NubiaFEST 2020 Old Nubian Crash Course
Day 2 – Noun Phrases

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Determiner

There is one definite determiner: -ⲗ. The numeral ⲟⲩⲉⲗ may be used as indefinite determiner, but is not necessary.

(1)   a. ⲉ̄ⲧⲧ-ⲗ̄ 'the woman'

        b. ⲉ̄ⲧⲧⲟⲩ (ⲟⲩⲉⲗ) 'a woman'

Determiner

The definite determiner nearly always appears in the context of a
nominative, as it is dropped before any other case marking.

(2) L 113.2–5 [ⲉⲓⲥ]ⲥⲛ̄ ⲇⲟⲇⲅⲣⲓ̈ⲅⲟⲩⲗ ⲙⲁϣⲁⲗⲟⲥⲕⲗⲟ̄ ⲧⲁⲣⲁ ⲓ̈ⲉ̄ⲣⲟⲩⲥⲁⲗⲙⲓⲟ̄
     ⲕⲓⲥⲁⲛⲁ

     eissin   *dodg-iri-gou-l-∅*   *mašalosk-ilo tara*
     behold sorcerer-PL-PL-DET-NOM   east-LOC   from
     ierousalmi-o   *kis-an-a*
     Jerusalem-LOC come.PST2-3PL-PRED

     'Behold, magi arrived from the east in Jerusalem.' (Mt 2:1)

Demonstrative Pronouns

(3) a. ⲉⲓⲛ, pl. ⲉⲓⲛ-ⲛ̄-ⲅⲟⲩ 'this'

    b. ⲙⲁⲛ, pl. ⲙⲁⲛ-ⲛ̄-ⲅⲟⲩ 'that'

Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns may be used attributively:

(4) K 23.11–24.1 ⲉⲛ̄ ⲕⲉⲧⲁ ⲙⲁⲗⲗⲉ̣ⲟ̣ⲛ ⲟ̄ⲛⲧⲁⲕⲣⲁⲅⲟⲩⲉⲕⲉ ⲙⲟⲩⲛⲧⲗⲱ
ⲡⲁ� ana ⲡⲁ𝟅ⲁⲛⲁⲥⲱ·

> *ein*   *ket-a*   *malle-∅-on*
> DEM.PROX way-PRED all-NOM-TOP
> *on-tak-r-a-goue-ke*   *moun-t-lō*
> love-PASS-PRS-PRED-PL.PRED-2PL hate-NMLZ-LOC
> *paj-ana-sō*
> cease-IMP.2/3PL.PRED-COMM

'In all these ways, beloved, desist from hatred!'

Demonstrative Pronouns

And also independently:

(5) L 106.8–9 ⲉⲓⲛⲛ̄ⲕⲁ ⲡⲉⲥ[ⲓ]ⲇ̅ⲁ̣ⲣ[ⲁⲗⲟ]ⲉⲓⲟⲛ ⲓ̈ⲏ̄ⲥⲟⲩⲥⲓ

ein-in-ka   *pes-ij-ar-a-lo-eion*
DEM.PROX-PL-ACC speak-PLACT-PST1-PRED-FOC-TOP

iēsousi-∅
Jesus-NOM

'These (things) Jesus said.' (Jn 17:1)

Demonstrative Pronouns

ⲉⲓⲛ may be used as a relative pronoun in literary texts.

