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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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## Summary and Conclusions

### 1 Life and Works of Yūsuf al-Mağribī

The subject of this dissertation is a book entitled *Daf al-iṣr 'an kalām ahl Miṣr*, “Removing the burden from the speech of the Egyptians”, a word list of the Egyptian Arabic dialect dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Its author is Yūsuf Abū al-Maḥāsīn Ġamāl al-Dīn b. Zakariyyā b. Ḥarb al-Mağribī al-Miṣrī al-'Azharī (±970/1562-1019/1611), who was born and raised in Cairo, and was of North-African origin. At the age of seven, and after the death of his father, he went to live with his maternal uncles. They were sword belt manufacturers, and lived in the Ibn Ṭūlūn quarter, a meeting point for North-African pilgrims where a large concentration of North-Africans resided. Al-Mağribī learnt the Qur'ān in the Ibn Ṭūlūn mosque. When his uncles left Egypt, he joined al-Azhar after a very short-lived career as a fabric merchant (§1.1). Some of his teachers there were famous scholars, including: Ibn al-Ġayṭī (910/1504-981/1573), head of the *ṣūfī*-monasteries al-Ṣalāhiyya and al-Siryāqūsiyya in Cairo; Yaḥyā al-Aṣīlī (910/1504-1010/1601-2), a famous poet; and 'Alī al-Maqdisī (920/1514-1004/1596), head of the *Ḥanaḥī* order and one of the greatest imams of the time (§1.1.1).

Details about al-Mağribī's personal life are scarce. In *Daf al-iṣr*, al-Mağribī writes that he held a *wazīfa* or official post (§1.2), and refers to himself as *al-faqīr* on several occasions (§1.3), implying that he was a *ṣūfī*. In fact, some of his teachers were also *ṣūfīs*, such as Ibn al-Ġayṭī. The influence of Sufism on al-Mağribī's work is obvious, because in *Daf al-iṣr* he refers to a great number of books written by *ṣūfīs*, such as Ibn al-'Arabī, al-Šarāwī and al-Ġazālī. Another aspect about his personal life that is known is that he frequented *mağālis*, social gatherings, during which intellectuals discussed all kinds of topics, such as literary and linguistic issues, and also recited poems. We get a glimpse of these in *Daf al-iṣr*.

Of the twelve titles that are known to have been written by al-Mağribī, other than *Daf al-iṣr*, only two have survived (§1.4):

- *Taḥmīs Lāmīyat ibn al-Wardī*, an adaption of the *Lāmīyat al-iḥwān wa mursīdat al-ḥillān*, a moral poem by Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar b. al-Muẓaffar b. al-Wardī (689/1290–749/1349);
- *Buğyat al-arīb wa ġunyāt al-adīb*, a work about various topics, meant as an aid when composing poetry.

His other works, which as far as we know have not survived, include translations from Turkish and Persian into Arabic, indicating that al-Mağribī had a good knowledge of these two languages.

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### 2 Description of the manuscript

The only known manuscript of *Daf al-iṣr* is the authograph, which is kept in the St. Petersburg University Library (§2.1). It was brought to Russia by Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī (1810-1861). He was Professor of Arabic at St. Petersburg University from 1847 until his death, when he bequeathed his entire manuscript collection, including *Daf al-iṣr*, to the university library (§2.1.1).

In its present form, the manuscript consists of 134 folios. Eleven quires, i.e. 110 pages, have been lost over the years. The manuscript is a first draft, and there are a large number of corrections, additions, notes and comments added to the margins. The work was written in 1014-5/1606, and in its present state contains 1406 entries (§2.2).

The book was first entitled *al-Faḍl al-‘āmm wa qāmūs al-‘awāmm*, “The general benefit and the dictionary of the common people”, but al-Maḡribī eventually settled on *Daf al-iṣr ‘an kalām ahl Miṣr* “Removing the burden from the speech of the Egyptians” (§2.3).

### 3 About *Daf al-iṣr ‘an kalām ahl Miṣr*

*Daf al-iṣr ‘an kalām ahl Miṣr* is an important source of the Egyptian dialect at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries (§3.1). It is presented in the form of a list of Egyptian Arabic words, which al-Maḡribī checked for consistency with Classical Arabic by referring, mainly, to *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*, the great dictionary by al-Fīrūzābādī (729/1329-817/1415). As the title of *Daf al-iṣr* indicates, the author’s aim was to prove that many words of the Egyptian dialect which were considered to be “incorrect” Arabic in fact have their roots in the Classical Arabic language. There are very few works in the same field, which makes *Daf al-iṣr* of special interest.

