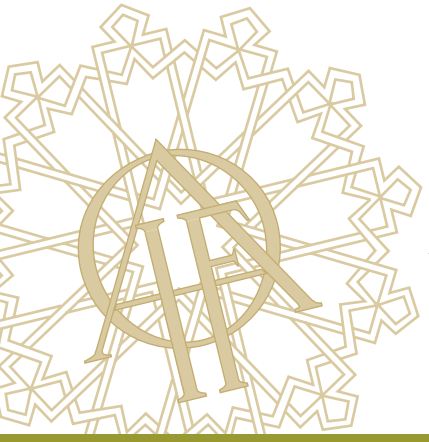
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AnIsl 15 (1976), p. 349-357

Madiha Doss

The Position of the Demonstrative da, di in Egyptian Arabic: a Diachronic Inquiry.

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THE POSITION OF THE DEMONSTRATIVE *DA* [1], *DI* IN EGYPTIAN ARABIC : A DIACHRONIC INQUIRY

Madiha DOSS

1. When subjected to a first analysis a number of linguistic forms in the text of *Hazz al-Quḥūf* appear to be alternating in terms of free variation. One such case is the position of the demonstrative adjective series *da, di,* whether prepositive or postpositive to the noun.

The synchronic analysis of present Cairene, a close inquiry in the text of *Hazz al-Quḥūf* and the comparison of the latter to other early sources of the dialect, will reveal more predictable rules for the positioning of the demonstrative.

2. *The Present Situation.* The forms of the demonstrative adjectives are the following :

For close reference :

masc. *da*	fem. *di*	plur. *dōl*

For distant reference [2] :

masc. *dokha*	fem. *dikha*	plur. *dokhom*

Forms of the close reference series are also obtained by the suffixation of the pronoun to the demonstrative : *dahó, dihé* or *dahówwa*(t) and their shortened counterparts *dáwwat, díyyat.*

[1] By the demonstrative we mean the equivalent of « this », in sentences such as : « this man » *errāgil da.* We are not concerned with other functions of *da* and *di :*

Pronominal : *da rāgel* « this is a man ». Exclamative sentence introducer : *fēnak dana mašuftakš men senīn ?* « Where have you been ? I haven't seen you since years ». In his grammar Willmore (1905) translates this *da* by «see».

[2] Although it does not belong morphologically to the demonstrative series, the ordinal numeral *tāni* is often used in place of an element of the *dokha* series; *howwa meš mawgūd fe-l'ōda di, yemken yekūn fi-l'ōda ttanya* « he is not in this room, he might be in the other (room) ».

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There exists a form *dek* representing the classical arabic ذاك, its use is strictly restricted to a few fixed forms such as *dekennahār* « the other day ». We shall see in paragraph 4, that *dāk* (masc.) *dēk* (fem.) are attested in earlier texts in larger, non-restricted uses.

As for the question of positioning, elements of the *da* series normally follow the noun : *šoft errāgel da?* « did you see this man »; *eṣṣūra di ʿagbāni* « I like this picture »; *teʿrafu nnās dōl?* « Do you know these people » is the productive unmarked one.

There are cases where the enclitic demonstrative has been closely combined to the noun so as to produce a single and undivisible stress unit, these are counted among the few cases of compound words which Arabic knows, *essanādi* « this year », *el-marrādi* « this time », *ennaḥyādi* « this side ». Whereas in the case of *errāgel dá'* « this man » an adjective can be inserted between the noun and the demonstrative *errāgel el-magnūn dá'* « this crazy man », no insertion is possible between the elements of the compound *essanādi*. Moreover *di* in *essanādi* behaves like a suffix as is shown by the lengthening of the final vowel of *sana* « year ». (The final vowel of a form is lengthened when a suffix is added to it : *šāfu* « they saw », *šafūni* « they saw me »). There are other situations where *da* or *di* is suffixed to the noun so as to form a single stress unit *elwaládda* « this boy » instead of *el wálad dá'*. We agree with Mitchell (1962, p. 57) that the former construction is endowed by an emphatic intention. However it does not seem that this procedure constitutes a productive means of adding emphasis to an utterance.

We have described the word order *Noun-Dem.* which is the productive and unmarked one. However we find cases in which the demonstrative precedes the noun. This word order *Dem.-Noun* is dependent upon its occurrence in a limited set of constructions in the language, namely in :

— noun phrases following the vocative *ya : ya de-lḥeba* « what a nuisance! »; *ya de-lmoṣība ssōda* « what a somber catastrophe! »; *yeḫreb bētak ya de-rrāgel* [1] « may God ruin your house, man! ».

[1] Compare these constructions to the cases brought forward by Fisher (1959, p. 57) from Yemenite Jew *fagrič jā ḏā lğumğumäh* « oh poor skull » and *Ḏofār jā ḏē lḥoruma* « o, woman ».

