High and Low Ordinals in NENA:
historical development or contact induced?

In this paper I return to the data presented in Gutman (2018: 375-386) from a fresh perspective. Gutman identifies four ordinal constructions across dialects: Noun-Ordinal, Ordinal-Noun, Noun.CST-Ordinal and Noun-Linker-Ordinal, and concludes that "in the sub-system of ordinal numbers the NENA dialects exhibit constructions that continue classical Aramaic strategies while resembling patterns from contact languages. The interaction between these two sources lead to high dialectal variation, each dialect showing a unique combination of constructions and features." (p. 386). While this assertion is certainly true, a closer look at the data reveals that language contact is in fact more important. For this purpose it is instrumental to make a distinction between the "low" ordinal *first*, and the "higher" ordinals (all the rest).

As observed already by Loewenstamm (1955), the ordinal *first* is often special as it has no common Semitic heritage. In NENA, only the ordinal *first* (Sytiac *qaḏmāyā* and its various different derivations) truly preserves the Syriac logic of adjectival modification, e.g. Alqosh *yóma qamā́ya* "first day" (Coghill 2003: 293 [A:137]). A notable exception is the Jewish dialect of Sanandaj (Khan 2009: 213) which preserves this construction across the ordinals, e.g. *baxtá treminta* "second woman" (Khan 2009: 213) yet this dialect is special in that it allows an optional Ezafe *baxtá-e treminta*, which may indicate that the "adjectival" construction has different sources.

For the higher ordinals the predominant construction is Noun.CST-Ordinal, e.g. Challa *yarx-əd ʾarba* "fourth month" (Fassberg 2010: 45), as already noted by Gutman (ibid.). While this may be understood as a continuation of the Syriac construction *yawmā da=trēn* "second day" (Nöldeke 1898: 178, §239), which manifests itself also in the Noun-Linker-Ordinal construction, e.g. Qaraqosh *báxta d=téttə* "second woman" (Khan 2002: 225) it is more amply characterized as a areal construction, as it is also present the Kurdish (Kurmanji and Sorani) and Arabic dialects of the region (Erwin 2004: 367, Thackston 2006: 25, MacKenzie 1961: 72). Evidence of language contact can be seen in the fact that the Noun-Linker-Ordinal construction is only present (conserved?) in those NENA languages which are in contact with Kurmanji. In Kurmanji we find a Linker-Ordinal construction without a qualified noun, the linker being a "demonstrative ezafe" (MacKenzie 1961: 162) as in Akre *yê dwê* "the second one" (ibid. P. 163). Another case of clear language contact is the use of pre-nominal Arabic ordinals as in Qaraqosh θáləθ yóma "third day" (Khan 2002: 640 [F:72]) and the Azeri-influenced (Garbell 1965: 172) pre-nominal ordinals in Jewish Urmi, e.g. trem*ə*nji gora "second man" (Khan 2008: 187, and compare with the Turkish construction: Goksel & Kerslake 2005, 182f.)

To conclude, the Ordinal system in NENA dialects, while showing historical affinities with the classical strata of Aramaic as examplified by Syriac, exhibits a clear areal phenomon, namely a head-marking attributive marking (cf. Gutman 2018, 319; Khan & Napiorkowska 2015: VII; Noorlander 2014: 214; Garbell 1965: 172). Only the ordinal *qaḏmāyā* "first" exhibits true continuity with former strate.

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