

Unit 1: Nouns and Articles

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Unit 1 Vocabulary

General Nouns

<u>Coptic</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Irregular Plural</u>
ⲉ	earth/land	M	
	sky/heaven	F	
ⲉ	day	M	
ⲛ ⲉ	night	M	
	name	M	

People Nouns

<u>Coptic</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Irregular Plural</u>
	man	M	
ⲉ	woman	F	ⲉ
ⲉ	child (boy/girl)	M/F	
	father	M	ⲉ
	mother	F	
	brother	M	ⲉ
	sister	F	ⲉ
ⲉ	son	M	
ⲉ	daughter	F	
ⲉ	elder (m.)	M	ⲉ
ⲉ	elder (f.)	F	ⲉ
ⲉ	friend (m.)	M	
ⲉ	friend (f.)	F	
	king	M	

	queen	F	
	master	M/F	
	wise person	M	
	wise person	F	

Church Nouns

<u>Coptic</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Irregular Plural</u>
ⲧ	god	M	
ⲛ	Trinity	F	
ⲛ	church	F	
	cross	M	
ⲛⲟ	bell	M	
ⲛ	dome	F	
	tower	F	
ⲛⲟ	censer	F	
	body	M	
ⲛⲟ	blood	M	
	bread	M	
	wine	M	
ⲛ	cup/chalice	M	
	testament/covenant	F	

General Vocabulary

<u>Coptic</u>	<u>English</u>
	and/with

ϣ	What is your (m.) name?
ϣ	What is your (f.) name?
...	My name is...
ϣ	Hello
⊗	Goodbye
`	Good morning
2	Good evening
ϣ ` 2	Good day
ϣ ` ⊗ 2	Good night

Lesson 1: Indefinite Articles

Nouns

A noun is a word that names a person, place, thing or idea. For example: Peter, bicycle, dog, Alexandria, and truth are all nouns. Coptic nouns are classified by number and gender.

Number: They can be singular (s.) or plural (pl.) like in English. Contrast this with Arabic where a noun can be singular, dual (du.) or plural. Many Coptic nouns do not have a distinct plural form, but some do. We will call these the irregular plural form. The number (singular or plural) is only evident from the preceding article.

Gender: Singular nouns can also be either masculine (m.) or feminine (f.) like in French, Spanish or Arabic. There is no neuter gender in Coptic (like in Greek or English).

Indefinite Articles

Indefinite articles are used to denote a noun that is not specified. For example, when we talk of "a book," we are referring to any book. Coptic has two forms of the indefinite article (singular and plural), which are attached directly to the beginning of the noun.

ⲁ: Singular Indefinite Article for both masculine and feminine nouns. Translated to "a" or "an" in English

ⲛ: Plural Indefinite Article which translates to the "s" at the end of a noun

Examples

	a, an	2	-s
	a name	ⲛ	names
	a man	ⲛ	men
ⲁⲓ	a woman	ⲛ ⲛ	women
ⲉ	an elder	ⲛ ⲉ	elders
	an eye	ⲛ	eyes
ⲧ	a god	ⲛ ⲧ	gods

Translate the following phrases into Coptic. Note that you can use the preposition as "and" to connect two nouns.

1. a man and a woman
2. a boy and a girl
3. a father and a mother
4. a father and a son
5. fathers and mothers
6. women and men
7. boys and girls
8. a king and a queen

Exercise 2: Translate to English

Translate the following phrases into English:

- 1.
2. Ⲅ
3. ⲉ ⲉ ⲉ ⲉ
4. ⲉ ⲉ ⲉ ⲉ
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
8. ⲉ ⲉ ⲉ ⲉ
- 9.

Resources

- Moawad Daoud Lesson 1
- ACTS 2990 Lesson 2A
- Sameh Younan Chapter 2 (2.1.i, 2.1.ii)
- Nabil Mattar Chapter 2, Chapter 4

Lesson 2: Definite Articles

Definite Articles

Where indefinite articles denote a noun that is not specified, definite articles denote a specified noun. For example, when we talk of "the book," we are referring to a specific book. English has only one definite article - "the" - which is used regardless of the noun it defines. Coptic has eight different forms, which are attached directly to the beginning of the noun.

The Coptic definite article depends on the number and gender of the noun, as well as its strength (more on that later) and sometimes the letter it begins with. It is important to use the correct definite article because this gives information about the noun.

