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Peripheral Arabic Dialects

Some Peculiarities of Central Asian Arabic From the Perspective of History of Arabic Language

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1.0. Central Asian Arabic, like Maltese, became isolated from the Arab World and over the course of the time developed as a peripheral Arabic dialect. This, with newly emerged elements due to independent development carries signs of the oldest characteristics of phonological, morphological and syntactic signs of Semitic languages and in particular Arabic language.

In the following article I present examples recorded in the Central Asian regions of Bukhara and Qashqa-daryā, which clearly shows general Semitic language peculiarities preserved in Central Asian Arabic up to nowadays. I will distinguish important morphological and lexical material which, in our opinion, is important from the prospect of the history of Arabic language.

Formation of plural.

Plural nouns in both gender categories use the *-āt* suffix element.

sabiyāt gālaw: – naḥnāt bōyatin kibīra walatumāt insōr.

“The boys said, “We are the sons of a Great Bey” (QAD)*.

zōkāt isnē^{ta} i darb daḥal mad. ziklōnāt salās iōm dard sārāw.

“They (the two of them) set out in a journey. They walked for three days” (QAD).

In the above sentence the *sabiyāt* “the boys”, *naḥnāt* “we” and *walatumāt* “his sons” were formed by *-āt* suffix. From here, *naḥnāt* – is the 1st person

* QAD - Qashqa-daryā dialect.

plural pronoun, which expresses a dual pronoun with suffix *-āt*. Dual is not uncommon in Central Asian Arabic verb formations as well.

– *ey, adəmiyāt, kul-kumāt ta‘āluwāt*

“Hey, people, all of you gather here (come)” (QAD).

nāb gāil: –i dilmurād fāt faras intuāt!

“The old man says, “Give Dilmurad a horse!” (QAD).

salās walad salās bint šāfawāt

“The three boys fell in love with the three girls” (QAD).

In northwestern Semitic languages, we find masculine suffix **-āt* in addition to suffixes *-ū/-ī(m)*... We find such examples frequently in Hebrew and Syrian languages. Parallelism of suffixes is also typical. For example, in Hebrew the common gender is *‘āb* “cloud”: pl. *‘ābīm/‘abōt*; m.g. *dōr. dōrim/dōrōt* “generation”, “relation” “family”, “tribe”; in Ugaritic *rīš. ršm/ršt* “head”; in Phoenician *im. imōt/imū* “day”. In some cases it is possible for these forms to appear analogous to one another. For example, the influence of the words *‘umm* (“mother”) and *lil* (“night”) explains the existence of the suffix *-āt* in plural forms of the nouns *‘b* (“father”) and *yum* (“day”).

At times, forms with **-ū* and **-āt* suffixes are in contradiction to each other as is evidenced in the case of collective plural, for e.g. Meshn. *yāmīm* “day/days” (pl.): *yāmōt* “season” (collect.), *šānīm* “years” (pl.): *šanōt* “age”, “time” (collect.).

Central Asian Arabic formation of plural utilizing *-āt* suffix follows the pattern of northwest Semitic languages where, in masculine gender along with suffixes *-ū/-ī(m)*..., we have **-āt*. Consequently, the existing condition of Central Asian Arabic, despite it’s relation to Ugaritic or Hebrew, is significant from the perspective of general Semitic language. It is possible that the formation of plural with the suffix **-āt* may not reflect the oldest stage of language development, but could instead be the result of its internal development. In this case first suffix **-āt* should have developed as a marker for masculine plural, and afterwards spread analogous to the verbal forms. In any case we deal with element of general Semitic formation, whose area of functioning is large in the peripheral Arabic dialect of Central Asia.

2.0. It is significant to mention the forms of broken plural, which carry singular meaning in Qashqa-daryā and Bukhara dialects.

ī kulhum beitung hast. binti bonka šuġl misū. suhūr zēn hast.

"Everyone has a house. My daughter works in the bank.

My son-in-law is a good [man]" (BAD)*.

dūk 'iyāl-ke kēyin 'andun.

"He had one son" (BAD).

ilay qubūr salās yumāt qaraūlya sū!

"Guard my grave for three days!" (BAD).

