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Heikki PALVA

THE -ūn IN THE COLLOQUIAL ARABIC GENITIVE EXPONENTS

ḥaggūn, taba'ūn AND btā'ūn

In the region of Ša'dah near the northern border of Yemen, Peter Behnstedt has attested the plural form *ḥaggūn* of the genitive exponent, which in three local dialects is inflected as follows:

sing. masc.	fem.	pl. masc.	fem.	
<i>ḥagg</i>	<i>ḥaggat</i>	<i>ḥaggūn</i>	<i>ḥaggūn</i>	(Sāgēn)
<i>ḥagg</i>	<i>ḥaggit</i>	<i>ḥaggūn</i>	<i>ḥaggāt</i>	(an-Naḏīr)
<i>ḥagg</i>	<i>ḥaggat</i>	<i>ḥaggūn</i>	<i>ḥaggāt</i>	(im-Maṭṭah)

Behnstedt compares the form *ḥaggūn* with the Upper Egyptian and Sudanese equivalents *bitā'īn*, *ḥaggīn* and *līlīn*, and then puts forth the interesting hypothesis that this /-ūn/ actually might be a preserved old nominative morpheme.¹ In a dialect area where the unique archaism /ḡ/ : /ḡ/ is convincingly attested,² this assumption naturally suggests itself. However, similar forms have been attested for some other dialect areas as well, and therefore some comparisons should be made to test the plausibility of the hypothesis.

Apart from the Ša'dah region, similar plural forms of the genitive exponent have been reported to occur in urban Hijazi dialects: Snouck Hurgronje cites it in the form *ḥaggūn* (Mecca), whereas Schreiber mentions that the plural forms *ḥaggōn* and *ḥaggīn* occur in Mecca, both of which are used with reference to persons only.³ Significantly, the only example given by Siény for the use of the plural form in urban Hijazi, 'aṭ-ṭalabah *ḥaggōn* 'aljām'ah 'the students of the university', is in accord with Schreiber's observation.⁴

If *ḥagg* were the only genitive exponent in the modern dialects of Arabic which displays the plural marker /-ūn/ (or /-ōn/), it could be possible to explain it as a preserved nominative morpheme. But, as a matter of fact, the same plural marker occurs sporadically with other genitive exponents as well, viz. *btā'* and *taba'*. Thus, Bauer ascribes the plural forms *btā'ūn* masc. and *btā'āt* fem. to Palestinian peasants: *el-byūt btā'ūni* 'my houses', *el-kurūm btā'ūna* 'our vineyards', *hadōl btā'ūna* 'these are ours'.⁵ Among Cowell's examples from Damascus is the form *taba'ūli* 'mine', which Cowell presumes to be rendered from *taba'ūn*, perhaps reinterpreted as a quasi-verbal form with an /-l-/ suffix: *taba'ū-lo* 'belonging (pl.) to him'.⁶ It is also worth noting that *btā'ūn* and *taba'ūn* always seem to be used parallelly with *btā'īn* and *taba'īn*. In this respect the case resembles that of urban Hijazi, whereas in the region of Ša'dah the form *ḥaggūn* is not reported to have variants of this kind. On

the other hand, forms ending in /-īn/ occur in Syro-Palestinian dialects without variants ending in /-ūn/.

The parallel occurrence of forms ending in /-ūn/ and /-īn/ could lead to the conclusion that although the forms on the synchronic level are used in free variation, they still might reflect the old case distinction nominative vs. oblique case. However, it should be borne in mind that the emergence of analytic genitive constructions to a high degree is a result of the collapse of the Old Arabic case system. Therefore it seems natural to presume that the genitive exponents from the very beginning have lacked case distinctions. Consequently, the variants /-ūn/ and /-īn/ occurring in genitive exponents can hardly reflect the old nominative vs. oblique case distinction. The suffix /-īn/ is, of course, the generalized old st. abs. oblique case, whereas /-ūn/ most probably is the result of a later development.

