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

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Chapter 9

Quantifiers

9.1 Numerals

Most numerals in Awjila have an Arabic origin. We only have fragmental information on numerals, as Paradisi did not include Arabic loanwords in his word list. Therefore all attestations of numerals above ‘one’ are from the texts.

1	m. <i>iwín</i> , <i>iwinàn</i> , <i>iwínan</i> f. <i>iwát</i> , <i>iwatàn</i>
2	<i>itnén</i>
3	<i>təláta</i>
4	<i>ərbəʃa</i>
7	<i>səbəʃa</i>
9	<i>təsəʃa</i>
90	<i>təsʕín</i>
100	<i>məyət</i>
1000	<i>əlf</i>

ərbəʃa, *səbəʃa* and *təsəʃa* all have a antepenultimate accent. This position is very rare in Awjila. It is very well possible that the *ə* in front of *ʃ* is epenthetic in these forms.

A numeral is attached to the quantified noun by means of the preposition *n* ‘of’. Only the numeral ‘one’ agrees in gender with the quantified noun, all other numerals have a fixed form. With ‘one’, the masculine and the feminine have two variants each: Masculine *iwín*, *iwínan* and feminine *iwát*, *iwatàn*. There appears to be no difference in meaning between these forms. Both forms can also be used to mark a noun phrase as indefinite.

- (144) *Gan iwínan n=amədən ašəl n=awilən.*
there one:ms of=man village of=Aujilan.people
‘There once was a man in the village of Aujila’ [PT:II]

- (145) *w=iwín n=išf i-llùm aməzʒlən=n-əs*
and=one:sm of=day 3sm-gather:°pf. sons=of-3s
‘And one day he gathered his sons’ [PT:I]

- (146) *Bəṣadèn i-n=ìs iwìn n=amàdàn:*
 Then 3sm-say:*pf.=10.3s one:sm of=man:
 ‘Then a man said to him.’ [PT:XIII]
- (147) *t-əllumà-m ká iman=nə-kìm a=tt-əqíma-m am=iwatàn*
 2pm-gather:*pf.-2pm neg. self=of-2pm fut.=2pm-remain:fut.-2pm like=one:sf
n=təyarit
 of=stick
 ‘(If) you do not gather yourself, you will remain like one stick.’ [PT:I]
- (148) *nək n-à=k=a s=àrbəṣa n=millim*
 I say:res.-1s=10.2sm=res. with=four of=milliem
 ‘I’ve told you for four milliemes’ [PT:III]

Some Arabic constructions have been taken over as such, and do not have the preposition *n* ‘of’.

- (149) *ṣbər-àt a=nn-a=kìm nək d=awil tlàta marràt*
 wait:imp.-pm fut.=say:fut.-1s=10.2pm I pred.=Aujilan three times
ila yom əlqiyàma:
 until.the.day.of.resurrection
 ‘Wait! I will say to you that I will be a person from Aujila three times until the day of resurrection.’ [PT:II]
- (150) *Žhà y-ətamənnə syar=rəbbi a=y-əfk=ìs əlf žni*
 Jha 3sm-wish:*pf. from=god fut.=3sm-give:fut.=10.3s 1,000 pound
 ‘Jha prayed God to give him 1,000 Pounds’ [PT:V]
- (151) *Bəṣadèn u=bəṣád səbṣəṣa ayyam y-əṣədd mərràt (mərràtət) aqùt-ə*
 then and=after seven days 3sm-go:*pf. time another-sf
 ‘Then after seven days he went another time’ [PT:IV]

9.2 Cryptic numerals

Zanon (1932: 264) describes a cryptic counting system that avoids the use of the Arabic numerals in order to discuss numbers without outsiders understanding them. He does not cite the terminology in Berber, but only gives an Italian translation. He gives an overview:

- 1 finger
- 2 two fingers
- 5 complete hand
- 7 a hand and two fingers, or two hands minus three fingers
- 10 two hands
- 15 two hands and a foot
- 20 two hands and two feet

Similar cryptic numeral systems are found in other Berber languages such as Siwa (Laoust 1931: 107, Souag 2010: 185), Nefusa (Beguinet 1942: 127) and El-Foqaha (Paradisi 1963a: s.v. quattro, cinque, sei, sette, otto, nove, dieci).

9.3 *kkull* ‘all, whole’

The word *kkull* ‘all’ functions as a general quantifier that marks the entirety of a group. It is placed after the noun phrase it modifies. There is some variation between *kkull* and *kull* in these forms.

- (152) *wènma slà-n=t mǐddən n=ašāl kùll, ušà-n=d*
 as.soon.as hear:*pf.-3pm=DO.3sm people of=village all come:*pf.-3pm=come
yǎlliy-ən a=mmudà-n kull dǎffər-a
 want:*pf.-3pm fut.=pray:fut.-3pm all behind-3sm
 ‘As soon as all the people of the village heard it, they came and all wanted to pray behind him’ [PT:II]
- (153) *mag ì-nni ənnùšš ən=təmùrt kkùll?*
 where 3sm-be(loc.):*pf. middle of=earth whole
 ‘Then he asked him and said: where is the middle of the whole earth?’ [PT:VIII]

9.4 *kull* ‘each’

The distributive quantifier *kull* ‘each’ marks each single instance of a group. It is always placed in front of the noun phrase it modifies.

- (154) *u=y-əfká kull iwìn təyarit.*
 and=3sm-give:pf. each one:sm stick
 ‘and (he) gave each one a stick.’ [PT:I]
- (155) *u=i-tənn=ìs i=kùll amàdən*
 and=3sm-say:impf.=IO.3s dat.=each person
 ‘and (he started) saying to each person.’ [PT:XIII]

9.5 *əggùt* ‘much, many’

The indefinite quantifier *əggùt* ‘much, many’ is only attested once in the texts. In this one example it precedes the noun it modifies.

- (156) *W=i-žigàž* *əggùt išftwən*
 and=3sm-walk:impf. many days
 ‘And he would walk many days’ [PT:III]