Al-Maḡribī reveals a number of his reasons for writing *Daf al-iṣr* (§3.2). He was annoyed to find that many words which he knew to be “correct”, i.e. which were used in accordance with Classical Arabic usage, were claimed to be incorrect by some intellectuals. He mentions a case where someone was laughed at for using a particular expression, while al-Maḡribī knew that it was, in fact, entirely appropriate. Therefore, he felt the need to deal with this ignorance by investigating which colloquial words had the same meaning in Classical Arabic. A second reason was his desire to study *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* and he, accordingly, combined the two objectives in one book: a work which investigated colloquial Egyptian Arabic words, and checked their meaning in *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*.

The idea of writing a book in defence of the Egyptian dialect was unique for the time. The only other works in which colloquial vocabulary was compared with

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Classical Arabic, were those of the *lahn al-‘amma* genre, “errors of language made by the common people”. As the name suggests, these books aimed to highlight, and then correct, “mistakes” in language, which was quite the opposite to al-Mağribī’s goal. Nevertheless, al-Mağribī was influenced by this genre in the way he set about his task. He was familiar with at least one specimen of the genre: *Durrat al-ğawwāṣ fi awḥām al-ḥawāṣṣ* by Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥarīrī (446/1054-516/1122), of which he had created an arrangement and appendix. Indeed, he even borrowed some of the terminology used in the *lahn al-‘amma* literature, e.g. he introduced the dialect word with *yaqūlūn* “they say”, and the correct form (if he established that the dialect form was not “correct”, which happened in spite of his intentions) by *wa al-ṣawāb...* “whereas the norm is...” (§3.3.1).

*Al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* also greatly influenced al-Mağribī, which is logical when considering that studying *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* was one of his reasons for writing *Daf al-iṣr*. Al-Firūzābādī’s influence is apparent in the arrangement of the entries, the so-called rhyme arrangement, which organises roots according to their last radical. It also had a great influence on the choice of the entries in *Daf al-iṣr*. Indeed, there are many consecutive pages in which al-Mağribī does not introduce any word that cannot be found in *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* (§3.3.2).

*Daf al-iṣr* was, in turn, a source of inspiration for another Egyptian scholar, Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Surūr al-Bakrī (±998/1589-1063/1653?) (§3.4). He wrote an abbreviated version of it entitled *al-Qawl al-muqtaḍab fīmā wāfaqa luġat ‘ahl Miṣr min luġāt al-‘Arab* (“The abbreviated speech concerning what agrees in the language of the people of Egypt with the languages of the Arabs”). Ibn Abī al-Surūr’s abbreviation of *Daf al-iṣr* is based on the complete manuscript, which can be useful when reconstructing some of the entries that were lost. However, Ibn Abī al-Surūr left out all of the words that do not have an Arabic root, depriving linguists of the most interesting aspect of the work. He also did some editing work, such as abbreviating the quotations from *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, and omitting the anecdotes and poetry etc. Furthermore, he often reworded the entries and made considerable changes to the text, which decreases *al-Qawl al-muqtaḍab*’s value when it comes to reconstructing *Daf al-iṣr*’ lost entries.

After Ibn Abī al-Surūr, both manuscripts (*Daf al-iṣr* and *al-Qawl al-muqtaḍab*) came into the hands of Yūsuf al-Mallawī, known as Ibn al-Wakīl (18<sup>th</sup> century). He copied Ibn Abī al-Surūr’s *al-Qawl al-muqtaḍab* while keeping *Daf al-iṣr* open next to it, adding some of the entries that Ibn Abī al-Surūr had left out. There is then a gap of almost two centuries, and the next information we have is that the manuscript had fallen into the possession of Muḥammad ‘Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī. The sources I have consulted do not indicate how and where this happened. The next person to take

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an interest in *Daf al-iṣr* was the German orientalist Heinrich Thorbecke (1837-1890), who copied the manuscript but did not, apparently, use it in his studies. Then, in 1926, Ignatij Julianovič Kratchkovsky (1883-1951) wrote an excellent article about *Daf al-iṣr* and al-Mağribī, and in 1968, *Daf al-iṣr* was published in Moscow as a facsimile. The text was introduced by ‘Abd al-Salām Aḥmad ‘Awwād in Russian and Arabic, and he also produced extensive indices to it. After the publication of the facsimile edition, some articles about *Daf al-iṣr* were published, all highlighting the dialectal materials. Its dialectal poetry has been discussed in several articles by Olga Frolova,<sup>505</sup> and more recently, Nelly Hanna (1998) has considered some of the work’s cultural aspects (§3.5).