When looking around for plausible points of departure for such a development, the closest parallels are to be found in demonstrative pronouns, in Maghribi dialects in particular: *hadūn* (Taza),⁷ *hādūn* and *hādun* (South Algeria),⁸ *hādūn*, *hādūna* (el-Hamma).⁹ In regard to the present problem, Maghribi forms are to be considered as relatively irrelevant; therefore it is worth noting that a similar development may have taken place in Damascus as well. There the pl. c. form of *hadāk(e)* and *hadīk(e)* is *hadānk(e)*, which according to the etymology proposed by Grotzfeld is derived from *hādūn + ke*.¹⁰

In certain dialects the plural morpheme displays a gender distinction which is unmistakably associated with personal pronouns. Thus, the dialect of the Marāzīg in southern Tunisia has the forms *hādūm(a)* pl. masc., *hādūn(a)* pl. fem., the first of which, together with other related North African forms, Fischer traces back to **hādā-humā*, **hādā-hum*. This etymology may, generally speaking, certainly be plausible, but there might have been substantial differences in the course of development between different dialects. The dialect of the Marāzīg—a dialect of the Bedouin type—belongs to those in which the etymology has probably been different. When discussing the feminine forms *hādūn*, *hādūna* of the dialect of el-Hamma, Fischer points to the problematic fact that it cannot be explained in the same way as the masculine forms *hādūm* etc., but for it the etymology **hād(ū)n(ā) < *hādā-ūn(ā)* must be presupposed. This is one of the reasons which has led Fischer not to rule out the possibility of the phonetic influence of *hādūlā* and related forms, and to presume that forms of the last-named type may have existed in these dialects at an earlier stage.¹¹ As a matter of fact, Boris mentions that in the dialect of the Marāzīg the pl. masc. and fem. forms given above intervary with an older form ("un pl. vieilli") *hādōl* pl. c.¹² In my opinion, the masculine and feminine forms in this case most probably have developed in parallel and should therefore be traced back to common origins. This implies that their /ō/ element would not be due to a phonetic influence of *hādōl*; rather, this inherited form was preserved, but in order to indicate gender distinction, new variants were developed through replacement of the final /l/ by /m/ in masc. and /n/ in fem., taken from corresponding personal pronouns. Analogously, the final /-ūn/ and /ōn/ in *hādūn* etc., as well as in the genitive exponents under discussion, may

originally have been composed of two separate morphological elements. This would in no way be an exceptional development. Several parallel cases are attested for different dialects, e.g. the pl. 3rd p. masc. (or c.) morpheme /-um/ in some dialects of Arabian Peninsula (*katabum*) and in Cairo (*gum*);¹³ in these kinds of forms a pronominal element—probably not a whole morpheme—has been added to the old plural morpheme /-ū/.

Verbal morphemes, too, have been borrowed in order to mark the plural of demonstrative pronouns. Instances of this are the series *hād(a)*, *hay(di)*, pl. *haw(di)*; *hidak/hidāk*, *hidik/hidīk*, pl. *hudik/hudīk* (Baskinta in Lebanon),¹⁴ *hāda*, *hādi*, *hawdi*; *hadāk*, *hadīk*, *hawdīk* (Jabal Anṣariye in Syria),¹⁵ and *hēdā*, *hēdi*, *hawli/hawdi*; *haḏāki*, *haḏēk/haḏīke*, *hawlēk/hawlīke* (ez-Zrēriye, Lebanon),¹⁶ in which the /w/ < /ū/ cannot be anything else but a plural marker borrowed from verbal inflection. Correspondingly, Jastrow traces the Anatolian and northern Mesopotamian *qaltu* dialect forms *hawq(e)* and *hawk(e)* (Mardin and its surroundings), *hawde* and *hawk(e)* (Kōsa, Mhallami), *(h)awq(e)* and *(h)awk* (Qartmīn), *(h)awd(e)* and *(h)awk* (Diyarbakır), *hawz(i)* and *hawk* (Boḥzāni), *ōzi* and *ōk* (Daragözü) back to **hā-ū-dā > *hawdā*, and explains the /ū/ element as taken from verbal inflection.¹⁷ This is also the commonest way of forming plurals of demonstrative pronouns in the Maghrib, where different reflexes of *hādā*, *hādī*, *hādū* and *dā*, *dī*, *dū* generally occur.¹⁸