(6) P.QI 2 13.ii.24–28 ⲅⲁⲥⲟⲩⲁⲣⲁⲥⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲕⲁ ⲧⲓⲗⲗ̄ ⲧⲁⲣⲛ̄ ⲥⲉⲩⲁ̄ⲉ̄ⲅⲁⲣⲁ⫽ . . .
ⲓ̈ⲁⲕⲱⲃⲓⲛ ⲅⲁⲟⲟⲟⲩⲣ ⲏⲛ` ⲟⲩⲥ̄ⲥⲛ̄ⲇⲉⲕⲉⲗⲕⲁ

ŋas-j-ar-a-sin   *ou-ka*   *till-il-∅*
choose-PLACT-PST1-PRED-EMP 1PL.EXCL-ACC God-DET-NOM
tari-n   *seuae-gar-a*   *iakōb-in*   *gajjour* *ēn*
3SG-GEN heir.PL-CAUS-PRED Jacob-GEN beauty DEM.PROX
ous-s-in-dekel-ka
want-PST2-2/3SG.PRED-CONJ-ACC

'God chose us, making us his heirs, and the beauty of Jacob that he loved.' (Ps 46:5)

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Singular

The singular is unmarked in Old Nubian.

Dual

The dual is created with the suffix **-ⲁⲛ/ⲛ̄** followed by the ⲧⲡⲓ 'pair(?)',
which may be marked with plural **-ⲅⲟⲩ**.
The dual is attested with only a few nouns, including body parts:

(7)   a. ⲙⲁ⳯-ⲛ̄ ⲧⲡⲓ'pair of eyes'

        b. ⲟ̄ⲉ-ⲛ̄ ⲧⲡⲓ 'pair of feet'

        c. ⲁⲩⲣ-ⲁⲛ ⲧⲡⲓ 'pair of wings/shoulders'

        d. ⲟⲩⲗⲅ-ⲁⲛ ⲧⲡⲓ 'pair of ears'

        e. ⲕⲟ-ⲁⲛ ⲧⲡⲓ 'pair of dominions (i.e., Makuria and Alwa)'

        f. ⲧⲗ̄ⲗ-ⲛ̄ ⲧⲡⲓ 'pair of (heathen) gods'

Dual

Especially the dual for 'gods' is pretty wild:

(8) SC 21.3–4 ⲧⲁⲣⲓⲟ̄ ⲇⲟⲟ[ⲕⲕ]ⲁ̣ ⲕⲁⲡⲉⲥⲟⲩⲛ ⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩⲣⲣⲱ^ᵒ ⲧⲗ̄ⲗ̄ⲛ̄ ⲧⲣⲉ ⲕⲟⲩⲗⲗⲁⲅ̣ⲁⲣⲣⲁⲗⲕⲉⲁ̄·

> *tari-o*   *jo-ok-ka*   *kap-es-ou-n*   *oukour-rō*
> 3SG-LOC go-PST1-ACC eat-PST2-1/2PL-GEN day-LOC
> *till-in*   *tre*
> God-DU pair.PRED
> *koull-aŋ-ar-r-a-lke-a*
> like-INCH-INTEN-PRS-PRED-AFF.PRS.2PL-DD

'"On the day that you have eaten what has come from it you will become like gods."'

Plural

There are two sets of plural suffixes.

The first set includes the most common plural suffix is -ⲅⲟⲩ. It not obligatory if plurality can be inferred from context.

(9)   a. ⲟⲩⲣⲟⲩ-ⲅⲟⲩ 'kings'

     b. ⲅⲁⲣⲙ-ⲟⲩⲅⲟⲩ 'heavens'

     c. ⲇⲁⲉ-ⲓⲕⲟⲩ 'fish (*Cyprinus lepidotus*)'

Plural

The second set comprises suffixes ending in -ı: **-pı**, **-ɴı**, **-λı**, **-ı**. These are lexically determined and obligatory.

(10) a. ïoγⲇⲁⲓⲟ̄ⲥ-ⲣï 'Jews'
      b. ⲧⲓ-ⲛⲓ 'cows'
      c. ⳝⲉⲙ-λï 'years'
      d. ⲥⲓⲡⲡ-ⲉ 'nations' < *ⲥⲓⲡⲡ-ⲓ-ⲁ

They commonly occur in combination with **-ⲅoγ**.

