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Non-Human Plurals as Feminine Singular with Appendices on Collective Nouns and Agreement Types (I)

TAKASHINA Yoshiyuki *

人間以外の名詞複数の女性単数による文法一致 —— 集合名詞と文法一致の類型に関する補論と共に ——

本誌掲載のター・マルブータ研究 (I) (II) に続き、統語論に関わるター・マルブータが持つ標記の現象を、昨今の印欧比較言語学における女性語尾の機能的発展に関する研究をヒントに、女性単数の概念がどう関与するかについて筆者の先行研究で論じた機能を再展開した。その中で、同機能が前イスラーム期のアラビア語での新表現法であるとするビーストン氏の見解に対して、他のセム諸語にも萌芽的に観察される現象であり、アラブ古詩の事例から、アラビア語成立以来の現象と論じた。

同時に、この立証に深く関わるアラビア語の集合名詞の理解について、従来の研究にある混乱を整理し体系化した上で、女性単数で文法一致する集合名詞に関しても論じた。その上で、古典アラビア語と現代標準アラビア語において、当該現象に関わる文例の体系化に取り組み、それぞれ同一基準でカタログ化した。

0. The Issue Left Over¹⁾

0.1. Our previous study on Tāʾ Marbūṭa

In our previous studies on Tāʾ Marbūṭa (2020 and 2021), we discussed almost every point held to have something to do with it, phonetically or morphologically. Since the study concerns the feminine suffix *-a*, scholars may think we should have finished earlier with the issue we will argue here.

But we could not do so for two reasons. For one thing, we knew a certain diffi-

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1) Common abbreviations are used. Owing to the original works cited from, heterogeneous spellings have crept in and we admit this inconvenience: *m.* or *masc.* for masculine, *f.* or *fem.* for feminine, *sg.* or *sing.* for singular, *plur.* or *Plurr.* *fract.* for pluralis fractus or plurales facti ‘broken plural(s)’. Other abbreviations are listed in *References*. The anonymous referee cannot be thanked enough for insightful discussions.

culty regarding collectives that would take a long time to get rid of (see 0.2 and A1.1). For another, we are still left unequipped with linguistic resources for checking frequency in pre-Classical and Classical Arabic texts²⁾. This is why we stated in the former study concerning the role of the feminine gender in agreement³⁾: “Though closely related, it lies more within the syntax than within the morphology”.

However, we found a way to prove the logical process of this agreement, evading the difficulties mentioned above.

0. 2. The aim of this study

To prove this, (1) we first review previous studies on this theme in Arabic and Semitic languages. Then (2) on the strength of recent studies in the Proto-Indo-European language, we shall make clear the mechanism or process of the feminine singular agreement with non-human plurals, following just logical steps on the language plane.

Thereafter, (3) we argue against the opinion that this agreement was secondary in Arabic or a neologism. (4) Collective nouns cannot be left aside in the discussion of agreement, but a separate discussion was necessary due to one of the aforesaid difficulties. Therefore, we discuss it in Appendix 1. (5) As to the agreement patterns in gender and number, we list specimens in tabular format in Appendix 2 as a minimum substitute of what we had once planned (see the illustration in 3.2 and footnote 48).

1. Some Preliminaries about the Grammatical Agreement

1.1. The feminine singular rule in studies of Semitists

With all agreement instances in Semitic languages, Brockelmann stated simply: “The three categories feminine-abstract, collective and plural in Semitic languages are, as in Indo-European languages, sometimes still inseparable from each other” (GvG 1:426-427, § 228 b)⁴⁾.

Lipiński’s reference⁵⁾ to the Indo-European neuter plural, as well as that of GKC (p. 464, footnote 1) to the Greek neuter plural, demonstrates that scholars have long been aware of this parallel. On the other hand, there are Arabists who look in another direction. Yushmanov found in this rule ‘socially passive class’ and ‘socially active class’⁶⁾, while Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes observed in

2) See footnote 48 about this.

3) See footnote 182 in Takashina (2021:98). See also 2021:135. ‘Concord’ may be used for brevity’s sake. As this citation shows, the agreement in feminine singular also implies suffixes other than Tā^a Marbūṭa (Takashina, 2021, footnotes 171 and 172). In the present work, Tā^a Marbūṭa means the letter name and tā^a marbūṭa the feminine suffix -a, but the distinction is often difficult.

4) Brockelmann saw this as ‘inseparable’, not as originating from the innate role of the feminine suffix.

5) Lipiński: “In Hebrew, the name of a country may be used with the verbal predicate in the plural (e.g. ...), while Arabic treats such names as feminine singulars (e.g. ...). The latter usage is comparable with the Indo-European neuter plural governing a verb in the singular, notable in Greek, in Avestan, and in Modern Persian” (50.23, p. 503). See also Kienast 122.1, p. 131.

6) “the classical language shows vestiges of the former classes that later constituted grammatical gender: the plurals of names of animals and inanimate objects (socially passive class) are treated as singular

it ancient survivals: ‘animate or inanimate, accidental or natural’⁷⁾.

1.2. The grammatical agreement in Semitic languages

Of the historical studies of Semitic languages, no other work can surpass Brockelmann’s GvG⁸⁾, though old, in the analyses from multiple viewpoints. As to the agreement rule of gender and number, GvG lists examples from sentences without a verb (GvG 2:95-99, § 48) and from those with a verb, ranging from Arabic to Akkadian⁹⁾. Indeed we find here almost a complete list of phenomena, but seeing that reliable linguistic data can be obtained only from the context in a language, we sought data locatable for ourself in good grammars.

Sometimes, a language that played the role of a cultural medium in ancient times is destined to have its own historical limits reflected in the texts. So in Aramaic¹⁰⁾, which had its main history as lingua franca, we found a very modest number of instances. We find cases of constructio ad sensum¹¹⁾ in the plural for collective nouns in Egyptian Aramaic (5 C BCE)¹²⁾. In Syriac, there are feminine nouns with no feminine suffix, of which Arabic equivalents are collective nouns¹³⁾: *baqrā* ‘herd’, *bəʿīrā* ‘larger cattle’, *guddā*¹⁴⁾ ‘troop’, *ṭayrā* ‘bird of prey’, *yawnā* ‘pigeon’, *kēpā* ‘stone’, *neqyā* ‘sheep’, *ʿezzā*¹⁵⁾ ‘goat’, *ʿānā*¹⁶⁾ ‘small cattle’, *ṣēppārā*¹⁷⁾ ‘little bird’, *ramkā* ‘herd (of horses)’¹⁸⁾. As to constructio ad sensum, *bəʿīrā* and *ʿānā* may be singular or plural, as is the case with human collectives¹⁹⁾.

Geez, the classical language of Ethiopia, is not particular about gender and number unlike others, and collective nouns need no nomen unitatis to signify a single member. Except for humans, nouns may be of either gender, and plural nouns may agree in either number²⁰⁾. But in Tigre, a northern Ethio-Semitic language, a collective noun still forms a unit noun (‘singulative’) by the suffix *-at* (feminine) or *-āy* (masculine). The typical concord is masculine singular, but for a

feminine, unlike plurals of names of humans, spiritis, deities (socially active class)” (p. 68).

7) “the facts are complicated by ancient survivals: notion of animate or inanimate, of accidental or natural group” (§ 232, p. 289).

8) See the top of 1.1.

9) Arabic (GvG 2:173, § 99), Ethiopian languages (do., § 100), Hebrew (do., § 101), Aramaic (do., § 102), Assyrian (do., § 103).

10) In Aramaic, *-ā* is a mark of definiteness, not of feminine gender.