It thus seems that there are two possible diachronic explanations for the /-ūn/ morpheme in *haggūn*, *btā'ūn* and *taba'ūn*. The /-ū/ element can plausibly be regarded as a loan from verbal inflection, whereas tracing the final /-n/ back to verbal inflection is more problematic. In the imperfect inflection, /-ūn/ admittedly occurs as a plural marker in the 2nd and 3rd p. masc. in Old Arabic as well as in Bedouin dialects of the Arabian Peninsula and in Iraqi dialects, but, significantly, neither in the Yemen nor the Hijaz, nor in the sedentary dialects of Greater Syria. Because the /-ūn/ morpheme most probably has not belonged to the imperfect inflection of the last-mentioned dialects late enough to have been loaned to genitive exponents, it is better explained as a combination of two elements derived from different sources, the verbal and the nominal inflection. In all three actual genitive exponents the use of a plural marker was probably called forth by a tendency to treat the genitive exponents morphologically as adjectives and to mark their agreement with the noun in number and gender. The most natural way to form this secondary plural was to use the nominal plural morphemes /-īn/ and /-āt/; new broken plurals were formed as well.¹⁹ Later on, in some dialects new variants ending in /-ūn/ developed, influenced by the plural marker /-ū/ of verbal inflection, perhaps brought about by a reinterpretation of the exponents as quasi-verbs, as suggested by Cowell for Damascus Arabic. In these dialects it occurs as a rival variant of other plural forms; among the dialects documented so far, those of the Ša'dah region are the only ones in which /-ūn/ would have totally replaced /-īn/. Although these dialects display several extremely conservative features, it is improbable that the diachronic explanation of *haggūn* there differs

substantially from that of the same form in Mecca. If the above hypothesis of the verbal origin of the /ū/ element is accepted, it would also explain the vowel /ō/ in the form in Mecca: the morpheme of the 3rd p. pl. in the perfect there is /-ū/, before a suffix /-ō-/.²⁰

A further fact supporting the hypothesis presented above is that the suffixation of plural morphemes to *ḥagg*, *btā'* and *taba'* actually involves a clear-cut distinction between the original substantives and the use of the words as established genitive exponents, and therefore it cannot be of a very early date.

Notes

- ¹ Peter Behnstedt, *Die Dialekte der Gegend von Sa'dah (Nord-Jemen)*. Wiesbaden 1987 (=Semitica Viva, Bd. 1); p. 62.
- ² *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7, and *id.*, Anmerkungen zu den Dialekten der Gegend von Sa'dah (Nord-Jemen). *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik* 16 (1987), pp. 93-107; p. 94f. The evidence of this archaic feature is conclusive: the fact that the phonemic contrast is not attributable to a secondary development is shown by ample material among which the distribution between the emphatic equivalents of /t/ and /d/ corresponds to their distribution in Old Arabic.
- ³ Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekkanische Sprichwörter und Redensarten. Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië* 5,1 (1886), pp. 433-576; p. 451. Giseler Schreiber, *Der arabische Dialekt von Mekka. Abriss der Grammatik mit Texten und Glossar*. Diss. Münster 1970; p. 52f. Kerstin Eksell Harning, *The Analytic Genitive in the Modern Arabic Dialects*. Orientalia Gothoburgensia 5. Göteborg 1980; p. 72f.
- ⁴ Mahmoud Esma'il Siény, *The Syntax of Urban Hijazi Arabic (Sa'ūdi Arabia)*, originally Ph.D. diss., Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., 1972; p. 140f.
- ⁵ Leonhard Bauer, *Das palästinische Arabisch. Die Dialekte des Städtlers und des Fellachen*. 4. Aufl., Leipzig 1926; p. 71f.; Eksell, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-53.
- ⁶ Mark W. Cowell, *A Reference Grammar of Syrian Arabic*. Washington, D.C., 1964. Georgetown University, Institute of Languages and Linguistics, Arabic Series No. 7; p. 489 n. 1.
- ⁷ George S. Colin, Notes sur le parler arabe du Nord de la région de Taza. *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie orientale du Caire* 18 (1920), pp. 33-119; p. 76.
- ⁸ Georg Kampffmeyer, *Südalgerische Studien. Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen* 8,2 (1905), pp. 225-244; p. 241.
- ⁹ William Marçais et Jelloūli Farès, Trois textes arabes de l'El-Hamma de Gabès. *Journal Asiatique* 218 (1931), pp. 193-247; 221 (1932), pp. 193-270; 223 (1933), pp. 1-88; p. 66.
- ¹⁰ Heinz Grotzfeld, *Laut- und Formenlehre des Damaszenisch-Arabischen*. Wiesbaden 1964. Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes XXXV,3; p. 45. As pointed out by Grotzfeld, *hādūn* is not attested for Damascus; however, Cowell

