Negation in Mehri, stages of Jespersen's Cycle
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1 Introduction
There are three major dialect groups of Mehri: Western Yemeni Mehri (henceforth WYM); Mahriyōt, also known as eastern Yemeni Mehri; and Mehreyyet, also known as Omani Mehri. In this chapter, we argue that negation patterns in Mehri result from grammaticalisation of the anaphoric negator,[1] examine negation patterns in the dialects as reflecting stages in Jespersen's Cycle of negation, and consider the extent to which morpholexical and syntactic factors influence negation patterns.

The Mahriyōt and Mehreyyet examples in this chapter have come from Watson's own fieldwork in Yemen and Oman or from the texts in Sima (2009). WYM examples are taken from Bittner (1914), Wagner (1953) or Simeone-Senelle (2011). Mahriyōt fieldwork examples are followed by the abbreviation (Mo); Mahriyōt examples taken from Sima (2009) by Sima and text:line number; thus, (Sima2:11) refers to Sima (2009) text 2, line 11; Mehreyyet fieldwork examples are followed by the abbreviation (M). Data from recorded narratives are followed by N, from Watson's bank of SMS text messages by txt, from rhymes and chants by R, from elicited speech by ES, and from partially elicited speech by PES. SMS text messages are given in the original Arabic script followed by a transcription. WYM examples are followed by the appropriate reference to Bittner, Wagner or Simeone-Senelle.

The majority of Modern South Arabian languages (MSAL) differ from other Semitic languages with respect to negation insofar as the negative particle *lā* generally follows the whole proposition, even where the negated term is the initial element. In (1) and (2), the negative particle follows the subordinate clause, although the main verb (the fact of knowing) is negated rather than the subordinate verb (the fact of staying in Muscat in (1), or the identification of 'far' in (2)).

(1) *wadak kam laśxawwal bi-maskūt lā* [lit: I knew how long I stay in Muscat not] 'I don't know how long I'll stay in Muscat' (M)

(2) *widʕak hõ rāḥaḳ lā* [lit: I knew where 'far' not] 'I didn't know where 'far' was' (Sima78:17)

No other Semitic language family, not even the closely related Ethio-Semitic languages and southern Arabic, negates by means of postposed *l*. The ancient Semitic languages, including Ancient South Arabian and Ge'ez, are recorded as having at least one negative particle containing *l* or derived from **l* that precedes the negated element. On the basis of data from Johnstone (1981) and Simeone-Senelle (1997), Lucas & Lash (2010: 399) suggest that the MSAL exhibit different stages of Jespersen's Cycle of negation, a historical change whereby pre-verbal negative markers are joined by new markers of negation in post-verbal position, which eventually come to replace the pre-verbal markers of negation. The term Jespersen's Cycle (henceforth JC) was coined in 1979 by Dahl (1979). Jespersen's original observation is as follows:

The history of negative expressions in various languages makes us witness the following curious fluctuation: the original negative adverb is first weakened, then found insufficient and therefore strengthened, generally through some additional word, and this in its turn may be felt as the negative proper and may then in course of time be subject to the same development as the original word. (Jespersen 1917: 4)

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[1] This is the term we use to refer to the word 'no' – i.e. the negative one-word answer to a yes—no question – and its equivalents in other languages.

Seen from the perspective of JC, stage I is characterised by a pre-verbal negator, as in Old French and Old English *ne*; at stage II, the pre-verbal negator is reinforced optionally by a post-verbal element grammaticalised to form a bipartite negative construction, as in Middle English *ne ... noht* and French *ne ... pas/rien*, etc.; at stage III, the pre-verbal negator is replaced by the post-verbal element as the primary negative particle, as in some varieties of Modern French *je (ne) sais pas* 'I don't know', with *ne* now optional, and Early Modern English *I say not* (Lucas & Lash 2010). A further stage, described as stage I´ (Lucas & Lash 2010: 380), involves leftward movement of the rightmost negator, as in Modern English *I don't say* where the negator is placed before the main verb.[2]

According to Lucas & Lash (2010: 400), the MSAL occupy the three main stages of JC: stage I, involving a pre-verbal or pre-predicate negator, is exhibited solely by Soqoṭri (Simeone-Senelle 1994: 198, 207; 1997: 414; Miranda Morris, p.c.); stage II, involving a pre-verbal negator reinforced by a post-verbal element, is exhibited by Śḥerɛ̄t, also known as Jibbali (Hofstede 1998: 157), and Mehreyyet; and stage III involving replacement of the original pre-verbal negator by the post-verbal element is exhibited in most contexts by Ḥarsūsi and WYM. One difference between the negation patterns exhibited by French and English on the one hand and those exhibited by MSAL on the other is that the post-predicate negator in MSAL is (almost) identical to the pre-predicate negator. Thus Lucas & Lash's (2010) proposal is based on analysing the post-predicate negator in MSAL as the result of grammaticalisation of the anaphoric negator *lā* 'no'.