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— strongly worded commands (most often negative ones) : *ḫallaṣūna men di šššoġlāna* « rid us from this job! », this utterance can come either with the noun being defined by the definite article as above, or with an indefinite noun : *ḫallaṣūna men di šoġlāna; sebna men di ssīra* « let us get over this question! » or *sebna men di sīra* (as above with an indefinite noun).
— curses and invocations : *yelʿan 'abu di ʿīša* « Damn this life! ».

The possibility of using *Dem.-Noun* is limited to these constructions. We can say that this word order is a restricted and non-productive one, it constitutes the marked counterpart of *Noun-Dem.*

In all of the constructions described above the slot reserved for the noun can receive a wide range of words depending on the context : *ya de-lḥekāya* « what a story! », *ya de-l'araf* « what a disgusting thing! » etc...

We posit that the limited occurrences of *Dem.-Noun,* in the present state, constitute residuals from a previous stage during which the variation of word-order was a freer one. According to our hypothesis the order *Dem.-Noun* had at an earlier stage a wider range of use since it would appear :

1) in a larger variety of fixed expressions (of a subjective nature) similar to the ones described above.
2) in normal noun phrases not included in 1); *Dem.-Noun* could then be a means used by the speaker in order to express his mood toward the object referred to.

Fischer (1959, p. 64) states that forms of demonstrative preceding the noun still exist in the *Fellāḥ* (Lower Egypt) dialect. Our investigation with informants from the Delta area showed no evidence for such a word order. We asked informants from the regions of Beḥayra, Manṣūra, and Manūfīyya; it appears to be the case that *Dem.-Noun* in these dialect areas is governed by the same constraints described above for Cairene. *Dem.-Noun* is a marked output appearing in fixed expressions such as in the *ya*-sentences.

Examples drawn from poetic texts are no evidence for the existence of demonstrative preceding the noun, since as we show in paragraph 3, poetry shows a high incidence of this word-order. Moreover the examples drawn from Schäfer

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and Maspero quoted by Fischer also reflect verse. Indeed Fischer himself notes the fact that cases of prepositive demonstrative are frequent in poetry.

Spitta (1880, p. 308 b) mentions the preposition of the demonstrative adjective and attributes it to regional particularities. *Da,* and *di,* (not *dōl*) preceding the noun would occur in the speech of the *Fellāḥ*'s and of other provincial areas. However the examples drawn by Spitta to substantiate his statement are quotations from Širbīnī's *Hazz al-quḥūf* and do not describe the actual situation of any area of the Egyptian dialect in the late nineteenth century. Compare Spitta's examples with *Širbīnī* (1274 A.H. p. 15 : 29 and p. 14 : 10).

The result of the study of *Hazz al-quḥūf* of *Bāsem al-Ḥaddād* and of other early sources which we study in the coming paragraph seems to justify this hypothesis.

3. Before proceeding to the study of earlier sources let us note the following : *Dem.-Noun* is of a high incidence in poetry, this fact has been noted by Fischer (1959, p. 64). The observation applies to poetry composed in the early Mamluke period (see Jammāl, 1966 in his quotations), but remains relevant to poetry written today. The reason for the frequent occurrence of this word order in poetry is beyond our study. Poetry in the vernacular has its traditions both in the form and in the content. The construction we are concerned with could be one among other forms transmitted through the tradition of the genre. Here are a few examples drawn from contemporary vernacular poetry; from Bayram al-Tūnisī (1976-IV, p. 143); *yekūn fī ʿonkom ya qoḍā rabb essama / law toḥkomu bel ʿadl maʿ di llaḥbaṭa* « may God help you judges, to be able to judge fairly in the midst of this confusion »; and from the same volume (p. 30) : *el 'akl dāyer w-ennofūs 'arfāna / men de-lḥalīl elle malāna ʿfāna* [1] « They were eating dinner, and disgust was growing from this *ḥalīl* (name of child) who made the air stink ». These are only two examples among a large number appearing in *Tūnisī*'s poetry (I to V).

Taking another collection of poetry in the vernacular *Sayf* (1977, p. 61) : *men yōm ma hāger 'abūya m-elġarb elbaʿīd wo-geh le di-lmadīna / la ḥaṭawātu 'edrit teġayyar ḥatwāha lʿanīd wala ṣawabʿu baddelet soḥnetha di-lmagnūna* « Since the

[1] The occurrence of the demonstrative before a proper noun is particularly striking, and should be compared to the example from Dhofār; *min dhē gefgēf etta dhī l-ugēl* « from jefjēf to al-Ujēl » (Rhodokanakis, quoted by Rabin, 1951).