In the Classical Arabic for the broken plural forms *fu'ūl*, *fu'ul* and *fi'āl* we have the following formation of the singular ones: *fu'ūl*: a) *fā'l* b) *fi'l* c) *fu't*. *baḥr-buḥūr* "sea", *baḥt-buḥūt* "study", "research", "discussion"; *ġild-ġulūd* "skin", *ḥilm-ḥumūl* "load", *ġund-ġunūd* "army", *burd-burūd* "(woman's) jacket", "blouse", "top", "cloak", "cape".

d) *fā'al*, e) *fā'il*, f) *fā'il*: *'asad-'usūd* "lion", *malik-mulūk* "king", *ġālis-ġulūs* "sitting".

fu'ul: a) *fā'l*, b) *fā'al*, c) *fā'il*, d) *fā'ul*. *saqf-suquf* "roof", *'asad-'usud* "lion", *namir-numur* "leopard", *ḍabu'-ḍubu'* "hyena".

e) *fā'al*, f) *fi'al*, g) *fu'aḥ*. *ṣāna'-ṣunu'* "doer", *dilāt-dulūt* "quick-footed", *kurā'-kuru'* "bracelet".

h) *fā'il*, i) *fā'ul*: *naḍīr-nuḍur*, *ṣabūr-ṣubur* "patient".

j) *fā'ilat*: *madīnat-mudun*

k) *fā'il*: *tāġir-tuġur* "merchant".

fi'āl: a) *fā'l*, b) *fu'l*, c) *fi't*. *baḥr-biḥār* "sea", *rumḥ-rimāḥ* "spear", *ḍi'ib-ḍi'āb* "wolf";

d) *fā'al*, e) *fā'ul*, f) *fā'il*, g) *fā'il*, h) *fu'al*, i) *fā'il*, j) *fā'lānu//fā'lānun//fu'lānun*, k) *fu'la*: *ġamāl-ġimāl* "camel", *raġul-riġāl* "man", *ġarib-ġirāb* "scabby", "mangy"; *kabīr-kibār* "big", *ruṭab-riṭāb* "newly plucked date", *ṣāhib-ṣiḥāb* "friend", *ġaḍbān-ġiḍāb* "angry", *ḥumṣān-ḥimās* "hungry", *'unṭā-'ināt* "woman", "female" (Lekiashevili 1963: 34-35; Wright 1967: 25, 26).

A number of broken plural forms in the Classical Arabic are used in singular as well. Among them are *fu'ūl//fu'ul* and *fi'āl* constructions, which are present in Central Asian as well. The abovementioned examples from Central Asian Arabic clearly show that in literary Arabic the forms of broken plural with plural connotation, such as *'iyāl* "sons", *qubūr* "graves" and *ṣuhūr* "sons-in-law"

* BAD – Bukhara dialect.

carry singular meanings in dialect. We can suppose that Central Asian Arabic reflects the old case with regards to development of the language. According to the presenting material we can assume that forms $C_1uC_2\bar{u}C_3//C_1uC_2uC_3$ and $C_1iC_2aC_3$ initially expressed the singular form and gained the Plural meaning in the following stage of language development progress.

3.0. In Qashqa-daryā Arabic we find the formation of plural with *mīm*.

adrūn ḥōyiṭ kisīr hamrayām kānat

“There was a lot of gold (golden coins) in the house” (QAD).

ziklonāt hamrayām-tangayām ḥazuwa, ḡaduwa

“They took gold and silver [and] went away” (QAD).

kokōyata kulla hamrāt ḥazuwa, kisatumāt-kisayām haṣuwa

“The brothers took the whole gold [that was there]; filled the purses” (QAD).

The forms *ḥazuwa*, *ḡaduwa* and *haṣuwa* (Comp. with Arabic *ḥaṣa* (u)) represent plural forms of the 3rd person (*ḥazaw*, *ḡadaw*, *haṣaw*). With the addition of the pronominal suffix we get *ḥazuwa*, *ḡaduwa*, *haṣuwa*.

ī čoyḥōna kisīr mōšīnām ademiyāt kānaw.

“In the tea-house there was a lot of people, who came for entertainment (walkers)”.

mōšīnām contains the following elements *mōš-īn-ām*. From the two forms of presented plural one is used with *mīm*.

naḥnāt madīna naḡade, pōšō binta inšūfa, salāsatnam naḡade, fahadna hama bint noḡusa.

“We shall go to the town; we shall see the daughter of the Pasha; the three of us’ll come [and] one of us’ll marry this beauty (daughter) (we shall take this girl for one of us)”.