In this chapter, we demonstrate not only that different MSAL, but also different dialect groups within Mehri exhibit different stages of JC. Mehreyyet exhibits significantly more bipartite negation – with a negative particle (realised as *al-*, *l-* or *la-*) both preceding and following the negated element – than Mahriyōt. Mahriyōt exhibits bipartite negation in contexts where WYM shows only monopartite negation, and thus appears here, as elsewhere (Watson, in press), to occupy a stage between that of the most conservative dialect group, Mehreyyet, and the least conservative WYM dialect group. Dialect differences in negation are acknowledged in the literature: bipartite negation is said to be exhibited in Mehreyyet and some eastern Yemeni dialects while western Yemeni dialects exhibit monopartite (post-negation) (Simeone-Senelle 1997: 413–414, 2011: 1103). However, bipartite negation exists alongside monopartite post- and pre-negation in both Mehreyyet and Mahriyōt, and, indeed, does occur in limited contexts in WYM. Although the dialects appear to occupy different stages of JC, the choice of monopartite or bipartite negation, we argue, is constrained in all dialect groups by morpholexical and syntactic factors.

We begin by considering the origin of the post-predicate negator and looking at tag questions and the anaphoric negator. We then examine negation of the predicate in the three dialects, and consider topic–comment sentences, *ʕād ... lā* 'yet … not' structures, negative commands, and constituent negation. In the penultimate sections, we look at fixed negative phrases and co-ordinated structures which in all dialects exhibit pre-predicate negation. In the final section, we consider instances where the rightmost negator has moved leftward, and thus where dialects show signs of moving to stage 1´ of JC.

2 The anaphoric negator and tag questions
The anaphoric negator in all dialects is *lā* 'no'. In many languages, tag questions are realised by a simple negative or, less commonly, positive particle. Tag questions turn a declarative clause into a yes–no question that requests confirmation or disconfirmation, but implies

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[2] The negative marker *pa* (< French *pas*) found in several French-lexifier creoles is pre-verbal (Rowlett 1998: 94—5) and, within a Chomskyan framework, in Haitian Creole is argued by DeGraff (1993) to have been reanalysed from specifier to head of the negative phrase. If this analysis is tenable, then Haitian Creole is at what Lucas & Nash call stage I´ within JC.

expectation of a positive answer (Payne 1997: 296–297). Tag questions in Mehri are realised by *lā* 'no'; utterance-final tag questions may also be realised by the positive particle *ahā*, or by juxtaposition of the positive and negative particles *ahā lā* 'yes no'. Examples include:

(3) *b-ḥāwēl ḥābū ysäkfäm ̄ar b-mīśäṭ – lā* 'At first, people used to just make roofs with [wood from] *mīśaṭ* trees, didn't they?' (Sima2:15)

(4) *hīs nūka hāl baʔlī hbēr lā* 'When he arrived at the camel herders, didn't he' (M)

Tag questions realised by *lā* occur far more frequently in Mehri than negative tag questions in English, for example; they may interrupt phrases and propositions, and in translation are often best left untranslated.

(5) *[hīs yḥaym yizīm tah ᴬgawāzᴬ lā] yḥaym yidāʔam bih fnōhan hēh man ḥ̃ō* 'when they m. are about to give him a passport, don't they? They want to know beforehand where he is from' (M.N)

(6) *wa-hīs mġōran ḥābū [lā] baʔlī ᴬšurṭahᴬ ḏ-išxabīrah* 'And then when the people [not], the police, were asking him' (M.N)

The original pre-predicate negator most probably took the form *lā* in the dialects. Through grammaticalisation, *lā* was reduced phonologically to *la-*, and we see the pre-negator *la-* in more careful speech in all dialects. The further reduced forms *l-* and *al-* attested most frequently today result from sonorant metathesis found elsewhere in the grammar (cf. Watson, in press). Phonological reduction of the original negator together with the frequency of occurrence of the *lā* tag question led to *lā* losing its function of negative tag question in some contexts and coming to strengthen the negation of pre-negated clauses in MSAL. Once final *lā* became reinterpreted as a predicate negator, the original initial negator could, in certain contexts and certain dialects, fall away.

