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A Grammar of Awjila Berber (Libya) : based on Umberto Paradisi's material

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Chapter 3

Noun

3.1 Features of the noun

3.1.1 Gender

Awjila has two genders, masculine and feminine. Gender is an important grammatical feature of Awjila nouns, which plays a role in the agreement of the PNG-marking of the verb, the object markers, the adjective and the pronominal suffixes after prepositions.

Gender is usually expressed in the noun by means of affixes. Kinship terms are not marked for gender. The natural gender of a kinship term determines its grammatical gender. Nouns of Arabic origin have the gender that they have in Arabic.

While gender is mostly lexically determined, some stems allow both a masculine and a feminine form. The main semantic relations between such masculine-feminine pairs are presented below:

Masculine	Feminine
male persons and animals <i>awil</i> ‘man from Awjila’ <i>afunàs</i> ‘ox’	female persons and animals <i>tawilt</i> ‘woman from Awjila’ <i>tfunàst</i> ‘cow’
things bigger than the feminine <i>akənzìr</i> ‘big nose’ <i>aməzùn</i> ‘pin or hinge at the base of a door’	things smaller than the masculine <i>tkənzirt</i> ‘nose’ <i>taməzùnt</i> ‘small pin or hinge at the base of a door’
collectives <i>bəzəlìm</i> ‘onions (coll.)’ <i>kšàym</i> ‘watermelons (coll.)’	unit nouns <i>təbzəlìmt</i> ‘onion’ <i>təkšàymt</i> ‘watermelon’

3.1.2 Number

Two numbers are distinguished in Awjila, the singular and the plural. The marking of number can be expressed in the prefix and the suffix, and, less commonly, in the noun stem. Like gender, number is a feature which plays a role in the agreement of the PNG-marking, object markers, the adjective and the pronominal suffixes after prepositions.

3.1.3 State

Like many of the Berber languages of the east, Awjila has no distinction between Free State (État Libre) and Annexed State (État d'Annexion). État Libre and État d'Annexion mark the function of a noun in a sentence. In Berber languages more to the west, the État d'Annexion marks the subject of a sentence when it is post-verbal, and it marks nouns that follow prepositions¹. The difference is marked in the prefix. The table below represents some Middle Atlas Berber nouns that illustrate this opposition of State (Penchoen 1973: 21).

	EL	EA	
m.	a-maziḡ	u-maziḡ	'Berber man'
f.	ta-maziḡ-t	t-maziḡ-t	'Berber woman'

It has been suggested for other eastern Berber languages, such as Siwa and Nefusa and El-Foqaha, that a shift of accent approximately has the same function as État d'Annexion in other Berber languages (Brugnatelli 1986, Louali & Philippson 2005). In these eastern Berber languages, after prepositions and subjects in post-verbal position, the accent of the noun shifts to the penultimate position.

Below follow some Siwa examples from Louali & Philippson (2005) that show a change of accent under influence of the preposition, (transcription adapted, an acute accent stands for the position of the accent):

zír	'child'	í-zir	'to the child'
taftált	'bottle'	i-táftalt	'in the bottle'
ak ^w əbbí	'boy'	n-ak ^w əbbi	'of the boy'
l̥arbiyá	'car'	s-l̥arbíya	'with the car'

An example by Louali & Philippson (2005) of retracted accent of the noun in subject position is given in the example below (transcription adapted):

- (1) *i-kátr=as* *ak^wəbbi amán i=tláʕžust*
 3sg.m.-carry=IO.3sg. boy water to=old.woman
 'the boy carried the water to the old woman.'

Like the other Eastern Berber languages, Awjila has a contrastive accent. Therefore, it is relevant to examine whether Awjila also undergoes an accent shift under these syntactic positions.

Generally, the Awjila data contained in Paradisi's texts speak against such an accentual system. Compare, for example, *təmìgni* 'wife' in PT:III. *u taxzàr yárəs tēmìgni*

¹For a more sophisticated analysis, see Mettouchi & Frajzyngier (2013)

wə tnìs ... ‘The woman saw him and said ...’, *w igà əlḥam(ə)lənnəs dīt n təmìgni* ‘And he put his load in front of the woman’, *u tìva təmìgni təmmùt* ‘and the woman fell and died’. In all these cases we would expect an accent shift. If we then compare it to PT:XV *gan Abú-dabr yàrəs təmìgni* ... ‘Once Abu-dabr had a wife’, we see that no accent shift has taken place.

Another examples is found in PT:VII *w isáy azìt* ‘And he bought a donkey’ besides *yəqqán imànnəs amakàn n azìt* ‘He tied himself in place of the donkey’. One would expect the accent to shift in the second phrase (after the preposition *n*) and the phonological accent pattern in the first phrase (direct object position). In both examples, however, *azìt* ‘donkey’ maintains its final accentuation.