Strictly speaking, *Daf al-iṣr* cannot be defined as a dictionary because the entries often lack a definition. Therefore, “word list” is a more accurate description of the work. As referred to previously, al-Mağribī’s objective of proving the validity of colloquial words was achieved by comparing the entries with *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*. Al-Mağribī considered any word to be correct Arabic if it could be traced to an Arabic root and its meaning had a resemblance, no matter how distant, to the meaning of this Arabic root. This meant that the root should not have undergone any phonetic changes, such as from interdental fricative to dental stop. If a word did not have an Arabic root, al-Mağribī stated that it was “unknown” to him. This meant that he had not found it in the Classical Arabic dictionaries. Sometimes, al-Mağribī’s explanation of a word is incorrect, mainly because he did not realise (or did not like to admit) that it had been subjected to certain phonetic changes. For instance, he insists on relating the word معلقة *ma‘laqa* “spoon” to the root ‘LQ “to hang”, instead of recognising (or admitting) that a metathesis of ‘ayn and lām had taken place (§3.6).

In most cases, the entries are not vocalized (§3.7.1). The pronunciation of a word is, however, sometimes demonstrated by either a description of the vowels contained in it (e.g. سفوف بضم السين *sufūf* “medicinal powder”, with a u after the letter *sīn*), or by a comparison of the entry to a well-known word (e.g. رجال كشداد *raǧǧāl* “man” like *šaddād*). Neither of these methods are of al-Mağribī’s own invention: they were simply borrowed from *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*, which is another sign of the influence this work had on him.

Al-Mağribī classified the colloquial words in a variety of ways (§3.7.4). When a word could not be found anywhere in *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*, he describes this fact with a variety of expressions: ولم اعلم له مناسبة; *wa lam yu‘lam* “it is not known”;

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<sup>505</sup> In Frolova (1982, 1995 and 1997).

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*wa lam 'a'lam lahu munāsaba* “I do not know an occasion that corresponds to it” etc. In other cases, when correcting a “deviation” from Classical Arabic, the following expressions are used: *والصواب* *wa al-ṣawāb* “and the correct [form] would be”; *وانما هو* *wa innamā huwa* “however, it should be...” etc. For “to mispronounce / misread”, the verb *صحف* *ṣahḥafa* and its derivatives are used: *يصحفون* *yuṣahḥifūn* “they mispronounce”, *تصحيف* *taṣḥīf* ‘an “[it is a] mispronunciation of” etc. These comments also indicate that al-Mağribī was not always able to distance himself from the concept of the *lahn al-āmma*-works, namely that the colloquial was wrong and needed to be corrected.

### 4 The poetry in *Daf al-iṣr*

There are 26 *mawāwīl* written by al-Mağribī in *Daf al-iṣr* (§4.1). A *mawwāl* is a non-Classical verse form which could be written in either Classical Arabic or the colloquial. Al-Mağribī’s *mawāwīl* all consist of four lines and contain homonymous rhyme, i.e. the rhyme word is the same in each line but is used with a different meaning. The *mawāwīl* are all in the *basīṭ* metre. Although al-Mağribī used some Classical Arabic vocabulary in these poems, the metre indicates that in most cases the words should be read without *i’rāb* and *tanwīn*. These poems are generally love poems, and contain the vocabulary that is typical of this genre.

There are also 18 small, two-verse poems in *Daf al-iṣr*, which were composed on the occasion of a *taṭlīṭ*, i.e. a word which can be read with *fatha*, *kasra* or *ḍamma* (§4.2.1). Al-Mağribī arranged them into quatrains, in which the first, second and third hemistichs end with one of these variants. The fourth ends with another word, thus creating the rhyme scheme *aaab*. These poems are all in the *rağaz*-metre, and are all dimeters (*manhūk al-rağaz*). They are called *mutallaṭāt*.

