DIGlossia: Egyptian Arabic between Rural and Urban Practices in Archaeological Dig Diaries from the Early Twentieth Century*

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In 2006, a unique collection of 73 Arabic diary volumes documenting thirty years of excavation (1913–1947) at fifteen archaeological sites in Egypt and Sudan resurfaced in the rural community of Quft (near Luxor) in the South of Egypt. They were written by two generations of archaeological foremen known as Quftis (after their town of origin) who worked with the Harvard University–Boston Museum of Fine Arts (HU–MFA) Egyptian Expedition. As was common to large-scale excavations in Egypt at the time, the expedition's head foreman, Reis Sayyid Aḥmad Sayyid Dirāz (1890–1926), and several sub-foremen from Quft, were responsible for the day-to-day running of the excavations, including the recruitment and management of local labor. But in addition to employing Quftis as field technicians, who were skilled in excavation methods and the preservation of archaeological materials, the HU–MFA Expedition was unique in introducing Arabic record-keeping and site documentation. The resulting Arabic diary corpus is thus a one-of-a-kind archive in the history of archaeology – but it is also unique and equally important from the perspective of Arabic linguistics. The texts are written in a mixture of Classical (Standard) Arabic and Egyptian dialects, and they contain features reminiscent of Middle Arabic. This article discusses fragments of the first two diary books, written at Giza (near Cairo) and Deir el-Bersha (in Upper Egypt) between November 1913 and October 1915. Here we establish a preliminary basis for the diaries' authorship; discuss the use of colloquial and Middle Arabic in the texts; and describe some features of linguistic and lexicographical interest.

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1 Introduction and significance of the diaries

In 2006, a unique collection of Arabic diaries documenting more than thirty years of excavation (1913–1947) at fifteen archaeological sites in Egypt and Sudan resurfaced in the rural community of Quft (near Luxor) in the South of Egypt.[1] Having originally formed part of a large bilingual archive belonging to the Harvard University–Boston Museum of Fine Arts (HU–MFA) Egyptian Expedition, these 73 Arabic manuscript volumes had become separated from it and were unknown to scholars for half a century. Written in a mixture of literary (Classical) Arabic and colloquial Egyptian dialects, they were collectively authored by two generations of archaeological foremen (ريسة *ruyasa*)[2] from Quft, whose role in knowledge production has long been marginalized (Doyon 2015, 2018; Quirke 2010). The existence of an Arabic diary corpus documenting day-to-day excavation life and research findings over a long period of time is unique and unprecedented in the history of archaeology.

The entire corpus comprises 73 Arabic manuscript volumes of around 100 pages each, currently housed with the HU–MFA Expedition Archive at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The diaries originally formed part of an integrated, bilingual field archive, created by the American archaeologist, George Reisner (1867–1942), and his teams in Egypt during the first half of the twentieth century (Manuelian 2023; Reisner 1942). The diaries became separated from the larger archive at the close of the expedition in 1947 and remained unknown to scholars until resurfacing in Quft nearly sixty years later. In 2006, the collection was offered by the Dirāz family, Egyptian descendants of the original diary writers, to the Department of the Art of Ancient Egypt, Nubia, and the Near East at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, through the intercession of Harvard Egyptologist Peter Der Manuelian (Manuelian 2022).

Every page of the approximately 6,500 pages, in 73 volumes, covering more than thirty years of field writing in these diaries is unique and none have ever been published in Arabic or in translation. A particular combination of factors makes them especially significant:

(1) They are written in a mixture of Classical, Cairene, and Upper Egyptian Arabic that is rarely encountered in modern manuscript form. Uniquely, they

[1] Quft is the colloquial spelling of the Arabic name قفط (*Qift*), which is pronounced *guft* in Upper Egypt. For the purposes of this article, we prefer the colloquial spelling because it reflects the dialect and social identity of Quft and its people, and because it appears so often in archaeological archives and literature that it has become the default professional form – within and outside Egypt – for referring to both the town of Quft and the archaeological foremen, known as Quftis, whose practice originated there.

[2] Singular *rayyis*.

feature an added register of archaeological literacy with many glosses that hold a specific meaning only in the context of archaeological excavation. We call this idiom 'Dig Arabic' and include a short glossary of excavation terms in section 8.3. In most cases, these diaries represent the earliest, and sometimes only, documented instance of these dialectal innovations in written form, many of which survive in the Dig Arabic still spoken in Egypt today.

(2) In contrast to Western traditions of field writing, where it is the responsibility of (a) lead researcher(s) to write up the results of fieldwork in a single-authored (or co-authored) field report or monograph based largely on the author's own field notes and other site documentation, the Arabic diaries were, from the beginning, collectively written by a community of skilled and literate archaeological foremen from Quft. Historically (as presently) the *ruyasa* from Quft self-identified as a collective: their work was not considered 'intellectual property', and individual authorship was rarely attributed in their diaries. The Qufti *ruyasa* have been in practice for over a century and their work as field technicians is well documented in archaeological archives (Bareš 2023; De Meyer et al. 2023; Doyon 2021, 2024 in press; Georg 2023; Keshk & Bastawrous 2023). However, their textual production as a sociolinguistic community of practice is not especially well documented outside of the Arabic diary corpus in question, which therefore represents the best source available for understanding the Quftis' culture of collective knowledge transmission and shared language.[3]

(3) Unlike the corresponding English diaries recorded by the HU–MFA Expedition, the Arabic diaries often provide much richer detail about the people behind the excavation, their travels to and from home and the field, and aspects of early twentieth-century rural life. The English diaries, which were written independently from the Arabic ones, are much shorter and do not provide much insight into the daily workings of the excavations. During the period in question, the most senior Qufti *ruyasa* acted as excavation supervisors, among other roles, while expedition directors and other archaeologists came and went according to administrative and other duties. Thus, for the HU–MFA Expedition, the *ruyasa* were the members of the team closest to the ground on a daily basis and their diaries illustrate how much information was lacking in the English records when no records were kept in Arabic, as was the case in other excavations. This

[3] A full discussion of authorship, language ideology, writing process, and collective knowledge production is presented in a separate article by the authors, W. Doyon & L. Zack (forthcoming), 'Ghost Writers of Upper Egypt: Arabic Field Diaries from Egypt and Sudan in the History of Archaeology', *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology*.

includes crucial observations about the archaeological record in the process of revealing it at a context-by-context scale (Figure 1a-b).

7th Feb. G.4730. G.4830.

Saturday. Work continued E. of G.4730 and also around N. of G.4830 where a small mastaba was found.

Miss Flint and Miss Paull here till monday.

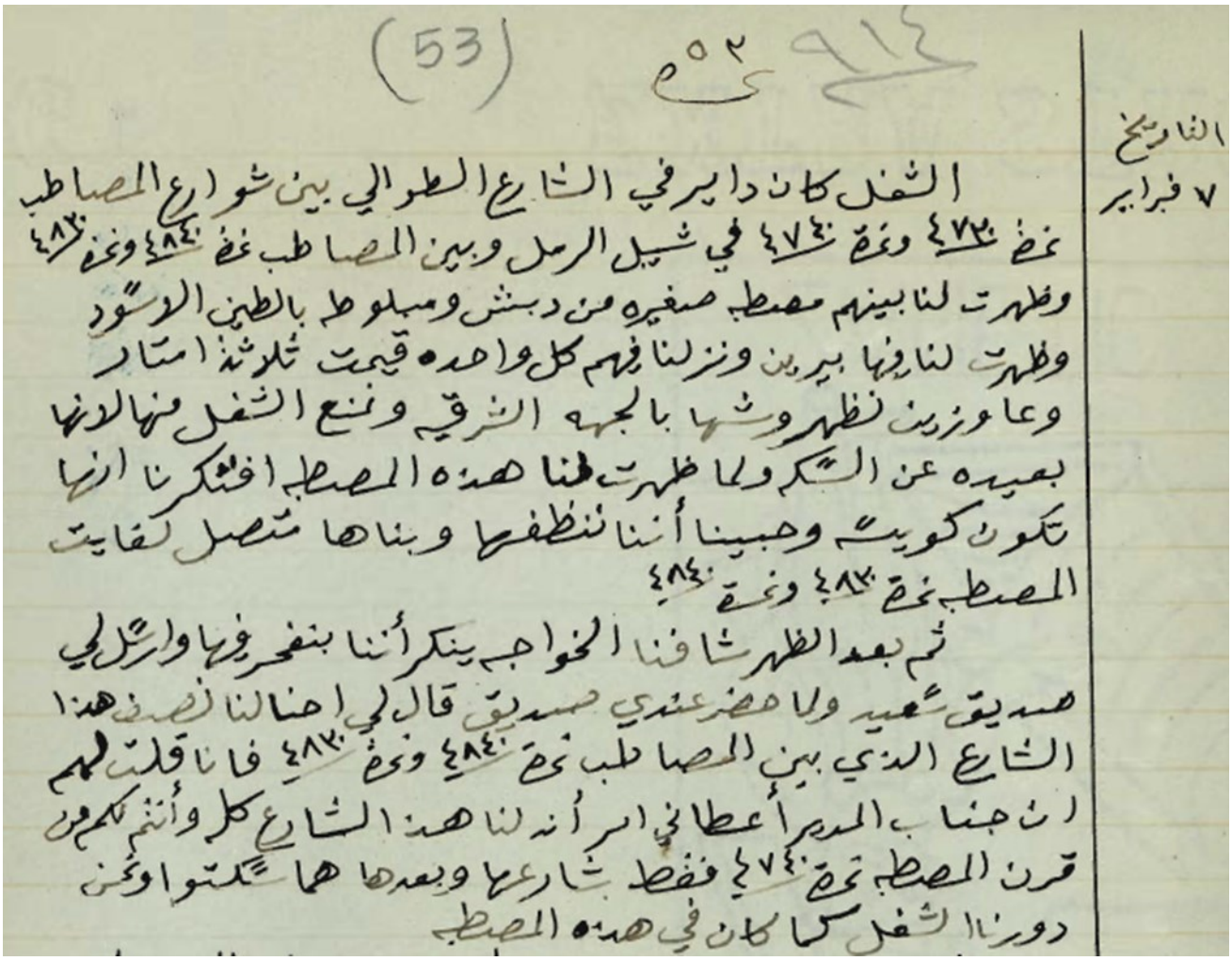

Figure 1a and 1b: Comparison of the same day in the English and Arabic diaries at Giza, 7 February 1913. Digital Giza (2024) and HU–MFA Expedition Field Records, Department of the Art of Ancient Egypt, Nubia, and the Near East, Archives of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The text in Figure 1b reads:

> The work was going on in the street straight between the streets of mastabas nos. 4730 and 4740, clearing sand, and between the mastabas nos. 4840 and 4830. There appeared to us between them a small mastaba of rough limestone set with black mud. There appeared to us there two shafts in which we descended, each one measuring three metres. We want to uncover its surface on the eastern side and stop the work on it, because it is far from the road. When this mastaba appeared to us, we thought that it would be good, and we wanted to clean it. Its building connects up to mastabas nos. 4830 and 4840.
>
> Then in the afternoon, *Khawaga* Mr. Junker[4] saw that we are digging in it, and he sent to me Sadiq Sa`id and when Sadiq came to me, he told me: half of this street, which is between mastabas nos. 4840 and 4830 belongs to us. So I told them that His Excellency the director gave me an order that all of this street belongs to us and you have only from the corner of mastaba no. 4740 in that street. Then they stopped talking and we went on with the work as it was in this mastaba.

A project is currently underway at Harvard University, in collaboration with the Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo, to develop a set of research, publication, and open access priorities for the long-term study of the diaries by historians, archaeologists, Egyptologists, Arabists, and linguists.[5] Since its inception in 2021, the initial aims of this project have focused on the digitization and cataloguing of the manuscript material; the recruitment of key collaborators to develop a preliminary research framework and digital archive structure; and on the large-scale transcription of the many thousands of diary pages from handwriting to type. Both of the present authors are collaborating members of the project which includes scholars in Egyptology, archaeology, modern Egyptian history, and Arabic studies (https://quft.fas.harvard.edu/people).

In what follows, we present a linguistic analysis of four small text samples, each sample containing six pages. The samples cover the following pages of the first two volumes in the HU–MFA series (which is catalogued chronologically from number 1 to 73):

[4] Hermann Junker (1877–1962), a German Egyptologist and director of excavations for the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Egypt (primarily at Giza) from 1909 to 1929. The title used before the name Junker is *xawāga*, which is a title and term of address that was used for Westerners and Christians. It does not have a precise equivalent in English.