There are two cases of an accent shift under influence of the preposition *n* in lexicalized idioms with the noun *tisí* ‘egg’: *mlil n tìsi* ‘egg white’, *urày n tìsi* ‘egg yolk (litt. gold of the egg)’. The phrases have the accent on the penultimate syllable, while the word *tisí* ‘egg’ has (lexical) accent on the final syllable. This suggests that in an earlier period the general eastern Berber accent shift after a preposition also applied in Awjila; apparently the ancient system is only retained in a few lexicalized expressions.

3.2 Morphology of the noun

The basic structure of the noun consists of a prefix, stem and, optionally, a suffix. The prefix can express gender and number. The stem may or may not express number and the suffix expresses gender and number.

Prefix	Stem	(Suffix)
gender	(number)	gender
number		number

The three elements of the Awjila noun (prefix, suffix and stem) will be discussed individually in the following sections.

3.2.1 The prefix

The prefix expresses gender and number. The feminine prefix is distinguished from the masculine by the presence of a word-initial *t-* that is absent in the masculine. Generally, the plural prefix is different from the singular.

In the following, the prefix classes are listed according to the singular form.

3.2.1.1 Masculine sg. *a*-

The largest group of masculine nouns (about 70 nouns) has a prefix *a*- in a singular, which is dropped in the plural, e.g.

sg.	pl.	
adbìr	dbìrən	‘pigeon’
afùs	fissən	‘hand’
agìdəv	gidəvən	‘wolf, jackal’
agmàr	gmàrən	‘horse’
arəgàz	rəgàzən	‘individual’
agìw	gìwən	‘leather bucket (for a well)’
àvəṭ	vəṭàwən	‘night’
aləyəm	ləymin	‘canel’
agəllid	gəldən	‘head of a tribe, gentleman’

Some nouns have a prefix *a*- which is maintained in the plural.² This group consists of only five nouns in the corpus.

addid	addidən	‘goatskin’
ammùd	ammùdən	‘mosque’
àmza	amziwən	‘ogre; strong, cunning person; lion (rare)’
awil	awilən	‘Augila person’
ayùr	ayùrən	‘new moon, month; button (of mother of pearl)’

3.2.1.2 Masculine sg. *ə*-

This second largest group of masculine nouns lacks a prefix both in the singular and plural. This group is significantly smaller than the nouns that start with *a*-. The list below displays all nouns of this type.

²Another interpretation is to consider this stable initial *a*- to be part of the stem, and that prefixes are dropped before vowel initial stems. Such an interpretation is possible for all nouns that have the same vocalic prefix in the singular and plural, but it does not work for nouns that have no prefix both in the singular and plural. For a similar interpretation see Penchoen (1973: 19-21).

flališ	fluliš	‘inflorescence’
glim	glimən	‘skin’
gniš	gnišan	‘male blossom of a date palm’
gruṭ	gruṭən	‘wood, trunk of a tree’
gzìn	gzìnən	‘dog’
màgi	magiwìn	‘eyelid’
qərzaṭ	qərzaṭən	‘dried dates for livestock’
vìw, vvìw	əvvìwən	‘bean; broad bean’
zzàý	zziwən	‘breast’
zərr, zzər	zərrən	‘back’
zùý, zzùý	zwan	‘palm’
ənfus (infus)	ənfusən (in- fusən)	‘sleeve’
tàqt	taqqìd, taqqìdən	‘finger’

It is conceivable that the nouns of this group that start with a CC cluster, have an initial ə which has not been transcribed by Paradisi. In other Berber languages the automatic initial ə is optional (Chaker 1983: 43), this may also be the case in Awjila.

There is one case in the list above where this initial ə appears in Paradisi’s transcriptions, namely in <vîu, vvîu pl. əvvîwən> ‘bean’. Moreover, the transcriptions of Müller seem to indicate an initial vowel for three of these words: *eglim* اقليم [M: peau], *eghzin* ا غزين [M: chien] and *azouan* ا زون [M: palmier].

3.2.1.3 Masculine sg. *i-*

A small group of nouns has initial *i-* in the singular. Some of the nouns lose this initial *i-* while others retain it in the plural. There is no conditioning that determines whether the noun loses this initial *i-* in the plural or retains it. The first table gives all the words that have an initial *i-* that lack this vowel in the plural.

imgər, yəmgər	məg(ə)rən	‘sickle’
isəm	smiwən	‘ear; handle of a basket’
išyər	šyirən	‘firewood’
išk	škiwən	‘horn’
iškər	škirən	‘nail’

The next table give all the nouns that have initial *i-* in the singular and plural.

iləs	ilsən, ilsənən	‘tongue’
infūs (ənfūs)	infūsən (ən- fūsən)	‘sleeve’
irìw	irìwən	‘boy, child’
ìštən	ìštìnən	‘a shoemakers awl’
ìšf	ìšfawən, ìšfiwən	‘day’

