds-Badawi (1986), Behnstedt (1981), Vollers (1896), Bishai (1964), Crum (1972), Kamāl (1997), Youssef (2003).

Linguistic Analysis

(26a)⁴⁸⁶, بهدل *bahdil* “to humiliate, scorn” (66b), يدري ل *yidarrī li* “to insult” (lit. “to inform someone of his bad qualities”) (127a), and يلسن *yilassin* “to slander” (118b).

Also numerous are curses: نملت استه *nammilāt istu* “may his ass tingle” (92a), رغم *rəgəm allāh anfu* “may God rub his nose in the sand” (98a), في رقبة العدو سلعة *fī raqabət al-‘aduww səl’a* “may the enemy have a cyst on his neck” (44b), قاتله الله *qātalahu allāh* “may God fight him!” (126b), على قلوبهم دبلة *‘alā qalbəhum dəbla* “may there be a lump on their heart!” (72a), للعدا الحكة *li-l-‘adā al-ḥəkka* “may the enemy get the itch!” (57a), للعدو ازقم *li-l-‘aduww izzaqqam* “may the enemy be force-fed!” (98b), سخام ولطام *suḥām wa luṭām* “filth and slaps!” (100a).⁴⁸⁷

The number of words describing stupidity or weakness of mind is also impressive: سخيف (25a) *saḥīf* “weak-minded”, عطرب (17a) *‘uṭrab* “stupid”, فقفاق (52b; 53a) *faqfāqa* “silly”, هبيل (94a) *habīl* “stupid”, مهبول (94a) *mahbūl* “simpleton”, دهل (95b) *‘ablam* “stupid”, ترل (67a) *tirill* “oaf”, بهلول (66b) *bəhlūl* “silly, foolish”, دهل (73b) *duhull* “simpleton”, دهلان *dəhlān* “simpleton” (73b), and عكفش (73b) *‘akfāš* “stupid” (17a). Not all of these expressions are in use today. For details, see the Glossary.

The remarkable thing about these entries is that al-Mağribī does not condemn or judge this kind of (sometimes very crude) language. He simply states that these expressions are being used by the people of Cairo and clarifies whether or not they are correct according to *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*. He however does not give a judgement about the use of this kind of words. How frequently they are mentioned does, however, make one wonder if they were included because of their ‘entertainment value’.

6.5.3 Puns

Al-Mağribī was very fond of puns, and particularly liked to play with the various meanings of a word. The first example is a pun on the word دل *dall*, which means

⁴⁸⁶ *ḡasal* has a similar meaning in Egypt today. Compare the Dutch “iemand de oren wassen”, “to wash someone’s ears”, i.e. to scold him.

⁴⁸⁷ Although the word *luṭām* as such does not exist, it is clear that it is formed from the root LṬM “to slap” in the same pattern as *suḥām*. *suḥām* is still used these days; both Taymūr (2001) IV p. 96 and Hinds-Badawi (1986) p. 403b mention the variety *suḥām iṭṭīn* used as an adjective (“rotten”), while Taymūr also mentions the variety *suḥām wi-hibāb* “filth and soot”.

Linguistic Analysis

“coquetry” and “to indicate”: ويقولون في المحبوب دلال وعنده دل فانظر الدل على اي (73a) “they say about a beloved one: “she is coquet” or “she has coquetry”, so check what the word *dall* indicates”. Another example of a pun with the same root, is found on fol. 57a: “the people say to the *tikka* ‘waistband’ *dikka* with a *dāl* and there is nothing that furnishes evidence for this”: *dāl - dāl* “the letter *dāl*” – “furnishing evidence”.

In the following example he uses the word *farzin* “to see” twice: ولم افرزن (117a) “and I did not see the word *farzin* [in any dictionary]”.

The word *šīn* can be read as *šīn* “the letter *š*” and *šayn* “disgrace”: ويقولون ما ذا (81a) “they say *mā dā illā šikl* so they put a *kasra* after the *šīn*, and this is no disgrace”.

In the following, the word *barrāniyya* “outer” is used as a pun: حتى ان قولهم (123b) “even their expression ‘the outer *Ašrafīyya*’ for instance, is a word which is outside the language”.

The following is a pun on the word *šadaf* “to see”: ويقولون فلان يصدف اي ينظر (27b) “they say: ‘so-and-so sees’, and ‘I met him by chance’. The first one I did not see (*mā šadaftuh*), and the second: he [= al-Ġawharī] said in *al-Muḥtaṣar*: *šadafahu* means ‘he found it’.”

The last example contains two puns on the words *yafham* “to understand” and *yufham* “to be understood”, and on *bill* “stupid” and *bal* “rather”: فقولهم فلان بل (66b) “they say: ‘so-and-so is *bill*, stupid’, with a *kasra*, about someone who does not understand. This is not understood from the language, but rather, in the language *bill* with a *kasra* means ‘a smart fellow’.”