11) Wright 1:233D, § 306; GKC:428, § 132 g.

12) Muraoka and Porten (2003:185, § 47f; 280, § 76ce). They are ‘troop’ and ‘domestic staff’.

13) Perhaps this is a reflex of the rule that collectives are to agree in feminine singular as in Arabic.

14) = جُنْدٌ ‘soldiers’ (see Table ap4).

15) = عَنَزٌ ‘a she-goat’. The word seems to have transferred to a collective ‘goat’ in post-classical Arabic and in Modern Standard Arabic we have عَنَزَةٌ ‘a goat’.

16) = ضَانٌ ‘sheep’ (see Table ap4).

17) = عَصْفُورٌ ‘sparrow’ (not a collective in Arabic).

18) Nöldeke 1898:56-8; Duval, 255-6.

19) Nöldeke 1898:252; Duval, pp.334 and 366. So *bəʿīrā* and *ʿānā* are feminine, singular or plural.

20) Lambdin, pp. 21, 26-27. Dillman’s grammar talks too many otiose words to cite.

human masculine, masculine plural [ad sensum] is also possible²¹⁾.

Unlike Aramaic and Geez, Biblical Hebrew and Akkadian provide us with ample data and we note in the table ‘yes’ when the grammars do not specify the sample as rare, and register it in the footnote. Incidentally, one Hebrew grammar cites the Arabic rule²²⁾ in the explanation of the example of 1) below. More than a dozen of samples testify that this is not a mere whim of ancient writers. Probably the two languages inherited the rule from the parent, or they were once neighbors.

the feminine suffix and/or collectives ²³⁾	Biblical Hebrew	Akkadian
1) fem. sg. for non-human plural nouns	yes ²⁴⁾	
2) collective nouns with nomen unitatis	yes ²⁵⁾	yes ²⁶⁾
3) constructio ad sensum	yes ²⁷⁾	yes ²⁸⁾
4) *-a for abstract nouns	yes ²⁹⁾	yes ³⁰⁾
5) *-a for collective nouns	yes ³¹⁾	
6) *-a for hypocoristic names		yes ³²⁾

With similar rules in Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew, we have to explain why Ara-

21) Raz, pp. 14-16. A very rare feminine singular agreement for human nouns is reported (p. 15).

22) GKC:464 writes in footnote 1: In Arabic also the *pluralis inhumanus* (i.e. not denoting persons) is regularly construed with the feminine singular of the attribute or predicate, as are all the *plurales fracti* (properly collective forms).

23) For items 4) - 6) in the table, please refer to the respective section in Takashina, 2021: for 4), see section 9.3.1, p. 107; for 5), section 9.3.3, p.109; for 6), section 10, pp. 115-7.

24) For plurals of animals or things, and of abstracts, are frequently construed with the feminine singular of the verbal predicate (GKC:464, § 145 k; JM:518, § 150 g): *qam bahāmōl šāde taʿrōg ʿelē-kā* ‘even beasts of a field cry to you’ [Joel 1:20]. In literal Arabic: وَأَيْضًا بَهَائِمُ حَقْلٍ تَشْتَأِقُ إِلَيْكَ.

25) There are some pairs of a collective and nomen unitatis: *ʿonī* ‘fleet’ and *ʿonīy-ā* ‘a ship’, *šīr* ‘poetry’ and *šīr-ā* ‘a song’ (GKC:394, § 122 t; JM:466, § 134 p).

26) The feminine suffix -a(t) denotes nomina unitatis: *elepp-at-um* ‘a boat’ < *elepp-um* ‘ship or boat’ (GAG, p. 11**, § 60 a). This use, still fully alive in Arabic, is limited in Akkadian.

27) In attributive adjectives and participles to collective nouns, we find constructio ad sensum (GKC:428, § 132 g), as in predicate verbs when one of such is a subject (GKC:462, § 145 b; JM:514, § 148 a).

28) In the following cases, we find constructio ad sensum: (α) when the subject noun has a collective sense, the predicate stands mostly in the singular, but sometime in the plural (GAG, p. 186, § 132 c); (β) after a collective noun, an attributive mostly stands in the singular, but at times in the plural: *šāb-am šun-ūti* ‘those people’ (GAG, p. 187, § 132 d); (γ) when the feminine noun signifies a man or men, the predicate following it often has a masculine form: *šābum ša pūh-ātū-šunu ana Bābili illikū* ‘people whose substitutes went to Babylon’ (GAG, p. 186, § 132 d). In the example, *illikū* (3rd person, masculine plural) is the predicate verb of *pūh-ātū-* (feminine plural) instead of *illikā* (3rd person, feminine plural).

29) There are abstract nouns formed by adding a feminine suffix to an adjective: *rā-* ‘bad, evil’ and *rā-ā* ‘evil’ (GKC:393, § 122 q; JM:465, § 134 n).

30) The feminine of the adjective works as neuter: *damiq-t-um* ‘what is good’ < *damq-um* ‘good’ (GAG, p. 74, § 60 a). The plural feminine also has this function: *damq-ātum* ‘what is good’ (GAG, p. 78, § 61 p).

31) There are a number of collectives formed by adding a feminine ending to an adjective or a participle: *hayy-ā* ‘cattle or beasts < that which lives’, *yōšēb-e-* ‘population < that which inhabits’ (GKC:394, § 122 s; JM:465, § 134 o).

32) The feminine ending -at-um also serves as a hypocoristic suffix for men: *Awīl-atum* ‘a dear man (Herrchen)’ (GAG, p. 74, § 60 a). Cf. *awīl-tum* ‘a woman’.

bic developed the usage of feminine singular into such a categorical one as to symbolize Arabic. All the more so, because Hebrew forsook it later.

1.3. Feminine singular in Arabic and in Proto-Indo-European

In our former work (7.6 in 2021:99), we singled out five basic roles which tā^o marbūṭa plays as the innate functions in Arabic. Of these five, we further analyzed the second ‘The specification of the singular number (oneness)’ and took out as its secondary function ‘(IIc) the abstraction into one notion’ (section 9.3, 2021:107).

We followed the argument laid by C. Brockelmann³³⁾ in that work, and were aware what was going on in the Indo-European studies³⁴⁾. It was almost near the end of the work that the feminine gender in Arabic and in Proto-Indo-European (PIE) got combined, assuring us of being on the right path.

To be sure, things and places are different. It is the logical factors working in them respectively that assured us³⁵⁾. For argument’s sake, we quote from Luraghi (2011:437). She writes before this that the Proto-Indo-European had earlier an animacy-based two-gender system, animate or inanimate³⁶⁾.

..., while the feminine gender was later formed through the addition of a special suffix, which Brugmann reconstructed as -*ā, and is currently noted as -*h₂ (or -(e)h₂). The suffix was originally used in the derivation of deverbal abstract nouns; it also gave rise to the inflectional ending of the nominative/accusative plural of neuter nouns. Extension to neuter was (and remains) explained in connection with frequent polysemy of abstract nouns, and consequently of abstract affixes, which tend to extend to collective: the nominative/accusative plural neuter, which triggers singular agreement in some languages, such as e.g. Ancient Greek, is considered to have acquired a count plural value only secondarily, as a development from an earlier collective value.

In our study (2021), we extracted from tā^o marbūṭa (the feminine suffix -a) the following functions³⁷⁾: abstract nouns (9.3.1), verbal nouns (9.3.2), and collective (broken) plurals (9.3.3). Seeing that this concerns the Arabic feminine suffix -a, it is beyond question that a very similar linguistic mechanism is working in them both.