3.2.1.4 Isolated masculine formations

Three nouns show unique patterns.

ul	ulawən	‘heart’
yəqzər, iqzər	aqzər	‘mouse’
agəngùy	ngùwən	‘green date’

3.2.1.5 Feminine sg. *tə-*

The majority of the feminine nouns, have an initial prefix *tə-* in the singular. Most of these nouns have a plural prefix *t-*, cf.

təfəlùšt	tfəlšìn	‘large spoon for cooking’
təmuzìst	tmuzistìn, tmuzìs	‘threshold, doorstep’
təsìli	tsiliwìn	‘sandal’
təvùrt (tavvùrt)	tvurr	‘door’
təbəršilt	tbəršil	‘pillar of a well on which the crossbar of the pulley rests.’

There are also several nouns that keep the plural prefix *tə-*. Some of these may be due to a epenthesis. Roots that start with a *|cc|* cluster, cannot have a prefix *t-*, as this would create an initial *|ccc|* cluster, which is never found anywhere else in the language. To avoid this, *ə* is inserted between the prefix and the root. Words that may have received the *tə-* prefix because of this phonetic rule are:

təbʒalìmt	təbʒalimìn	‘onion’
təgzint	təgzintìn, təgz- inìn	‘bitch’
təkšaymt	təkšaymìn	‘watermelon’

However, the vast majority of nouns with the prefix *tə-* in the plural do not have an initial |cc| cluster in the root. There is no obvious phonetic conditioning, and therefore, the plural suffix of these nouns must be considered lexically determined.

təkábərt, təkabə̀rt	təkabrìn	‘shirt’
təmiṭàst	təmiṭaz	‘scissors’
tə̀rəkə̀ft	tə̀rəkfin	‘caravan’
təmasùt	təmasutìn	‘boil, pimple’

3.2.1.6 Feminine sg. *t-*

A large group of feminine nouns has the prefix *t-* both in the singular and the plural. In all words in this class the syllable that follows the prefix is either |cəc|, or |cv|. This does not mean that roots that have |cəc| or |cv| after their prefix always belong to this class, e.g. *təmiṭàst* pl. *təmiṭaz* ‘scissors’.

tfunàst	tfunastìn	‘cow’
tfīyit	tfīya	‘animal excrement’
tfidìrt	tfidrìn	‘lizard (monitor lizard)’
tkə̀nzìrt	tkə̀nzirìn, tkə̀nzìr	‘nose’
tkərrišt	tkərriš	‘knot’
tkə̀ttift	tkə̀ttfin	‘ant’
tšə̀rimt	tšə̀rmìn	‘gut (sg.), intestine (pl.)’
tyə̀rdìmt	tyə̀rdimìn	‘scorpion’
tsunùt, tsənùt	tsə̀nuttìn, tsə̀nutìn	‘thick needle’

One exception to the phonological distribution is *tsunùt*, *tsənùt* pl. *tsə̀nuttìn*, *tsə̀nutìn* ‘thick needle’, which has a variant with a |cə| syllable following the prefix in the singular, which is the only possible variant in the plural.

Another exception to this distribution is *tšə̀rimt* ‘gut’ pl. *tšə̀rmìn* ‘intestine’.

3.2.1.7 Feminine sg. *ta-*

Most feminine nouns that have a singular prefix *ta-*, have a plural prefix *t-*. The list below is an exhaustive list of nouns that belong to this group.

taḥolīt	tḥolitìn	‘sheep’
tamìrt	tmìra	‘beard’
taqəzzàlt	tqəzzalìn	‘kidney’
taṭl(ə)wīt	(t)ṭəlwītìn	‘turnip’
takəllimt	tkəllmìn	‘slave, servant’
tavvùrt (təvùrt)	dvurr	‘door’
tavərgàt (dvərgàt)	dvərgà	‘dream’
tavurīt (?)	dvuritìn	‘small plate, tray’
tabazàrt (?)	tbazrìn	‘basket’
taqəṭṭišt	tqəṭṭiṣ, tqəṭṭiṣìn	‘little hole; eye of the needle’

The nouns *tavurīt* ‘small plate, tray’ and *tabazàrt* ‘basket’ in fact may have an initial prefix *tə-*. Paradisi transcribes these words as <tävurīt, täbazârt>. There is no way to determine what the phonetic value of <ä> is in this context (see page 23).

Other nouns with the singular prefix *ta-* have the plural prefix *tə-*. Some of the nouns belong to this group because of the phonetic constraint forbidding initial |ccc| clusters. Not all nouns of this group can be explained in such a way, however.

takùkt	təkkik	‘worm’
tazàrt	təzzàr	‘millstone, handmill’
tasift, tasiwt	təssiw	‘(terraced) roof’
taḡəmmirt	təḡəmmirìn	‘armpit’
tamzəzza	təməzəzzáyat	‘bee’
takəmmùšt (?)	təkəmmiṣ	‘bundle of sticks, bundle’

takəmmùšt ‘bundle of sticks, bundle’ may not belong here. The prefix is transcribed with <tä->. This spelling is ambiguous: <täkəmmùšt> pl. <tekəmmiṣ>.