There is also an example from the aforementioned (see §1.4) *taḥmīs* of *Lāmīyat al-iḥwān wa muršīdat al-ḥillān* by Ibn al-Wardī (§4.2.2). Mainly to demonstrate the use of a word, other instances of al-Mağribī’s Classical Arabic poems are scattered throughout *Daf al-iṣr*, as are fragments of those by famous poets such as al-Mutanabbī and Abū Nawās. There are also some riddles (§4.2.3), which are short poems in the interrogative form. In these, al-Mağribī played with the different meanings that a word could have.

The metres most frequently utilised by al-Mağribī are the *basīṭ* and the *rağaz*, because of their respective use in the frequently occurring *mawāwīl* and *mutallaṭāt*. The division of the other metres is as follows: *sarī* 6, *ḥafīf* 5, *wāfir* 5, *hazağ* 5, *ramal* 5, *muğtatt* 4, *kāmīl* 3, *ṭawīl* 3, *mutadārik* 2, *munsariḥ* 1 (§4.2.4).

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The Persian poetry in *Daf al-iṣr* consists of three quotations from the *Gulistān* by Sa'dī (d. 691/1292), and one verse by al-Mullā Ḥāfiẓ (726/1325-6 - 792/1390). The Turkish poetry is comprised of two poems about coffee: one by an unknown Turk, and one by al-Mağribī himself. He writes that he composed this poem on the spot during a *mağlis*; it would, therefore, be safe to say that he thus displayed great skill in the Turkish language (§4.3).

### 5 Aspects of daily life

Al-Mağribī describes many aspects of daily life in Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Much attention is paid to food and drink (§5.1), and there is reference to many items which are still known in Egypt today, such as كنافة *kunāfa* “pastry made of thin vermicelli-shaped dough”, كحك العيد *kaḥk al-īd* “cookies served at the religious holidays” and قَطَائِف *qaṭāyif* “sweet pancakes”. Some of the food stuffs which are no longer available are: خشكناك *ḥuškānān* / خشتاناك *ḥuštānānak* “pastry filled with almond paste”, هيطليّة *hyṭaliyya* “a sweet dish made of wheat starch and milk”, رخاميّة *ruḥāmiyya* “marble sweet” (so called because its colour resembles that of marble), كُماج *kumāǧā* “dry bread” (from Persian کوماج), خشكه فلو *ḥaška fālāw* “dry rice” (from Persian خشكه *ḥushka*, “boiled rice without butter” and پالو *palāv*, “a rice dish”) and ارنبيّة *arnabiyya* “hare ragout”. The Turkish and Persian influences in Egypt at the time are obvious from the large number of food stuffs with Persian and Turkish names that are mentioned in *Daf al-iṣr*.

It is also clear that coffee was extremely popular in Egypt in al-Mağribī's time, because he writes about it frequently and even reveals that it was discussed in a *mağlis*. He mentions that the best type of coffee is not made from the beans, but from the قشر *qišr*, i.e. the husks (§5.1.3).

The entry about tobacco is particularly interesting (§5.2). Al-Mağribī mentions that in the year *Daf al-iṣr* was written, i.e. 1014/1606, a new phenomenon called طابغه *ṭābǧa* had come into fashion. Tobacco was indeed introduced in Egypt in 1603-1604.<sup>506</sup> Al-Mağribī mentions its price: one *raṭl* (around 443 grams) cost three gold coins. He also mentions that there was some question about whether it was permitted to smoke while fasting during Ramaḍān. According to a certain *ṣayḥ* called al-Zayyādī it was, although al-Mağribī did not agree.

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<sup>506</sup> See *EF*<sup>2</sup> X p. 753b (R. Matthee).

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There are some references to medicine as well (§5.3). Most are descriptions of the medicinal properties of herbs and vegetables. Some common ailments are also referred to, such as شقاق *šaqāq* “cracked skin”, فتق *fatq* “hernia, rupture”, or شقيقة *šaqyqa* “a splitting headache”. Different treatments are described, such as مرهم *marham* “ointment” and لُغُوق *lu‘ūq* “electuary”.

A few entries concern the terminology used in games. Chess was popular, and related terminology is provided, such as فِرْزَان *firzān* “queen”, دست *dast* “game” and مَرْمَاد *marmād*, meaning literally “affected by ophthalmia”, i.e. somebody who lost a game but does not realise it. Another popular game was the طَاب *tāb*-game, which is still played today (§5.4).