[5] For more information about the project and additional background on the diaries and the Harvard-MFA Expedition, see Harvard University (2024), 'The Arabic Excavation Archive from Quft' (https://quft.fas.harvard.edu), and 'Digital Giza' (2024, http://giza.fas.harvard.edu.

Book 1. Arabic Diary at Giza 1913–1914, pp. 1–6 (16 November to 28 November 1913) and pp. 52–57 (2 February to 17 February 1914). Giza is a royal cemetery site in Lower Egypt (north) dating to the Fourth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom, c. 2613–2494 BCE. It is well-known for its three great pyramids and surrounding necropolis, where the HU–MFA Expedition worked for forty years (Manuelian 2023; Reisner 1942).

Book 2. Arabic Diary at Deir el-Bersha and Giza 1915, pp. 1–6 (17 March to 26 March 1915) and pp. 65–70 (21 October to 27 October 1915). Deir el-Bersha is the site of a large necropolis in Upper Egypt (south), featuring rock-cut tombs belonging to Middle Kingdom provincial governors and their courtiers, c. 2055–1650 BCE (De Meyer 2015; Willems 2014).

For the purposes of this article, we refer to these samples as 1.1–6, 1.52–57, 2.1–6, 2.65–70. In-text references are given in the form **1.2,14** (for Book 1, Giza, page 2, line 14); **2.1,4** (for Book 2, Deir el-Bersha/Giza, page 1, line 4).

2 Handwriting and authorship

The authorship of the Qufti diaries is collective and complex. Primary studies of the Quft area as both an historical and ethnolinguistic region of Upper Egypt are rare and isolated (Garcin 1976; Petrie 1904, *inter alia*; Nishio 1994; Winkler 2009 [1936]). Therefore, establishing the authorship, voice, and ideologies of the diary corpus is enormously promising for our understanding of Qufti society and its role in the history of knowledge production.

The head foreman during the field seasons in which these sample texts were written was Sayyid Aḥmad Sayyid Dirāz (1890–1926) who is usually identified historically as Reis Said Ahmed. The word ‘Reis’ is the conventional spelling of *rayyis* ‘foreman’, especially in its title form, in most primary sources and archaeological literature from the period. As a title, the capitalized form of Reis carries class associations in Egyptian society but has no equivalent form in English (thus, we prefer the historical form when used as a title).

In essence, the diary corpus represents a single, multi-authored (but not typically autographed) narrative of archaeological discovery and life in the field spanning thirty years, season-by-season and site-by-site. The diaries are written in the cursive *Ruqʿa* script and are all finished drafts (probably made from field notes); they contain very few corrections, additions, or revisions. None of the texts in these samples are attributed to an individual author. As head *rayyis* in charge of the day-to-day field operations for the excavations under discussion, Reis Sayyid Aḥmad was almost certainly one of the actual six writers discussed below, however we do not yet know which one.

In the two fragments from Book 1 (Giza 1913–1914), at least four different handwritings are apparent. In Book 2 (Deir el-Bersha/Giza 1915), two different handwritings are found in the selected fragments, and both are different from the writers of Book 1. This gives us a total of at least six sample writers. Given the communal nature of the diary writing by members of an historically underrepresented rural community, it is important to note the diagnostic features of different handwriting from this period, as these may provide clues to the comparative educational and social backgrounds of the Quftis as diary writers. Figures 2–6 show examples of each handwriting identified in the samples, where 'R' stands for Reis:

- R1 is the writer of Book 1.1–2
- R2 is the writer of Book 1.2–4
- R3 is the writer of Book 1.5–6
- R4 is the writer of Book 1.52–57
- R5 is the writer of Book 2.1–6
- R6 is the writer of Book 2.65–70

We would like to add here that R6 is also the writer of Book 3 (not included in the sample analysis) which continues the diary at Giza from November 1915 to January 1916 and at Jebel Barkal, Sudan, from January to March 1916. It is of course possible that one or more of the changes in handwriting noted in these samples belong to the same person writing under different circumstances or with a different pen, but we think that the presence of different writers for these early diary volumes is the more likely explanation.

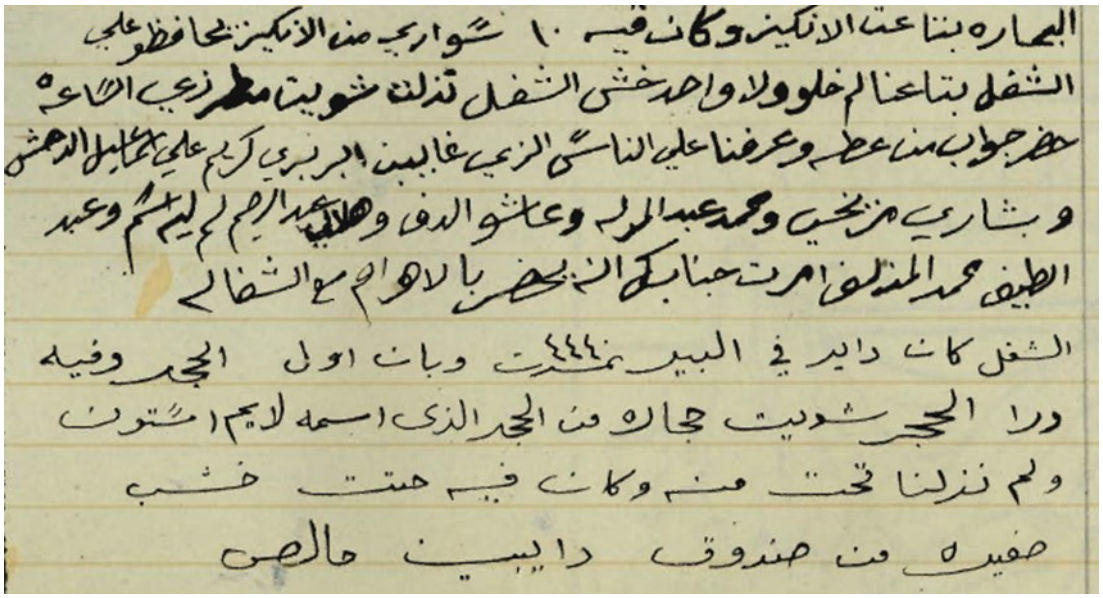

Figure 2: Book 1, fragment of page 2, showing two different handwritings for writer R1 (top) and R2 (bottom). HU–MFA Expedition Field Records, Department of the Art of Ancient Egypt, Nubia, and the Near East, Archives of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

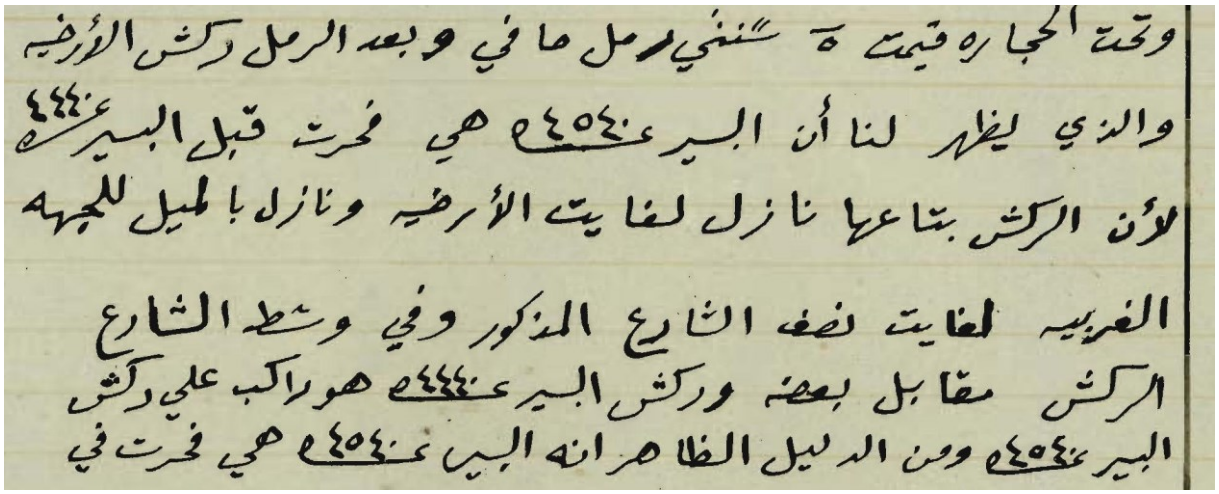

Figure 3: Book 1, fragment of page 6, writer R3. HU–MFA Expedition Field Records, Department of the Art of Ancient Egypt, Nubia, and the Near East, Archives of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

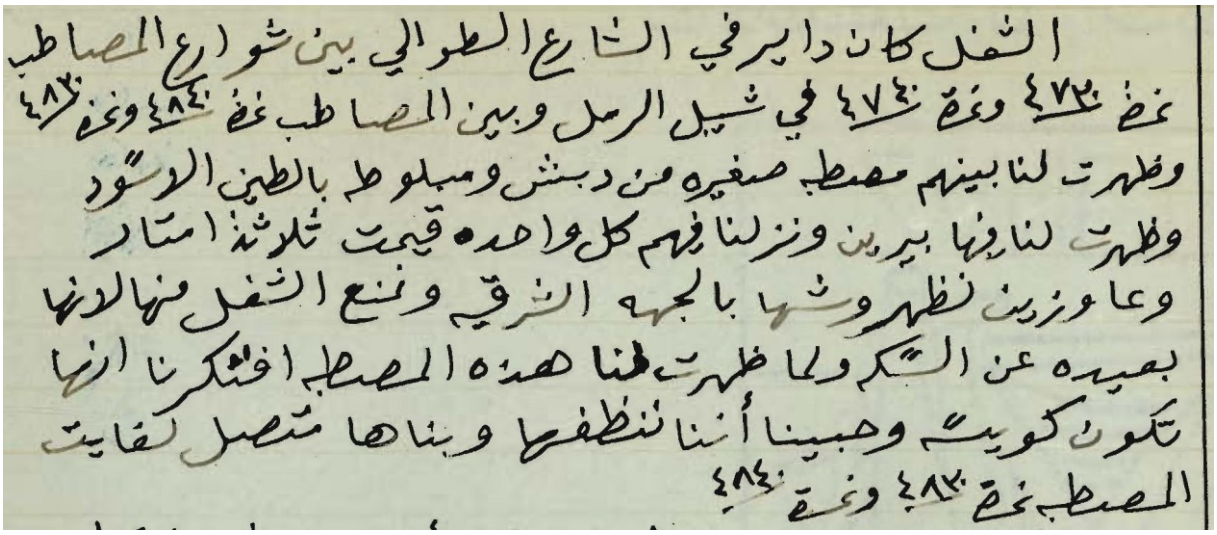

Figure 4: Book 1, fragment of page 53, writer R4. HU–MFA Expedition Field Records, Department of the Art of Ancient Egypt, Nubia, and the Near East, Archives of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

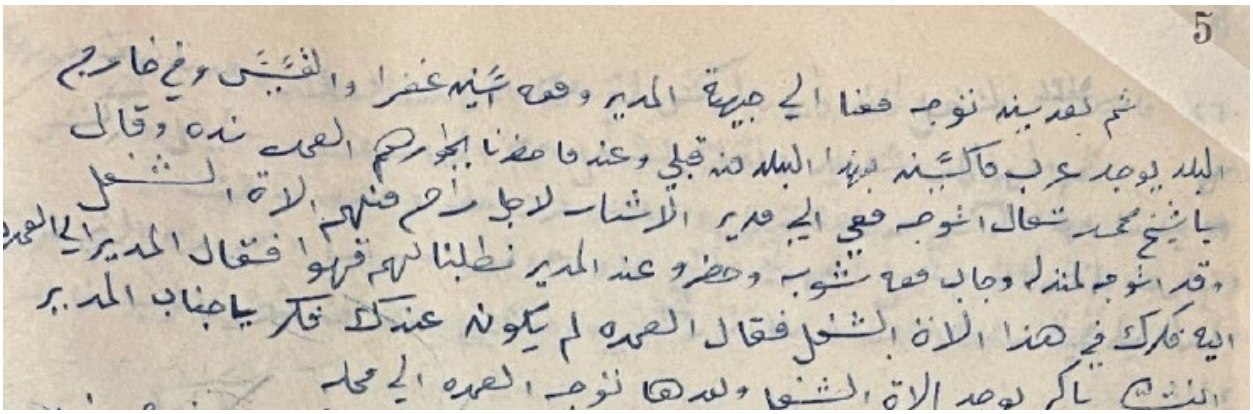

Figure 5: Book 2, fragment of page 5, writer R5. HU–MFA Expedition Field Records, Department of the Art of Ancient Egypt, Nubia, and the Near East, Archives of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