In the word *salāsatnam* *m* is added to the pronominal suffix of the plural form of the 1st person. From one side, this might express dual plural form or, from the other, 2nd and 3rd person plural pronominal suffixes, developed in analogy with the forms of the construction. In both cases the expression of plural

should be taken into consideration with *mīm*, the reflection of which in the Classical Arabic is the construction of plural for 2nd and 3rd persons with *m*: comp. *-kum/-hum*: *baytukum* “your house”, *baytuhum* “their house”.

zōka i ʾibsōt i wača ʾabu ʾumma isimumāt nasaġa

“He made an embroidery of the names of his mother and father [parents] on the carpet”.

The plural form of *ism* in dialect differs from literary Arabic *isimumāt* and is constructed with dual plural form. From the forming elements (*-um-āt*), *-um* containing *mīm* is notable.

ugub il-ḥōyiṭ daḥalt, il-morti rōsa gaseyta, il-bōyām qatalta, il-bētī maddeyt.

“Then I went into the palace, cut off my wife’s head, killed the Bey too and returned home”.

In this sentence the form *il-bōyām* is plural. Even though it has a singular meaning, it is important because of its construction. This example has been evidenced in only one circumstance and is actually a mistake made by an Informant during his speech.

ziklōnāt moyōtumāt ufragat.

“They have their water finished”.

mūy “water” is a feminine form. The plural of *muyōt* < *muyāt* is constructed with plural *mīm* suffix *-um//ūm*. The dual plurals of the same pattern words are constructed with *-āt*, i.e. we get a duplicate of the forming element. In the end we get a tripled form of plural.

The subject matter regarding the *mīm* plural in QAD appears naturally. Plural *mīm* construction is typical for northwest Semitic languages – Ugaritic and Hebrew. In Ugaritic, masculine nouns in the status absolutus plural have the ending *-m* [*-ūma*] in Nominative and *-m* [*īma*] in Genitive-Accusative form. We can compare the presented elements to suffixes of regular plural in literary Arabic *-ūna/īna*. It is worth mentioning that in both dialects of Central Asian Arabic the numerals are fundamentally different from the Classical Arabic in the second decade (10+1) and correspond fully with Ethiopian. We often find the same

pattern of construction in Phoenician and Nabatean (Akhvlediani 1985: 47; Brockelmann 1908: 489).

In Biblical Hebrew the nouns of masculine gender in plural have *-īm* suffixes: *sūs* > pl. *sūsīm* "horses". We also find some instances when this rule is not followed, i. e. when *-īm* forms the plural from the feminine nouns as well: *šānā* > pl. *šānīm*. From the masculine nouns from time to time we find other forms for the formation of plural: *-īn*, *-ī*, *-ay*, and *-ām* (Tsereteli, K. 2001: 75). Some of the masculine nouns add suffix *-ōt*, *'āb-'ābōt* "father", *šēm-šēmōt* "name" (look above, 1.0.).

The element *-īn* is analogous to plural forms in Chaldaic and Syriac. It is often found in Old Testament books of later age and in poems from the oldest periods. For e.g. *meleḥīn* "kings", Proverbs 31, *yamīn* "days", Daniel 12, 13, etc. (Gezenius 1874: 332).

In the element *-ī* - *mīm* is dropped. As for *-ām* it is a rarely used archaic form *sullam* < *salal* "stairs" (Gezenius 1874: 332).

The feminine plural is constructed with the suffix *-ōt*. If in singular the feminine noun ends with *-ōt//īt* in the feminine form *īm* is added: *almenūtīm* "widowhood", "widows".

Some words have double plural forms. This lexeme ending with *ōt* in plural additionally receives *-im//īm*: *ḥōma* "wall" > *ḥōmōt* > *ḥōmōtīm* (Gezenius 1874: 335).

Some words we find only in plural forms, for e.g.: *metīm* "people", "human beings", "mortal", *elōhīm* "God" are presented only in the plural form.

In addition to Ugaritic and Hebrew, the element *-m/-īm* is characteristic in Phoenician (*īm*). With regard to Aramaic and Ethiopian, in these languages consequently is found *īn* and *ān* forms. In Classical Ethiopian the element of feminine plural *-āt* is found in masculine nouns as well: *kāhem-kāhenāt* "priest", *falāsefāt* "philosophers". In Arabic in indirect cases, as we know we have ending *īn* and in Nominative case we have ending *-ūn*.

In Akkadian, plural masculine forms are constructed with *-ē*, *-ani*, *-ānu*, *ūtī*, and less often with *ū*. For e.g.: *sisē* "horses", *ilāni* "Gods", *duppānu* "earthenware plates", *rabūtī* "big", *tabbanūtu* "buildings", *paršū* "decisions". Feminine plural in Akkadian is constructed with suffix *-ātī*.