Three nouns have the prefix *ta-* both in the singular and the plural:

tašùmt	tašumìn	‘pillow’
taržàlt	taržalìn	‘wing (of a bird)’
taymày (?)	taymawìn (?), taymáwin (?)	‘thigh’

Paradisi’s spelling of *taymày* (<taḡmâi> pl. *taḡmāwîn, taḡmāwîn*) is ambiguous, as the *ta* value of the prefix may be a result of colouring of initial *tə* under influence of the adjacent *ḡ*. The prefix could therefore stand for either *ta* or *tə*.

3.2.1.8 Feminine sg. *tu-*

The two nouns with the prefix *tu-* have this prefix both in the singular and in the plural.

<i>tuwəgilt</i>	<i>tuwəgilin</i>	'molar tooth'
<i>tuwənìt</i>	<i>tuwənìtin</i>	'pit, hole'

Because *ə* can be transcribed as <u> in front of *w*, both *tuwəgilt* 'molar tooth' and *tuwənìt* may in fact represent /təwəgilt/ and /təwənìt/ and therefore belong to the nouns that have *tə-* in the singular and plural.

3.2.1.9 Feminine sg. *ti-*

Three nouns have an initial prefix *ti-* in the singular and plural.

<i>tìxsi</i>	<i>tixsiwìn</i>	'head of a sheep or goat (sg.), flock (pl.)'
<i>tit</i>	<i>tiwìn</i>	'eye; eye of a needle'
<i>tisí</i>	<i>tisiwìn</i>	'egg, genitalia'

3.2.2 The suffix

Most suffixes differ according to gender and number, although some plural suffixes can occur both in the masculine and the feminine. The masculine singular never has a suffix. The feminine singular usually has a suffix *-t*. When the stem ends in a vowel, sometimes the final *-t* is absent. In the plural both genders can take several suffixes to indicate the plural.

The table below shows the different plural suffixes. For some of the suffixes the numbers of attestations is mentioned.

	Masculine	Feminine
pl.	<i>-ən</i>	<i>-in</i>
	<i>-an</i>	
	<i>-in</i>	
		<i>-tin/-itin</i>
	<i>-ø</i>	<i>-ø</i>
	<i>-awən</i>	<i>-awin (1x)</i>
	<i>-win (1x)</i>	<i>-win</i>
	<i>-wən (1x)</i>	
	<i>-iwən</i>	<i>-iwin (2x)</i>
		<i>-ən (3x)</i>
	<i>-yin/-iyin (1x)</i>	<i>-yin (2x)</i>
	<i>-anən (1x)</i>	<i>-yat (1x)</i>

The vast majority of masculine nouns have a plural suffix *-ən*, the most common feminine plural is *-in*. In the following sections I will examine these suffixes individually.

3.2.2.1 Feminine singular suffix *-t*

Almost all feminine nouns whose stem end in a final consonant have the suffix *-t*. There are a few groups of nouns that form exceptions to this rule.

Abstract nouns derived from stative verbs never have a final *-t*, e.g. *təfšəš* 'lightness', *təyʒaf* 'length', *təvrək* 'width, breadth', *təzzik*, *təzziq* 'heaviness, weight'.

Several nouns originally had a final *-i* which was dropped in Awjila. These nouns do not have a final *-t* in Awjila, e.g. *təvál* 'sheep' (cf. To. *tehǎle* 'id.'), *təžər* 'moon' (cf. Ghd. *tazíri* 'full moon')³ and *tamùr(ə)ɣ* 'grasshoppers (coll.)' (cf. Siwa. *təmərǵi* 'id.').

The two nouns whose stem ends in a diphthong *-ay* lack final *-t*: *təymà* 'thigh' and *tqártay* 'paper'.

The above examples give the impression that final vowels and diphthongs block the presence *-t*, but, as is common to all Berber languages, feminine nouns with stem-final *-u* always have the suffix *-t*, e.g. *təfūt* 'sun', *təbarūt* 'way, street'.

There are not many nouns that end in stem-final *-a*. A slight majority of these nouns do not take the final suffix *-t*. Those that do take the suffix, are verbal nouns with stem-final *a*: *tšəwwàt* 'drink, beverage, drinking', *tənənnàt* 'being about to cook', *tnəššàt* 'sleep', *tnəvvàt* 'falling', *tərazzàt* 'creak', *təššàt* 'laughing' (< *t-təššàt*), *təvərgàt*, *tvərgàt* 'dream', *təfadàt* 'thirst', *təlazàt* (or *talazàt*) 'hunger'. Finally, there is one isolated noun, *təmədyàt* 'clay; red earth', which has the same pattern as *təvərgàt* 'dream' but does not have a verb associated with it.