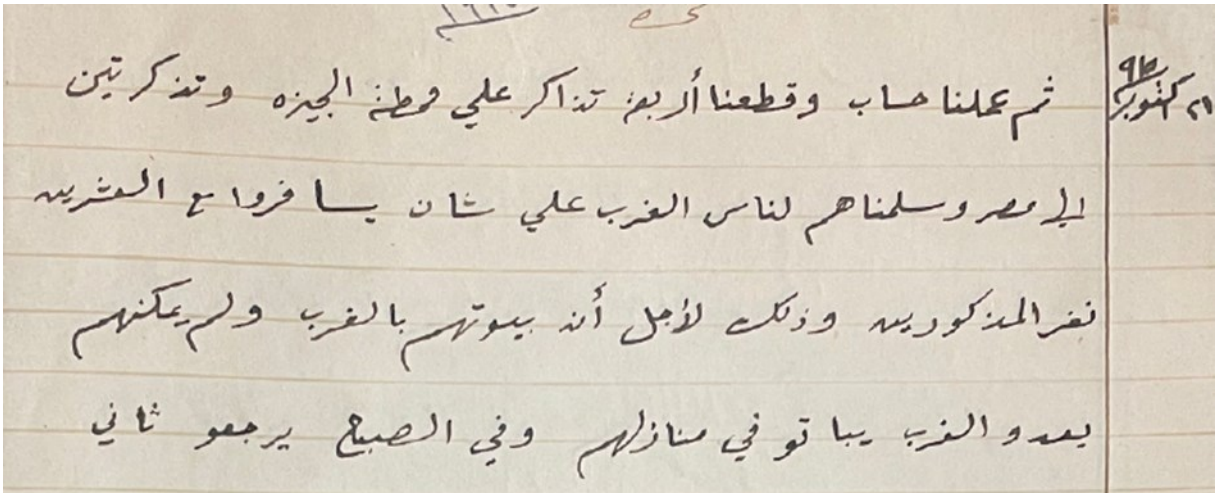

Figure 6: Book 2, fragment of page 66, writer R6. HU–MFA Expedition Field Records, Department of the Art of Ancient Egypt, Nubia, and the Near East, Archives of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Careful side-by-side examination of the sample pages reveals the following orthography to be most diagnostic of a given writer:

- The shape and direction of the final ي *yāʾ* (as in في *fī* 'in', الي *ilā* 'to'), cf. R1, R2 (Figure 7).[6]

- The writing of the final short vowel *a* as either ة *tāʾ marbūṭa*, ت *tāʾ maftūḥa*, or ه *hāʾ*, which can appear either above or below the line in final position. See section 4.2.

- The shape of the final ن *nūn* with the tail ending either up & closed or down & open (as in من *min*, 'from', اسنين *isnēn* 'two'), cf. R2, R5 (Figure 8).

- To a lesser extent, the size and shape of the ه *hāʾ* or م *mīm* in any position, and the length and flatness of the ر *rāʾ*, are also diagnostic, cf. R2, R6 (Figure 9).

- Diacritic preference is not always consistent and may change within a given handwriting, but in general, a preference for dots, lines, or carons or breves (ˇ,˘) over the ش *šīn*, ق *qāf*, ث *ṯāʾ* and/or ت *tāʾ* is also characteristic of a particular writer, cf. R1, R2, R4, R6 (Figure 10).

[6] We use the transcription system of the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics* (Eid et al. 2011).

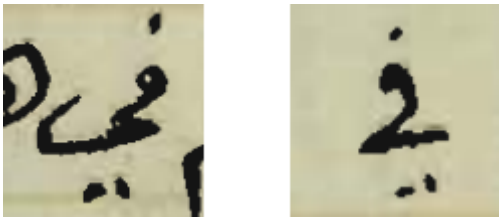

Figure 7: Book 1, fragments of page 2, final *yāʾ* in في *fī* ‘in’, R1 (left) and R2 (right).

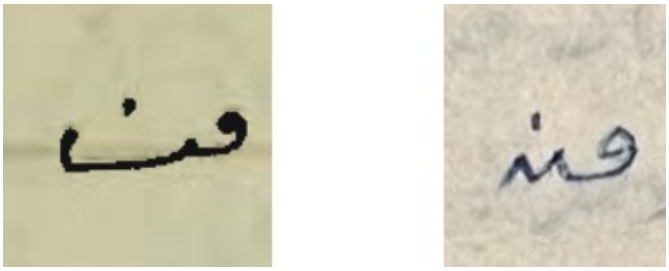

Figure 8: Book 1, fragment of p. 2 and book 2, fragment of p. 4, final *nūn* in من *min* ‘from’, R2 (left) and R5 (right).

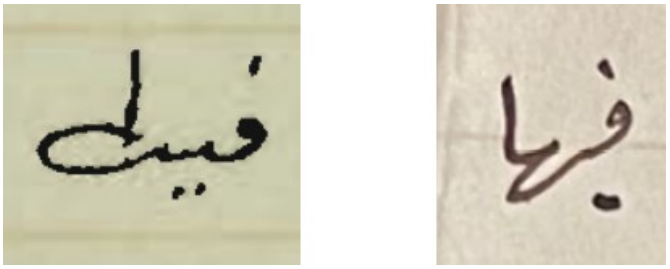

Figure 9: Book 1, fragment of p. 3 and book 2, fragment of p. 68, medial *hāʾ* in فيها *fīhā* ‘in it’, R2 (left) and R6 (right).

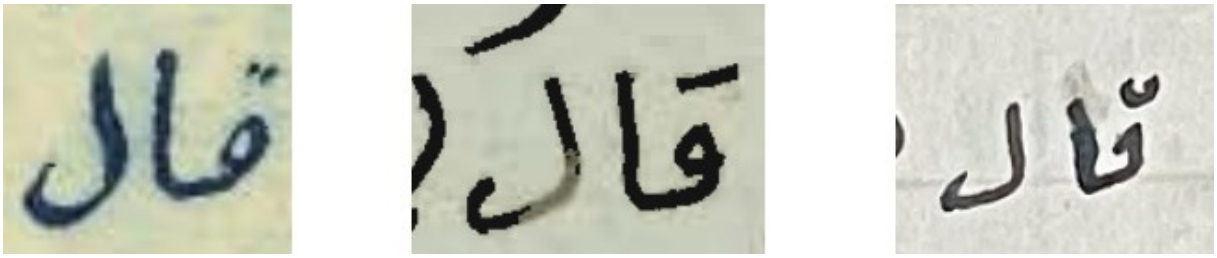

Figure 10: Book 1, fragments of p. 2 and 53 and book 2, fragment of p. 65, initial *qāf* in قال *qāl* ‘he said’, written with two dots (left, R1), a line (middle, R4) and a breve (right, R6).

Finally, one of the most common diagnostic features in the diaries is the writing of a pair of ‘false *tanwīn*’ dashes on the letter *sīn* (س). These dashes look like

the two strokes of *tanwīn al-fatḥ* ً (normally indicating the case ending *-an*). On the *sīn*, it is a stylistic feature sometimes encountered in handwritten, archival documents from early twentieth-century Egypt. In our experience, the practice seems to be more prevalent in informal handwriting (e.g. letters) and less common in more formal handwriting. For example, between the two writers of Book 2, the orthography of the first writer (R5) is less stable and much more informal than that of the second writer (R6); the former, R5, uses the *tanwīn* dashes with *sīn*, whereas the latter, R6, does not. This feature is demonstrated in the following four samples containing the word *kasr* 'breaking, breakage' (Figure 11), while the fifth example does not contain the dashes:

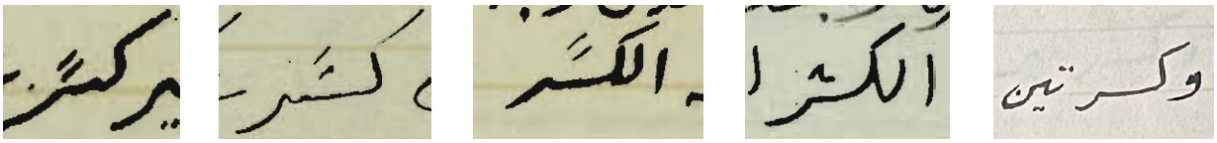

Figure 11: From left to right: كسر *kasr* 1.2 (R1), 1.3 (R2), الكسر *al-kasr* 1.5 (R3), 1.57 (R4) and كسرتين *kasritēn* 2.69 (R6).

It seems possible that these dashes were a stylistic convention for replacing the classical *shadda* shape ّ at the beginning of the letter س *sīn*, but its origins and history are unclear. If it is true that the dashes were associated with different degrees of formality, then the variability of this feature between different writers would place the textual status of these field diaries somewhere between casual letter-writing and professional report and journal-writing. This would be consistent with other aspects of the writing, including the use of 1st person singular and plural, with reference to others in both the 2nd and 3rd person, including many passages addressed directly to the Expedition Director in the 2nd person (as would be the case in a letter or draft report submitted for personal use). For example:

- خلصت البير نمرت ٤٢٤٠ *xallaṣt al-bīr nimrit 4240* 'I finished shaft no. 4240.' (1.2,1)[7]

- ظهر لنا ان هذا البير يوجد بها الاة الشغل التي سراقوها فابعدين حضر لي واحد من الشغاله واخبرني بذالك *ẓahar lanā anna hāḏā l-bīr yūjad bihā ālāt aš-šuġl allatī saraqūhā fa-baʿdēn ḥaḍar lī wāḥid min aš-šaġġāla wa-axbarnī bi-ḏālik*[8] 'It

[7] Where '2' refers to volume number (Book 2, Deir el-Bersha/Giza), '1' refers to the page number, and '4' refers to the line number (see section 1).

[8] Given the fact that the texts contain Classical Arabic, Egyptian Arabic and Middle Arabic elements, it is complicated to decide how words and particles that belong to both Classical

appeared to us that this pit is where the work kit, which they stole, will be found. Later, one of the workers came to me and informed me of that.' (2.5,8–9)

- ثم جناب المدير توجه الي مصر اليوم *ṯumma janāb al-mudīr tawajjah ilā Miṣr al-yawm* 'then His Honour, the director, went to Cairo today.' (2.67,1)

- لاجل طلب جنابكم *li-ajl ṭalab janābak* 'because of Your Excellency's request.' (1.3,16)

3 Situating the diaries in the Arabic linguistic landscape

The language situation in the Arab world can be described as one of diglossia. This term, first applied to Arabic by Charles Ferguson in his seminal article 'Diglossia' (1959), describes the situation as one in which different varieties of one language exist side by side. The dialects are spoken at home and in informal situations, but they are not the official language of the Arabic-speaking countries; this variety is called Classical Arabic or (Modern) Standard Arabic, which is the language of the Quran and a large heritage of written literature but is no one's native language.

Documents written in a language that does not conform to the rules of Classical Arabic are found dating back as far as the first millennium CE. These show dialectal influences, as well as hypercorrections and hypocorrections. This type of mixed language is called Middle Arabic. Middle Arabic is "the language of numerous Arabic texts, distinguished by its linguistically (and therefore stylistically) mixed nature, as it combines classical and colloquial features with others of a third type, neither standard nor colloquial" (Lentin 2011). Linguistic studies of texts in mixed Arabic from the period under discussion are rare. Research either focuses on texts from earlier periods (pre-twentieth century), which are usually described as Middle Arabic, or on modern texts written or spoken in mixed Arabic. The language of the excavation diaries is written in a

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Arabic and Egyptian Arabic (for instance و *wa/wi* 'and', ال *al-/il-* 'the') should be transcribed. In this example, which contains some Classical Arabic vocabulary such as يوجد *yūjad* 'be found', اخبرني *axbarnī* '[he] informed me' and ذالك *ḏālika* 'that', we have chosen to use a transcription that is closer to Classical Arabic. An alternative transcription here, that would take Egyptian Arabic as its base rather than Classical Arabic, would be: *ẓaharlinā inn hāzā l-bīr yūjad bihā alāt iš-šuġl allatī saraʾūhā fa-baʿdēn ḥaḍarlī wāḥid min iš-šaġġāla wi-axbarnī bi-zālik*. Of course, these two extreme representations on the continuum of language mixing are just two possible ways to read the texts; they could be read as mixed, sometimes opting for a Classical Arabic pronunciation, and sometimes for a colloquial one (either Cairene or Upper-Egyptian or both). Therefore we transcribe the examples according to the rules of Classical Arabic, unless they contain colloquial vocabulary and/or grammar, in which case a colloquial transcription is given.

style that has characteristics in common with the Middle Arabic of older texts. What is especially interesting about the diaries, however, is that they were influenced by two dialects: the dialect of Cairo, and (an) Upper Egyptian dialect(s). The Dirāz family originated from the village of al-Qalʿa in Quft, which is located to the north of Luxor. According to Behnstedt and Woidich's dialect atlas of Egypt, this region belongs to the dialect group of Upper Egyptian I. However, the borders between dialect groups in this region are fluid rather than clearly demarcated, so influences from other dialect groups can be found as well (Behnstedt & Woidich 1988: 154). Therefore, the texts are important not only from a linguistic point of view as primary source material from an understudied historical period, but also for what they tell us about literacy and writing habits in Upper Egypt.