By the time feminine came into being in PIE, ‘inanimate’ changed its label to ‘neuter’ in the three-gender system. So the plural of neuter nouns in PIE is almost equivalent to ‘the plural of non-human nouns’ in Arabic.

33) For particular details, see corresponding sections in Takashina (2021).

34) Matsumoto (2006:52) and Shimizu (2012:86).

35) So we wrote about this (2021:136): “Lastly, it is to be hoped that part of our Tā^o Marbūṭa discussion might happen to be a counterpart to that on the Proto-Indo-European feminine suffix, used also for a collective noun and for an abstract noun (see Luraghi 2009 and 2011)”.

36) We have omitted two parentheses in the quotation below, for which we apologize the author. Underlines are added by us to the phrases to be compared with those in Arabic.

37) For more details, please refer to our original work (2021).

2. The Mechanism of *Tāʾ Marbūṭa* in Feminine Singular Agreement

2.1. Linguistic mechanism in Arabic and PIE

Hence, it is safe to say that the feminine singular agreement with non-human plurals and collectives in Arabic has a very similar phenomenon in Indo-European languages. Though we do not speak of a probable contact or influence between them in days of yore, the Proto-Indo-European (hereafter PIE) testifies that a very similar mechanism once worked in the course of development. It is this fact that prompted us to resume the study.

Also, we do not go far back to ancient times to reconstruct the original agreement rule to compare the ancient Arabic and PIE, since what attracts us is the mechanism that worked spontaneously in relation to the symbol of the feminine singular.

2.2. Grammatical functions assigned by feminine suffix *-a*

In the study of an ancient language, some people talk of the spiritual world of ancient peoples about some linguistic features. Yet with no actual evidence, such ought to remain a conjecture. Arabic is, on the contrary, a still living language, though it experienced artificial contrivances through reforms as in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Further, most citizens have now a linguistic intuition in the written language, even if acquired secondarily through education.

It is by no means reasonable to suppose that they are acquainted with the spiritual world of ancient people and that they revive it when they communicate in MSA. Conversely, we hold that there lies a linguistic or cognitive scheme that both ancient people and present-day Arab citizens can learn and acquire on the instinctive level. This is why we shunned talking of ancient times in our former study (Takashina, 2021:98-100).

Hence we assert that our analysis is synchronic, not historical in the least. In other words, we should like to know how Arab citizens command *Tāʾ Marbūṭa* or the notion of feminine singular. So we wrote in the previous study:

“Since a language consists of a set of signs, any single sign presupposes the existence of the remaining signs. In the set of Arabic nouns, the instant we think of a group of nouns with *tāʾ marbūṭa* (Y), there emerges the opposite group without it (X)” (Takashina 2021:99).

When we think of the typical case (plane (α) in the table below), where [Y] is feminine (mostly with *-a/-at*), the rest (= X, non-Y) is automatically masculine. So according to this system, when the marked is specified (Y = *-a/-at*), the unmarked (X) also gets fixed. It is clearly the intuition of the speaker that specifies what [Y] is. In short, it is how the speaker recognizes or perceives the context of utterance that fixes what [Y] is.

Or on the different plane (β), when [Y] is the (feminine) singular, [X] is the

(feminine) plural (*-āt*). Hence, the number of sets of [X/Y] depends on how Arabic employs the mark of the feminine singular. Since it is [Y] that delineates what [X] is, we logically conclude that the study of *tāʾ marbūʿa* is, in a sense, to identify what [Y] is on its respective plane in the framework.

Now we shall turn our eyes to those functions shared by PIE (see 1.3). Following our analysis of the innate functions of *tāʾ marbūʿa* (2021:99-117), *-a* can express, as in the diagram below, many functions relating to, or deriving from, oneness (2021, section 9). Other functions exemplify the set (γ) which produces abstract nouns from common nouns and adjectives (2021:107-8). The set (δ) explains the mechanism for the feminine singular agreement with non-human plurals, while the set (ϵ) answers the question of why collective nouns are held basically as feminine singular (see *Table ap4* in A1.10). The last set (ζ) explains the function of *tāʾ marbūʿa* in forming nomen unitatis (2021:101).

X Y (α) gender: X: masculine, Y: feminine	(β) feminine suffix: X: plural, Y: singular (γ) noun: X: common, Y: abstract (δ) plural noun³⁸⁾: X: human, Y: non-human (ϵ) non-plural noun: X: singular, Y: collective (ζ) nature group³⁹⁾: X: collective, Y: unit noun
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Diagram: functions of the feminine suffix

Very brief as it is, the role of the feminine singular as well as its background of logical mechanism has been demonstrated now. Non-human plural nouns are agreed with in feminine singular, marked often by *tāʾ marbūʿa*. This is not what we contrived only for the feminine singular agreement, but versatile in nature in the Arabic language.

3. The Strict Agreement and the Feminine-Singular (*f-sg*) Agreement

3.1. Two ways of grammatical agreement with non-human plurals

At the very early stage in the MSA teaching course, the agreement rule in feminine singular with non-human plurals (the *f-sg* rule) is introduced. But soon we find a violation of the rule in al-Qurʾān. See the following phrases much alike.

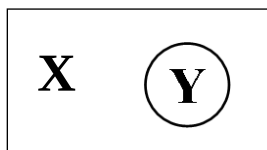
38) Plural nouns include both regular suffixed plurals and broken plurals.

39) For the naming, see *Table ap4* in A1.10.

- (1) a. أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَةً “(for) a number of days⁴⁰⁾” (2:80)
 b. أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَاتٍ “for a number of days” (3:24)
- (2) a. فِي الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ “in the days gone by” (69:24)
 b. فِي أَيَّامٍ نَحْسَاتٍ “in (unlucky) days of ill fortune” (41:16)
- (3) a. أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَاتٍ “for days numbered” (2:184)
 b. فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْدُودَاتٍ “during certain days numbered” (2:203)
 c. فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْلُومَاتٍ “on days well-known” (22:28)

The rule in (1a), equivalent to that of MSA, shows that the *f-sg* rule has worked ever since pre-Islamic times⁴¹⁾. The feminine plural suffix *-āt* in (1b) comes from the rule that this suffix also covers non-human things⁴²⁾, unlike the masculine plural *-ūna* which covers humans only. In other words, the non-human plural *ʿayyām* ‘days’ demands a feminine attributive either in singular or in plural⁴³⁾.

On the ground of this difference in number, we call the latter (1b) the agreement rule strictly in the plural (the *strict* rule)⁴⁴⁾. Please notice that in either case the singular of the noun *yawm* ‘day’ is masculine. It is as if the gender of the singular noun has changed to feminine in the plural. Put otherwise, the change of gender in agreement signals the change of number (from singular to plural) in nouns⁴⁵⁾.



η) number in concord:

X: singular, Y: plural

We can observe this effect on number in (2a, *f-sg*) too, in which the lapse of time is in the human mind one length, whereas in (2b, *strict*) every unlucky day was

followed by another.

The three phrases (3a-c) in the strict agreement need some explanation, for (3a) is none but (1b). The context refers to respective periods that Allāh has allotted or numbered⁴⁶⁾. Each day in the period counts with Allāh as a meaningful day.

As explained, what concerns us is the function of Tāʾ Marbūʿa in the *f-sg* rule (1a, 2a) in contrast to the *strict* rule that requires the agreement to be in one of the plural alternatives (see footnote 44). However, in place of the *f-sg* rule, some scholars argue

40) The English was taken from Arberry’s interpretation.