Nouns with stem-final *-i* may or may not have the suffix *-t*. There seems to be no apparent distribution, e.g. *tkərdit* 'core of a palm', *təkərdi* 'measles', *tʃfɪyt* 'animal excrement', *tɣili* 'head'. One word with stem-final *-i* is found both with and without the final *-t*: *tsígit*, *tsìgi* pl. *tsigitin* 'rib'.

3.2.2.2 Masculine plural *-ən*

This is by far the most common masculine plural suffix. The table below gives several examples:

³Notice that both words have an irregular accent, caused by the loss of the final *-i*.

adbìr	dbìrən	‘pigeon’
agìdəv	gidəvən	‘wolf, jackal’
awìš	wìššən	‘sword’
agəllid	gəldən	‘head of a tribe, gentleman’
abžàw	bžàwən	‘cheek’
abəškiw	bəškiwən	‘horn’

3.2.2.3 Masculine plural *-awən*

A subset of masculine nouns takes the plural suffix *-awən*. The suffix is often found with nouns that have only one or two stem consonants or have a word-final |əcc| or |vcc| cluster in the singular. This tendency is by no means a rule.

adəy	dəyàwən	‘a bush of palms’
afiš	fišàwən	‘face’
agərt	gərtàwən	‘neck’
ul	ulàwən	‘heart’
arəg	rəggàwən	‘handle’
asìrf	sərfàwən	‘braid of palm leaves to make baskets’
išf	išfàwən (išfiwən)	‘day’
ašal	šalàwən	‘village’
avùr	vuràwən	‘plate, tray made of palm leaves’
avərg	vərgàwən	‘pestle (usually metal, to crush cores of dates)’
ayùf	yəfàwən	‘the lining of the upper edge of a basket made of small string’

Three out of four masculine nouns that end in *-i* replace the final vowel by *-awən* in the plural. The only masculine noun that ends in *-i* that does not take this suffix is *màgi* pl. *magiwèn* ‘eyelid’.

aḥòli	ḥolàwən	‘lamb’
alùzi	luzàwən	‘whip’
aləžži	ləžžàwən	‘ram’

3.2.2.4 Masculine plural *-iwən*

Some nouns take the plural suffix *-iwən*. One of them ends in a vowel *-a*, and another ends in *-ay*. Both of these final sequences are replaced by the plural suffix. Three out of five nouns in this group have an ic(ə)c word structure in the singular.

àmza	amzìwən	‘ogre’
zzàɣ	zziwən	‘breast’
ìsəm	smìwən	‘ear; handle of a basket’
išk	škiwən	‘horn’
išf	išfiwən	‘day’
	(išfawən)	

3.2.2.5 Masculine plural *-in*

Several masculine nouns have the plural suffix *-in*. From a synchronic perspective, this plural suffix is unusual, as it is normally associated with the feminine. This suffix is probably the regular reflex of the Pan-Berber plural suffix *-an* which has undergone an **a > i* shift before *-n*.

	gudìn	‘urine’
aləɣ(ə)m	ləɣmìn	‘camel’
	imìn	‘water’
arìng, anìrg	ringìn, nirgìn	‘neighbour’
ašùd	šudìn	‘(wooden) pole’
aṭàr	ṭarìn	‘foot’
	ižvìn	‘palm fibres’

3.2.2.6 Masculine plural *-an*

Three words have the masculine plural suffix *-an*.

azìṭ	ziṭàn	‘donkey’
zùɣ, zṣùɣ	zwan	‘palm’
	zṣan	‘excrement’

Also remark the suppletive plural of *awil* ‘word’: *žlàn* ‘speech, words, language’

3.2.2.7 Masculine plurals *-wən, -win, -anən, -yin/-iyin*

There are four masculine nouns that have a unique plural suffix. These words are *agəngùɣ* pl. *ngùwən* ‘green date’, *ilas* pl. *ilsànən* ‘tongue’ (also: *ilsən*), *màgi* pl. *magi-win* ‘eyelid’ and *awènu* pl. *wənyin, wənniyin* ‘well’

3.2.2.8 Feminine plural *-in*

This is the most common feminine plural suffix. The table below lists examples.

təfəlùšt	tfəlšìn	‘large spoon for cooking’
təkábərt	təkabrìn	‘shirt’
ayàst	yəstìn	‘bone’
tyardìmt	tyardimìn	‘scorpion’
tašùmt	tašumìn	‘pillow’
tirìwt	tiriwìn	‘girl’

In PT:XV, Paradisi lists an alternative plural for *tirìwt*: *tirìwi*. This plural suffix *-i* is unique to this noun.