6.5.4 *Daf al-iṣr*'s word list and present day Egyptian Arabic

According to ‘Awwād⁴⁸⁸ 80% of the words mentioned in *Daf al-iṣr* are still in use in contemporary Egypt. I have also checked whether or not its entries are still in use anywhere in the country today. As proof of their usage, I checked whether or not the words are mentioned in Hinds and Badawi’s dictionary (1986) and the Arabic-German glossary by Behnstedt and Woidich (1994). This enabled me to cover rural Egyptian dialects as well. Words not found in these two works were checked with

⁴⁸⁸ See ‘Awwād (1968), the Russian introduction, p. 24.

Linguistic Analysis

native speakers. Accordingly, an investigation of the entries in *Daf al-iṣr* reveals that of the 1406 mentioned, 903 are still in use in Egyptian dialects today, i.e. 64%. Around 40 words, i.e. 3% were still known in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th centuries,⁴⁸⁹ but have apparently disappeared since that time. Twenty-three entries, i.e. less than 2% are now only found in dialects outside Egypt, such as Syrian and Moroccan, although most of these words belonged to the dialect of Cairo in al-Mağribī's time. Forty-five entries, i.e. 3% can be found only in Dozy's dictionary, which is interesting because he included many Middle Arabic items of vocabulary which are not found in either dictionaries of Classical Arabic or modern dialects. Furthermore, 296 entries, i.e. 21% can only be found in dictionaries of Classical or Modern Standard Arabic, such as those by Lane, Hava, Wehr, and Kazimirski etc. Of course, it is not known for certain whether these items were already classicisms in al-Mağribī's time, but it is clear that he mentions at least some classicisms in his lexicon. Fifteen entries, i.e. 1% are loan words from Persian and Turkish, and can only be found in dictionaries of these languages and have disappeared from the Egyptian lexicon. Finally, there is a group containing 80 entries, i.e. almost 6%, which could not be traced in any dictionary or other reference work.⁴⁹⁰

The discrepancy between 'Awwād's findings that around 80% of the entries in *Daf al-iṣr* are still in use in Egypt, and my own calculation of 64%, can be explained in two ways. First of all, 'Awwād wrote his PhD thesis in the '60s of the last century. In the forty years which have passed, some of the words that were still in use at that time may well have become obsolete, particularly after the departure of thousands of *ṣawām* – who were the users of imported words – from Egypt in the '60s and '70s. The effect of Egyptianization on the young generation of Turkish descendants is also likely to be a factor. Another explanation is that al-Mağribī mentions a large number of words that are considered classicisms in our time.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁹ These are words that can be found in works such as Spiro's dictionary (a new impression of the 1895 edition was used), Aḥmad Taymūr's dictionary (it is unclear when exactly Taymūr wrote his dictionary, but he lived from 1871 to 1930), Lane's *Manners and customs* (a reprint of the 1860 edition was used) and other works from this period.

⁴⁹⁰ Note that these also include the *taṣḥīfāt* or "misplacements of the diacritical dots", i.e. nonsense-words which were made by misplacing the diacritical dots, such as بلابل الرمان *balābil al-rummān* "the nightingales of the pomegranate" for تلاتل الزمان *talātil al-zamān* "the hardships of time".

⁴⁹¹ And some of these were classicisms in al-Mağribī's time as well.

Linguistic Analysis

However, this does not mean that these words are unfamiliar to (educated) Egyptians. Therefore, it is possible that 'Awwād counted a number of these words as “in use”, while strictly speaking they do not belong to the dialect.⁴⁹²

6.5.4.1 Semantic change

Some words and expressions found in *Daf al-iṣr* are still in use today but have a different meaning. Various types of semantic change are encountered. Below are a few examples of these different categories.

Opposites

There are several instances of words which throughout the centuries have come to mean the opposite of their original meaning. For instance, there has been a shift from a positive to a negative meaning, and vice versa, as in the following example: *نقطع فروتك niqatṭa' farwatak* “we speak well of you” (129b). When compared with its present-day usage: Hinds-Badawi (1986) p. 654a “*'atṭa' fi farwit(-u)* to speak badly of (s.o.) behind his back, spread scandal about (s.o.)”, it becomes clear that the basic meaning of “speaking about someone” remains, but the positive meaning has been replaced by a negative one. Another example is the word *مشموم mašmūm* (102a), literally “can be smelt”, which in al-Mağribī's time had the meaning of “smelling pleasant”; nowadays it means “spoilt”, i.e. smelling unpleasant, rotten. The word *ميرن mirin* (119a) meant “hard”, while nowadays it means “pliant, flexible”. Note, however, that in Classical Arabic the word *مرن marin* has the meaning of “soft and hard” (see Hava p. 717b), i.e. flexible. The word *يدري yidarrī* (127a) meant “to insult” in al-Mağribī's time, while in Classical Arabic it means “to praise” (see Lane III p. 964c) and in modern Egypt it has the neutral meaning of “to inform”. The interjection *أحيه uhhyh* (120b) was, in al-Mağribī's time, an exclamation of admiration, while today *ihhīh* is an exclamation of disgust.