41) The text of al-Qurʾān is pre-Classical Arabic. See W. Fischer, Introduction (pp. 1-2).

42) From the masculine *libās* ‘clothing’, its plural *libās-āt* comes out. MSA has many words: *maṭār* ‘airport’ and *maṭār-āt* even with its back formation *maṭār-a* as singular.

43) (1a) and (1b) were uttered by Jews who contended that they had worshipped the golden calf only forty days. This is why Arberry used the same words for both in his interpretation. Nevertheless, Arabic connotes difference: (1a) ‘one short stretch of days (one unit)’; (1b) ‘so short a period that each day was counted (respective days in mind)’.

44) While the *f-sg* rule covers feminine singular only, the *strict* rule covers any plural agreements: 1) the masculine plural suffix *-ūna*, 2) the feminine plural suffix *-āt*, or 3) broken plurals of adjectives.

45) No doubt, this remark applies only to non-human masculine common nouns.

46) Namely, (3a) all the days of Ramadan, (3b) three days of Dū al-Ḥiġġa 11-13, and (3c) a certain period of days (ten days?) in Dū al-Ḥiġġa. I.e., (1b) and (3a) signify something different in the same wording.

in another term ‘deflected’ (see 3.3), but we are afraid that it sounds ‘deviating or winding’, where it is a very simple rule. So we call it the “*f-sg* rule” throughout. Scholars and teachers of the Arabic language could do without it all along.

3.2. Collective nouns in between

In our understanding, Sībawayhi set the target users of his grammar to non-Arabs, being himself an ‘aḡamīy ‘non-Arab’. We think so on the ground that the description of collectives is not as precise and elaborate as in other points. Collective nouns were not such a serious barrier in understanding al-Qurʾān that he neither step into subtle differences in the nuance between varieties of grammatical agreements nor further his analysis to classify them into groups labeling each a respective name⁴⁷⁾.

So when it comes to collective nouns, we face two problems: 1) lack of systematic description in the grammar of written Arabic, and accordingly, 2) lack of an explicit agreement rule, according to which we can discuss.

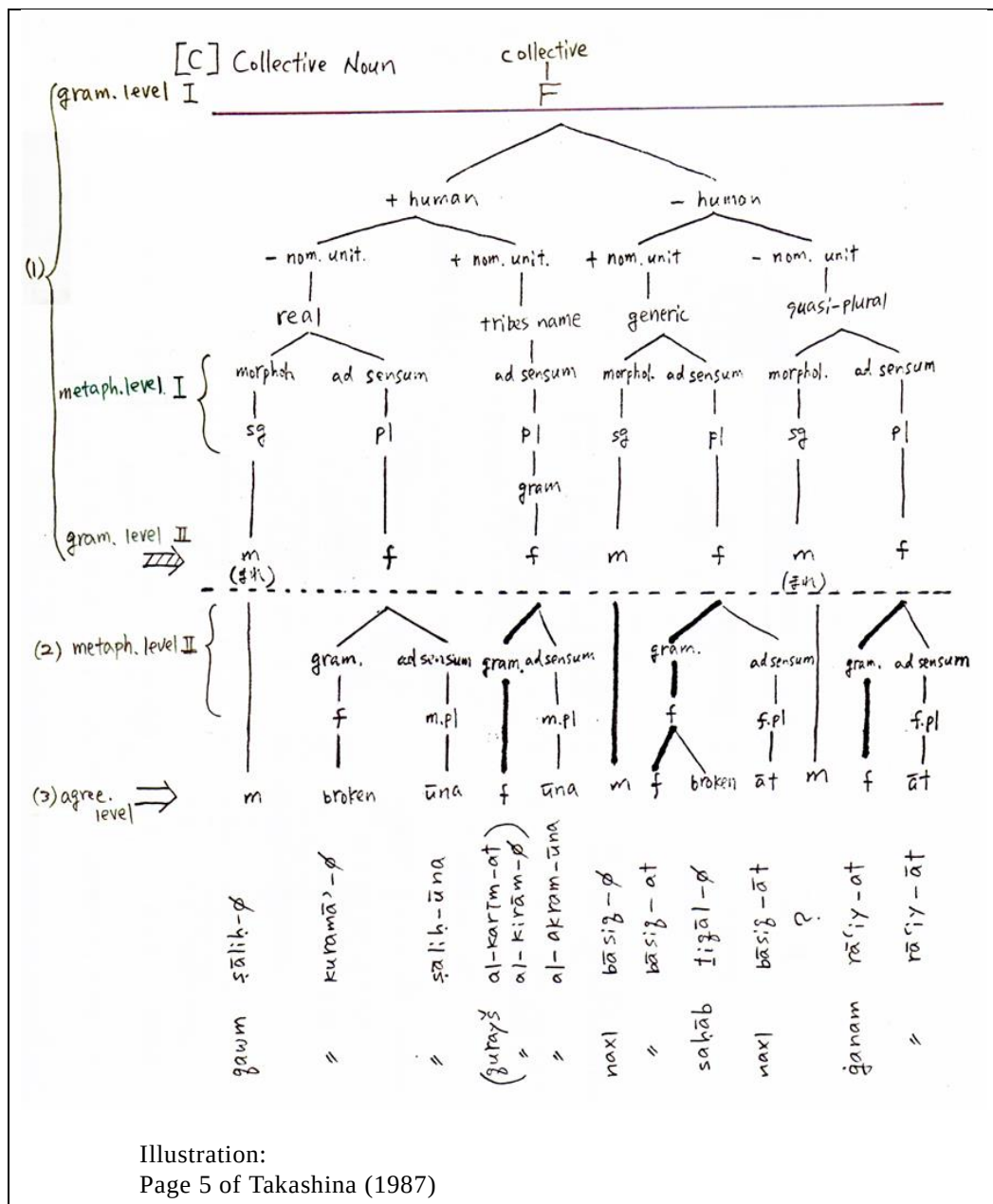
The fact is that a collective noun is agreed with in masculine singular, in feminine singular, or even in masculine plural. In the case of the feminine singular agreement, it shows affinity to non-human plural nouns, and as is often said, collective nouns take a position between singulars and plurals. See the diagram (2.2) in the planes (δ) ‘plural noun’ and (ε) ‘non-plural noun’, where the same logic or mechanism is working.

As mentioned above (see 0.2), we had to move the discussion of collectives to Appendix 1. Our final analysis is tabulated as *Table ap4: Collective Nouns and the Agreement Rule* in A1.10.

The illustration⁴⁸⁾ below will furnish a glimpse of the complexity involved.

47) Obviously, succeeding generations of grammarians did not go beyond Sībawayhi.

48) The preprint reproduced here was prepared for the workshop, held at Osaka University of Foreign Studies, now School of Foreign Studies, Osaka University, with the title “The Gender/Number Agreement in Arabic”. We learned the lack of language resources or data that would supply us with frequency ratio corresponding to the analyses, such as those of Reckendorf (1898:71, 89-90; 1921:24-29, 58-59), and without a ratio statistic, it was impossible to go beyond Reckendorf. Hence we did not touch upon the grammatical agreement in gender and number since then. Ferguson (1989:11) also deplored this current situation. Abbreviations in the illustration are self-explanatory. It was a little prior to the coming of IBM electronic typewriters. It was not printed for the second time.



3.3. The *f*-sg rule in pre-Islamic poetry according to Beeston

It was in the work of Belnap and Shabaneh (1992) that we learned the term 'deflected' agreement⁴⁹⁾. They based their discussion on the term of Ferguson⁵⁰⁾ (1989), but honestly we were surprised at the quotation of Beeston's statement (p. 255)

49) Belnap and Shabaneh, p. 247.