3.2.2.9 Feminine plural *-tin*, *-itin*

The feminine plural suffix *-tin* is the second-most frequent plural among feminine nouns. It can be divided into two groups.

The first group consists of feminine nouns that denote female animals and persons that are the counterpart of a male noun that refers to a male animal or person. With such pairs the masculine noun usually has the plural suffix *-ən* while the feminine noun has the plural suffix *-tin*. If the masculine plural of such a pair ends in *-in*, the feminine plural suffix is *-itin*. Below is a list of all the pairs found that comply to this system.

m.sg.	m.pl.	f.sg.	f.pl.
afunàs	funasən ‘ox’	tfunàst	tfunastìn ‘cow’
agmàr	gmàrən	tagmàrt	tagmartìn ‘horse’
gzìn	gzinən ‘dog’	təgzint	təgzintìn (also: təgzinìn) ‘bitch’
aləy(ə)m	ləymìn	tələymt	tləymitìn ‘camel’
aqəttùš	qəttùšən	təqəttùšt	təqəttùštìn ‘cat’
aqazìt	quzìt ‘rooster’	təkazìt	təkazìtìn ‘chicken’
aring	ringìn	təringìt	təringitìn ‘neighbour’
awil	awilən	tawilt	tawiltìn ‘Augila person’
azìt	ziṭàn	təzìt	tzittìn ‘donkey’

There are only two exceptions to this: *akəllim* pl. *kəlləmən*; f. *takəllimt* pl. *tkəllmìn* ‘slave, servant’, and *irìw* pl. *irìwən*; f. *tirìw* pl. *tiriwìn*, *tirìwi* ‘child’

There are two nouns with a similar formation, that is, *-tin* after a consonant-final root. These words refers to an object and have no attested masculine counterpart: *təmuzist* pl. *tmuzistìn*, *tmuzis* ‘threshold, doorstep’ and *tžirəṭ* pl. *tžirəṭtìn* ‘ribs of leaves’.

The second group of nouns that take the plural suffix *-tin*, are feminine nouns that end in *i-t* or *u-t* in the singular.

taḥolīt	tḥolitìn	‘sheep’
tḥalkút	tḥalkútìn	‘bread’
təmasūt	təmasutìn	‘boil, pimple’
tsìgit, tsìgī	tsigitìn	‘rib’
taṭl(ə)wīt	(t)təlwītìn	‘turnip’
tavurīt	dvuritìn	‘small plate, tray’
tuwənit	tuwənitìn	‘pit, hole’
tsunūt, tsənūt	tsənutìn, tsənutìn	‘thick needle’

Three nouns ending in *-it* take a different plural suffix. *tnavīt*, *tnuvīt* pl. *tnuvìn* ‘irrigation canal’, *twəržīt* pl. *twəržìn* ‘root of a plant’, *tit* pl. *tiwìn* ‘eye; eye of a needle’ and *təyarīt* pl. *tyariwìn* ‘stick’.

3.2.2.10 Feminine plural *-win*

Except for *tit* pl. *tiwìn* ‘eye; eye of a needle’ and *təyarīt* pl. *tyariwìn* ‘stick’, all plurals with the suffix *-win* are found with feminine singulars that end in *-i*.

tfilli	tfilliwìn	‘house’
tìxsi	tixsiwìn	‘head of a sheep or goat’ pl.: ‘flock, cattle’
təmìdi	təmidiwìn	‘point of attachment of a stalk to a date’
tisí	tisiwwìnn	‘egg, genitalia’
təsìli	tsiliwìn	‘sandal’
təžiri	tžiriwìn	‘small rope’
tgili, təgili	tgiliwìn	‘head’
təmìgni	təmigniwìn, tmigniwìn	‘woman, wife’

3.2.2.11 Feminine plurals *-iwin*, *-awin*, *-yin*, *-yat* and *-ən*

The remaining feminine plural suffixes only have marginal attestation.

Two words end in *-iwin*, one drops its final *-a*, while the other drops the final *-ay*: *tələba* pl. *təlabiwìn* ‘barracan’ and *tqárṭay* pl. *tqərṭiwìn* ‘paper’⁴.

One word has the plural ending *-awin* which replaces the word-final *-ay* of the singular: *taymày* pl. *taymawìn*, *təymáwin* ‘thigh’⁵.

Two words have the plural suffix *-yin*, one drops its final *-it* from the singular, while the other undergoes a stem change in the plural: *təmmīt* pl. *təmanyìn* ‘tamarisk’ and *tšəkrīt* pl. *tšəkriyìn* ‘story, tale’.

⁴Perhaps to be read as *tqárṭay*, *tqərṭiwìn*.

⁵Perhaps to be read as *təymày* pl. *təymawìn*, *təymáwin*.

One word has the plural suffix *-yat*: *tamzázza* pl. *təməzəzzáyat* ‘bee’. This suffix looks similar to the Arabic feminine plural suffix *-āt*. The word is not of Arabic origin, and the suffix is unique to Awjila. There is no obvious explanation for this form.