(11) a. ⲙoγⲅ-ⲣⲓ-ⲅoγ 'dogs'
      b. oγⲕⲣ-ï-ⲅoγ 'days'
      c. ⲥⲁⲭⲭ-ⲛⲓ-ⲅoγ 'anchorites'

Plural

There are a few irregular plurals.

(12)   a. ⲉⲓⲗ 'woman, wife', pl. ⲉⲓⲗⲓⲟⲩ

          b. ⲧⲟⲧ 'child', pl. ⲧⲟⲩⳡ

          c. ⲉⲕ̄ⲕⲁ-ⲁⲧⲧ 'prophet', pl. ⲉⲕ̄ⲕⲁ-ⲁⲉⲓ

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Structural Cases

Structural cases mark the main semantic roles in a sentence: subjects, direct objects, and indirect objects. Old Nubian has a nominative–accusative case marking system, meaning that subjects of transitive and intransitive verbs are marked with the same structural case.

(13)   **Nominative -∅**   Subject of intransitive verb; agent of the transitive verb

Genitive -ⲛ(ⲁ)   Subject of intransitive verb; agent of the transitive verb in non-coreferential attributive relative clause, possessor

Accusative -ⲕⲁ   Patient of transitive verb, animate recipient of ditransitive verb, duration

Dative -ⲗⲁ   (In)animate recipient of ditransitive verb, location, direction, time

Lexical Cases

Lexical cases mark adjuncts in a sentence

(14) **Locative -**ⲗⲟ   Direction, location, time; may be followed by a
        large number of postpositions
      Allative -ⲣ̄ⲗ(ⲗⲉ)   Direction
      Superessive -ⲇⲟ   Location above/upward direction
      Subessive -ⲇⲟⲛ/ⲇⲱⲛ   Location below/downward direction
        (rare)
      Vocative -ⲟ   Addressee (rare)
      Comitative -ⲇⲁⲗ   'With' or 'against' (rare)
      Adessive -ⲇⲉ   'Adjacent/next to' (rare)

Position of Case Marking

Case marks the end of the entire noun phrase.

(15) M 10.4–6 ⲙⲁⲛ ⲇⲓⲡⲡⲓⲗⲁⲉⲓⲟⲛ ⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥⲟⲩ ⲅ̄ⲥ̄ⲥⲟⲩ ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁⲛ ⲕ̄ⲥⲥⲉⲗⲗⲟ
ⲅⲟⲛⲇ̄ⲁⲣⲁ·

man   *dipp-ila-eion*   *parthenosou ŋissou maria-n*
DEM.DIST village-DAT-TOP virgin   holy   Mary-GEN

kisse-l-∅-lo   *ŋonj-ar-a*
church-DET-NOM-FOC stand-PST1-PRED

'In that village stood the church of the Holy Virgin Mary.'

Double Object Marking

If the indirect object is inanimate, the dative is used:

(16) St 12.12–13.1 ⲧⲁⲛ ⲟ̄ⲣⲱⲥⲉⲛ ϣⲟⲕⲕⲁ ⲡⲉⲓⲁ̄ ⲕ̄ⲥ̄ⲥⲉⲗⲁ ⲧ̄ⲟ̄ⲇ̄ⲁⲣ ⲉⲛⲕⲁⲛ

tan	*orōse-n*	*šok-ka*	*pei-a*	*kisse-la*
3SG.GEN	praise-GEN	book-ACC	write-PRED	church-DAT

tij-j-ar	*en-ka-n*
give>2/3-PLACT-PST1	be-SUBORD-2/3SG

'If he wrote books of its praise and gave them to the church . . . '

Double Object Marking

If the indirect object is animate, the accusative is used:

(17) FP 1.3–4 ● ⲧⲗ̄ⲗⲟ ⲱⲟⲕⲁ ⲡⲁ[ⲟⲩ]ⲟⲩⲛⲁ ⲥⲉⲓ̈ⲅⲉⲕⲁ ⲇⲉⲛⲁⲙⲏ

tillo   šoka   paouou-na   seiw-e-ka
God.FOC book.ACC power-GEN inherit-NMLZ-ACC

den-a-mē
give>1-PRED-JUS.SG

'Let God give me, the inheritor of power, the book!'