Masculine Articles: -ⲁ, -ⲓ, -ⲓⲁ

Feminine Articles: †-ⲁ, -ⲓⲁ, -ⲓⲓⲁ

Plural Articles: -ⲓⲁ, -ⲓⲓⲁ

When to use each article is discussed below.

Plural Nouns

In the vast majority of cases, -ⲓⲁ is used as the definite article for nouns. For example: "the hands" would be ⲛⲓⲁⲛⲓⲁ.

The article -ⲓⲓⲁ is used in constructions involving the word "of" (i.e. "the" <pl. noun> "of" <noun>). For example: "the hands of Aaron" would be ⲛⲓⲁⲛⲓⲁⲁⲣⲟⲛⲓⲁ.

Singular Nouns

The three masculine articles are equivalent to the three feminine articles.

- ⲁ will follow the same rules as †-ⲁ
- ⲓⲁ will follow the same rules as -ⲓⲓⲁ
- ⲓⲓⲁ will follow the same rules as -ⲓⲓⲓⲁ

Strong/Weak Articles

- ⲁ and †-ⲁ are considered strong articles.

ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ - are considered weak articles.

The strong articles are used in more specific situations than their counterparts. For example, if you're referring to a specific father, you would say ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ. However, if you were to say ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ, you would be understood to be referring to the father who is already known; or considered to be unique or one-of-a-kind. So ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ is understood as referring to God the Father. Likewise, ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ ("the son") would refer to a particular son whereas ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ refers to "the Son" (i.e. the Son of God). Sometimes this distinction occurs in English with the use of capital letters (e.g. The President).

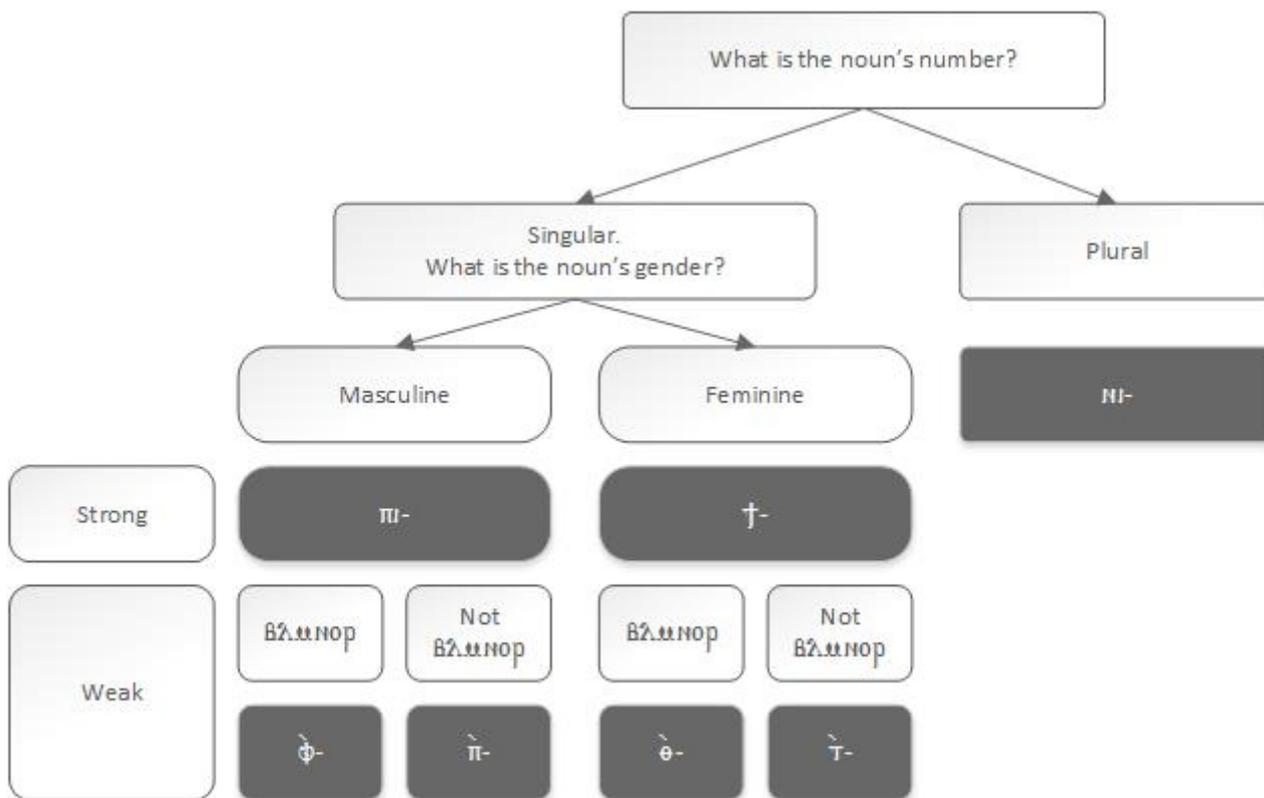
Bilminor Articles

How do you distinguish between the two weak articles of each gender? When would you use ⲛⲓⲛⲓ or ⲛⲓⲛⲓ? This distinction is based on the first letter of the noun.

