

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)

We will continue to see both of these patterns (i.e. for masculine, for feminine, for plural; and 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
q	his father	q	his mother	q †	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.

2.	Through her prayers: and intercessions: O Lord open unto us: the gates of the Church.
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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. - 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. 6 straightforward singular masculine weak definite article (non-).
4. - 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. † - 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.

qf' 2 _ q w w` 2. :x	And gave their land as a heritage: Alleluia, His mercy endures forever.
_ q _ q` w w` 2x	A heritage to Israel His servant: Alleluia, His mercy endures forever.
`2 . 9` `qx _ q w w` 2x	The Lord who remembered us in our lowly state: Alleluia, His mercy endures forever.

1. _ - 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. _ q 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 q and the possessive pronoun is "his" because of the - q.
3. _ q 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 q and the possessive pronoun is "his" because of the - q.
4. _ q 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. _ q 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.

x` 2` f' 2` t: `.. X . t ` `2	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.
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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. _ 2 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

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. ⲧ ⲁ
2. ⲓ
- 3.
4. ⲓ
5. ⲁ ⲓ
- 6.
- 7.
8. ⲁ

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. ⲓ ⲓ (Acts 20:28)
3. (James 2:28)
4. (2 Peter 3:2)
5. ⲁ (Acts 18:6)
6. ⲓⲧ (1 Peter 1:7)
7. ⲓⲧ (Luke 7:50)
8. ⲧ ⲧ (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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