Denominal Postpositions

There are two types of postpositions: denominal and deverbal postpositions. Denominal postpositions derive from nouns. They may follow a locative case -ⲗⲟ, but are also attested after other cases and the determiner.

(18)   DET + ⲁⲅⲱ̄/ⲁⲅⲁ̄ 'within'
          DET/LOC + ⲕⲁⲗⲟ 'downstream, after'
          GEN + ⲕⲉⲗⲗⲓⲕⲁ/ⲕⲉⲉⲕⲕⲁ 'as, according to'
          LOC + ⲙⲁⲗⲟ 'according to'
          DET + ⲙⲟⲗ 'near'
          GEN + ⲛⲁⲣⲟ/ⲛⲁⲣⲉ 'beside'
          DET/GEN/LOC + ⲟ̄ⲣⲟ 'upstream, before'
          DET/GEN/LOC + ⲧⲁⲅⲟ 'under'
          GEN + ⲧⲟⲩ 'inside'
          DAT/LOC + ⲧⲟⲩⲥⲟⲩ 'before'
          GEN + ⲇⲟⲩⲣⲓ-; LOC/LE + ⲇⲟⲩⲛ 'about, because of'

Denominal Postpositions

(19) Dong 1.i.21–23 ⲙⲁϣⲁⲛ ⲟⲥⲕⲉⲗⲱ ⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁ ⲉⲓⲗⲁ ⲟⲛ ⲧⲉⲣⲛ̄ ⲕⲟⲩⲗ ⲁⲩⲱ̄
ⲡⲓⲉⲓⲥⲁⲛⲁ

mašan   os-k-e-lō   timm-a   ei-la
sun.GEN come.out-NMLZ-NMLZ-LOC gather-PRED hand-DAT

on teri-n   koul   auō   pi-eis-an-a
and 3PL-GEN cave.DET within lie-PST2-3PL-PRED

'At sunrise, they gathered together and lied within their cave.'
(Ps 103:22)

Deverbal Postpositions

Deverbal postpositions derive from verbal roots. They follow a locative case **-ⲗⲟ**.

(20)   ʟᴏᴄ + ⲕⲕ̃ⲕⲗ̄ 'until, up to'
            ʟᴏᴄ + ⲕⲟ 'by, through'
            ʟᴏᴄ + ⲕⲟⲛⲟ/ⲕⲟⲛⲁ 'after'
            ʟᴏᴄ + ⲧⲁⲣⲁ 'from'
            ʟᴏᴄ + ⲧ̄ⲇ̃ⲟ 'with, from'
            ʟᴏᴄ + ⲇ̃ⲱⲁ̄ 'through, by, because of'

Deverbal Postpositions

(21) L 108.3–4 ⲉ̄ⲛ ⲧⲁⲅⲥⲗⲟ̄ ⲕⲱ ⲧⲉⲕⲕⲁ ⲉⲓⲇ̅ⲫⲓⲇⲉⲥⲱ⳥

    ein   *taŋs-ilo*   *kō*   *tek-ka*
    2SG.GEN   name-LOC   through   3PL-ACC
    eidñ-ij-e-sō
    keep-PLACT-IMP.2/3SG.PRED-COMM

    'Keep them through your name!' (Jn 17:11)

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Possession

Possession is marked with a genitive:

(22) M 5.12–14 ⲅⲥ̄ⲥⲟⲩ ⲙ︤ⲏⲛⲁⲛ ⲕ︤ⲥ︤ⲥⲉⲅ︦ⲗ̄ⲗⲉⲗⲱ ⲟ̅ⲟⲩⲣⲉ·

ŋissou mēna-n   *kisse-gille-lō*   *jou-r-e*
holy   Mēnas-GEN church-ALL-FOC go-PRS-1SG.PRED

'I go to the church of Saint Mēnas.'