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day my father emigrated from the distant west / And came to this city/ Neither could his steps change its stubborn direction / Nor could his fingers change the features of this mad city ».

There is always a function to this positioning, that of emphasis which is usually to express a negative feeling : disgust : *del ḫalīl* « this *ḫalīl* » (see above); disapproval : *dil-laḫbaṭa* « this confusion », etc.

4. We find constructions exhibiting *Dem.-Noun,* besides *Noun-Dem.* in texts mainly poetic as early as the 13th century (see al-Jammāl, 1966). In this section however we are dealing with prose texts exhibiting this feature. First Širbīnī's *Hazz al-quḥuf* by now well known by linguists and historians. This text was written after 1663/64 [1], and contains large passages in the spoken language. The vernacular of the texts represents the speech of Lower Egypt, of Cairo and sometimes more specifically of the region of *Širbīn* (the home town of the author). *Širbīn* is a large village in the province of *Daqahliyya* on the east branch of the Nile.

Concerning the demonstrative there are two series represented in the text; that for close reference :

masc. *da* fem. *di*
plur. *dōl* (or *dī* for broken plural)

and that for distant reference :

masc. *dāk* fem. *dīk*

We omit the classical series *hādā,* it occurs mainly in passages written in the elevated language, in rarer cases in the vernacular passages. It would seem that in the latter the presence of *hādā* is due to a certain randomness in the style. *Dāk* and *dīk* are used for reference to distant objects : Širbīnī p. 41 : 30 *dīk alwezza* « that goose ». In order to make more discrete the mention of the sexual act : p. 20 : 13 *dāk al ʿamla* « that action »; and Širbīnī p. 18 : 2 *ʿamalt maʿāha mā taʿmil arriğāl maʿ annisā' yaʿni dīk alqadiyya* « I did with her what men do with

[1] This date is given by Širbīnī himself as being the date of his pilgrimage to Mekka. We have used the Būlāq edition of 1274/1857 for this study.

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women; I mean that business ». Finally Širbīnī p. 152 : 25 *kalt min dāk aṭṭaʿām matrid matridayn* « I ate from that food a *matrid* or two (*matrid* is a type of dish in which food is served) ». The food referred to is the *ḫoškanānik,* known by townsmen, and obviously foreign to the fellāh's diet, this explains the use of *dāk.*

We find in *Hazz al Quḥūf* the following compounds *issanādi* « this year » (as shows its orthography السنادى, *innahārda* «today» النهار ده and *dalwaqt* «now» دالوقت.

As for the position of the demonstratives *dā, dī* it is not regular, being either postpositive or prepositive to the noun; Širbīnī p. 16 : 20 *alʿām almāḍī dīk w-alʿām dā dīk* [1] « last year a roster (was lost) and this year another one ». Širbīnī p. 23 : 26 *mā-taqūlī fī'illi yāḫod alferāḫ min alfallāḥ dā* « What do you think if someone were to take the chicken away from this fellah? ». Then we have cases where the demonstrative precedes [2] : *deḥket ʿalek di-lʿāhera wu-ḫadet minnak elferāḫ,* Širbīnī, p. 24 : 7 « this prostitute fooled you and took the chicken away from you »; *yāmā qāsēt fī di-lsafra,* p. 22 : 28 « O, how I suffered during this trip! ».

Actually there are 19 occurrences of *Noun-Dem.* and 32 of *Dem.-Noun.* This count should however be qualified :

(1) Among the 32 cases of *Dem.-Noun,* 13 occur in verse. We have seen earlier, that verse up to the present day favors this construction. This probably accounts for the large number of occurrences of *Dem.-Noun* in our text. Let us add on the other hand that none of the cases of *Noun-Dem.* appears in the verse.

(2) In the case of *Noun-Dem.,* one should also keep in mind that some cases call for this word order; when the noun is followed by a personal suffixe and is made definite by it and not by the definite article *šābiʿī dah* « this finger of mine ». Of these cases there are 5 among the 19 *Noun-Dem.*

With these reservations in mind one clearly notes the presence of two word orders : *Dem.-Noun, Noun-Dem.* If we look more closely into the cases of

[1] The orthography of *da* following the noun varies between دا and ده .

