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
□ □ ɋ-	□ □ ɋ-	□ □ ɋ-	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)
- -□ ɋ for 3rd Person Masculine (i.e. His)
- -□□ for 3rd Person Feminine (i.e. Her)
- -□□ for 3rd Person Plural (i.e. Their)

We will continue to see both of these patterns (i.e. □ for masculine, □ for feminine, □ for plural; and □ for 1st Person Singular, □□ for 2nd Person Masculine, □ for 2nd Person Feminine, etc.) throughout the Coptic language.

Examples

□□□□□	my father	□□□□□	my mother	□□□□ †	my fathers
□□□□□□	your (m.) father	□□□□□□	your (m.) mother	□□□□□ †	your (m.) fathers
□□□□□	your (f.) father	□□□□□	your (f.) mother	□□□□ †	your (f.) fathers
□□ ϥ□□□	his father	□□ ϥ□□□	his mother	□□ ϥ□□ †	his fathers
□□□□□□	her father	□□□□□□	her mother	□□□□□ †	her fathers
□□□□□□	our father	□□□□□□	our mother	□□□□□ †	our fathers
□□□□□□□□	your (pl.) father	□□□□□□□□	your (pl.) mother	□□□□□□□ †	your (pl.) fathers
□□□□□□	their father	□□□□□□	their mother	□□□□□ †	their fathers

Application

Application 1:

This is an excerpt from the eighth part of the Sunday Theotokia. The possessive articles are underlined below, as well as the definite and in definite articles from last week, and an explanation is provided for each.

ϩ□□□□ □□ □ □□□□ : □□□ □□□ ⲁ□□□□□□□ : □□□□ □□□ □ ϭ□□□ :ⲁ□ □ □□ ⲁ□□□ † □□ ⲁ □□□□□□ .	Through her prayers: and intercessions: O Lord open unto us: the gates of the Church.

1. □□□□□□□ _____ - the 3rd person feminine article is used here with a plural definite article. So the translation is "her prayers." Prayers is plural because of the □ - in □□□ and the possessive pronoun is "her" because of the -□□
2. □□□ ⲁ□□□□□□□ _____ - the 3rd person feminine article is used here with a plural definite article. So the translation is "her intercessions." Intercessions is plural because of the □ - in □□□ and the possessive pronoun is "her" because of the -□□
3. □ ϭ□□□ ___ - straightforward singular masculine weak definite article (non-□□□□□□□).
4. ⲁ□□□ ___ - the noun □□ means "mouth" but can also mean gate (i.e. the gate of the church is the mouth of the church). It is interesting here that the weak article is used, as if to say the Gates of the Church are unique or well known.
5. †□□ ⲁ□□□□□ _____ - straightforward singular feminine strong definite article.

Application 2:

This is an excerpt from the Second Canticle. The possessive articles are underlined below, and an explanation for each follows.

□ ϥϯ̀□ □□□___□□ ⲥ□ □□ ⲧ̀□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ : ⲭ□ □□__ϥ□□□ ⲱ□□ ⲱ□ⲧ̀□□□ ⲥ.	And gave their land as a heritage: Alleluia, His mercy endures forever.
□□ ⲧ̀□□□□□□□□□ ⲧ̀□ⲧ̀□ □□__ϥ□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ : ⲭ□ □□__ϥ□□□ ⲱ□□ ⲱ□ⲧ̀□□□ ⲥ.	A heritage to Israel His servant: Alleluia, His mercy endures forever.
ⲧ̀ⲥⲟ□□ ⲩ□□ □□□□___□□□□□ □ ϥ□□ □□□□___□□□□ ⲧ̀□ⲧ̀□ ⲭ□ □ ϭ□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ : ⲭ□ □□__ϥ□□□ ⲱ□□ ⲱ □ⲧ̀□□□ ⲥ.	The Lord who remembered us in our lowly state: Alleluia, His mercy endures forever.

1. □□□□□□_____ⲥ□ - the 3rd person plural article is used here with a masculine definite article. So the translation is "their land." Land is singular because of the □ - in □□□ and the possessive pronoun is "their" because of the -□□ .
2. □□__ϥ□□□___ - the 3rd person masculine article is used here with a masculine definite article. So the translation is "his mercy." Mercy is singular because of the □ - in □□ ϥ and the possessive pronoun is "his" because of the -□ ϥ.
3. □□__ϥ□□□___ - the 3rd person masculine article is used here with a masculine definite article. So the translation is "his servant." Servant is singular because of the □ - in □□ ϥ and the possessive pronoun is "his" because of the -□ ϥ.
4. □□__ϥ□□□___ - See above.
5. □□□□□□□□_____ - the 1st person plural article is used here with a masculine definite article. So the translation is "our humility." Humility is singular because of the □ - in □□□ and the possessive pronoun is "our" because of the -□□ . The common English translation is "our lowly state."
6. □ ϥ□□□□□□□□_____ⲧ̀□ - the usage of □□□ here is not a possessive article, although the □□□ does refer to the 1st person plural "us." The word is translated as "he remembered us." We can translate the entire third verse above as:
   In our humility, He remembered us; namely, the Lord. Alleluia. "His mercy endures for ever."