Many items of clothing are mentioned (§5.5). Most of these are still in use today, and only a few are currently unknown. Of the latter, there are two examples. The first is the حَنِينِي *ḥḥnyḥnī*, which is mentioned in Dozy I 330b as “semble être le nom d’un vêtement”, and the second is the كَامِلِيَّة *kāmiliyya*, again mentioned by Dozy II 489b as “espèce de robe”. In both cases, Dozy is the only source where I have found a reference to these items. Unfortunately, al-Mağribī’s lack of description or explanation does not bring us any closer to an understanding of the nature of these garments.

The last category discussed in this chapter are the kitchen utensils, tools, and other household goods (§5.6). All of the items mentioned in *Daf al-iṣr* are still in use today, showing us how little Egyptian society has changed in this respect over the centuries. Their inclusion in *Daf al-iṣr* is also remarkable in the sense that al-Mağribī, as a respectable Azharī scholar, did not believe that it was beneath him to refer to them and make them the subject of his study.

## 6 Linguistic Analysis

### Orthography (§6.1)

The orthography in *Daf al-iṣr* does not comply with the standards of Classical Arabic, particularly the use of the *hamza*, which is placed rather arbitrarily (§6.1.1). The final *ā* can be written with ءَآ , آ , ءِآ and آ . Very often, the *hamza* in any position is omitted altogether, and the final *yā* and *alif maqṣūra* appear inconsistently, sometimes with and sometimes without dots (§6.1.2). We even find a final *yā* where *alif* would be expected, e.g. عَصِي instead of عَصَا ‘aṣā “stick” (§6.1.3). In a few cases, *tā marbūṭa* is written without the dots in status constructus (§6.1.4). Sometimes, al-Mağribī writes dental plosives where we would expect to



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find interdentals in a purely Classical Arabic context (§6.1.5). There are also cases of hyphenation, i.e. words broken off at the end of the line (§6.1.6). The colloquial material is sometimes written with historical spelling, following the spelling of Classical Arabic, and sometimes with phonetic spelling, reflecting the colloquial pronunciation. All of these are traits which are characteristic of Middle Arabic texts (§6.1.7).

### *Phonology* (§6.2)

In Cairo, Alexandria and along the Damietta branch of the Nile, *qāf* and *ǧīm* are nowadays pronounced as /ʔ/ and /g/ (§6.2.1). There has been an ongoing discussion about the issue of when the inhabitants of Cairo started to pronounce *qāf* as /ʔ/ and *ǧīm* as /g/. Behnstedt and Woidich (1985) I p. 31-32 propose the theory that the pronunciation /ʔ/ - /g/ is an ancient feature. Another viewpoint, which was first offered by Blanc (1981), is that the pronunciation of *ǧīm* as /g/ is relatively new in Cairo, and the final stage of the depalatalization of *ǧīm* was not finalized until the period 1800-1860. Hary (1996) suggests that a shift has taken place in the pronunciation of the *ǧīm*, not once, but twice: from /g/ in the 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> centuries to /ǧ/ in the 12<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries and back to /g/ in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Two examples from *Daf al-iṣr*, which are quoted by Blanc in support of his theory, have been proved to provide no conclusive evidence in support of his proposals. The first concerns the word رجل, *raǧl* “man”, which was used in the countryside. Al-Maǧribī describes that the *ǧīm* is pronounced “between *kāf* and *ǧīm*”. From this, Blanc concluded that the pronunciation was *raǧl* with /g/. Because al-Maǧribī found this worth mentioning, this is, according to Blanc, an indication that this was not the common pronunciation of the *ǧīm* in Cairo at that time.<sup>507</sup> However, al-Maǧribī was speaking of a rural dialect, in which this might indeed have been an uncommon feature, but this provides only very indirect information about the dialect in Cairo. There is also the possibility that the *ǧīm* in this particular example was pronounced as /d/ or as a palatalized /g/ because of the following *l*, a feature which can still be found in some rural areas in Egypt.<sup>508</sup> This feature could indeed have attracted al-Maǧribī’s attention.

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<sup>507</sup> See Blanc (1981) p. 192.

<sup>508</sup> In the Western Delta and Middle Egypt, *ǧ* can become *d* before liquid and nasal consonants. See Behnstedt-Woidich (1985) I p. 70 (note to map 11). In the Western Delta, it can be pronounced as a slightly palatalized *g* before the *l*, see Doss (1981) p. 27.