As the linguistic content of the diaries is extremely rich and space is limited, our discussion will focus primarily on the following points: (1) preliminary remarks on orthography; (2) morphology with a focus on personal pronouns, suffixes, and verbs; and (3) two syntactic case studies, namely the negation لم *lam* and the relative pronoun الذي *alla*ḏ*ī*. The vocabulary section will discuss the use of Egyptian Arabic lexical items, with a special focus on Upper Egyptian items and the specialized excavation terminology of 'Dig Arabic'.

In Cairene Arabic, the letter ج (pronounced in Classical Arabic as *j*) would be pronounced as *g*, whereas in Upper Egypt it is pronounced as *ǧ*, *ǵ* or *d*, depending on the region (Behnstedt & Woidich 1985b: maps 13–14). As we don't know how the authors would have pronounced this in every case, we write *j*, based on the transcription list for Arabic characters in the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics* (Eid et al. 2011). For ق, which is usually pronounced as the glottal stop ʾ (but sometimes as *q*) in Cairene Arabic, and as *g* (and sometimes as *k*) in Upper Egyptian Arabic (Behnstedt & Woidich 1985b: maps 7–9), we use the transcription *q*. Short vowels, which are not written in Arabic script, are transcribed according to their Cairene-Arabic pronunciation, unless the vocabulary item is exclusive to Classical Arabic, in which case the Classical Arabic vocalization is used.

4 Orthography

The following sections describe some orthographical features that differ from the Classical Arabic orthography.

4.1 Scriptio plena

Scriptio plena is the writing of short vowels with ا *alif*, و *wāw* or ي *yāʾ*, which are normally used for writing the long vowels *ā*, *ū*, and *ī*.[9] There are 21 examples in the sample texts, 19 of which can be attributed to the first author of Book 2 at Deir el-Bersha (writer R5), who has a very unstable orthography.

Plena writing of *i* with ي *yāʾ* is found frequently in the word *jiha* 'direction', which occurs in different spellings: جيهة (2.1,4) *jīha*, جيها (2.1,11) *jīhā*, and even جييه *jīīh[a]* with a double *yāʾ* (2.5,20).[10] Another example of plena writing of *i* is found in ولاكين (1.2,4) *wa-lākīn* (**wa-lākin*[11]) 'but'.

Plena writing of short *a* with ا *alif* can be found in the following: راديم (1.3,5) *rādīm* (**radīm*) 'fill, backfill, debris'; خرازات (2.3,13) *xarāzāt* (**xarazāt*) 'beads'; مزلاقان (2.3,13) *mazlāqān* (**mazlaqān*) 'ramp, sloping shaft'; سراقوها (2.5,8) *sarāqūhā* (**saraqūha*) 'they stole it'. The pronouns هيا (2.4,8; 2.6,7) *hiyyā* 'she' and هما (2.6,14) *hummā* 'they' are written with final *alif*; however, this would be pronounced with short *a*: *hiyya* and *humma*. The connector فـ *fa-* is written four times as فا *fā*:

(1) فانظرنا (2.2,10)
fā-naẓar-nā
so-saw-1PL[12]
'so we saw'

(2) فاحضر المدير (2.5,18–19)
fā-ḥaḍar il-mudīr
so-arrived ART-director
'so the director arrived'

(3) فا ارسلنا (2.5,9)
fā-arsal-nā
so-sent-1PL
'so we sent'

[9] And for the consonants ʾ, *w* and *yāʾ*, but this is not relevant here.
[10] It is also possible that this is a case of lengthening of a historical short vowel, meaning that it was actually pronounced as *jīha*. Perhaps because *jiha* (from the root WJH) with its two consonants was felt to be overly short, the vowel *i* was lengthened to turn it into a word with three consonants, as if from the root JYH. This is quite common in Egyptian Arabic, see Spitta (1880: 85). Some examples from modern Cairene Arabic are *dam* > *damm* 'blood' and *kura* > *kōra* 'football'.
[11] * is preceding the actual pronunciation.
[12] The following glosses are used in this paper: 1/2/3: first/second/third person; ART: definite article; DU: dual; F: feminine; M: masculine; NEG: negation; PL: plural; PRS: present tense prefix; REL: relative pronoun; SG: singular.

(4) فابعدين (2.1,14; 2.5,9)
fā-baʿdēn
so-afterwards
'so afterwards'

Although the first two examples might be interpreted as a hypercorrect verbal form IV,[13] which starts with *ʾa-* in the perfect tense (so: *fa-anẓarnā* and *fa-aḥḍar*), the other two examples show that *fa-* is actually written as فا.

ذالك (2.5,9; 2.4,17) *ḏālik* 'this' and ولاكن (2.6,23) *wa-lākin* 'but' are, strictly speaking, not cases of *scriptio plena*, as the correct pronunciation is actually with long *ā*. However, the Classical Arabic spelling is without an *alif*: ذلك / ولكن or with a dagger *alif*: ذٰلك / ولٰكن.

4.2 tāʾ marbūṭa

The ة *tāʾ marbūṭa*, indicating the feminine ending *-a*, or *-it / -at* (in construct state),[14] is often written with a ت *tāʾ* when in construct state, for instance: شويت شقف (1.6,1) *šuwayyit šaqf* 'a few sherds'; ٤٤٤٠ نمرت (1.2,24) *nimrit 4440* 'number 4440'. In one case, *tāʾ* is written when not in construct state: امرات (1.1,16) *imraʾat* (**imraʾa*) 'a woman'.

Sometimes *tāʾ marbūṭa* is written with an undotted ه *hāʾ*, e.g. مفحوره (2.2,6) *mafḥūra* 'excavated'; جميله (2.2,11) *jamīla* 'beautiful'. This also occurs in the construct state, e.g. ٤٤٤٠ نمره (1.5,1) *nimrit 4440* 'number 4440'. Dotted versus undotted *tāʾ marbūṭa* varies significantly from one writer to another and is highly characteristic of individual writing habits across the diaries.

Tāʾ marbūṭa instead of *tāʾ* is sometimes found in the feminine plural ending *-āt*, as in الاة (2.5,3; 2.5,5; 2.5;10) *ālāt* 'work kit, gear' and المحلاة (2.6,20) *al-maḥallāt* 'the sites, locations'. It can also be found when the verb in the past tense ends in *-t*, for instance راحة (2.4,20) *rāḥit* 'did it go'; فقلة له (2.4,20; 2.5,19) *fa-qult lu* 'so I said to him'; حضرة (1.1,1; 1.2,16) *ḥaḍarit* 'arrived (fem. sg.)'.

[13] Arabic verbs are derived from a root (mostly consisting of a base of three consonants, or sometimes four) and follow a certain fixed pattern or form. In Egyptian Arabic, there are ten verbal forms in total.

[14] The construct state is a combination of two (or more) nouns which indicate a possessive relationship. An example is: *mudīr al-āṯār* 'the director of the antiquities, literally 'director the antiquities', in which the first noun *mudīr* 'director' is the 'possessed', and the second noun *al-āṯār* 'the antiquities' is the 'possessor'. When the first noun of the construct state is a word ending in the feminine ending *-a*, this is changed to *-at* (Classical Arabic) or *-it* (Egyptian Arabic).

The ا *alif* instead of *tāʾ marbūṭa* is found in two words: قهوا (2.4,19; 5,4) *qahwa* ‘coffee’ and جيها (2.1,11; 2.6,22) *jīha* ‘direction’.

4.3 alif

The *alif* that is added to the *wāw* of the plural ending *-ū* of the verb (وا), called *alif fāṣila* ‘separating *alif*’, is often left out, e.g. بنو (2.2,1) *banū* ‘they built’; فحرو (2.6,23) *faḥarū* ‘they excavated’; قالو (1.2,17) *qālū* ‘they said’; كانو يشتغلو (2.67,8) *kānū yištaġalū* ‘they were working’.

When the demonstrative هذا *hāḏā* is followed by the definite article الـ *il-/al-*, one of the *alif*s is usually elided, e.g. هذ اليوم (2.1,11; 2.4,12) *hāḏā-l-yawm* ‘this day, today’ instead of هذا اليوم.

4.4 Assimilation

When the ل *l* of the definite article *al-/il-* assimilates to the next letter, sometimes the letter *lām* is not written: اتلغراف (2,facing page,1–2) *it-tiliġrāf* ‘the telegraph’ instead of التلغراف and اليل (1.52,4) *il-lēl* ‘at night’ instead of الليل.

4.5 Writing of ث *with* س

As described in section 5 Phonology below, ث **ṯ* can be pronounced as *s* in Egyptian Arabic. In the present day it is common to write the Classical Arabic ث *ṯāʾ* rather than س *sīn* in order to avoid confusion (for instance: ثورة *sawra* ‘revolution’, not سورة). In the sample texts, however, sometimes Classical Arabic ث is written with س: اسنين (2.1,4; 2.1,7) *isnēn* ‘two’, كسير (2.1,12) *kasīr* ‘many’, والساني (2.6,9) *wi-ssānī* ‘and the other one’.[15]

4.6 The letter sīn

As discussed above, most – but not all – diary writers use two ‘false *tanwīn*’ dashes on the letter *sīn*. See section 2, above.

In summary, the non-classical features of the orthography are applied in a rather systematic way (for instance, the way in which *tāʾ marbūṭa* is written). An exception is author 1 of book 2 (R5), who has a very divergent spelling and is also inconsistent in the way he writes the same word. As we do not know the names of the authors, and therefore we do not know their backgrounds, it is hard

[15] In Book 1, pp. 68–88 (not included in this sample), the word *māris* ‘March’ is consistently written with the letter *ṯāʾ*: مارث. This is a so-called hypercorrection (see Hary 2011). The author was aware that in some cases Egyptian-Arabic *s* was the equivalent of the Classical Arabic interdental *ṯ*, and therefore wrote *ṯ* even when the word is written with *s* in Classical Arabic.

to determine why R5 is so deviant. It is possible that he had received less education than the others.

The orthography of the texts can give us important information about phonological colloquial features, as the next section will show.

5 Phonology

5.1 Vowels

In some cases, long unstressed vowels are shortened, as in: عملين (1.4,3) *عاملين *ʿamlīn* 'having made (plural)'; عدناه (2.1,5) *عديناه *ʿaddenāh* 'we crossed it'; عدتهم (1.5,18) *عديتهم *ʿaddethum* 'I counted them'; الخوجات (2.3,2) *الخواجات *il-xawajāt* 'the foreign gentlemen'; جمعها (2.4,16; 2.5,11) *جميعها *jamiʿhā* 'all of it'; المغرات (2.6,12) *المغارات *il-maġarāt* 'the caves'. There are, however, other cases in which a long vowel in a stressed syllable is not written either: الشغله (2.3,2) *الشغاله *iš-šaġġāla* 'the workers'; حلاً (2.3,3) *حالاً *ḥālan* 'right away'; اخبرنه (2.4,17) *اخبرناه *axbarnāh* 'we reported to him'.

5.2 hamza

The glottal stop ء *hamza* is mostly missing. This is a common feature in Middle Arabic, as most dialects have (partially) lost the *hamza*; this has been attested in texts as early as the first millennium CE (Blau 2002: 32–33). In medial form *hamza* is often replaced by *yāʾ*, for instance ركايب (2.1,2) *rakāyib* 'riding animals', داير (2.3,8 and others) *dāyir* 'going on, in operation'. In final form it is simply left out, e.g. بنا (1.53,17) *binā* 'building'.[16]

5.3 Interdentals

In Egyptian Arabic, the Classical Arabic interdentals ث *$\underline{t}$, ذ *$\underline{d}$, and ظ *$\underline{ḍ}$ are realized as sibilants or plosives. *$\underline{t}$ is pronounced as *t* or, in loanwords from Classical Arabic, as *s*. We find examples of *$\underline{t}$ → *s* in some words in which ث is written with س (see section 4.5 above). Both ث and ت are found in ثلاته (2.6,3) *$\underline{t}$alāta* 'three'. In نبحص (2.4,10) *nibḥaṣ* 'we search for' the letter ث *$\underline{t}$* has become an emphatic ص *ṣ* (see also section 5.4). The Classical Arabic relative pronoun الذي *allaḏī* is twice written with ز *zāy*: الزي (1.1,7 and 1.2,14). Hypercorrect ذ *$\underline{d}$* is found in المذلقان (1.2,2) *il-maḏlaqān* (**ilmazlaqān*) 'the ramp, sloping shaft'.