If the noun begins with any of the "Bilminor" letters (ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ) then ⲛⲓⲛⲓ and ⲛⲓⲛⲓ are used. If not, then ⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ is used.

Summary

The following chart summarizes the rules for the Coptic Definite Article.



Examples

Singular		Plural	
	The man		The men

†`2	The woman	2	The women
	The boy		The children
†	The girl		
	The father	†	The fathers
`	The Father (God)		
†	The mother		The mothers
`	The Mother (St Mary)		
ω	The son	ω	The sons
`ω	The Son (Christ)		
†ω	The daughter	ω	The daughters
`ω	The Daughter (St Mary e.g. `ω ` `)		
†ϑ	The old woman	ϑ	The elders
`	The King (Christ)		The kings
	The king		
†	The god	†	The gods
`†	God		
†	The Trinity		
†	The Church		The churches
	The Cross		
†	The dome	`	The domes
†	The tower		The towers
†ω	The censer		
	The body		
`q	The blood		
	The bread		
`	The chalice		

because the noun starts with , a Bilminor letter.

6. `ω The article ` -is one of the the singular masculine definite articles. Since ` - is a weak article, this word is referring to the Son who is already well known to the reader - God, the Son. A strong article would have translated to "the son." is used instead of because the noun starts with ω, which is not a Bilminor letter.
7. - The article is a singular masculine definite article. So the word ` means "the spirit." 1 full text read ` - "the spirit that is holy" - The Holy Spirit.
8. _ 2 The article is the singular indefinite article. So 2 means "peace."
9. - The article is the singular indefinite article. is a verb meaning "to edify." It is used here as a noun, so means "edification."
10. † - The article † is the singular feminine definite article. So † ` means "the one."
11. ` _ - The article ` - is one of the the singular masculine definite articles. Since ` - is a weak article, this word is referring to the god who is already well known to the reader - God. A strong article would have translated to "the god." is used instead of because the noun starts with , a Bilminor letter.

Application 2: Single Definite Articles

This is an excerpt from the Anaphora of St. Gregory the Theologian in the Divine Liturgy.

... †ω x` `ω: ω: :2:ω†ω `ωφ: θ . φϑ: φχ†`	God the Lover of Mankind, the ineffable, the invisible, the infinite, the without beginning, the eternal, the timeless, the immeasurable, the incomprehensible, the unchangeable, the Creator of all, the Savior of everyone.
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1. _ - God
2. - The Lover of Man
3. ___ `ω The ineffable: the one that cannot be described
4. ` - The invisible: the not seen
5. ___ `ω The infinite: the cannot be counted
6. - The without beginning
7. ___ ω` The everlasting/eternal: the forever

8. הַ - The timeless: the without time
9. הַ - The immeasurable: the cannot be measured
10. הַ - The incomprehensible: the cannot be examined
11. הַ - The unchangeable: the without change
12. הַ - The Creator: the one who creates
13. הַ - The all
14. הַ - The Savior: the one who saves

Application 3: Plural Definite Articles

These are excerpts from the Third Canticle as it is chanted during the Midnight Praise. All of the plural definite articles are underlined below, and an explanation for each follows.

<u>הַ</u> בְּרַכּוּ הַיַּמִּים וְהַנְּחָלִים וְשַׁבְּחוּ אֶת הַיְיָ	Bless the Lord O you fountains, praise Him...
<u>הַ</u> בְּרַכּוּ הַיָּם וְהַנְּחָלִים וְשַׁבְּחוּ אֶת הַיְיָ	Bless the Lord O you seas and rivers, praise Him...
<u>הַ</u> בְּרַכּוּ הַבָּרִיָּה וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יָרַד בַּיָּם וְשַׁבְּחוּ אֶת הַיְיָ	Bless the Lord O you whales and all that moves in the waters, praise Him...
<u>הַ</u> בְּרַכּוּ אֶת הַיְיָ כָּל אֲשֶׁר בְּרַשְׁתֶּם בַּשָּׁמַיִם וְשַׁבְּחוּ אֶת הַיְיָ	Bless the Lord all you birds of the sky, praise Him...
<u>הַ</u> בְּרַכּוּ אֶת הַיְיָ כָּל אֲשֶׁר בְּרַשְׁתֶּם בַּיָּבֵשׁ וְשַׁבְּחוּ אֶת הַיְיָ	Bless the Lord all you wild beasts and cattle, praise Him...