Finally, one word has the plural suffix *-ən*: *tyəṭ* pl. *tyəṭṭən*, *tyiṭṭən* ‘goat’.⁶ Perhaps the *plurale tantum* <ṭilīwən> ‘fenugreek’ also belong here, but the transcription is ambiguous. In the transcriptions <ṭ> might stand for an unaccented /i/.

3.2.3 The stem

The stem can undergo changes from the singular to the plural. These usually involve vowel changes and sometimes changes in length of consonants. When a stem change occurs, often no suffix is added to mark the plural. Plurals formed by vowel change are a much smaller group than those that form their plural by suffixation. The following sections describe the plural formations that mainly employ stem changes to form the plural.

3.2.3.1 *i*-infix plural

This is the largest internal plural formation in Awjila. An *i* is inserted before the last consonant of the stem. If there is a vowel in this position, it is replaced. If earlier in the stem there is a vowel *a*, it is changed to *u*.⁷ In many cases, the final vowel is already *i*, and the only way the plural can be distinguished from the singular is the absence of the feminine singular suffix *-t*.

takəmmùšt	təkəmmiš	‘bundle of sticks, bundle’
tkənzìrt	tkənzìr (tkənzirìn)	‘nose’
tkərrìšt	tkərriš	‘knot’
amərtùf	mərtif	‘a measure of capacity (for cereals)’
təmuzìst	tmuzis (tmuzistìn)	‘threshold, doorstep’
təništ	tniš (tnišìn)	‘key’
təqənvìlt	təqənvil	‘mucus’
taqəṭṭìšt	tqəṭṭiš (tqəṭṭišìn)	‘little hole; eye of the needle’
azàləq	zulìq	‘billy goat’
flalìš	flulìš	‘inflorescence’
tasìft, tasiwt	təssiw	‘(terraced) roof’

⁶This word commonly has this plural suffix in Berber languages and must be considered old, cf. MA *tayəṭṭ* pl. *tiyəṭṭən*; Tashl. *tayəṭṭ* pl. *tiyəṭṭn*

⁷Historically, these plurals have developed from the *a*-infix plural, commonly found in other Berber languages. Originally the plurals that ended in **ar*, **al*, **an*, **aš* shifted the **a* to *i*. This formation has become productive and has spread accross nouns that did not undergo the regular **a* > *i* shift.

There is one case where the consonant before the infixed *i* is lengthened. *takùkt* pl. *təkkik* ‘worm’.

3.2.3.2 *a*-infix plural

A smaller class infixes a vowel *a* before the last consonant of the stem. Any vowel that is in this position is replaced.

təmiṭàst	təmiṭaz	‘scissors’
təqəṭṭùšt	tqəṭṭaş	‘cat’
agəṭiṭ	gəṭaṭ	‘sparrow; bird’
ayidəd	yidəd	‘kid (goat)’
yəqzər, íqzər	aqzàr	‘mouse’

In one case the consonant before the infixed vowel is lengthened: *tazàrt* pl. *təzzàr* ‘millstone, handmill’.

3.2.3.3 Long vowel removal plural

This is the largest group of nouns that undergo change in the stem in the plural. Any long vowel in the final syllable is removed, and the regular plural suffixes *-ən* for masculine nouns and *-in* for feminine nouns are added.

tabazàrt	tbazrìn	‘basket’
tbəssikt	tbəsskin	‘bum, backside; vulva’ pl.: ‘fart’
tfidirt	tfidrìn	‘lizard (monitor lizard)’
təfəlùšt	tfəlsìn	‘large spoon for cooking’
agəllid	gəldən	‘head of a tribe, gentleman’
təkədirt	tkədrìn	‘ear (botanical)’
akəllim	kəlləmən	‘(male) slave, servant’
takəllimt	tkəllmìn	‘(female) slave, servant’
tkəttift	tkəttfin	‘ant’
tšərimt ‘gut’	tšərmìn	‘intestine’
awəgil	wəgələn	‘canine tooth’
tuwəgilt	tuwəgəlìn	‘molar tooth’
twəllikt	twəllkin	‘louse’
twəlist	twəlsìn	‘big plate or bowl of wood’

Two nouns of this class have the plural suffix *-awən*: *asirf* pl. *sərfəwən* ‘braid of palm leaves to make baskets’, *ayuf* pl. *yəfəwən* ‘the lining of the upper edge of a basket made of small string’.

tə̀rəkə̀ft pl. *tə̀rəkfin* ‘caravan’ may belong here too, but loses a short final vowel in the plural rather than a long one.