Application 3:

This is an excerpt from the Liturgy of St Gregory. The possessive articles are underlined below, and an explanation for each follows.

□□□ ⲭ□ⲧ̀□□□□ □□ ⲧ̀□ □□□___□□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□ ⲥⲟⲧ̀□□□□□□□□□□ . Ⲭ□ □□__ⲥ □□□□□ ⲧⲧ̀□□□□ □□□□□ : □□__ⲥ□□□□□ ⲧ̀□□□□ ⲧ□□ ⲧ̀□□□□ □□□□□□□□ . □□□ □□ ⲧ□□□ ⲧ̀□□□ ⲧ̀ⲥ □□□ ⲧ̀□□□□ □□□ □□□___□□□ .	You said to Your holy disciples and apostles, "My peace I give to you; My peace I leave with you." The same also, now grant to us, O our Master.

1. □□□□□□□□□□_____ - the 2nd person masculine article is used here with a plural definite article. So the translation is "your (m.) disciples." Disciples is plural because of the

□ - in □□□ and the possessive pronoun is "your (m.)" because of the -□□ .

2. □□ ⲥ□□□□□ - the 1st person singular article is used here with a feminine definite article. So the translation is "my peace." Peace is singular because of the □ - in □□ and the possessive pronoun is "my" because of the -□ .
3. □□ ⲥ□□□□□ - See above.
4. □□□□□□ - the 1st person plural article is used here with a masculine definite article. So the translation is "our master." Master is singular because of the □ - in □□□ and the possessive pronoun is "our" because of the -□□ .

Application 4:

This is an excerpt from the Doxology of St Rebekah. The possessive articles are underlined below, and an explanation for each follows.

□□ ⳟ□□ □□ `□□□□□ `□ □□ ⳟ□□□ : ϩ□□ `□□□□□ `□□□□□□ `□□□ □□□ `□□□ : □□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□□□□□ □□□□ : □□□□□□ ⲥ`□ ⲭ□ □□□ `ⳟ□□□□ `□□□ .	They cut the heads of the children: in the embrace of their mother and then her head: the faithful built a church for them: they revealed their wonders to them.

1. □□ `□□□□□ - the heads (plural definite article; irregular plural form of □□□ meaning "head")
2. □□ ⳟ□□□ - the children (plural definite article)
3. `□□□□□ - the embrace (singular weak article with □□□□ meaning "arm" or "embrace")
4. □□□□□□ - their mother (singular feminine possessive third person plural article)
5. □□□ `□□□ - her head (singular feminine possessive third person singular article)
6. □□□□□□□□ - the faithful (plural definite article)
7. □□□□□□□□□ - a church (singular indefinite article)
8. □□□ `ⳟ□□□□ - their wonders (plural possessive third person plural article; irregular plural form of ⳟ□□□ meaning "wonder")

Biblical Examples

ϯ□□□□□□ `□□□ □□□ ϭ□□□□	the table of their masters (Mt 15:27)
□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□ `□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□ □□□□□□	all the kingdoms of the world and their glory (Mt 4:8)
`□□□ ϥ □□ □□□□□ □□□ □□□□□□ □□□ □□□□□	he is my brother and my sister and my mother (Mt 12:50)
□□□ □□ □□□□□ □□ □□□ □□ □□ `□□□□□	who is my mother or who are my brothers? (Mt 12:48)

Exercises

Exercise 1: Translate to Coptic

Translate the following into Coptic:

1. My father and your (f.) father
2. My mother and your (m.) mother
3. Their eyes and ears
4. My brothers and sisters
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. □□□□□□ □□□ □□ ϥ□□□□
3. □□□□□□□□ □□□ □□□□□□□□□
4. □□□□□ □□□ □□ ϥ□□□ □□□ □□□□□
5. □□ `□□□ □□□ □□ ϥ□□□
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. □□ ϫ□□□ ϥ (Acts 20:28)
3. □□□□□□ (James 2:28)
4. □□□□□□□□ (2 Peter 3:2)
5. □□□□□ `□□□ (Acts 18:6)
6. □□□□□□□ ⲥ† (1 Peter 1:7)
7. □□□□ ⲥ† (Luke 7:50)
8. □□ ⲭ□ ⲭ (Acts 4:28)

Resources

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

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