1. הַ - The article הַ is the plural definite article. So הַיַּמִּים means "the fountains" or "the springs."
2. הַ - The article הַ is the plural definite article. So הַיָּם means "the seas." הַנְּחָלִים is an irregular plural meaning "rivers." the singular meaning "sea."
3. הַ - The article הַ is the plural definite article. So הַבָּרִיָּה means "the rivers." כָּל אֲשֶׁר יָרַד בַּיָּם is an irregular plural meaning "river."
4. הַ - The article הַ is the plural definite article. So הַבָּרִיָּה means "the whales."
5. כָּל - The כָּל here is not an article but rather the word is כָּל, an adjective meaning "every."
6. הַ - The article הַ is the plural definite article. So הַיָּבֵשׁ means "the waters."

7. ⲁⲓ - The article ⲁⲓ is the plural definite article. So ⲁⲓ ⲧⲓ means "the birds." ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ is an irregular plural for the singular ⲧⲓ meaning "bird."
8. ⲁⲓ - The article ⲁⲓ is the plural definite article. So ⲁⲓ ⲧⲓ means "the wild animals."
9. ⲁⲓ - The article ⲁⲓ is the plural definite article. So ⲁⲓ ⲧⲓ means "the beasts" or "the animals."

Exercises

Exercise 1: Translate to Coptic

Translate the following into Coptic:

1. The man and the woman
2. The brother and the sister
3. The boy and the girl
4. The sky and the earth
5. The father and the mother
6. The father and the son
7. The Father and the Son
8. The brothers and the sisters
9. The fathers and the mothers
10. The women and the men
11. The boys and the girls
12. The king and the queen

Exercise 2: Translate to English

Translate the following phrases into English:

1. ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ
2. ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ
3. ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ
4. ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ
5. ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ
6. ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ
7. ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ
8. ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ
9. ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ
10. ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ
11. ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ
12. ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ ⲧⲓ

Resources

- Moawad Daoud Lesson 1

- ACTS 2990 Lesson 2A
- Sameh Younan Chapter 2 (2.1.i, 2.1.ii)
- Nabil Mattar Chapter 2, Chapter 4

Lesson 3: Possessive Articles

Possessive Articles

When assigning a possessive article to a noun, several things are taken into account:

- The perspective, gender, and number of the subject (i.e. the possessor)
- The gender and number of the object (i.e. the possessed)

Masculine Object	Feminine Object	Plural Object	English	Person	Number
-	-	-	My	1st	Singular
-	-	-	Our	1st	Plural
-	-	-	Your (m.)	2nd	Singular
-	-	-	Your (f.)	2nd	Singular
-	-	-	Your (pl.)	2nd	Plural
q-	q-	q-	His	3rd	Singular
-	-	-	Her	3rd	Singular
-	-	-	Their	3rd	Plural

The first letter of the possessive article is based on the gender and number of the object and are identical to the first letter of the definite article:

- for a masculine object
- for a feminine object
- for a plural object

The rest of the article is based on the perspective, gender and number of the subject:

- - for 1st Person Singular (i.e. My)
- - for 1st Person Plural (i.e. Our)
- - for 2nd Person Masculine (i.e. the masculine Your)
- - for 2nd Person Feminine (i.e. the feminine Your)
- - for 2nd Person Plural (i.e. the plural Your)
- - q for 3rd Person Masculine (i.e. His)
- - for 3rd Person Feminine (i.e. Her)
- - for 3rd Person Plural (i.e. Their)

5. His nose and his tongue
6. My body and my blood
7. Your (pl.) king and queen
8. His brother and her sister
9. Our mouth
10. Our mouths
11. The king and my brother

Exercise 2: Translate to English

1. † `
2. ϣ
- 3.
4. ϣ
5. ` ϣ
- 6.
- 7.
8. `

Exercise 3: Words of Scripture

Find the reference in the Coptic Bible App and see how it matches up with the translation:

1. (Luke 22:9)
2. ϣ ϣ (Acts 20:28)
3. (James 2:28)
4. (2 Peter 3:2)
5. ` (Acts 18:6)
6. ϣ† (1 Peter 1:7)
7. ϣ† (Luke 7:50)
8. x x (Acts 4:28)

Resources

- Page 44 of the Sameh Younan PDF
- Lesson 4 of Moawad Daoud
- Page 132 of Nabil Matar

Lesson 4: Near Demonstrative Articles

Near Demonstrative Articles

Demonstratives refer to the English "this" and "that." The demonstrative "this" is called the near demonstrative since it refers to objects that are nearby (e.g. "this book") whereas "that" is called the far demonstrative since it refers to objects that are far away (e.g. "that book").