50) Consult Ferguson (1989:11-12) for his full-fledged discussion on the term.

in their work⁵¹). In so far as our current discussion is concerned, Beeston had stated three points (1975:65-6), on which we shall comment below.

1) “... this statement, which seems to imply that adjectives which are not colour terms have the singular concord with irrationalia. This is certainly not the case. In pre-Islamic poetry, it is virtually a universal rule that adjectives, no matter whether colour terms or otherwise, show plural forms when referring to pluralities” (p. 65). Frankly, his straightforward denial of the *f-sg* rule dismays us, though he gradually changed his tone adding other factors in such a brief passage. Here he cited two examples, the first of which is *albīḍu ṣawārimu*⁵²) “the trenchant swords”. Though the poet’s name was left anonymous, we found the phrase in the one-line verse by Zayd al-Ḥayl, a contemporary of the prophet.

<1> Zayd al-Ḥayl, No. 37 (p. 75)⁵³), one line: * فَلَهْفِي عَلَى الْبَيْضِ الصَّوَارِمِ وَالْقَنَا *
 وَأَمْرُسِلَهَا وَالرَّأْيِ مِنْ قَبْلِ ذَلِكَ
 ‘So my regret is on the trenchant swords, the spears and their striker [i.e., I or the poet], while the idea (flashed into me) before that [regret]’. Cf. *lahf* ‘regret’; *abyaḍ* (pl. *bīḍ*) ‘white, sword’; *ṣārim* (pl. *ṣawārim*) ‘cutting’; *qanāt* (pl. *qanan*) ‘spear’; *arsala* ‘to let go, strike’.

It is quite natural that Beeston’s citation is to the point, while *-hā* in *mursili-hā* refers to ‘swords’ and ‘spears’. In other words, this verse is also an instance in which non-human plurals were taken up in the feminine singular. The second is al-Šanfarā’s *sanāsinu quḥḥalun* “fleshless vertebrae” taken from the famous *Lāmīya al-ʿArab*.

<2> al-Šanfarā al-ʿAzdīy, *Lāmīya al-ʿArab*, line 42⁵⁴):
 وَأَلْفُ وَجْهٍ الْأَرْضِ عِنْدَ * بِأَهْدَأُ تُنْبِيهِ سَنَاسِنْ فُحْلٍ
 ‘I am accustomed to the surface of the ground when I stretch on it at the hump-backed place; the old man’s dried backbones force him to turn over’. Cf. *ʿalif* (a) ‘to get accustomed to’; *iftaraša* ‘to spread out arms on the ground’; *ahdaʿ* ‘bent, hump-backed’; *anbā* ‘to make restless in bed, force to turn over in bed’; *sinsin* (pl. *sanāsin*) ‘edge of the vertebra’; *qāḥil* (pl. *quḥḥal*)⁵⁵) ‘dry, raw-boned (old man)’.

Again this verse witnesses Beeston’s argument quite well, but just before Beeston’s phrase we see *tunbī-hi* ‘she forces him to turn over’, of which the feminine singular refers to *sanāsinu*, doubtless a non-human plural noun.

2) “The use of the feminine singular concord with “irrational” substantives is a neologism in Arabic which only gradually won its way to becoming the norm”

51) In Ferguson’s aforesaid work, there is no mention of Beeston.

52) Cited in the original transcription.

53) See also Rafʿ al-Ḥuḡub, p. 1151. Verses are followed by a simple gloss for the firsthand interpretation.

54) al-Lāmīyatāni, p. 42; al-Šanfarā No. 17, line 43, p. 67.

55) According to the grammar, فُحْلٌ is one of the plurals of فَاعِلٌ (Wright 1:206D-207B). So LA (p. 3538b) does not mention the plural of فَاعِلٌ and yet the poem cited there has it.

(pp.65-6)⁵⁶⁾. When Beeston says that the *f-sg* rule is ‘a neologism’ in pre-Islamic poetry, it is to be questioned what older Arabic texts enabled him to call this a neologism. Pre-Islamic poems are the oldest texts when we accept that they are genuine and authentic. It is indeed because of this point that we take the *f-sg* rule as the innate asset of the pre-Islamic Arabic language. We can deny this, only when older texts are discovered in good quantity and their language testifies to the contrary. In this connection, we may as well recall that Biblical Hebrew also had this agreement (see the table in 1.2).

3) “It looks as if it made its first appearance in the domain of the pronouns (already Shanfarā has [inserted here is the latter hemistich of the verse quoted below] “dice cast by a player and lying outspread”, with singular pronouns but plural adjective), and then spread to other domains” (p. 66). Whether or not in ‘its first appearance’, we confirmed the *f-sg* rule in the pronouns already in examples <1> and <2> above. In the verse below, as Beeston says, a non-human *ki‘āb* ‘dice’ appears twice as feminine singular: *daḥā-hā*, *fa-hya*. To wit, the *f-sg* agreement was by no means rare. But we should like to stress another aspect of this example. The two rules, the *f-sg* and the *strict* (*muttal* a plural adjective), did coexist in one verse.

<3> al-Šanfarā al-ʿAzdīy, Lāmīya al-ʿArab, line 43⁵⁷⁾: وَأَعْدِلْ مَنْحُوضًا كَأَنَّ
كِعَابَ دَحَاهَا لَا عِبْ فَهِيَ مُثَلُّ
‘And I straighten an emaciated (arm); it was as if joints (at my elbow) were dice which, cast by a (miracle) player, are upright!’. Cf. *ʿadala* (i) ‘to straighten’; *naḥaḍa* (a) ‘to emaciate’; *faṣṣ* (pl. *fuṣūṣ*) ‘joint of two bones’; *ki‘āb* (pl of *ka‘b*) ‘dice’; *daḥā* (u) ‘to throw, cast’; *māṭil* (pl. *muttal*) < *maṭala* (u) ‘to stand up’.

Finishing with Beeston’s examples, we quote the following from the same *Lāmīya al-ʿArab*, in which the *f-sg* rule governs the (virtual) predicate (passive participle), not a pronoun.

<4> al-Šanfarā al-ʿAzdīy, Lāmīya al-ʿArab, line 14⁵⁸⁾: وَلَسْتُ بِمِهْيَافٍ يُعَشِّي
مُجَدَّعَةً سُقْبَانَهَا وَهِيَ بُهْلُ
‘And I am not a man quick to thirst⁵⁹⁾
pasturing his camels⁶⁰⁾ freely, whose young ones are nourished scantily, while they (mother camels of the herd) are left untied (of udders)’. Cf. *mihyāf* ‘vehemently or soon thirsty’; *ʿaššā* ‘to pasture cattle by night’; *sawām* ‘cattle or camels pasturing freely’; *ḡadda* ‘to nourish scantily’; *saqb* (pl. *suqbān*) ‘young

56) Concerning this remark of Beeston’s, see the comment of Simon Hopkins: “I have not myself observed that this is the case” (p. 145, footnote 5). Hopkins also referred to Nöldeke’s study, which we shall take up in section 4.1.3.

57) al-Lāmīyatāni, p. 42; al-Šanfarā No. 17, line 44, p. 67.

58) al-Lāmīyatāni, p. 31; al-Šanfarā No. 17, line 15, p. 61.

59) The verse begins with ‘I am not’, but *yuʿaššī* is in the third person singular.

60) *Sawām* must be a collective, for the word becomes feminine singular in *suqbānu-hā*. Also, *hiya buhhāl* is in the feminine singular.

one of camels’; *bāhil* (pl. *buhhal*) ‘untied (she-camel)’⁶¹.