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The second example quoted by Blanc is the word لکن *lagan* “brass vessel”. However, al-Mağribī mentions that it is used in Turkish and in *al-‘arabiyya*, by which he means Classical, not Egyptian Arabic.

Unfortunately, al-Mağribī does not make any direct remarks about the pronunciation of the *ğīm*. The only indirect evidence we have is a *mawwāl*<sup>509</sup> of which the rhyme word is جبيت *ğabbyt* / *gabbyt*. The word has a different meaning in every line. This rhetorical device is called جناس *ğinās*, “paronomasia” or تورية *tawriya*, “double entendre”. In the fourth line, جبيت should be read as *kabbyt* “I came, ejaculated”. This is an indication that in al-Mağribī’s time, the *ğīm* was pronounced as /g/, because the association of /g/ with /k/, from voiced to voiceless velar plosive (*gabbyt* - *kabbyt*), is very plausible, while it is far less plausible that /ğ/ could be associated with /k/.

Al-Mağribī does not make a direct statement about the pronunciation of the *qāf*. However, he does mention that the Egyptians say: فلان عائق والديه *fūlān ‘ā’iq wālidyh* “so-and-so is disobedient towards his parents”. In Classical Arabic, this would be عاق *‘āqq*, the active participle of the root ‘QQ. In Egyptian Arabic, the active participle of verbs mediae geminatae is *fā’il*. Therefore, the Egyptians would have said عاقق *‘āqiq* instead of عاق *‘āqq*. The only explanation of why al-Mağribī would have written عائق is because it was pronounced ‘ā’i, and he wrongly interpreted it because of the glottal stop in the middle of the word as an active participle of a verb mediae infirmae.

There are numerous traits which the colloquial material in *Daf al-iṣr* has in common with modern Cairene Arabic. There are many examples of words in *Daf al-iṣr* in which the change from interdental to plosives is visible. Al-Mağribī even explicitly mentions that the *t* was pronounced as *t* in the dialect of Cairo (§6.2.2). It is obvious from many examples that the *hamza*, in the initial, intervocalic and final positions had disappeared (§6.2.3). Both emphatization and de-emphatization are attested in *Daf al-iṣr* (§6.2.4), and there are also a few examples of the voicing of *s*; once this is caused by the following *d*, but in the other examples it is in the word’s initial position and it is not exactly clear why the voicing has taken place (§6.2.5). Many instances of the assimilation of the *t* of the passive-reflexive forms (V, VI and VII) to the following letter can be found, e.g. يَصْنَط *yīṣṣannaṭ* “to eavesdrop” (46a) < *yitṣannaṭ* (§6.2.6). There are some examples of metathesis in *Daf al-iṣr*,

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<sup>509</sup> On fol. 11b.

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amongst which are a few that are still in existence today, such as معلقة *ma'laqa* < *mil'aqa* “spoon” and سَقَف *saqqaf* < *šaffaq* “to applaud” (with de-emphatization of the *š*) (§6.2.7). It cannot be concluded with any certainty whether or not the diphthongs had developed into long vowels in the dialect of Cairo, but the writing of the word *ayš* / *ēš* with اِش suggests the pronunciation /iš/ or /eš/, i.e. a shortening of the vowel *ē* (§6.2.8). There are some instances of the lengthening of short vowels, e.g. كَام *kām* “how much?” (106a,b) < كَم (§6.2.9) and of the shortening of long vowels (e.g. بَكَّة *bakka* “cry-baby” (56b) < بَكَّاء (§6.2.10). There are also a few examples of pausal *imāla*, a feature which disappeared from Cairo during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but can still be observed in the Egyptian countryside today (§6.2.11). As far as can be judged from the orthography, the vowel distribution is generally the same as in modern Cairene Arabic (§6.2.12).

### Morphology (§6.3)

The vowel of the prefix of the imperfect is *i* (§6.3.1.1), and in the perfect the prefix of forms V, VI and the quadrilaterals is *it-*, although *ta-* is also found in some classicisms (§6.3.1.2). The prefix of form VII, however, is *in-*, not *it-* as in modern Cairene Arabic (§6.3.1.3).<sup>510</sup> The vowel distribution in forms II, V and the quadrilaterals is the same as in modern Cairene Arabic, i.e. *a-a* if the second and/or third radicals are emphatic, laryngeal (not *h*), pharyngeal, or postvelar fricatives. In all other cases, the vowel distribution is *a-i* (§6.3.1.4). We also find some instances of form IV and the internal passive, which in modern Cairo Arabic only exist in loan words from MSA (§6.3.1.5-6). It is very likely that these are classicisms and did not belong to the colloquial vocabulary of that time.