[16] This follows a very long tradition, see for instance Zack (2009: 78–79) for examples from a seventeenth-century Egyptian text.

The change from emphatic interdental to emphatic plosive (ظ *$\underline{d}$ → d) is found in نضفنا (2.6,7) *naḍḍafnā* (*نظفنا) 'we cleaned' and نضاره (2.3,15; 2.6,11) *naḍḍāra* (*نظارة) 'camera lens(es)'.

5.4 Emphatics

This section discusses both loss of emphasis and secondary emphasis. De-emphasizing of *$ṣ$ to s (ص → س) is found in مسور (2.3,14) *musawwar* 'depicted', التسوير (2.4,4) *it-taswīr* 'photography', and منسوبين (2.1,10) *mansūbīn* 'pitched'. Based on the same root we also find تنصيب (2.3,4) *tanṣīb* 'setting up', in which the emphatic Classical Arabic letter ص *$ṣ$ has remained emphatic. De-emphasizing of *$ḍ$ to d (ض → د) is only found once, in بعد (2.4,5) *baʿd* 'some'. Secondary emphasis of *s to $ṣ$ (س → ص) is found in e.g. مصخوط (2.6,9) *maṣxūṭ* 'statue, idol', بااصيوط [sic] (1.1,11) *bi-aṣyūṭ* (*باسيوط) 'in Asyut',[17] and اصوان (1.1,3) *aṣwān* 'Aswan'.[18] One of the writers (R2) consistently writes both راس *rās* 'head' and its plural روس *rūs* with a ص, i.e. راص *rāṣ* and روص *rūṣ* (e.g. 1.3,8 and 1.4,12). In نبحص (2.4,10) *nibḥaṣ* (*نبحث) 'we search for', the interdental *$\underline{t}$ has become an emphatic sibilant ص (see also section 5.3).

5.5 qāf

There are no examples of ق *q → ʾ (written with the glottal stop ء *hamza*) or *q → g (written with ج *gīm*) in this sample.[19] Examples of *q → k (written with ك *kāf*) are found in شكف (e.g. 2.1,12) *šakf* 'sherds', and سكف (e.g. 2.4,8) *sakf* 'roof', although سقف *saqf* and شقف *šaqf* are also found (e.g. 1.3,14; 1.5,1). The shift of q to k cannot be explained from the perspective of Cairene Arabic because in both words *q would be pronounced as a glottal stop. However, in Upper Egypt *q has become g, so *saqf* → *sagf* and *šaqf* → *šagf*. Here, the shift g → k can be explained by the loss of voicing of g before the voiceless consonant *f*.[20]

Summarizing, the orthography shows influences of colloquial phonology, such as the disappearance of the *hamza* and interdentals, shortening of long vowels in certain positions, and both secondary emphasis and loss of emphasis. A specific characteristic of Upper Egyptian Arabic is the change from *q to k before a voiceless consonant.

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[17] Town in Upper Egypt. Note the extra *alif* in بااصيوط .

[18] Town in the very south of Egypt.

[19] In book 4 (not included in this sample) the word 'granite' is consistently written with initial ق *qāf*: قرانيت, which indicates that indeed the letter *qāf* should be pronounced as *g*.

[20] See Nishio (1994: 30) for devoicing assimilation in the dialect of Quft, including examples of g → k.

6 Morphology

6.1 Personal pronouns

The personal pronouns found in the sample texts are:
- two pronouns for 'we': Classical Arabic نحن (e.g. 2.2,9; 1.53,13) *naḥnu* and Egyptian Arabic احنا (e.g. 2.5,14; 1.4,1) *iḥnā*.[21]
- for the third person: هوا (1.53,17) *huwwā* 'he', هيا (2.4,8; 6,7) *hiyyā* 'she', هما (2.6,14) *hummā* 'they' (see also section 4.1) as well as هم (1.57,20) *hum*, which could be read as Classical Arabic *hum* or Egyptian Arabic *humma*.

6.2 Suffixes

In modern Cairene Arabic, the possessive suffix can be preceded by *ī*. This is common in prepositions and adverbs, but also in some words such as *nafs* 'self', *baʿḍ* 'each other', and *li-waḥd* 'alone'. For instance, *nafs-uhum* "they themselves" can be pronounced as *nafs-īhum* (Woidich 2006: 43). We find examples of this in the sample texts, for instance in examples 5 and 6:

(5) سكف المغار نفسيه
sakf il-maġār nafs-ī-h
roof ART-cave self-*ī*-3SG.M
'the roof of the cave itself'

(6) والمصطبه الذي قبليها
wi-l-maṣṭaba allaḏī qabl-ī-hā
and-ART-mastaba[22] REL before-*ī*-3SG.F
'and the mastaba that is before it'

قالنا (2.2,7) 'he told us' should be read as *qāl-linā* (from *qāl* 'he said' + *linā* 'to us'): the suffix *li* + *nā* is affixed to the preceding verb (see Woidich 2006: 41), and because the verb and its suffix are perceived as one word, the double *l* is written with a single ل.

[21] Final long vowels are pronounced short in Egyptian Arabic, but for the sake of the accuracy of the transcription, they are transcribed long in this analysis.
[22] The word mastaba, in Arabic, means 'bench'. In Egyptology, it refers to a stone or mudbrick rectangular tomb superstructure with a flat roof and sloping walls. It entered the Egyptological lexicon via Arabic in the nineteenth century when it was used by local communities at Saqqara to refer to a large stone monument known as Mastabat al-Fara'un or "the pharaoh's bench" (Doyon 2021: 128; Maspero 1889).

6.3 Verbs

6.3.1 Form I of verbs C1=w

This concerns verbs of which the first consonant of the root is و *w*. There is one instance of a colloquial form of such a verb:

(7) كنا نوجدها (2.3,7)
kun-nā ni-wjid-hā / nū-jid-hā[23]
were-1PL 1PL-find-3SG.F
'we had found [it]'

In example 7, the و *wāw* is written in نوجدها; in Classical Arabic this would have been نجدها *na-jid-hā*. This preservation of the *wāw* in the imperfect tense is common in Cairene Arabic, for instance in *wiṣil, yi-wṣal* 'to arrive'.

6.3.2 Verbs C2=C3

In this type of root the second and third consonant are the same (geminate roots). When such a verb is conjugated with a suffix that starts with a consonant, C2 and C3 are split in Classical Arabic. For instance: شدّ *šadda* 'he pulled', شددنا *šadad-nā* 'we pulled' (with the 1PL suffix *-nā*). This happens because Classical Arabic does not allow for a sequence of three consonants, so *šadd-nā* is not a possible form. The same rule applies in Cairene Arabic: it is not possible to have three consonants following each other. However, in these types of verbs, Cairene Arabic has a different solution: after C2C3, a long vowel *ē* is inserted: *šaddē-na*. Two examples (8–9) from the sample text are:

(8) شديت حجاره من الحجر (1.2,25)
šadd-ē-t ḥijāra min il-ḥajar
pulled-*ē*-1SG stone from ART-stones
'I pulled a stone from the stones'

(9) وحبينا أننا ننظفها (1.53,7)
wi-ḥabb-ē-nā ʾanna-nā ni-naẓẓaf-hā
and-loved-*ē*-1PL that-1PL 1PL-clean-3SG.F
'and we wanted to clean it'

[23] Both pronunciations can be found in modern Egyptian Arabic, see Badawi & Hinds (1986: 923).

6.3.3 Verbs C3=w/y

This concerns verbs of which the third consonant of the root is either a *w* or a *y*. There are some verbs that suggest an Upper Egyptian verbal form, as in example 10:

(10) المدير مشا بالرجل (2.1,6)
il-mudīr *mšā* *bi-l-rijl*
ART-director walked by-ART-foot
'the director walked on foot'

In example 10, the verb 'walked' is written with *alif*, rather than with *yāʾ* as in Classical Arabic مَشِيَ *mašiya* or Cairene Arabic مِشِي *mišī*. مشا can either represent *mišā* or *mašā*, both of which are found in the region of Quft (Behnstedt & Woidich 1985b: map 281).

Twice, اعطانا *aʿṭā-nā* is written rather than Classical Arabic اعطينا *aʿṭay-nā*, as shown in examples 11 and 12:

(11) اعطاناهم الي النجار (2.5,12)
aʿṭā-nā-hum *ilā* *in-najjār*
gave-1PL-3PL to ART-carpenter
'we gave them to the carpenter'

(12) واعطاناه مبلغ (2.5,24)
wi-aʿṭā-nā-h *mablaġ*
and-gave-1PL-3SG.M sum
'and we gave him the sum [of…]'

It is possible that this is a reflection of the colloquial pronunciation, as this would be *aʿṭē-nā* both in Cairene Arabic (see Woidich 2006: 79) and in the dialect of Quft (see Nishio 1994: 62). Although this would be expected to be written اعطينا like in Classical Arabic, it is possible that the author used ا *alif* to reflect the pronunciation *ē*.

6.3.4 Form V

In form V, both the Classical Arabic prefix *ta-* and the Egyptian colloquial prefix *it-* are found in the same verb, توجه / اتوجه *it-wajjah* / *ta-wajjah* 'to head to, to go'. The colloquial form اتوجه is shown in example 13:

(13) تعال اتوجه معي الي مدير الاثار (2.5,3)
taʿāl itwajjah maʿ-ī ilā mudīr al-āṯār
come head with-1SG to director ART-antiquities
'come, go with me to the director of the antiquities'.

6.3.5 b-imperfect

We found three instances of the *b*-imperfect. The prefix *b-* is a prefix that is put before the present tense to indicate the imperfect aspect or a habit (Woidich 2006: 280–282). The prefix is *bi-* in Cairene Arabic and *ba-* in the region of Quft.[24] In examples 14 and 15, the *b*-imperfect indicates the present tense:

(14) بنفحر[25] فيها (1.53,9)
bi-ni-fḥar fī-hā
PRS-1PL-dig in-3SG.F
'we are digging in it'

(15) كانو بشتغلو (2.5,22)
kān-ū bi-štaġal-ū / ba-štaġal-ū
were-3PL PRS-work-3PL
'[they] were working'

In example 15 above, the *yi-* of the prefix of the third person is elided. This, however, was common in late-19th-century Cairene Arabic (see e.g. Spitta 1880: 27).

In example 16, the use of the present tense *bašūf* is somewhat unusual, because the active participle *šāyif* would be expected:

[24] See Behnstedt & Woidich (1985b: map 221), in the region of no. 744. This is the village of ilBarāhma. The village of ilQalʿa is not one of the places where dialectological data for the dialect atlas of Egypt were collected; ilBarāhma is the closest place, around 3 km by road. See Behnstedt & Woidich (1985a: 54) for the place name directory in this region. Other prefixes can be found in the surroundings of ilQalʿa as well, such as *ʿa-*, *bi-*, and *ʿama-*; it is a dialectologically diverse region (see Behnstedt & Woidich 1985b: map 221). Nishio (1994) does not mention or discuss prefixes for the present tense.

[25] In Egyptian Arabic, both *ḥafar* and *faḥar* 'to dig' are found, see Badawi & Hinds (1986: 212, 643) and Behnstedt & Woidich (1994: 345). In our sample texts, we only found *faḥar*. It seems that *ḥafar* is the older form and *faḥar* is a case of metathesis, as Classical Arabic dictionaries do not mention *faḥar* with this meaning; it is, e.g., not mentioned in Lane's dictionary (1877: 2399).

(16) بشوف صف مغارات (2.5,19)
b-a-šūf *ṣaff* *maġārāt*
PRS-1SG-see row caves
'I see a row of caves'

The verb *yišūf* 'to see' is one of the *verba sentiendi*, i.e. verbs of perception, for which Cairene Arabic uses the active participle (*šāyif*) rather than the *bi*-imperfect in the present tense (Woidich 2006: 284–286). The verb *bašūf* would be used only if 'I see' was a habit (Woidich 2006: 281). It is interesting, however, that this is reported speech uttered by the American expedition director, George Reisner. It is possible that he did indeed say it as it is written down here; therefore this might be a case of reported 'foreigner Arabic'.