Adjectives

Qualifiers (adjectives, relative clauses) usually **follow** nouns.

(23) ⲥⲱⲡⲧⲱϫⲉⲓ ⲁⲇⲱⲫⲉⲓ ⲅⲱⲕ ⲕⲟⲛⲇⲓⲗ ⲁⲇⲱ ⲕⲉⲙⲥⲱⲛⲅⲟⲩⲗ

sōrtōw-ei adō-phei ŋook kon-j-il *adō*
priest-PL white-INT glory have-PLACT-PRS twenty
kemsōn-gou-l
four-PL-DET

'24 sparkling white, glorious priests'

Adjectives

But if they **precede** the noun, they have a restrictive reading.

(24) ⲅⲁⲇⲕⲓ̄ⲯ̄ⲫⲉⲓ ⲅ̄ⲟⲟⲕ ⲕⲟⲛⲇⲓⲗ ⲁⲯⲉⲗ ⲕⲉⲙⲥⲱⲛⲅⲟⲩⲕⲁ

    gad-kiññei   *ŋook kon-j-il*   *añ-el*
    flesh-NEG.ADJ glory have-PLACT-PRS live-PFV.PRS
    kemsō-n-gou-ka
    four-PL-PL-ACC

    'four incorporeal, glorious animals'

Attributive Relative Clauses

Like adjectives, attributive relative clauses usually follow the noun. It is possible to relativize the subject:

(25) ⲁⲡⲟⲅⲅⲟⲩ ⲉⲓⲕⲕⲁ ⲟⲩⲗⲅⲣ̄ⲗ̄

apoggou   *eik-ka*   *oulgr-il*
boatsman   2SG-ACC   hear-PRS.DET

'the boatsman that hears you'

Attributive Relative Clauses

Like adjectives, attributive relative clauses usually follow the noun. It is possible to relativize the subject:

(27)　ⲁⲡⲟⲅⲅⲟⲩ ⲉⲓⲕⲕⲁ ⲟⲩⲗⲅ̄ⲣ̄ⲗ̄

　　apoggou　*eik-ka*　*oulgr-il*
　　boatsman　2sg-acc　hear-prs.det

　　'the boatsman that hears you'

And to relativize the object:

(28)　ⲁⲡⲟⲅⲅⲟⲩ ⲉⲓⲛⲛⲁ ⲟⲩⲗⲅ̄ⲣ̄ⲗ̄

　　apoggou　*ein-na*　*oulgr-il*
　　boatsman　2sg-gen　hear-prs.det

　　'the boatsman that you hear'

NB: in non-coreferential (object-relativizing) RCs, the subject of the RC is marked with genitive!

Attributive Relative Clauses

When they precede the noun, they have a restrictive reading.

(29) ⲉⲓⲛⲛⲁ ⲟⲩⲗⲅⲣ̅ⲗ ⲁⲡⲟⲅⲅ̅ⲗ

ein-na   *oulgr-il*   *apogg-il*
2SG-GEN   hear-PRS   boatsman-DET

'the boatsman that you hear' (rather than the boatsman you don't hear – restrictive reading)

Attributive Relative Clauses

When they precede the noun, they have a restrictive reading.