3.2.3.4 *-iċ-ən* plurals

A small group of nouns with two consonants in their stem have their stem vowel replaced by *i* and their final root consonant lengthened. The plural suffix *-ən* is added to the root.

afùd, afùdd	fiddən	‘knee’
afùs	fissən	‘hand’
ayìz	yizzən	‘necklace’
avìr	vìrrən	‘wall’
awìš	wìššən	‘sword’
azìf	zìffən	‘tail’
tyə̀t	tyìttən (tyə̀ttən)	‘goat’

Two nouns have lengthening of the final consonant, but do not shift the preceding vowel to *i*: *ažàr* pl. *žàrrən* ‘abdomen, belly’ and *tžírat* pl. *tžíraṭṭin* ‘rib of a leaf’. One noun lengthens its final consonant, but does not undergo a vowel change, and is followed by the plural suffix *-awən* instead of *-ən*: *arég* pl. *rəggə̀wən* ‘handle.’

dìmmən ‘blood’ may belong to this class too. But since this form is a *plurale tantum*, this cannot be confirmed.

3.2.3.5 *i*-infix with plural suffix

A small group of nouns replaces their final *ə* with *i* and add the plural suffix *-ən*. Three out of four nouns that belong to this group have the shape |iščəc| in the plural.

išyər	šyìrən	‘firewood’
iškər	škìrən	‘nail’
ištən	ištìnən	‘a shoemakers awl’
amədən	mədìnən (mìd- dən)	‘man’ pl.: ‘people’

3.2.3.6 Suppletion

A small group of nouns have a suppletive plural formation.

təvəl	dvittìn	‘sheep’
ìwi	aməzẓìn	‘my son’
awìl	žlàn	‘word, speech’
uma	àtma	‘my brother’
wərtnā	sətma	‘my sister’

3.2.3.7 Isolated formations

Several isolated cases of plural formations remain. Two nouns only remove the feminine singular marker *-t* to mark the plural, e.g. *tavərgàt* pl. *dvərgá* ‘dream’ and *təvùrt*, *tavvùrt* pl. *dvurr*, *dfurr* ‘door’.

One noun shifts its root final *-i* to *-a*, e.g. *tḥyit* pl. *tḥya* ‘animal excrement’.

One noun adds a final *-a* to the root, e.g. *tamìrt* pl. *tmìra* ‘beard’.

Three nouns have irregular plural formations: *agəngùt* pl. *ngùwən* ‘green date’, *tàqt* pl. *taqqid*, *taqqidən* ‘finger’, *təmmìt* pl. *tmənyìn* ‘tamarisk’.

One noun replaces its final vowel by *a* and places a suffix *-ən* behind the stem. The long consonant preceding the final vowel is shortened. *aqəlliz* pl. *aqlàzən* ‘lie’

3.3 Arabic loans

Arabic loans form a special class of nouns within Awjila Berber. Most Arabic loanwords are easily recognized by the Arabic definite marker *l-*, *əl* or *al* which may be assimilated to the next consonant according to the Arabic assimilation rules. The Arabic definite marker has no semantic value in Awjila, but is almost always present in such loanwords. The Arabic definite marker assimilates to dental and palatal stops and fricatives. This includes the voiced palatal fricative *ž* from the Arabic *ج*. The Arabic feminine suffix *-a(t)* has been taken over in Awjila as *-ət*. Once the *-a(t)* is taken over as *-a*: *sàna* ‘year’. Arabic loanwords inherit their plural formations from Arabic. Examples:

əlbàb ‘door’

əlbəḥr ‘sea’

əddələl ‘auctioneer’

alidàm ‘butter’

lḥəbb pl. *ləḥbùb* ‘date (mature)’

əlkətf pl. *ləktuf* ‘shoulder’

ssùq ‘market’

əlṣàləm pl. *əlṣulamá* ‘scholar’

əžžəḥim ‘hell’

əlhəzmət ‘bundle’

əlhəžət ‘thing’

Some Arabic loanwords have Berber morphology. These nativized loanwords lack the definite marker, and their plural formations follow Berber patterns.

aḥòli pl. *ḥolàwən* ‘lamb’

amakàn ‘place’

tzənàqt pl. *dzənqìn* ‘street’

3.4 Nominal derivation

There are very few examples of nominal derivations in Awjila by means of prefixation, something quite commonly found in other Berber languages.⁸

3.4.1 Agent nouns

There is one attested case of the common Berber *m-/n-* agent prefix.

anagàm pl. *nagàmən* ‘someone who draws water’, derived from *ugám* ‘to draw (water from a well with an animal)’

3.4.2 Instrument nouns

There are no unambiguous examples of the common Berber *s-* instrument noun prefix. A possible examples is *azədùz* ‘hammer’, which has no corresponding verb that it is derived from. In other Berber languages, this verb is attested, e.g. Middle Atlas Berber *edz* ‘to pound’, *azduz* ‘hammer’.

⁸For a short overview of the derivational prefixes *m-/n-* and *s-*, see Galand (2010: 149ff.).