[2] The orthography of the demonstrative preceding the noun is usually دا or ذا for the masculine form, دى for the feminine, however there are cases of دى or ذى coming before a masculine noun; Širbīnī p. 43 : 29; *dil qōl* دى القول . The most plausible explanation is that given by Fischer (1959, p. 63), where he posits that the vowel *i* of *dil* should be accounted for by the loss of the vowel proper to the demonstrative *da,* and the adoption of the vowel of the article thus giving *dil* or *del.*

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Dem.-Noun it appears that emphasis is the dominant function of preposition. The noun or the whole utterance is strengthened by this means; Širbīnī p. 14 : 12 *law 'innī ṭāweᶜtuhum ya 'amīr wa sirt kull yawm 'adẖul dā-lgāmeᶜ kān 'inkasar ᶜalayyā māl alsulṭān* « If I followed their advice, o prince and were to enter this mosque every day, then I couldn't pay the duties to the sultān »; and Širbīnī p. 151 : 29 *ṭūl ᶜumrī 'aštadd / fī hamm dī-l-baṭn 'illī ma-tirayyaḥ ḥadd* «All my life I suffer from the torment of that stomach which leaves no one in peace ».

The emphasis can also be aimed at expressing a positive feeling; Širbīnī p. 43 : 29. *Zīdū yā muġanniyīn alqawm min dī-lqawl almalīḥ* « O, singers tell us more of this good poetry »; or a negative one : Širbīnī p. 24 : 7, *ḫadit minnak alfirāḫ wa-taraketak fī di-lḥāla* « She took the chicken away from you and left you in this state ».

5. Širbīnī's text dates from the second half of the 17th century. *Bāsim al-Ḥaddād* is a popular tale of which many versions circulated in some arabic speaking countries (of which we know Egypt and Syria) until the last century. It was collected and edited by Landberg in 1888. In the preface to his book the editor explains that the Egyptian version of *Bāsim* is based on the text of a manuscript which he acquired in Cairo in 1887. Landberg argues that the very existence of the manuscript proves that the text would go back to an earlier period, for example the 18th century. It seems fair to follow this argument especially that the language of the text does appear to be previous to the last century (if we compare it with texts and grammatical descriptions of the same period : ex. Tantâvy).

For the feature at stake in this paper, we have found in the text of *Bāsim* evidence of the two constructions :

57 occurrences of *Noun-Dem.*
36 occurrences of *Dem.-Noun*

(No verse is contained in the Egyptian version of *Bāsim*).

The occurrences of *Dem.-Noun* appear in contexts quite similar to what we found in *Hazz al-Quḥūf :* Landberg, p. 36 : 20 *Faraḥāt di-lkarkūba li-ldukkān wa-qālet ṣabāḥ al-ẖer* « so this old woman went to the shop and said good

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morning!»; and Landberg, p. 27 : 3 *wa ḥayāt rās al'afandī 'alqādī mā'anā mittaʿtaʿ min hunā 'ellā wa reglahā ʿalā reglī dī lʿāhira* « I swear on the head of the judge, that I will not move from here if this prostitute does not follow me ».

The results seem quite consistent; the relative number of prepositive demonstrative is smaller than it was in *Širbīnī*'s text, but the feature is still alive and productive a century or less later. *Dem.-Noun* is used to underline emphatically a noun-phrase in a larger utterance, or to underline the whole utterance.

Finally we have studied a text consisting of four tales gathered and published by Dulac (1889). Among the large number of nouns qualified by demonstrative adjectives only one case is of the *Dem.-Noun* order; Dulac p. 59 : *wa dannohom māšyīn lammā daḫalū lsarāya wa qasūlak di-lḫulḫāl ṭiliʿ ʿalā qaddahā biẓẓabt* « And they kept walking until they entered the palace, there they tried this *ḫulḫāl* (anklet) it fit her exactly! ». It is particularly interesting to see how Dulac dealt with this feature. As he adds in a foot-note that *dī* دى here should be translated as *'ādi* آ دى « voilà ». Actually both the use of *lak* [1] suffixed to the verb and the preposition of the demonstrative are stylistic effects aimed at emphasizing a particularly surprising episode of the tale. It is interesting to note Dulac's misunderstanding; it shows us that *Dem.-Noun* was not any longer common in the dialect and that the order which prevails today of *Noun-Dem.* was already dominant.

In the dialect of Ḏofār (Rhodokanakis, quoted by Rabin 1951, p. 75), instances of the demonstrative adjective preceding the noun (proper as well as common) appear. Biblical Hebrew offers cases of the *zeh* preceding proper nouns (Rabin 1951, p. 75). Finally in *Tāǧ al ʿarūs* Vol. 10 p. 435 it is mentioned that in the speech of the *Qais* (tribe) and of neighboring areas it is common to find a superfluous form *dhu* الزائدة. The examples drawn however are cases of proper nouns (of persons or places) preceded by the demonstrative. Could one posit a common function to cases of preposition of the demonstrative to the noun?

Attention should be given to the various dialects where it is admitted that both word orders exist in order to determine whether the use of one or the other of the two constructions corresponds to any emphatic effect.

[1] The suffix *lak*, fem. *lik*, which Dulac qualifies as « explétif », or superfluous element, added to a verb is still today a productive way of marking an utterance. This procedure is common in story-telling.

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