Liesbeth Zack

Egyptian Arabic in the seventeenth century

a study and edition of Yūsuf al-Maġribī's *Dafʿ al-iṣr ʿan kalām ahl Miṣr*

Dafʿ al-iṣr ʿan kalām ahl Miṣr, "Removing the burden from the speech of the Egyptians" , was written in 1606 by Yūsuf al-Maġribī (d. 1611), and provides its readers with valuable information about the Egyptian dialect used in the 17th century. The work is unique because it was one of the earliest attempts to study colloquial Arabic. It is a list of Egyptian Arabic words, which al-Maġribī checked for consistency with Classical Arabic. His aim was to prove that many Egyptian dialect terms, which were considered to be "incorrect" Arabic, in fact had their roots in the Classical Arabic language. Al-Maġribī focused on the words used in daily Egyptian life, such as the names of tools and utensils and food and drink, as well as the speech of traders and artisans. These entries are often adorned by anecdotes and lines of colloquial poetry and therefore, provide the reader with insight into the culture and daily life of Egypt in this period. This volume consists of two parts: the first is a study of aspects of daily life, the colloquial poetry, the linguistic characteristics of the dialect of this period, and a glossary of the words which are mentioned by al-Maġribī and the second includes an edition of the Arabic text, based on the autograph.

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