Metaphor

In the expression *ما حاك هذا في خاطري mā ḥāk hādā fī ḥāṭiri* “this didn't come to my mind” (57b), *حاك* which originally meant “to weave”, is used as a metaphor for “weaving a thought”.

⁴⁹² E.g. the word *هاهنا hāhunā* “here” (fol. 132b).

Linguistic Analysis

In the expression *iwki ḥalaqak* “shut up!” (literally “tie up your neck!”) (132a), the neck is likened to a waterskin which could be tied up (*wakā* وكي) with a string (*yakī* يكي).

In *fulān mā huwwa ṭahy fulān* “he is not like him” (129a), the word *ṭahy* “cooking” should not be taken literally, but is used in a metaphorical way to express similarity: “he is not his (type of) cooking”, as if two people are like two meals which were cooked in a different way and therefore do not look alike. None of these expressions still exist in modern Egyptian Arabic.

Semantic bleaching

When a word is overused it loses its emphasis. A good example is the word *very* in English, which originally meant “truly”.⁴⁹³ Compare the abovementioned⁴⁹⁴ *hāyil* *hāyil*, which originally meant “terrifying” but in al-Mağribī’s time was weakening to “great, wonderful”. This is also the case with the word *danaf* which appears in the expression *danaf fi l-‘išq* “love-sick” (22b). In Classical Arabic, the meaning of *danaf* is “having any disease: or emaciated by disease so as to be at the point of death”;⁴⁹⁵ in MSA it is “seriously ill”,⁴⁹⁶ while in modern Egyptian it means “oafish”.⁴⁹⁷ We see the same with the word *ḡahḡahwn* *ḡahḡahwn*, which in al-Mağribī’s time meant “tyranny, oppression”, but nowadays means “haphazardly, in any old way”.⁴⁹⁸ The word *naqaf* (34b) means “to break the skull” in Classical Arabic,⁴⁹⁹ while in the 17th century it had the meaning of “to hurt with words”.

Semantic expansion

When the meaning of a word is expanded over time, this is called semantic expansion. The word *biṭāqa* (37b) meant “message sent by pigeon” in al-

⁴⁹³ See Görlach (1997) p. 134.

⁴⁹⁴ In §6.5.1.1.

⁴⁹⁵ Lane (1955-6) III p. 919c.

⁴⁹⁶ Wehr (1994) p. 339b.

⁴⁹⁷ Hinds-Badawi (1986) p. 305a.

⁴⁹⁸ Hinds-Badawi (1986) p. 176b.

⁴⁹⁹ See Hava p. 794b.

Linguistic Analysis

Mağribī's time,⁵⁰⁰ but nowadays means the more general "card".⁵⁰¹ The word هاف *hāf* (36a) "to become weak (crops)" is also used more generally today, with the meaning: "to be petty, be trivial".⁵⁰²

Transfer

With the invention of new concepts, the need for new names arises. In some cases, al-Mağribī presents the older meaning which has since changed. Existing words often get a new meaning, based on similarity in appearance (metaphor) or function (metonymy) with the new concept. For instance, the word حقن *ḥaqan* (111b) used to have the meaning "to administer a clyster": دوا المريض حقنه: *dawā al-marīḍ ḥaqanuh* "he administered the medicine to the sick person with a clyster" (111b). With the arrival of the hypodermic syringe⁵⁰³ it came to mean "to inject".

The word جيب *ǧyb* (12a) first meant "bosom" and "bosom of a garment", and the Arabs often carried things in the bosom of their shirts.⁵⁰⁴ When the pocket was introduced, it took over this function and was, therefore, also called *ǧyb*. Al-Mağribī says the following about this word: يقولون الجيب على ذلك الذي يوضع فيه: *yaqūlūn al-ǧyb 'alā dālik alladī yūḍa' fih al-darāhim bi-l-ǧanb* "they say *ǧyb* to (the place) where they put their money at the side". It is unclear about which part of the garment al-Mağribī is speaking here. The pocket as we know it today is, according to Kalfon Stillman (2003) p. 170, a European innovation which was introduced to Palestine during the late 1930s and early 1940s. However, this is contradicted by Lane (1955-6) III p. 492c, who mentions that the Arabs had pockets in the 19th century.

Another well-known example of transfer is the word هاتف *hātif* "the voice of an unseen man" (35b) which now is used in MSA for "telephone".

⁵⁰⁰ It is known that the word had this specific meaning at that time, because it is also the only meaning al-Ḥafāḡī p. 41 mentions.

⁵⁰¹ See Hinds-Badawi (1986) p. 81a.

⁵⁰² Ibid. p. 920a.

⁵⁰³ The discovery of the hypodermic syringe is credited to two people: Alexander Wood, secretary of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh and Charles Pravcaz of Lyon, France. Both made successful use of a syringe in 1853. See Kravetz (2005) p. 2614.

⁵⁰⁴ See Lane II p. 492c