(31) ⲉⲓⲛⲛⲁ ⲟⲩⲗⲅⲣ̅ⲗ ⲁⲡⲟⲅⲅ̅ⲗ

ein-na   *oulgr-il*   *apogg-il*
2SG-GEN   hear-PRS   boatsman-DET

'the boatsman that you hear' (rather than the boatsman you don't hear – restrictive reading)

RCs can also be used independently (without antecedent):

(32) ⲟⲩⲗⲅⲣⲓⲗⲅⲟⲩⲗ

oulgr-il-gou-l
hear-PRS-PL-DET

'those that hear'

Noun Coordination

Two coordinated terms 'A and B':

(33)   a. A B

            b. A ⲟⲛ B

            c. A-ⲇⲉ B-ⲇⲉⲕⲉⲣ

            d. A-ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ B-ⲇⲉⲕⲉⲣ

Noun Coordination

Three coordinated terms 'A, B, and C':

(34) a. A-ⲇⲉ B-ⲇⲉ C-ⲇⲉⲕⲉⲣ

b. A-ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ B-ⲇⲉ C-ⲇⲉⲕⲉⲣ

c. A-ⲇⲉ B-ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ C-ⲇⲉⲕⲉⲣ

d. A-ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ B-ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ C-ⲇⲉⲕⲉⲣ

Noun Coordination

(35) K 33.15–34.2 ⲧⲁⲛⲛⲁⲥⲛ̄ ⲅⲟⲕⲗ̄ ⲟⲛ ⲧⲱⲉⲕⲗ̄ ⳝⲉⲗ ⲉⲗⲗⲉⲛⲅⲟⲩⲗⲟ ⲕⲥ̄ⲕⲗ̄ⲗⲟ
ⲁⲙⲏⲛ:+++

tan-n-a-sin   *ŋok-il-∅*   *on*   *tōek-il-∅*   *jel*
3SG-GEN-PRED-EMP glory-DET-NOM and power-DET-NOM age

ellen-gou-lo   *kiskillo*   *amēn*
eternity-PL-LOC until.LOC amen

'His is the glory and the power, until the eternity of the ages,
amen.'

Noun Coordination

(36) K 25.10–14 ⲕⲟⲣⲁⲕⲁ ⲉⲧⲉⲛⲛⲟⲛ ⲉⲛ̄ⲛⲁ ⲁ̄ⲉⲗ̄ⲇⲉ ⲟⲕⲕⲁⲛⲛⲏⲇⲉⲕⲉⲕⲕⲁ ⲕⲟⲕⲉⲓⲣⲁ ⲕⲟⲣⲉⲕⲁ ⲕⲉⲓⲁ ⲉⲓⲧⲉⲥⲟ·

kora-ka   *et-en-non*   *ein-na*
sacrament-ACC take-PFV.PRS.2/3SG-TOP 2SG-GEN

aeil-de   *ok-kannē-dekek-ka*   *ko-keir-a*
heart-CONJ feel-NMLZ-CONJ-ACC pure-CAUS-PRED

kore-ka   *kei-a*   *eit-e-so*
sacrament-ACC come-PRED take-IMP.2/3SG.PRED-COMM

'When you take the sacrament, purify your heart and feelings, and come and take the sacrament!'

Noun Coordination

Other coordinators:

(37) a. A ⲉⲛⲕⲁⲛ B ⲉⲛⲕⲁⲛ: 'either A or B'

      b. A ⲙⲉⲛⲉⲛ B ⲙⲉⲛⲉⲛ: 'either A or B'

      c. A-ⲉⲛⲇⲉ B-ⲉⲛⲇⲉ: 'neither A nor B'

      d. A B-ⲉⲛⲕⲱ: 'A but B'

Noun Coordination

(38) GAL i.4–9 ογννιτακολλον· πокода· мενεν· ϲада· ϲαλαϲι
     мενεν· δογϲραλο ενδνα

ounn-itak-ol-∅-lon   *pokod-a*   *menen*   *ŋad-a*
bear-PASS-PST1.DET-NOM-TOP lame-PRED or   ??-PRED

ŋalaŋi *menen* *douŋ-r-a-lo*   *en-d-n-a*
??   or   blind-PRS-PRED-FOC be-INTEN-PRS.2/3SG-PRED

'The one who has been born will be either lame or (. . .) or blind.'

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