Summarizing the findings, it can be concluded that all authors use both Classical and colloquial forms of the personal pronouns and the verbs. It is interesting that author R6, whose handwriting looks the most professional, also remains closest in his use of grammar to Classical Arabic, which likely points to a higher level of education. In contrast to that, the grammar of R5 contains the most colloquial features of the six authors. He is also the one with the least stable orthography, showing that these two features go hand in hand and probably point to a lower education level.

7 Syntax: two case studies

The syntactical data is so rich that it would take a complete paper to list all the peculiarities found in the sample texts. Therefore, we have chosen two case studies in syntax to be discussed here. The first one is the use of the negation لم *lam*, and the second one focuses on the use of the relative pronoun الذي *allaḏī*.

7.1 First case study: the negation لم *lam*

In Classical Arabic, there are two ways to negate the past tense. The first one is ما *mā* followed by the perfect tense, and the second one is لم *lam* in combination with the jussive form. In the diaries, لم *lam* is the 'default' negation that can be used to negate any type of phrase. It is the only negation that is used with verbs in the perfect tense, as the following examples (17–21) show; no examples of ما *mā* + perfect tense are found:

(17) لم وجدنا (1.3,13)
lam *wajad-nā*
NEG found-1PL
'we did not find'

(18) لم خلو ولا واحد خش الشغل (1.2,20)
lam xall-ū walā wāḥid xašš iš-šuġl
NEG let-3PL even one went-in ART-work
'they didn't let even one person get into the work'

(19) لم نظفناها (1.55,14)
lam naẓẓaf-nā-hā
NEG clean-1PL-1SG.F
'we did not clean them'[26]

(20) لم انتهينا (1.55,6)
lam intahay-nā
NEG finish-1PL
'we did not finish'

(21) لم خلصناهم (2.68,12)
lam xallaṣ-nā-hum
NEG finish-1PL-3PL
'we did not finish them'

There are two examples (22–23) in which *lam* is used in combination with the jussive, which is the only way in which *lam* can be used in Classical Arabic:

(22) لم يقطعو لنا تذاكر (2.65,4)
lam ya-qṭaʿ-ū la-nā taḏākir
NEG 3-cut-3PL for-1PL tickets
'they did not cut[27] tickets for us'

(23) ولم يمكنهم يعدو الغرب (2.66,3–4)
wa-lam yu-mkin-hum yi-ʿadd-ū il-ġarb
and-NEG 3-be.possible-3PL 3-cross-PL ART-west
'they could not cross to the west'

Hary (2011) proposes the theory that the negation لم *lam* in combination with the perfect tense started out as a hypocorrection. The negation ما *mā* was felt to be not prestigious, because it is used in the dialect as well, so writers used the more

[26] In Classical Arabic, the plural of objects is referred to in the feminine singular. The same rule applies in Egyptian Arabic, but less strictly; the plural can be used as well (as in example 21) (see Woidich 2006: 249).
[27] 'To cut' here means to sell train tickets cut from a booklet.

prestigious *lam* instead, without, however, changing the perfect tense to the jussive:

> This example follows the criteria for hypocorrections: the underlying form *mā* differs from the form in the prestigious variety *lam*; the resulting form contains a vernacular feature (the use of the perfect form, not the jussive), it does not go far enough (to change to the jussive), and the form *lam* followed by the perfect does not exist in the prestigious variety nor in the dialect. (Hary 2011)

This specific use of *lam* then became standardized in Middle Arabic. In the diaries from Quft, *lam* is also used to negate all kinds of other sentences, such as nominal sentences. In Classical Arabic these would be negated with the verb ليس *laysa*, whilst in Egyptian Arabic the particle مش *miš* or *muš* would be used.[28] In the following examples, we see phrases in which the predicate is a noun (examples 24–26), a participle (examples 27–29), or an adjective (example 30).

(24) لم مسخوط (1.57,14)
lam masxūṭ
NEG idol
'[it is] not a statue'[29]

(25) لم فيها شيء (1.55,1)
lam fī-hā šayʾ
NEG in-3SG.F something
'there is nothing in it'

(26) فهو لم باب (1.54,10)
fa-huwa lam bāb
so-he NEG door
'it is not a door'

(27) ولم فاضل منها الا القليل (1.56,8)
wa-lam fāḍil min-hā illā il-qalīl
and-NEG remaining of-3SG.F except ART-little
'but little remained of it'

[28] Although *miš* is the most frequently used negation for nominal sentences (and the future tense) in modern Cairene Arabic, *muš* was more common until well into the twentieth century (see Hassan 2020: 160).
[29] For this translation of *masxūṭ* see section 8.3.

(28) لم قادر علي الشغل بتاعنا (1.57,24–25)
lam qādir ʿalā iš-šuġl bitāʿ-nā
NEG able to ART-work of-1PL
'he is not able to [do] our work'

(29) الانفار الذي لم موجدين (1.1,3–4)
il-anfār allaḏī[30] *lam mawjudīn*
ART-persons REL NEG present-PL
'the workmen[31] who aren't present'

(30) وجدو الجبل لم تمام ولم يصلح فيه القامه (1.2,4)
wajad-ū il-jabal lam tamām wi-lam yi-ṣlaḥ fī-h
found-3PL ART-mountain NEG okay and-NEG 3-be.suitable in-3SG.M
il-qāma
ART-build
'they found that the bedrock isn't good and doesn't serve for the chamber[32]'

The last example (31) in this category is interesting, as one would expect the verb كان *kān* to be negated, rather than its predicate:

(31) و اذ كان لم كويس (2.facing page,2)
wi-iḏa kān lam kuwayyis
and-if was NEG good
'and if it isn't good'

There are two examples (32–33) in which *lam* + imperfect verb is used for the prohibitive:

(32) لم ترسلو ورق و لاقزاز (2.facing page,3)
lam ti-rsil-ū waraq wa-lā qizāz
NEG 2-send-PL paper and-NEG glass
'don't send paper or glass'

(33) لم يكون عندك فكر (2.5,5)
lam yi-kūn ʿand-ak fikr
NEG 3SG.M-be with-2SG thought

[30] For *allaḏī* see section 7.2.
[31] For this translation of *anfār* see section 8.3.
[32] The meaning here is that the natural rock was not the right type for constructing a tomb chamber; for these translations of *jabal* and *qāma*, see section 8.3.

'don't let there be a thought with you'[33]

Lam + imperfect verb is used once to negate the present tense:

(34) لم يجوز (2.65,6)
lam yi-jūz
NEG 3SG.M-is.allowed
'it is not allowed'

Lam + imperfect verb is used once to negate a modal meaning (example 35). In this example, the reading of the verb تصلح is unclear. The transcription given here interprets the verb as Classical Arabic, with an internal passive,[34] but it is also possible to read it as Egyptian Arabic *ti-ṣ-ṣallaḥ*, assimilating the *t*-prefix of the passive voice (*ti-t-ṣallaḥ*) to the following *ṣ*. It makes no difference for the meaning of the phrase how the verb is pronounced.

(35) لم تصلح ابداً (1.2,16)
lam tu-ṣallaḥ *abadan*
NEG 3SG.F-is.repaired ever
'it cannot be repaired at all'

Finally, there is one example (36) in which the impersonal pronoun احد *aḥad* 'someone' is negated with *lam*:

(36) لربما يكون فيه مغارة الان لم احد فتحها (2.2,7–8)
la-rubbamā yi-kūn fī-h maġāra al-ān lam aḥad
lest-perhaps 3SG.M-be in-3SG.M cave now NEG someone
fataḥ-ha
opened-3SG.F
'perchance there is a cave [until] now no one has opened'

As the abovementioned examples demonstrate, *lam* is used as a universal negation particle in the sample texts. There are no instances of the Egyptian-Arabic negations *ma-...š* (for verbs in the past and present tense, the prohibition and prepositional sentences) or *miš / muš* (for nominal sentences), nor of the Classical Arabic negations *mā* for the past tense, *lā* for the present tense, *lan* for the future tense or *laysa* for nominal sentences.

[33] An idiomatic expression similar to 'don't give it a second thought'.
[34] In Classical Arabic, this can either be a form II *tu-ṣallaḥ* or a form IV *tu-ṣlaḥ*, which both have the meaning 'to be repaired'.

7.2 Second case study: the relative pronoun الذي **allaḏī**

In Classical Arabic, the relative pronoun has a range of different forms that agree in number and gender with their antecedent: الذي *allaḏī* (sg.m.), التي *allatī* (sg.f.), الذين *allaḏīna* (pl.m.), اللواتي *allawāti* (pl.f.),[35] and the dual forms (m. and f.) in the different cases. There are around ten different forms in total. However, all Arabic dialects use a relative pronoun that is invariable. The most common one is اللي *illi* (see Vicente 2011), which is also used in Egyptian Arabic. The diaries, however, almost exclusively use الذي *allaḏī*. This is, as mentioned above, the relative pronoun for singular masculine antecedents in Classical Arabic.

Examples 37–39 show the use of *allaḏī* where in Classical Arabic feminine *allatī* would have been used:[36]

(37) المصطبه الذي بهذ الشارع (1.56,2)
il-maṣṭaba allaḏī bi-hāḏa iš-šāriʿ
ART-mastaba REL in-DEM.SG.M ART-street
'the mastaba that is in this street'

(38) واخذنا منهم اجرة السكه الذي حضروا بها من قفط الي مصر (1.57,28)
wi-axaḏ-nā min-hum ujrit is-sikka allaḏī ḥaḍar-ū bi-hā
and-took-1PL from-3PL fare ART-road REL came-3PL with-3SG.F
min Qifṭ ilā Miṣr
from Qifṭ to Cairo
'and we took from them the rail fare[37] with which they came from Quft to Cairo'

(39) الحجاره الذي بالمغار (2.5,22)
il-ḥijāra allaḏī bi-l-maġār
ART-stones REL in-ART-cave
'the stones that are in the cave'

In example 40, there is a masculine resumptive pronoun *-h* where a feminine one would be expected; whether this is due to the influence of the masculine *allaḏī* is hard to say:

[35] There are two other forms: اللاتي *allātī* and اللائي *allāʾī*.
[36] Note, in examples 36 and 37, that the plural of inanimate objects is grammatically treated as feminine singular in Arabic.
[37] Here *sikka* is short for *sikka ḥadīd* 'railroad,' in English the phrase is shortened to 'rail fare' (rather than 'road fare').

(40) المحلاة الذي اشتغلناه (2.6,20)
il-maḥallāt allaḏī ištaġal-nā-h
ART-sites REL worked-1PL-3SG.M
'the sites that we were working in'

In examples 41–42, the antecedents are the plural of (male) persons and would take the relative pronoun الذين *allaḏīna* in Classical Arabic:

(41) جملة الأنفار الذي سافروا (2.66,5)
jumlit il-ʾanfār allaḏī sāfir-ū
total ART-persons REL travelled-3PL
'the total of the workmen who travelled'

(42) المستخدمين الذي بالمحطه (2.65,3–4)
il-mustaxdim-īn allaḏī bi-l-maḥaṭṭa
ART-user-PL REL at-ART-station
'the users that are at the station'

In example 43, المسخوطين *il-masxūṭēn* is in the dual, but the expected relative pronoun in the dual, اللذين *allaḏayn*, is not used; instead, again, الذي *allaḏī* is used:

(43) تكاسير المسخوطين الذي وجدناهم (1.57,19–20)
takāsīr il-masxūṭ-ēn allaḏī wajad-nā-hum
fragments ART-statue-DU REL found-1PL-3PL
'the fragments of the two statues that we found'

Note also in example 43 that after the verb, the plural resumptive pronoun *-hum* is used, rather than the dual *-humā*. As Egyptian Arabic does not indicate the dual except on the noun (with the ending *-ēn*), this shows that the suffix *-hum* must be interpreted as Egyptian Arabic. Therefore, also in المسخوطين the dual ending is interpreted as Egyptian Arabic *-ēn*, rather than Classical Arabic *-ayn*.[38]

No instances of *illi* as the relative pronoun are found in the current sample texts. Blau (2002: 55) notes that in early Middle Arabic "الّذي has become invariable"; we are therefore dealing with a very old phenomenon. Even in official texts, *allaḏī* is frequently found as an invariable relative pronoun.[39]

[38] Another interpretation is that *takāsīr* 'fragments' is the antecedent, in which case the relative pronoun *allatī* would be expected.
[39] See for instance Zack (2022: 288) for a discussion of this feature in Ottoman legal texts from the Dakhla Oasis.