mentions *hadōn* as a Damascus variant for *hadōl*, *op. cit.*, p. 552. The etymology **hād(ā)-ūn(ā)* proposed by Fischer (Wolfdietrich Fischer, *Die demonstrativen Bildungen der neuarabischen Dialekte*. 's-Gravenhage 1959; pp. 109-111) for the Maghribi forms *hādūn*, *hādūn* etc. implies a very early date, if it is supposed that the plural marker was borrowed from nominal inflection, but perhaps somewhat later, if it was taken from the inflection of the imperfect. W. Marçais' explanation *hādūn* < *hādā* + *ulā* through a purely phonetic development (*op. cit.*, p. 66) may be justifiably rejected.

¹¹ Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 112f.

¹² Gilbert Boris, *Lexique du parler arabe des Marazig*. Paris 1958; p. 633. Wolfdietrich Fischer and Otto Jastrow (hrsg.), *Handbuch der arabischen Dialekte*. Wiesbaden 1980, p. 83, presents for the Marāzīg data that differ from Boris; cf. also p. 256. Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 113, expressly mentions that **hādā-ulā* does not exist in the dialect of el-Hamma; as to the dialect of the Marāzīg, he has only used the texts in Gilbert Boris, *Documents linguistiques et ethnographiques sur une région du Sud-Tunisien (Nefzaoua)*. Paris 1951. The *Lexique* was not yet available.

¹³ Fischer/Jastrow, *op. cit.*, pp. 117 and 220.

¹⁴ Farida Abu-Haidar, *A Study of the Spoken Arabic of Baskinta*. Leiden & London 1979; p. 78.

¹⁵ Bernhard Lewin, *Notes on Cabali. The Arabic dialect spoken by the Alawis of "Jebel Ansariye"*. Orientalia Gothoburgensia 1. Göteborg 1969; p. 19f. This dialect has also a sing. c. form *hāya*.

¹⁶ Jussi Aro, Der südlibanesisische Dialekt von ez-Zrēriyye 2. Grammatik. *Acta Orientalia* 40 (1979), pp. 27-71; p. 43.

¹⁷ Otto Jastrow, *Die mesopotamisch-arabischen qeltu-Dialekte. Band I: Phonologie und Morphologie*. Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes XLIII,4. Wiesbaden 1978; pp. 104-107.

¹⁸ Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

¹⁹ Such secondarily formed plurals are *mālāt* in Iraqi *gilit* dialects, *taba'āt* in Aleppo, *qēlāt* sporadically in Palestine, *imtā'in* in Eastern Libya, and the broken plurals *btū'* and *šayyūt* in Jerusalem, *bitū'* in Cairo and *mtāwa'* in Mzāb (Algeria), see Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 71f.; Wallace M. Erwin, *A Short Reference Grammar of Iraqi Arabic*. Washington, D.C., 1963. Georgetown University, Institute of Languages and Linguistics, Arabic Series No. 4; p. 376; Abdulghafur Sabuni, *Laut- und Formenlehre des arabischen Dialekts von Aleppo*. Frankfurt am Main 1980 (=Heidelberger orientalistische Studien, Bd. 2); p. 184; A. Barthélemy, *Dictionnaire Arabe-Français. Dialectes de Syrie: Alep, Damas, Liban, Jérusalem*. Fasc. 1-5 Paris 1935-54; s.vv. *bt'* and *šyy*; Jonathan Owens, *A Short Reference Grammar of Eastern Libyan Arabic*. Wiesbaden 1984; p. 84; Nada Tomiche, *Le parler arabe du Caire*. Paris & La Haye 1964; p. 184; Jacques Grand'Henry, *Les parlers arabes de la région du Mzāb (Sahara algérien)*. Leiden 1976; p. 84.

²⁰ Schreiber, *op. cit.*, p. 36.