Mimation is typical for Akkadian. The names in status absolutus receive *-m* and sometimes it is replaced with *-ma*. We also find parallel forms without mimation in the language: *bītum//bītu* "house", *rieum//rieū* "shepherd". Predictably mimation is dropped in the words in status constructus and with pronominal suffix forms. Mimation is also characteristic for Epigraphic South Arabic, where an indefinite noun ends with (*-m*).

4.0. To explain the plural form of *mīm* in QAD dialect I believe we must consider linguistic factors as well as extra-linguistic ones.

In my opinion the existing toponym in the Karshi area of the Qashqa-daryā side is noteworthy, and is linked to the old Arab tribe in the area. Qakhlai must be distinguished, as it derives from *qaḥtān* and is an indication of southern Arab tribe.

Arabs from the Arab Peninsula in the pre-Islamic period were divided into two groups: Arabs of pure blood (*al-‘arab al-‘arība*) and non-native Arabs, i. e. assimilated Arabs (*al-‘arab al-musta‘riba*). There existed a third group of Arabs, which were unified groups of Aramaic descent (*al-bā‘ida* = “lost”, “unknown”). The pure Arabs (*al-‘arība*) related themselves to the *yoktān*, i. e. *qaḥtān*. Joktan (Qahtan) was the son of Eber. He was a founder of the southern Arab tribe of Qahtan. It is known that southern Arabs, i.e. Yemenites, were distinguished in one way with their originality and in the other with the linguistic peculiarities of their language contacts. This was the main reason for having Hebrew Community beside the other southern Arab tribes in the area. Influence of Hebrew in southern Arabic and Ethiopian languages has been documented on numerous occasions by specialists. Southern Arabic is linguistically closer to Hebrew and Ethiopian than to northern Arabic. G. Tsereteli in his article “Newest Theories about the Place of Origin of Semites” quotes A. Lein’s following words, “Himyarite dialect, the area of which is surrounded with al-Yemen, is closer to the Ethiopian and Hebrew than to *ma‘dad* (i.e. to the pure classical Arabic of northern Arabic tribes)” (Tsereteli, G. 2004: 172).

According to A. Ungnad, southern Arabic dialect is further from northern Arabic than from Hebrew. The similarity of southern Arabic and Hebrew is apparent in morphology, grammar and onomastics. The remarkable resemblance is in nomenclature of Old Hebrew – Israelites and Minaeans and Sabaeans (Tsereteli, G. 2004: 172). As for Wolf Leslau, he purports that the influence of the Hebrew Community of southern Arabia on Ethiopian is noticeable. The evidence of Judaist elements in the Ethiopian church, which then spread later in Coptic (Leslau 1965: 5) is also noteworthy. It is necessary to mention that mimation is usual in southern Arabic epigraphic inscriptions as opposed to northern Arabic. In the aforementioned inscriptions, the name becomes indefinite, gaining [m] in the end. Thus *mīm* as a formative element is not unfamiliar for the southwestern Semitic language (Bauer 1966: 47-48; Grande 1972: 43). The abovementioned indicates linguistic contact of Qakhlai’s southern Arab tribe with Hebrew, which explains the existence of the Hebrew element of plural formation in QAD. The southern Arabic toponym’s fixation in Qashqa-daryā region gives us a basis to relate Arabs living in Jeinau and Kamashi if not entirely, at least partially to Joktan (Qahtan) descendents.

4.1. Arab-Hebrew linguistic contacts are not peculiar within the Arabic speaking world. In addition to the aforementioned southern Arabia, we can mention the Fertile Crescent and in particular Baghdad's eastern province Al-'anbār in Iraq. There lives an Arab tribe Dulaym, in the speech of which it is characteristic to use element *mīm* in the 3rd person singular perfect verb.

e.g. *akalam* < *'akalū* "(they) have eaten"

šarabam < *šarabū* "(they) have drunk"

katabam < *katabū* "(they) have written"

In Imperfect it is *ioklūn*, *išrabūn* and *iktubūn*. For plural in Arabic it is difficult to argue the influence of the Hebrew language alone in the foreign originated formations, but in our opinion emergence of *mīm* in verb constructions must be indicative of certain language contacts¹.