The demonstratives were *dā*, *dī* and *dwlāh* (§6.3.3). There are two examples of preposed *dī*, the first followed by a feminine noun, and the second by a masculine noun. Although this does not represent a solid foundation upon which to build any conclusions, this point does confirm the findings of Davies, who notes 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”.<sup>511</sup> In modern Cairene Arabic, the normal word order is noun - demonstrative, e.g. *iḥḥāgil da*, but in certain expressions the order demonstrative - noun can be found. The function of this word order is to cause an “increased intensity of awareness because of its

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<sup>510</sup> However, *in-* is still found in the *Šarqīya* today, see Behnstedt-Woidich (1985) I map 242.

<sup>511</sup> Davies (1981) p. 163.

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contrast with the normal word order”,<sup>512</sup> e.g. *yādi ṣṣudfa ssa’īda* “what a happy coincidence!”.

The word *dillā* is a demonstrative which seems to have fallen out of use fairly soon after al-Mağribī wrote *Daf al-iṣr*. In *Daf al-iṣr*, it occurs only in combination with *mā*: *mā dillā* “what kind of ... is”, whereas in *Nuzhat al-nufūs* (15<sup>th</sup> century) it still appears as a normal demonstrative, both in combination with a noun and independently, while in *Hazz al-quḥūf* (second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) it does not occur at all. The demonstrative particle *’ādī* already existed in al-Mağribī’s time; moreover, the particle *’ad* + personal pronoun was also used, and can still be found in the Dakhla-oasis today<sup>513</sup> (§6.3.4).

The interrogatives are the same as in modern Cairo Arabic, except for *anā* “which”. This reveals a resemblance to modern *āni* (§6.3.5). The diminutive seems to have been used more often than in modern Cairo Arabic, where it is no longer productive (§6.3.6). As for the adverbs, the most interesting is *hwn* “here”, which sounds decidedly Levantine to modern ears, although it is mentioned in *Nuzhat al-nufūs*,<sup>514</sup> and is still used in Egypt’s oases (§6.3.7).<sup>515</sup>

### Syntax (§6.4)

Since the examples of sentences in *Daf al-iṣr* are always rather brief, not much can be learned about syntax. The negation used is always *mā*; however, this can probably be attributed to al-Mağribī’s tendency to use a somewhat classicized context for his entries (§6.4.1). There are three examples of asyndetic clauses, i.e. clauses where *’an* is omitted (§6.4.2), one of which is in a Classical Arabic context.

Wishes in *Daf al-iṣr* are either expressed by perfect + subject (as in Classical Arabic) or by subject + imperfect (as in modern Egyptian Arabic)(§6.4.3).

The interrogatives are placed at the beginning of the sentence (§6.4.4). Sharbatov (1969) p. 312 states that the fact that al-Mağribī places *imtā* and *iṣ* at the beginning of the sentence, while nowadays they are placed at the end, is evidence of the final struggle between Coptic and Arabic in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is, however, unlikely. In modern Egyptian Arabic the position of the interrogative is in situ, i.e. it takes its position according to its function in the sentence. In *Daf al-iṣr*, *iṣ* is in all cases the subject of the sentence, and is therefore placed at the beginning of the sentence, just like in the modern Arabic spoken in Cairo.

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<sup>512</sup> See Woidich (1992) p. 214.

<sup>513</sup> See Behnstedt-Woidich (1999) p. 359a.

<sup>514</sup> See Vrolijk (1998) p. 155.

<sup>515</sup> BW IV p. 494b “*hawn hier: min hawn hier lang*”.

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Furthermore, it has been proven that Coptic was already extinct in Cairo in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>516</sup>

There are three more notable features of syntax:

- the particle *dann* (§6.4.5), which is used to describe the continuation of an action;
- the word *qā'id* (§6.4.7), which is used as an auxiliary verb expressing continuity;
- the word *šā*, which was originally a verb meaning “to want”, had already acquired the function of future marker in the Yemeni dialects in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (§6.4.6).

These three features are still in use in this way today.