The phrase *muğaddaʿat-an* is the ḥāl to depict the camels with *suqbānu-hā* as its semantic subject. Since *suqbān* is a non-human plural, *muğaddaʿ* is forced to agree with it in the feminine singular (tāʾ marbūṭa) in order to meet the meter restrictions⁶². Yet *buhhal* (broken plural of *bāhil*) describing she-camels is fit for Beeston’s other example.

4. The Actual Agreement in pre-Classical Arabic

In this section, we shall see actual agreements of gender and number in pre-Classical Arabic (pre-Islamic poetry). This section is due here also as our continued effort to show that Beeston’s remark is groundless. We place the agreement samples of Classical Arabic (CA) and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) in Appendix 2 (see 0.2).

Compared with them, the data in pre-Classical Arabic is much limited in quantity and less is known than other periods.

4.1. The *f-sg* rule in pre-Islamic poetry of al-Muʿallaqāt

In the preceding section, we stated that the two agreement types, *f-sg* and *strict*, were employed simultaneously, or that they coexisted in pre-Islamic poetry. In our opinion, there is no ground for the remark that the *f-sg* rule is a neologism, given the lack of older texts in which only the strict rule worked.

On the other hand, Clive Holes uses the term ‘deflected’ but does not mention Beeston (1975). Instead, he rephrased quite adequately: “In the Arabic of the pre-tenth century, it was common for broken nonhuman plural nouns to take “broken” plural adjectives as an alternative to fsg.⁶³ or (if the adjective had no broken pl. form) f. suffixed pl.” (1995:165; 2004:203). However, seeing that we find Beeston’s work followed uncritically in more recent studies⁶⁴, we hastened to check the seven poems in al-Muʿallaqāt to pick up verses in which the *f-sg* rule is observed.

Poetry must meet both rhyme and meter. In other words, the syllable structure and the number of syllables may force the poet to choose a certain form or word pattern rather than an otherwise more natural one. So we must be cautious in evaluating the usages in poetry, though we are to take the data as they are, with no prose text

61) Note that *bāhil* is an adjective specific to she-camels.

62) According to the strict rule, it will be *muğaddaʿ-īna* (masculine plural in the accusative).

63) fsg. = feminine singular [Takashina].

64) But all such works have not been mentioned in this study. Owens remarked “Building on basic observations of Beeston (1975) ...” (2021:483), while D’Anna stated differently: “Syntactic [*strict*, added by Takashina] agreement, moreover, coexists with the optional and innovative agreement in the feminine singular (Beeston 1975: 65–6), more frequent for nonhuman controllers but definitely available also to human ones” (2020:149). Thus the latter clearly stated that the two coexisted. We welcome the analyses of al-Muʿallaqāt and al-Qurʾān by this author (see footnote 4, ditto).

available to us.

<5> Zuḥayr bn ʿAbī Sulmā, al-Muʿallaqāt 3, line 41⁶⁵): فَشَدَّ وَلَمْ يُنْظَرْ بَيُوتًا كَثِيرَةً * لَدَى حَيْثُ أَلْفَتْ رَحْلَهَا أُمُّ فَشَعَمٍ
‘So he attacked (him), while not giving time to many (other) tents, at (the place) where Mother of Qaṣʿam (Death) cast its luggage⁶⁶’. Cf. *šadda* (u) ‘to attack’; *ʿanzara* ‘to grant a respite to’⁶⁷; *rahl* ‘luggage’; *ʿumm qaṣʿam* ‘death, war’.

<6> Zuḥayr bn ʿAbī Sulmā, al-Muʿallaqāt 3, line 54⁶⁸): وَمَنْ لَمْ يُصَانِعْ فِي أُمُورٍ * يُضْرَسْ بِأَنْيَابٍ وَيُوطَأَ بِمَنْسِمٍ
‘Whoever does not act gently in many things shall be bitten by sharp teeth and trodden by a camel's pad’. Cf. *šānaʿa* ‘to treat with gentleness (Lane, p. 1733a)’; *ḍarras* ‘to bite strongly’; *nāb* (pl. *ʿanyāb*) ‘canine tooth, tusk’; *mansim* ‘sole of a camel’.

The *f-sg* rule in instances <5> and <6> appear as if taken from the MSA text and refutes Beeston for themselves.

<7> Labīd bn Rabīʿa, al-Muʿallaqāt 4, line 1: عَقَتْ الدِّيَارُ مَحَلُّهَا فَمَقَامُهَا * بِمِئَى تَأَبَّدَ عَوْنُهَا فَرَجَامُهَا
‘The dwellings have been erased, (places both for just) stopping and staying; at Minan lie desolate its Ġawl and Riḡām’. Cf. *ʿafā* (u) ‘to be erased’; *dār* (pl. *diyār*); *ḥall* (u/i) ‘to stop, settle’; *ʿaqāma* ‘to stay’; *taʿabbada* ‘to be wild for ever’.

<8> Labīd bn Rabīʿa, al-Muʿallaqāt 4, line 8: وَجَلَا السُّيُُُولُ عَنِ الطُّلُولِ كَأَنَّهَا * رُبُّرٌ تُجَدُّ مُتُونُهَا أَقْلَامُهَا
‘And the torrents disclosed the ruins (of dwellings) ; it is as if the ruins were writings whose texts their pens have renewed’. Cf. *ḡalā* (u) ‘to disclose’; *sayl* (pl. *suyūl*) ‘torrent’; *matn* (pl. *mutūn*) ‘text’.

<9> ʿAmr bn Kulthūm, al-Muʿallaqāt 5, line 5: وَإِنَّا سَوْفَ نُدْرِكُنَا أَلْمَنَايَا * مُقَدَّرَةً لَنَا وَمُقَدَّرِينَا
‘and verily the Fates will overtake us, (for they are) predetermined for us and (we are) predetermined (for them)’. Cf. *manīya* (pl. *manāyā*) ‘fate’.

In the example <7>, a non-human plural noun (*diyār*) demanded the verb (*ʿaf-at*) and the pronoun (*-hā*) to be feminine singular. The verse <8> abounds with the *f-sg* rule: the first *-hā* is *ṭulūl* ‘ruins’, the second *zubur* ‘writings’, and the third *mutūn* ‘texts’ while the subject of *tuḡiddu* ‘she renews’ is *ʿaqlām* ‘pens’. Doubtless, these all refer to non-human plural nouns. Likewise in <9>, another non-human plural noun (*manāyā*) required the verb (*tu-driku-*) and the adjective in the *ḥāl* (*muqaddaratan*) to be femi-

65) Line 41 (Lyll, p. 62; Ikeda, 2006:15), line 37 (Abel, p. 13).

66) Namely, at the place where Death stopped her step casting her luggage.

67) To wit, without delay.

68) Line 54 (Lyll, p. 66; Ikeda, 2006:16), line 50 (Abel, p. 14; Nöldeke 1902:35). Note that Nöldeke (do.) did not deny لَا (in Abel, not لَمْ adopted by Lyall and Ikeda).

nine singular. In addition, in the text of <11> below, ‘short-haired horses’ are referred to as ‘her’ (*nūriṭu-hā*) ‘we shall bequeath them’.

4.2. The actual agreement in pre-Islamic poetry

In the preceding two subsections, we argued that the two agreement rules, *f*-sg and *strict*, coexisted. Here we take up specimens of Nöldeke (1897:81-85) with some added by us. He showed us how the agreement of gender and number vacillated between options, bound by poetic rules of syllable structures (meter and rhyme).