There is, however, one important exception to this observation in the sample texts. The first author of Book 2 (R5) also uses *allaḏī*, but besides that, he uses feminine *allatī*, as well. In example 44, *allatī* is used where the feminine relative pronoun would be expected:

(44) المغارات التي فوق دير البرشه (2.2,10)
il-maġārāt allatī fōq dēr il-Berša
ART-caves REL above Deir el-Bersha
'the caves that are above Deir el-Bersha'

However, in the other instances he uses *allatī* with masculine antecedents, as in examples 45–46:

(45) عمدة البلد التي يعرف لصوص بلده (2.4,21)
ʿumdit il-balad allatī yi-ʿraf luṣūṣ balad-uh
mayor ART-town REL 3SG.M-knows thieves town-3SG.M
'the mayor of the town is the one who knows the thieves of his town'

In example 45, it is possible that the feminine *allatī* was triggered by the *tāʾ marbūṭa*, which usually marks feminine words, at the end of the word *ʿumda* 'mayor'. However, this is not the case in example 46:

(46) بالركش التي امام هذا المغارات (2.4,11)
bi-l-rakš allatī ʾamām hāḏā[40] *il-maġārāt*
in-ART-debris REL in.front.of DEM.SG.M ART-caves
'in the debris that is in front of these caves'

The exact same word *rakš* is used with the masculine *allaḏī* in other places, for instance as shown in example 47:

(47) وشلنا الركش الذي امامه (2.5,21)
wi-šil-nā il-rakš allaḏī ʾamāma-h
and-removed-1PL ART-debris REL in.front.of-3SG.M
'and we removed the debris that is in front of it'

Summarizing, it appears that the relative pronoun الذي *allaḏī*, which is masculine singular in Classical Arabic, has taken on the role of default relative pronoun. It can be used after masculine, feminine, singular, and plural nouns and therefore

[40] Note the use of masculine هذا *hāḏā* where feminine هذه *hāḏihi* would be expected; another very common feature in these texts.

reflects the use of the invariable Egyptian Arabic relative pronoun *illi*. One of the authors diverges from this pattern, using the feminine التي *allatī* interchangeable with الذي *allaḏī*.

8 Vocabulary

The vocabulary used in the diaries is an interesting mix of Classical Arabic and Egyptian Arabic. The former can be found in grammatical items such as demonstratives, relative pronouns and negations, as well as in the form of 'signal words' that are used to raise the register of the texts to a more formal or literary voice. The Egyptian Arabic vocabulary can be divided into two types: (standard) Egyptian Arabic (or Cairene Arabic), the more prestigious variety spoken in the capital, and Upper Egyptian Arabic, which reflects the dialect of the authors' home region of Quft. Besides these three types of Arabic, a fourth, important, aspect of the vocabulary of the diaries is the technical idiom used by the *ruyasa* (archaeological foremen) in the course of their fieldwork; this is a specialized excavation terminology in which existing words have a different, more specialized meaning in the context of doing excavations.

8.1 (Standard) Egyptian Arabic

The texts contain a large number of (standard) Egyptian Arabic vocabulary items. By 'standard', we mean the Egyptian dialect spoken in the capital of Cairo and used as a regional standard. Examples of such frequently used items are:[41]

- بتاع *bitāʿ* 'of' (genitive exponent)
- برا *barrā* 'outside'
- بعدين *baʿdēn* 'after that, then, later'
- جاب *jāb* 'to bring'
- جواب *jawāb* 'letter'
- حتة، حتت *ḥitta*, pl. *ḥitat* 'piece'
- خالص *xāliṣ* 'completely'
- دول *dōl* 'those'
- راجل *rāgil* 'man'
- راح *rāḥ* 'to go'
- زي *zayy* 'like'
- ست *sitt* 'lady'
- شاف *šāf* 'to see'

[41] The items are ordered alphabetically according to the root consonants. Verbs are given in the perfect tense.

- شوية *šuwayya* ‘a bit’, ‘some’
- عاوز *ʿāwiz* ‘[he] wants’
- علي شان *ʿala šān* ‘for’, ‘in order to’, ‘because’[42]
- فيه *fīh* ‘there is/are’
- كويس *kuwayyis* ‘good’
- لازم *lāzim* ‘must’
- لغايت *liġāyit* ‘until’[43]
- مرا *mara* ‘woman’.

The above-mentioned words are all still in common use in modern Cairene Arabic, with one exception: the word مرا *mara* is used twice with the meaning of ‘woman’ (1.3,3). Although considered to be highly offensive in modern Cairene, in the nineteenth century and until the beginning of the twentieth century, the word was still in common use with the neutral meaning of ‘woman’. It has since undergone pejoration (a shift of meaning from neutral to negative) in Cairene Arabic but is still in common use in rural areas in Egypt (see Behnstedt and Woidich 2011: 16). For the pejoration of *mara* and other words denoting ‘woman’ in Cairene Arabic, see Zack (2024).

8.2 Upper Egyptian Arabic

One of the most interesting features of the diaries is the mixture of Upper Egyptian vocabulary items with standard Egyptian and Classical Arabic forms, a mixture that is rarely so well documented in written texts. This mode of writing is not surprising in light of the *ruyasa*’s origins in the southern region of Quft and the fact that archaeology is largely practiced in rural contexts. What is surprising is that, given the level of literacy apparent among the skilled *ruyasa* class from Quft, we find no textual parallels in the history of modern Egypt or archaeology more broadly of professional journal writing in such detail and over such a long period of time.

The best example of Upper Egyptian dialect is the phrase with which most diary entries begin:

(48) الشغل كان دايِر في
iš- šuġl kān dāyir fī
ART-work was turning in
‘the work was in operation in’

[42] Always written as two separate words, across the diaries.
[43] In the sample texts, this is always written with a *tāʾ* instead of *tāʾ marbūṭa* but shows more variability across the diaries.

This phrase is usually followed by a location, such as مصطبه *maṣṭaba* ‘mastaba’ or بير *bīr* ‘shaft’, and is often preceded by ثم *ṯumma* ‘thus, so, then’. As *ṯumma* is a Classical literary convention marking the transition to a new idea or paragraph, and *iš-šuġl kān dāyir* is an Upper Egyptian construction signalling the ‘running, moving, going on, operating, turning’ of the work, together these two phrases emphasize the continuity of excavation from one day to the next. In Upper Egypt, the verb *dāṛ*, *yidūr* has the meaning of ‘arbeiten, in Betrieb sein’ – ‘to work, be running/in operation’ (Behnstedt & Woidich 1994: 146). An archaeological parallel for this phrase occurs in modern field notes and diaries designated by ‘Op.’ (for Operation number). We suggest that the formula ‘Thus, the work was in operation in mastaba no. 4820’ was an Upper Egyptian diary innovation for recording excavated contexts in sequence.

Other lexical items that are typical for Upper Egypt include:

- مبلوطه *mablūṭa* ‘stopped up, prepared, sealed; set, mortared’,[44] in the context of: مصطبه صغيره من دبش ومبلوطه بالطين الاسود (1.53,3) *maṣṭaba ṣuġayyara min dabš wi-mablūṭa bi-ṭ-ṭīn il-iswid* ‘a small mastaba [made] from rough-cut limestone,[45] set with black mud’.
- خدة *xadda* ‘side post of a door’ (Behnstedt & Woidich 1994: 109).
- ساس *sās* ‘fundament, foundation’ (Behnstedt & Woidich 1994: 222).
- شوبه *šūba* ‘a heavy stick, staff’ (Behnstedt & Woidich 1994: 252).
- فسان *fisān* ‘axes, hoes[46]’, the plural of فاس *fās*. The plural is فؤوس *fuʾūs* in Classical Arabic, and فوس *fūs* in Cairene Arabic, but *fisān* is found in Upper Egypt (Behnstedt & Woidich 1994: 362).
- لسع *lissaʿ* ‘still, yet’ (Behnstedt & Woidich 1994: 431).
- همر *hamr* in حجر همر *ḥajar hamr* ‘soapstone, steatite’. Badawi & Hinds (1986: 911): ‘همر *hamr* /adj invar/ [non-Cairene] made of a certain fine heat-resistant type of clay (of cooking-vessels etc.).’ Behnstedt & Woidich (1994: 492) ‘Talkum, Speckstein’. The object described in context (2.6,14–15) can only refer to the ‘steatite half-round end of a beaded collar (or necklace)’ found at Deir el-Bersha on 27 March 1915, as part of an assemblage with an alabaster canopic jar and 14 faience beads.[47] The material is described as both stone and clay in the

[44] For this translation of *mablūṭa*, see section 8.3.
[45] For this meaning of *dabš*, see Badawi & Hinds (1986: 277). It could also mean ‘rubblestone’ (Wehr 1994: 313), see also section 8.3.
[46] For this translation of *fās, fisān*, see section 8.3.
[47] MFA 15-3-561, https://collections.mfa.org/objects/386186/necklace-terminal (accessed 30 August 2024).

diary and was catalogued by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston as steatite, or soapstone.

8.3 Excavation terminology

One of the most interesting features of Dig Arabic is the invention of specialized excavation terminology. In many cases, these diaries represent the first and possibly only documented instance of these terms entering the archaeological lexicon as practiced by Arabic speakers in the field. This 'in situ' vocabulary-building is part of a process of transculturation, whereby the Quftis 'Egyptianized' a genre of scientific documentation (dig diaries, field notes, and technical site reports) into their rural Upper Egyptian language, society, and culture. The Quftis' marginalized social position in both the history of archaeology and of modern Egypt means that they are doubly marginalized and their linguistic identity stigmatized. Scholarship on the role of Arabic-speaking Egyptians in the history of Egyptology and of Egyptian literature in the early twentieth century has focused almost entirely on the better-documented elite and urban classes (e.g. Bierbrier 2019; Colla 2007; Johnson 2020; Reid 2002, 2015).

The following is a list of words from the sample texts that have undergone semantic change in comparison to Classical Arabic and Cairene Arabic. These have often got a more specialized or technical meaning. A notable feature of this process in the diaries, for example, is the use of military-style terms (examples from this list are الاة *ālāt* 'work kit, gear', انفار *anfār* 'laborers, workmen, soldiers, subalterns', كبانيه *kubbāniyya* 'company, unit'), which underscores the collective and hierarchical organization of fieldwork and knowledge production in the Qufti experience.

- الاة *ālāt* 'instrument, utensil, tool' → 'work kit, gear'.
- مبلوطه *mablūṭa* 'stopped up, plugged up' → 'set, mortared': as in building-stones or mud bricks set with mud mortar.
- بير *bīr* 'well, shaft' → 'shaft, pit, burial shaft' (descending vertically).
- جبل *jabal* 'mountain' → 'bedrock, subsoil': the natural, undisturbed substrate below archaeological deposits.
- دبش *dabš* 'rough-cut limestone' → 'limestone debris, chippings, rubblestone'.
- دكة *dakka* 'flattened earth' → 'floor, floor-level': refers to a very compact dirt surface, such as the in situ floor-level of a house or tomb.
- دنستي *dinasti* 'dynasty' → 'century'. See 2.1,14: 'Fifth Coptic Dynasty', a misnomer for the fifth century AD. English loanword.