4.2. In the Fertile Crescent and southern Arabia, as well as in internal regions of the Arabian Peninsula the existence of Jews has been historically documented. The State of Israel, as we know, was established in the second part of the last century of the 2nd millennium B.C. In the second part of the 8th century in Asia Minor, Assyria rose to power, took control of Syria in 738 B.C. and became a danger to Israel. The Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III (745-727) attacked Israel and took over the northern part of Galilee including the eastern side of the river Jordan, added the territory and began a system of taxation on the rest of Israeli Kingdom. In 727 B.C., after the death of Tiglath-pileser III, rebellion in Syria and Palestine broke out against Assyria. In response, the Assyrians conducted a punishment campaign; they arrived with a big army and after 3 years of siege in 722 B.C. took the capital of Israel Samaria. The king of Assyria, Sargon the 2nd (722-705), took a majority of the Israeli population captive and returned with them to Mesopotamia (Mamulia 1988: 304).

In the end of 7th century B.C. the Fertile Crescent was ruled over by the Babylonian Kingdom or Chaldean Babylonia. The greater role of its creation and the further existence played by Semitic tribes of Chaldeans living around the Persian Gulf had relocated from Arabia in the end of the 2nd millennium B.C. The Bible is an important source in studying the history of Babylon, in particular the Books of the Prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. The value of the inscriptions found due to archeological searches combined with the written accounts of

¹ The information about the mentioned peculiarity of the tribe Dulaym's speech was given to me by an Iraqi Doctorate student of Tbilisi Institute of Asia and Africa Adnan Jasim

antiquity about Babylon is colossal, including Herodotus (5th century B.C.); Xenophon (5th-4th B.C.) Ktesion (5th -4th B.C.) and others.

In 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar (604-562 B.C.) was able to conquer Assyria and acquired a vast majority of its territories. At this point he decided to take over Syria, Phoenicia and Judea, which he robbed and then forcibly relocated to Babylon thousands of Judeans (according to some recourses 7 000), mostly from dignified households (Mamulia 1988: 327). Nebuchadnezzar put on the thrown of Judea Zedekiah and took over all of Palestine.

In 587 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar once more struck Jerusalem with his army, due to the disloyalty of Zedekiah and other small kingdoms. Judea was not ready to fight Babylon and turned for help to Egypt. Ezekiel describes this story in the Bible: "But he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people. Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such things? or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered?" (Ezekiel 17, 15).

The Egyptian army did not save Judea, they retreated and left it alone facing the enemy. The large army of Nebuchadnezzar attacked and burned down the city. Again, thousands of Judeans were taken away to Babylon.

After Judea, Nebuchadnezzar forced Tyros to surrender. In 574 B.C., the King of Tyros, Ithobal, made a fettering peace agreement with the king of Babylon. Like the conquered Judeans, Phoenicians were taken to Babylon. Such Jewish-Phoenician migration waves were habitual in Mesopotamia in the abovementioned time period. It is known that Nebuchadnezzar during his reign conducted a military operation to Yemen. The enchanted wealth of this country has attracted every strong kingdom. According to the story, Nebuchadnezzar reached Yemen's western borders and than decided to stop and not overtire the army and did not continue the operation (Maksutov 1905: 331). The beauty and wealth of Yemen was very attractive for forcibly relocated Jewish people in Babylonia. Babylonia during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar had a highly advanced culture which was only possible with highly developed trade conditions. In Babylonia local and imported trade property and their barter were protected by law. The traditional sphere of this business was prospective to the forcibly displaced Jews.

From the Babylonian captivity, the Jewish Community migrated to Arab and other, among them Semitic and non Semitic, populated areas. Thus we do not see it impossible to consider the plural suffix (*mīm*) found in QAD to be a reflection of these circumstances in Arab-Hebrew linguistic contacts, which predates the migration of Arabs of the Qakhlai tribe from southern Arabia to Central Asia. As for preserving the abovementioned plural forming element in Central Asian Arabic, it is mostly due to QAD's century long isolation.

The plural formation with *mīm* is not seen today in Yemenite dialect. In 1989 during field work conducted at Aden, located in Abyan Province, and to

Mukalla in Yemen, I recorded the dialectological material where the abovementioned construction has not been evident. Since we do not have the written source of the old Arabic dialect of Yemen, it is impossible at this stage to know if there was ever in this dialect linguistic contacts showing plural formation with *mīm*. Only the data from QAD gives us the possibility to relate this construction to the Yemen Qakhlai tribe. Therefore, the material of Peripheral Arab dialects is important and must be taken in serious consideration from the perspective of researching the Arabic dialects and, in general, the history of Arabic language.

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