4.2.1. Broken plurals

First, the agreement with broken plurals, of Nöldeke’s own choosing (ibid, p.81). <10> and <11> concerns non-human plurals, while <12> depicts humans (women).

The verse <10> has two kinds of agreement with the same broken plural ‘eyes (f.)’, first the *strict* (feminine plural: *dawārī* ‘scattering tears’) and then the *f*-sg (‘everlasting of grief’) in the same line.

<10> Hassān bn Tābit, *muḥaḍram*⁶⁹, Ibn Hišām, p. 711, line 4⁷⁰: عَيْونٌ ذَوَارِي * ...
الْدَّمْعُ دَائِمَةٌ أَلْوَجْدِ ‘eyes shedding tears, everlasting in the grief (of his death)’. Cf.
dawārī < *dawārin* (pl. of *dāriy-a*, feminine active participle of *darā*) ‘to winnow, scatter’; *dā'im* (active participle of *dāma*) ‘to continue’; *wağada* (i) = *wağida* (a)
wağd ‘to grieve, mourn’.

In verse <10> above, the syntax is not logical at all, and it was the syllable structure that counted. In the following (11), ‘Amr bn Kulṭūm talks about an inheritance, i.e. ‘short-haired horses’ (*ğurd*, pl. of *ʾağrad*) and ‘they were known (*ʿurif-na*, feminine plural)’ to the tribesmen⁷¹. So the object of our inheritance is in the feminine plural (*hunna*, ‘them’), but the object which we are to bequeath is in the feminine singular (*hā*, ‘her’), though all of them are the same horses.

<11> ‘Amr bn Kulṭūm, al-Muʿallaqāt 5, line 81⁷²: وَرِثَانَهُنَّ عَنْ آبَاءٍ صِدْقٍ * وَنُورِثُهَا إِذَا
مِتْنَا بَنِينَ ‘and we have inherited them from fathers of veracity, and shall bequeath them, when we die, to our sons’.

Likewise in the next verse <12>, five words modify the same ‘women’: the first (*šumm*, adjective) and the last (*yašfīna*, imperfect verb) are in the feminine plural, while *muḥašṣar-at-in* (passive participle), *šīn-at* (perfect verb) and *munaʿam-at-in*

69) The poet was well-known as the prophet’s poet.

70) According to Sīra-A1 (line 2 in the poem); p. 231, vols. 3-4 in Sīra-A2; p. 479, Sīra-E.

71) This information is described in the preceding line (73 in Lyall, p. 121; 71 in Ikeda, 2009:7; 79 in Abel, 25). Arberry (1957:208) also translated the poem in this sequence of lines.

72) Nöldeke (1897:81) cites this verse as ‘Amr. Mo. 81’ which is line 74 (Lyall, p. 121), line 81 (Abel, p. 25) and line 72 (Ikeda, 2009:7). For *mit-nā*, Lyall and Ikeda read *mut-nā*.

(passive participle) are in the feminine singular. Beyond all question, here is no consistent agreement but the conformity to the poetic rule.

<12> Tamīm bn ʿUbayy bn Muqbil, *muḥaḍram*⁷³⁾, Ibn Muqbil No. 41, line 32 (p. 325)⁷⁴⁾: شَمِّ مُحَصَّرَةٍ صَيَّنَتْ مُنَعَمَةٍ * مِنْ كُلِّ دَاءٍ يَأْذِنُ اللَّهُ يَشْفِينَا: '[Women,] proud, slender, well protected, living an easy life, who by God's permission heal from every illness'. Cf. *šumm* (plural of ʿašamm) 'fine-nosed, proud'; *muḥaššar* 'slender in the waist'; *šāna* (u) 'to preserve'; *munaʿam* 'leading a comfortable life'; *šafā* (i) 'to heal'.

The following verse is the first line of al-Muraqqiṣ al-ʿAkbar. We take up this because the syntax is so clear that we need no argument. Here *tuḡīb-a* '(that) she answer' refers to nothing but *al-diyār* 'abodes'.

<13> al-Muraqqiṣ al-ʿAkbar, the early 6 C, al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt No. 54, line 1 (vol. 1, p. 485): هَلْ بِالْدِّيَارِ أَنْ تُجِيبَ صَمَمٌ * لَوْ كَانَ رَسْمٌ نَاطِقًا كَلَّمَ: 'Is it incumbent on abodes that they answer? Deafness! If (their) trace could utter (words), it would tell'. Cf. *šamam* 'deafness'; *rasm* 'trace'.

4.2.2. Collective nouns of the human group

Nöldeke (1897:81-2) also took up interesting phenomena regarding collective nouns from pre-Islamic poetry. They all belong to the human group (see *Table ap4* in section A1.10).

About this group, Nöldeke stated: "In collectives of persons, agreement as plural masculine predominates but here too there are all kinds of changes. قَوْمٌ is at most sporadically construed as singular⁷⁵⁾" (p. 81, line 29). In place of his example⁷⁶⁾, we cite others from al-Muʿallaqāt, for we could not identify his ultimate source.

<14> Tarafa b. al-ʿAbd, al-Muʿallaqāt 2, line 41⁷⁷⁾: إِذَا الْقَوْمُ قَالُوا مَنْ فَتَى خِلْتُ * عُنَيْتُ فَلَمْ أَكْسَلْ وَلَمْ أَتَبَلَّدْ: 'When the people ask, "Who is the youth?" I suppose that I myself am intended, for I have not been lazy or stupid'. Cf. *tabal-*

73) Concerning the term *muḥaḍram* for this poet, see Stetkevych (2006). The word *Allāh* in a poem does not always tell that it was produced after Islam or after the poet became a Muslim. For this point, see now Takashina (2022:47-9, section 2.1.1).

74) Nöldeke (1897:81) cites this verse as 'Gamhar 162, 6' which is Ġamhara line 31 (Būlāq ed. p. 162, line 6; Cairo ed. p. 688; Bayrūt ed., p. 309; Saudi ed., p. 862). Though readings and lines are slightly different among the editions (e.g. *munaʿam-at-an* in three editions), we followed Nöldeke.

75) Our tentative translation.

76) Nöldeke's example (p. 81), taken from Howell 1:78, runs as follows. * أَقَاطِنُ قَوْمٌ سَلَمَى أَمْ نَوَوْا طَعْنًا * إِنَّ يَطْعَنُوا فَعَجِيبٌ عَيْشٌ مَنْ قَطَنَّا 'Will the people of Salmā abide at home, or have they proposed journeying? If they journey, wonderful will be the life of him that abides at home'. Cf. *nawā* (i) 'to intend'; *ṣaʿana* (a) *ṣaʿan* 'to depart, leave'. As the abbreviation (Sh) in loc. cit. shows, Howell took this from *Šuḍūr* (No. 85: al-Qāhira, p. 181; Dimašq, p. 233), while the editors of two editions of *Šuḍūr* confess that they could not identify the original poet. Though the ultimate source is unknown, *qāṭin* is masculine singular and *nawaw* and *yaṣʿanū* are masculine plural.

77) We follow the text of Ikeda (2004), line 41 in Lyall, line 42 in Abel. Cf. Arberry, 1957:85.

طَيْر ‘birds’, because in Wright’s grammar, the word was about to go astray (see A1.8). °Imru° al-Qays’ very famous poem bears witness to the fact that this collective is referred to in the feminine singular (-*hā*) and, in addition, that it is a collective noun because ‘nests’ in the plural means birds are all in their nest.