- رديم *radīm* ‘earth’[48] → ‘fill, backfill’.
- ركش *rakš* ‘debris, rubble’ (obsolete).
- مزلقان *mazlaqān* ‘ramp, slip, gangway’ → ‘sloping shaft, shaft floor’: the floor of a shaft descending into a tomb chamber.
- مسخوط *masxūṭ* ‘idol’ → ‘statue’ (obsolete).
- سرداب *sirdāb* ‘cellar, vault’ → ‘serdab, concealed statue chamber’: this term likely entered the Egyptological lexicon in the 1860s via Reis Rubi Hamzawi at Saqqara (Doyon 2021: 131; Mariette 1869).
- طبخ (من) *(min) ṭabx* ‘cooking’ → ‘faience, glazed (from firing)’: see, for example, 2.4,6.
- طرية، طورية (pl. طواري) *ṭuriya* ‘mattock, field hoe’ → ‘tureya, digging and scraping tool’: medium-to-long-handled type of traditional Upper Egyptian field hoe adopted as an excavation tool in the nineteenth century, ideal as a horizontal scraping tool for tight control while digging.
- فاس (pl. فسان) *fās* ‘axe’ → ‘hand hoe, digging tool’: short-handled type of field hoe in use in Lower and Upper Egypt, somewhat comparable to a pickaxe but with a wider and blunter blade, ideal for close-up work.
- قامه *gāma* ‘stature, build; fathom’ → ‘chamber, burial chamber’: an enclosed room or burial feature (e.g., rock-cut chamber) in the architecture of a tomb. The broad use of this term for ‘chamber’ by the Quftis almost certainly comes from the Upper Egyptian word for a ‘fathom,’ measuring six feet, and also referring to a ‘coffin-sized recess’ or ‘burial niche,’ *gâme*, as attested by Winkler (1936: 220; cf. ‘Grabnische’, Behnstedt & Woidich 1994: 401; see also Wehr 1994: 935; Spiro 1895: 472). Given Winkler’s long association with archaeological excavation and his collaboration with many Quftis in the field, it is possible he learned this usage of the term (which he recorded in Kharga as well as the Luxor region stretching from Quft to Esna) from the Quftis themselves (Winkler 1934, 1936, 2009 [1936]; see also Doyon 2023: 525; Winkler 1938, 1939).
- كبانيه (pl. كبابين) *kubbāniya* ‘company, unit (of men)’: see, for example, 3.54,13–15 (Book 3, page 54, from Giza to Jebel Barkal, Sudan, 22 January 1916).
- كسر *kasr* ‘the act of breaking’ → ‘fragment, breakage’: تكسير *taksīr* and its plural تكاسير *takāsīr* are used with the same meaning.
- لقون *laqūn* ‘gemstone; amethyst, quartz’ (obsolete).
- الميت *il-mayyit* ‘the deceased’ → ‘dead person, mummy, corpse, remains’.
- محل *maḥall* ‘location, place’ → ‘site, position, find-spot’: in many cases the phrase *fī maḥallu* ‘in its position’ can be read as a gloss for ‘in situ’.

[48] See Behnstedt & Woidich (1994: 161). In Classical Arabic and Cairene Arabic, ردم *radm* is used for ‘filling of earth, rubble’, whilst رديم *radīm* is an adjective meaning ‘old, worn-out garment’, see Badawi & Hinds (1986: 333) and Lane (1867: 1069).

- نشر *našr* ‘spreading out, diffusing, issuing’ → ‘tomb shaft’: a built shaft leading into tomb chambers, as distinct from a vertical shaft or pit (*bīr*); perhaps related to the function of the *našr* to spread out and branch off (horizontally) into the chambers of an underground tomb complex (see 2.6,9; 2.6,22).
- نضارة (*نظارة) *naḍḍāra* ‘glasses’ → ‘camera lens(es)’.
- نفر *nafar* (pl. انفار *anfār*) ‘person(s); private, soldier’ → ‘day laborer, worker; men, workmen’. See Badawi and Hinds (1986: 875).

8.4 Classical Arabic signal words

As mentioned before (see section 3), the texts are written in a mixed language, meaning that the language can neither be classified as Egyptian Arabic with classical elements, nor as Classical Arabic with colloquial elements. There are grammatical elements from both varieties, as well as hybrid elements that could be interpreted as either (see footnote 8); this type of writing could therefore be classified as ‘diglossic mixing’ (see e.g. Mejdell 2011–2012).[49] However, there are a number of Classical Arabic ‘signal words’. These are frequently used words belonging to the Classical Arabic vocabulary, which seem to be used to elevate the level of the texts and give them a more authoritative or ‘learned’ character. They are often found at the beginning of sentences. As shown in sections 7.1 and 7.2, both the negations and the relative pronouns analyzed in the sample texts are consistently used in their Classical Arabic forms (albeit not conforming to the rules), and never in Egyptian Arabic. To these two categories a third can be added: all demonstrative pronouns, except for one (see example 45), are in Classical Arabic as well: هذا *hāḏā* ‘this, that’ (masculine) and هذه *hāḏihi* ‘this, that’ (feminine) are used rather than Egyptian *da* and *di*. The only exception is one instance of the Egyptian plural demonstrative دول *dōl*:

(45) وكل راص من دول الروص (1.4,12)
wi-kull rāṣ min dōl ir-rūṣ[50]
and-every head of DEM.PL ART-heads
‘and every one of these heads’

[49] Although the language of the diaries shares many features with Middle Arabic (see section 3), the term Middle Arabic is commonly applied for texts from the pre-modern period (see Lentin 2011). We can therefore say that the diaries share common features with Middle Arabic, rather than that they are written in Middle Arabic.

[50] The demonstrative *dōl* is placed before the noun, rather than after it, as in the modern Egyptian-Arabic form. Already in the nineteenth century, the usual placement of the demonstrative was after the noun. See Doss (1976) and Woidich (1992) for more information on the preposition of the demonstratives.

Interestingly, in her analysis of spoken mixed Arabic (Egyptian Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic), Mejdell found that "[t]he highest usage level of MSA variants was for the attributive demonstrative (DEM), followed by the negative markers (NEG), then the relative marker and/or the complementizer (REL/COMP) […]" (Mejdell 2011–2012: 34). In this respect, the language of the diaries shows remarkable similarity to modern spoken mixed Arabic.

Besides these three categories, there are other signal words that are frequently used to indicate a high style:

- الآن *al-ʾān* 'now' (also spelled الان and الأن): rather than the very informal *dilwaʾti* (Cairene Arabic) or *dilwakēt* (Upper Egyptian Arabic).
- أرسل *arsal* 'to send': used rather than its synonym بعث *baʿaṯ* which is perhaps associated with its Egyptian equivalent بعت *baʿat* and is therefore avoided.[51]
- الى *ilā* 'to(ward)' (often written الي): whereas Egyptian Arabic either uses no preposition at all in verbs indicating direction, or *li-* if the direction is toward a person (see Woidich 2006: 262–263), the diaries use *ilā* consistently. It is even used in combination with the Egyptian Arabic verb روح *rūḥ* 'go' in: روح الي عمدة هذا البلد *rūḥ ilā ʿumdat hāḏā l-balad* 'go to the mayor of this village' (2.4,17–18).
- أيضا *ayḍan* 'also': a signal word that is also used frequently in modern spoken Arabic to achieve a more elevated style.
- توجه الى *tawajjah ilā* 'to head to, go in the direction of'.
- ثم *ṯumma* 'then': a literary convention used to begin a new diary entry or sequence of events, an interjection to punctuate sentences or paragraphs not otherwise separated; it may be translated as 'thus', 'so', or 'then' (or sometimes not at all). Its Egyptian-Arabic equivalent بعدين *baʿdēn* is also used, but not at the beginning of a paragraph. An interesting exception is ثم بعدين *ṯumma baʿdēn* (2.4,17) which combines both.
- حضر *ḥaḍar* 'to come', 'to arrive': used both for persons and objects (for instance a telegraph or letter).
- كثير من ال *kaṯīr min al-* 'many' (lit. 'many of the …'): this construction is employed more frequently than the construction in which *kaṯīr* is used as an adjective. There is one example of the latter: تذاكر كثيره (2.65,6) *taḏākir kaṯīra* 'many tickets'.
- وجد *wajad* 'to find': used both in the literal sense in the context of archaeological findings, but also with the meaning of 'to deem', for instance: وجده قانونا (2.65,9) *wajadahu qānūnan* 'he found [that] it [is the] law'.

[51] This avoidance of vocabulary items which are shared between Modern Standard Arabic and colloquial Arabic in favour of items that are exclusively Modern Standard Arabic, is a well-known strategy. See for instance Magidow (2013) for a study on Arabic written by speakers of Damascus Arabic.

- اليوم *al-yawm* ‘today’.

9 Conclusions

Based on samples from two excavation diaries, written by the Upper Egyptian (Qufti) foremen (*ruyasa*) of the Harvard University–Boston Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian Expedition at the beginning of the twentieth century, we analyzed aspects of their orthography and studied significant points of phonology, morphology, syntax, and vocabulary. Our study affirms that the diaries are written in a mix of Classical Arabic and two varieties of Egyptian Arabic: the dialect of Cairo and the Upper Egyptian dialect of Quft. With respect to lexical characteristics, in particular, the authors make use of an archaeological idiom based on everyday vocabulary items which assumed a specialized meaning in the context of archaeological fieldwork in Egypt and the Sudan.

The orthography of the diaries deviates from the classical orthography on many points, such as in the writing of *tāʾ marbūṭa* without dots, the *plena* writing of short vowels, and the addition of two ‘false *tanwīn*’ dashes on the letter *sīn*. Between the six authors, some have a more standardized orthography than others, and the level of penmanship varies. The orthography of the same word can even vary for the same person (especially R5). Since many Classical Arabic and colloquial words are only distinguished from each other by the pronunciation of the short vowels, and as short vowels are not written, it is hard to reconstruct how the authors of the texts would have intended them to be read.

The language of the diaries is characterized by a high level of mixing. Both classical and colloquial grammar and vocabulary are found, to the extent that it is impossible to determine if the basis is Classical Arabic or Egyptian Arabic. The texts also contain features that cannot be attributed to either variety, a characteristic that they share with Middle Arabic texts.

Certain Classical Arabic features are used throughout the texts as markers of an elevated style. Two examples are the negation لم *lam* and the relative pronoun الذي *allaḏī*: these seem to have taken on the role of universal negation and relative pronoun, respectively, and they are probably used to give the texts a more learned and authoritative appearance. Certain frequently used Classical Arabic lexical items, such as حضر *ḥaḍar* ‘to come’, ارسل *arsal* ‘to send’, ايضا *ayḍan* ‘also’, and وجد *wajad* ‘to find’, have the same function. The conjunction ثم *ṯumma* is used at the beginning of new diary entries or a new sequence of events; it functions stylistically as a particle to indicate a formal writing style, even if what follows is in the dialect. This mixed style is rather consistent across the different authors and gives the impression of a shared register that was deemed appropriate for these kinds of reports. Another possibility is that the mixing of the different Arabic varieties can be contributed to imperfect learning

of Classical Arabic, and that the use of Classical Arabic signal words is merely a sign of the *ruyasa* using well-known vocabulary to give their texts a more formal 'color'. More research is therefore needed to determine how and where the authors were educated, and to what extent their writing practices are in line with general writing practices at that time.

The colloquial Arabic found in the diaries contains a high number of standard Cairene Arabic lexical items, most of which are still in common use today (e.g. عاوز *ʿāwiz* 'he wants', بتاع *bitāʿ* 'of', بعدين *baʿdēn* 'after that', and شوية *šuwayya* 'a bit, some'). The only obsolete item is مرا *mara* 'woman', now a slur in Cairene Arabic, but still used with its neutral connotation at that time. Besides the Cairene vocabulary, some Upper Egyptian items can be found as well (e.g. لسع *lissaʿ* 'still', خدة *xadda* 'side post of a door', همر *hamr* 'soapstone'). These are less frequent in the samples, but it remains to be determined how representative these samples may be of the entire diary corpus. Therefore, tracking the relative frequency of Upper Egyptian and Cairene dialect in the Quftis' writing is an important point of future research.

The diaries establish a basis for understanding the development of 'Dig Arabic' as a specialized terminology and form of literacy, which rendered the archaeological record readable in Arabic. The Quftis' writing shows how common (Egyptian) Arabic words, or sometimes loanwords, obtained a more specific meaning in the context of excavations. Interesting examples are قامة *gāma* '(burial) chamber', جبل *jabal* 'bedrock, subsoil', طبخ *ṭabx* 'faience, glazed', and نشر *našr* 'tomb shaft'. Some of the lexical items illustrate the use of military terminology, such as كبانيه *kubbāniyya* 'company, unit', as an indication of the hierarchical organization of fieldwork in the early twentieth century.

The Qufti diaries are significant in mixing a literal diglossia – the practice of code-switching between the informal/colloquial and formal/Classical varieties of Arabic to situate a speaker's social position – with a kind of 'figurative' DIGlossia. By this, we mean the practice of using Dig Arabic to signal a shared register of archaeological literacy and identity that sits between the social positions of Egyptian *ruyasa* and Western archaeologists. The term طبخ *ṭabx* is an interesting example, where rather than borrowing the term فاينس 'faience' for an archaeological material, as in the use of قرانيت 'granite', an Arabic word is chosen to indicate the process of cooking or firing pottery. As with the level of linguistic mixing present in the diaries, the level of sociolinguistic mixing also makes it difficult to determine if the basis of the Quftis' professional writing voice derives more from Western archaeology or the Egyptian community of '*rayyis*-ship'. The former denotes research methods and theory, while the latter denotes practical skills, including excavation techniques, artifact processing, and labor management. Methods of archaeological documentation sit between these two distinct interpretive processes. Thus, although they are written in Arabic, the

meaning and content of the diaries exists within a Western archaeological framework, which gives the diaries a unique and somewhat ambiguous voice.

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