In Coptic, the near demonstratives can be denoted as an article attached to the noun, or as a pronoun.

Masculine (this)	Feminine (this)	Plural (these)
-	-	-

When using the near demonstrative as an article, it describes the attached noun. You will notice that the first letter of the near demonstrative article is based on the gender and number of the object and are identical to the first letter of the definite (and possessive) articles:

- for a masculine object
- for a feminine object
- for a plural object

The rest of the article is always -.

Examples

	this man	ⲉ ⲙ	this woman	ⲉ ⲙⲏ	these boys
	this brother	ⲉ ⲙⲓ	this censer	ⲉ ⲙⲓ	these hands
ⲉ	this son	ⲉ ⲙⲓ	this daughter	ⲉ ⲙⲏ	these women
	this king		this queen	ⲉ ⲙⲏ	these fathers
	this priest	ⲉ ⲙⲓ	this church	ⲉ ⲙⲓ	these brothers

ⲛⲓ	this friend (m.)	ⲛⲓ	this friend (f.)		these kings
ⲛ	this cup		this bread		this body

Application

Application 1:

Biblical Examples

ⲉ ⲛⲓ ⲛ	"in the Judgment with this generation" (Matthew 12:41)

Exercises

Exercise 1: Translate to Coptic

Translate the following phrases into Coptic:

Exercise 2: Translate to English

Translate the following phrases into English:

Exercise 3: Adapt the Hymn

The Veneration hymn ⲛⲓ ⲛ is written for a singular male martyr. Adapt the words of the hymn to be for St Rebekah and her children (plural).

ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ : ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ	Delight is the church, delight is the people assembled in it, delight is the image of this martyr, Saint (...), the martyr of our Lord Jesus Christ
ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ : ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ : ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ	Delight is your holy name, O chosen one of Christ, the strong courageous and blessed one, O Saint (...)
ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ : ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ : ⲛⲓ ⲛⲓ	Whenever we mention your name, we the Christians, our hearts rejoice, O Saint (...).

Compare your results with the adaptation here: <https://hymnologist.com/hymn/view/64>

Resources

- Page 46 of Sameh Younan PDF
- Page 143 of Nabil Mattar
- Lesson 3 of Moawad Daoud
- ACTS 2990 Introduction to the Coptic Language (Bohairic) with Hany Takla Lesson 2b

Lesson 5: Indefinite Pronoun

Indefinite Pronouns

An indefinite pronoun is a pronoun that does not refer to any person, place, or thing in particular. Some examples of indefinite pronouns in English are: "anything" - "something" - "anyone" - "anywhere" - "someone" - "somewhere" - etc.

Infix - -

The infix - - is a noninflectional word element that is inserted between the noun prefix and the noun. It expresses the meaning "other" and can be used with definite or indefinite articles, demonstrative articles and possessive articles without inflection. It is the only infix used with nouns.

	the other man	Definite Article (m.)
	the other men	Definite Article (f.)
† 2	the other woman	Definite Article (pl.)
*	another man	Indefinite Article (s.)
2	some other men	Indefinite Article (pl.)
	this other man	Demonstrative Article (m.)
	my other man	Possessive Article (1s.)
	your (m.) other man	Possessive Article (2m.)
	your (f.) other man	Possessive Article (2f.)

*Note that for the singular indefinite noun, the singular indefinite article is dropped. However, in the case of the plural, the plural indefinite article 2 is kept.

Application

Biblical Examples

2	through another man [came] the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor 15:21)
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Exercises

Exercise 1: Translate to Coptic

Translate the following into Coptic:

- 1.

Exercise 2: Translate to English

Translate the following phrases into English:

- 1.

Resources

"A Study in Bohairic Coptic" by Nabil Matar; p162

See Moawad Daoud Lesson 2

See Sameh Younan page 59 in the PDF

ACTS 2990 Introduction to the Coptic Language (Bohairic) with Hany Takla Lesson 3A