<17> °Imru° al-Qays, al-Mu°allaqāt 1, line 49⁸³): * وَقَدْ أَغْتَدِي وَالطَّيْرُ فِي وَكُنَاتِهَا * بِمُنْجَرِدٍ قَيْدِ الْأَوَائِدِ هَيْكَلِ ‘and at times I go out early in the morning, while the birds are still in their nests, on a short-haired horse, so swift as to drive away beasts, huge like an edifice’. Cf. *ʾiḡṭadā* ‘to come or go early in the morning’; *wukuna* ‘nest’; *munḡarid* ‘a horse having short, and little, hair’ (Lane, p. 407c); *°ābida* (pl. *°awābid*) ‘a wild beast’; *qayd* ‘shackles of beasts, i.e. the horse is so swift that, as it were, it fetters beasts’ (Lane, p. 2577a).

4.2.3. Nöldeke’s view on the agreement in pre-Classical Arabic

Near the end of § 64, Nöldeke summed up his observations on how far the vacillation goes in the use of number and gender in Arabic (p. 85, ll. 17-32).

For one thing, he says, the meaning often prevails over the form as in other languages⁸⁴), and for another, because of broken plurals, so many words can be a plural and a singular⁸⁵). He concluded his remark thus: “But then this formation has caused the functions of the plural and the feminine to get mixed up to a large extent, in such a way that the function of the feminine, which is rather dispensable, has outgrown that of the plural. As a result, the significance for distinguishing forms is generally weakened within these areas. All of this brought plenty of opportunity to choose the words artificially, and the great freedom in the grammatical expression is quite convenient for the poet: but through this, the most desirable quality of language, clarity, suffers severely⁸⁶)”.

With no clear wording of the *f-sg* rule, he had the rule in mind when he talked of the mixture of the plural and the feminine. He says poets made most of the multiple choices for plurality. Then it was ancient Arab poetry that needed varied means to express plurality.

4.3. The *f-sg* rule and the languages in contact

To admit the opinion that the *f-sg* rule was a neologism (3.3, 2), we must explain how Arabic got hold of it. With examples in al-Qurʾān, the influence of languages

83) Qays, p. 19. The line varies according to editions: 47 in Ahlwardt, 52 in Abel or 53 in Lyall and Ikeda.

84) Thus the meaning opens the way to *constructio ad sensum*.

85) We may add to this an unmistakable fact that the feminine suffix, or Tā° Marbūṭa, committed itself deeply to the process of word formation.

86) Our tentative translation for the original: “Dann aber hat diese Bildung bewirkt, dass die Kategorien des Plurals und des Femininum in grosser Ausdehnung durch einander gerathen sind, und zwar so, dass die eher entbehrliche des Femininum die des Plurals überwuchert hat. Der Sinn für die Unterscheidung der Formen ist dadurch innerhalb dieser Gebiete überhaupt abgeschwächt. Das hat alles zwar viel Gelegenheit gegeben, die Worte künstlich zu wählen, und die grosse Freiheit in der grammatischen Bezeichnung ist dem Dichter bequem: aber die wünschenswertheste Eigenschaft der Sprache, die Deutlichkeit, leidet dadurch empfindlich” (Nöldeke 1897:85).

nearby in pre-Islamic days is the only choice left. They are: Syriac, which Arabs knew through Christianity; Greek, with which Arabs had contact under the Byzantine control of Syria and Egypt⁸⁷⁾; and Pahlavi or Middle Persian, with which some Arab tribes were acquainted under the Sasanian control in Mesopotamia.

Even if many Arabs had had chances to hear preaches of Syrian monks, Syriac has no *f-sg* rule (see 1.2)⁸⁸⁾. The Greek syntax in question is, as stated by Luraghi (1.3), the singular agreement in the verb with neuter plural nouns⁸⁹⁾. This is also the case with Persian with inanimate plural subjects⁹⁰⁾. Greek and Persian have no distinction of gender in the paradigm of verbs. Accordingly, the Greek neuter plural noun has the verb in the 3rd person singular, used for any gender, while the Persian inanimate plural noun has the verb in the 3rd person singular (no gender).

The Arabic *f-sg* rule is both feminine and singular at once. Hence it is an honest question why Arabic took the rule of any or no gender in the singular verb as feminine singular, applying it even to the agreement of adjectives. So in the case of language contact, it is Arabic that allotted the gender of singular to feminine. Then we must explain why Arabic took it as feminine. The question comes back again to Arabic.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Summary of the work

In the light of the aim of the work (see 0.2), we explained the mechanism of the *f-sg* agreement rule with non-human plural nouns (section 2) in terms of the logical reuse of *tāʾ marbūṭa*'s function to demarcate gender. To make sure of our theoretical argument, we chose pre-Islamic poetry and confirmed that the rule was no *neologism* (sections 3 and 4). In short, Beeston's heedless statement (3.3) should be done away with, and the *f-sg* agreement should be held as having come out of the multilayered development of Semitic languages (1.2).

In the face of a sort of confusion about the collective noun, we set up a logical and lucid regrouping in Appendix 1, and the samples of various agreement types in CA and MSA are listed in a tabular format in Appendix 2, perhaps the first of its kind.

5.2. Further studies on *Tāʾ Marbūṭa*

With a series of studies related to 'the deflected' agreement, it is our sincere hope that a bird's eye view should be taken of *Tāʾ Marbūṭa* and its various functions in a

87) It may be recalled that Greek was the language of official documents under the early Islamic rule, but before that, the *f-sg* rule had been established in al-Qurʾān.

88) In all probability, it was Arab Christians who preached to Arabs and there was no language contact. Later in the days of Umayyads, there were Syrian scholars who translated Greek into Arabic, but by then the *f-sg* rule had been established long since.

89) About Greek and Persian, see also Lipiński in footnote 5.

90) We are grateful to D'Anna (p. 150) for Hashabeiky's work and to Hashabeiky for the research in this theme in Persian. The well-documented argument has furnished us with explicit proof.

unified mechanism. Then it turns out how much the Arabic language owes to it not only in phonology and morphology but also in syntax as shown in this study.

In the field of spoken languages, however, little is known in its own light about how the feminine suffix has developed and modified what they have inherited in the history of the Arabic language.

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* For editorial reasons, the continued part of this study is to appear in the next issue (vol. 22, 2024) of this journal, which will cover the following two appendices:

Appendix 1: Collective Nouns in Arabic Grammar

- A1.1 Collective nouns in Wright's grammar
- A1.2 A. Fischer and the collective nouns
- A1.3 Wright's grammar and the German of Caspari
- A1.4 Wright's grammar as the English of Caspari
- A1.5 Other grammars after Wright's second edition (1874-5)
- A1.6 After A. Fischer (1940)
- A1.7 Two studies of the collective nouns in al-Qurʾān
- A1.8 The gentilic group in Wright
- A1.9 The four-group classification in Wright
- A1.10 Our classification table of collective nouns

Appendix 2: The Actual Agreement Types

- A2.0 Some preliminary remarks on "Classical Arabic"
- A2.0.1 About CA data below
- A2.0.2 The arrangement of examples

A2.1	Classical Arabic (CA)
A2.1.1	CA: Noun + Adjective (Table A)
A2.1.2	CA: Verb - Subject sequence (Table V)
A2.1.3	CA: Subject - Verb sequence (Table S)
A2.2	Modern Standard Arabic
A2.2.1	MSA: Noun + Adjective (Table A)
A2.2.2	MSA: Verb - Subject sequence (Table V)
A2.2.3	MSA: Subject - Verb sequence (Table S)
A2.3	Summary of agreement types

*) Corrigenda