### Vocabulary (§6.5)

*Daf al-iṣr* focuses not only on the speech of the intellectuals of the day, but also on various other social classes such as the artisans, working classes, country people, those from other Arab-speaking countries, and women and children (§6.5.1). Al-Mağribī hesitated about including the final category, because he felt that it was not an appropriate subject for a serious work. So far as the speech of women is concerned, an interesting entry is the word هَائِل *hāyil*, which was just making its semantic shift from “terrifying” to “wonderful” at that time, which started in women’s speech according to al-Mağribī (§6.5.1.1).

The loanwords found in *Daf al-iṣr* reflect the long influence of Turkish and, through it, Persian, on the Egyptian dialect. Most of the Turkish and Persian entries remain in use today (§6.5.1.4).

Striking is al-Mağribī’s interest in slang, particularly insults and abuse. Many synonyms of “stupid” are mentioned, as well as a number of words meaning “to insult”. Although al-Mağribī does not condemn this kind of language, the feeling exists that he included these entries because he found them entertaining (§6.5.2).

Another means of enriching the book is the use of puns, which are based on words that have more than one meaning, such as دال *dall* “coquetry” / “to indicate” (6.5.3).

I have calculated that about 64% of the 1406 entries in *Daf al-iṣr* are still in use in the Egyptian dialects today. ‘Awwād (1968), on the other hand, suggested that this figure was 80%. This discrepancy can be attributed to two factors: firstly, ‘Awwād wrote his thesis in the sixties, and some words have become obsolete in the past 40 years; secondly, ‘Awwād may well have included some words which are not, strictly speaking, dialect but MSA, but are well-known to educated Egyptians.

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<sup>516</sup> See e.g. MacCoull (1985), Rubenson (1996), and *EALL* I p. 495 (T.S. Richter).

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I did not count these as belonging to the dialect lexicon.<sup>517</sup> 21% of the entries in *Daf al-iṣr* can no longer be found in the Egyptian dialects of today, but can be related to Classical Arabic, and 3% were still in use in the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but have become obsolete since then. Less than 2% are still found only in dialects outside Egypt, such as Syrian and Moroccan, even though most of these words belonged to the dialect of Cairo in al-Mağribī's time. A further 3% can be found only in Dozy's dictionary. This is interesting because Dozy included many Middle Arabic vocabulary items, which can be found in neither dictionaries of Classical Arabic nor those of the modern dialects. A further 1% are loanwords from Persian and Turkish, and can only be found in dictionaries of these languages and have since disappeared from the Egyptian lexicon. Finally, almost 6% of the entries could not be traced in any dictionary or other reference work that I consulted.

There are also entries which still exist in modern Egyptian Arabic, although they have undergone a semantic change (§6.5.4.1). In some instances, an expression has come to mean the opposite, e.g. *niqaṭṭa' farwatak* *نقطع فروتك*, which meant "we speak well of you" but nowadays means "we speak badly of you". There are also examples of metaphors which created new meanings, e.g. *ḥāk* *حاك* which literally means "to weave" but was used in the sense of "to come to mind" ("weaving a thought"). Words can have a stronger or a weaker meaning, the latter as a result of frequent use (semantic bleaching), e.g. *nəqaf* *نقف* "to hurt with words", which in Classical Arabic means "to break the skull". A device by which words for new concepts are created, is transfer, i.e. using existing words with a new meaning, based on similarity in appearance (metaphor) or function (metonymy) with the new concept. An example from Egyptian Arabic is the word *gyb* *جيب* which originally meant "bosom of the garment" but because of the similarity of function (carrying things in it) got the new meaning "pocket".

There are only a few sources of the Egyptian-Arabic dialect from this period available. These include *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa-muḍḥik al-'abūs* by 'Alī Ibn Sūdūn al-Bašbūgānī (1407-1464), described by Arnoud Vrolijk, and *Hazz al-quḥūf bi-šarḥ qaṣīd 'Abī Šādūf* (written in 1686) by Yūsuf al-Širbīnī (17<sup>th</sup> century), described by Humphrey Davies. *Daf al-iṣr* fills the gap of more than two centuries between these two works, and is therefore an invaluable source of the Egyptian-Arabic dialect in the Ottoman period. *Daf al-iṣr* is unique, however, because this was the first time

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<sup>517</sup> E.g. *hāhunā* *هاهنا* "here" (fol. 132b).

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that the Egyptian dialect was the subject of a serious study, instead of being the object of ridicule or criticism.