3 Negation of the predicate
Negation of the predicate in WYM is, with the exceptions noted in section 3.6, always realised as monopartite post-negation (Bittner 1914: 31; Wagner 1953: 33). In Mahriyōt and Mehreyyet, the choice of monopartite or bipartite negation with predicates in non-topic–comment clauses is subject to rather complex morpholexical and syntactic constraints. With few exceptions, main and subordinate clauses exhibit monopartite post-negation in Mahriyōt. Personal-pronoun and VP-initial conditional clauses may exhibit bipartite negation. The choice of monopartite post-negation or bipartite negation in main clauses in Mehreyyet is subject to the following morpholexical constraints: monopartite post-negation is mandatory where the clause-initial element is a PP, existential *śī*, a locative, a noun, an indefinite pronoun, or a demonstrative. Bipartite negation may occur for emphasis where the clause-initial element is an independent personal pronoun or a VP. Bipartite negation in subordinate clauses and syndetically linked co-ordinated clauses may occur *unless* the initial element is a substantive or a demonstrative.

3.1 Mahriyōt
PP-initial main clauses in Mahriyōt are invariably singly post-negated whether they are independent main clauses or second conjuncts.

(7) *śī ḥatm lā* 'I'm not sure' (Mo)

(8) *w-bīs śī xadmāt ġahrīt lā* 'It f. doesn't have any more work [i.e. there isn't any other work associated with it]' (Sima6:17)

Negated NP-initial clauses of all types almost always have monopartite post-negation. The following examples include a locational clause, a nominal clause, and a verbal clause.

(9) *w-lākän sēh hāl ḥābū käll lā* 'but it f. [i.e. the knowledge of *raʕbūt*][3] is not with everyone' (Sima1:7)

(10) *naḫj ḏōm jīd lā* 'that game isn't good' (Mo)

(11) *ḏ-šēh fēśäl lā* 'he who has no work' (Sima11:9)

A personal-pronoun-initial subordinate clause may have bipartite negation, though cases are rare. In the conditional clauses below, bipartite negation is shown in the first example, monopartite negation in the remaining examples:

(12) *w-hān l-sēh zbänyōt lā* 'and if it is not a spring [tree]' (Sima2:16)

(13) *hān sēh mḥōläm lā* 'if it f. is not a [matter of] blood poisoning' (Sima1:58)

(14) *w-hīn [...] sēh ʕayd ḥnōb lā* 'and if [...] they [= it f.] are not big sardines' (Sima51:16)

VP-initial main and subordinate clauses display monopartite post-negation, although they may exhibit bipartite negation in a positive–negative or negative–negative co-ordinate complex (cf. below).

(15) *yḥarsäm hēh lā* 'They m. don't guard it m.' (Sima56:81)

(16) *mäkk täfsaḥ b-näbyūḳ ḏä-ttōmär lā* 'Won't you m.s. stop taking the dates?' (Sima33:34)

(17) *ḥābū kall snīnan yġarbam śī lyōmah ḏa-nṣrōmah lā / yġarbam śī ᴬmustawraḏᴬ man barr lā* 'People in the past didn't know these [things] of now. They m. didn't know about [things] imported from abroad' (Mo)

(18) *aḥōm ḏēh lā / aḥōm är ḏēh* 'I don't want that, I just want that' (Mo)

The following are negated adverbial (conditional and time) clauses respectively:

(19) *hān mōt īmōh lā* 'If he doesn't die today' (Sima74:16)

(20) *wa-tfäsk b-ʕaynätä ḥmūh, tfäsk, tfäsk, / at-tā yḳāʕ rġāź wīyä lā wi-yḳāʕ ḳwī ḳwī lā* 'You m.s. soften [it] with a little water, until it m. becomes neither too soft or too hard' (Sima57:93)

A VP-initial conditional clause may have bipartite negation in Mahriyōt, particularly where two or more conjuncts are involved, as in (22) below, though examples are rare:

(21) *hām lä-tġarbämsän lā* 'If you m.pl. don't know them f.' (Sima99:33)

(22) *hīn lä-rḳank lēh tū lā w-l-aśśᵃʕbaʕk män mälḥōt lā* 'When you m.s. haven't preserved it m. well or put enough salt in' (Sima58:44)

3.2 Mehreyyet

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[3] Traditional treatment for snake bites and puncture wounds (Lonnet & Simeone-Senelle 1987; Sima 2009, text 1, text 67).

In Mehreyyet, the predicate in PP-initial main clauses is typically singly post-negated. In the examples below, PP-initial clauses are bracketed off where they occur within larger contexts. Where they occur at the end or beginning of larger contexts, for example where the PP-initial clause follows the conjunction *lahinna* 'but', the PP-initial clause is separated by a forward slash:

(23) *šīn ḥawš lā* 'we don't have a paddock' (M)

(24) *nakan [šīn ḥōgat lā] xaṭṭawr* 'we came, we had no particular reason, [we were] passing through' (M)

(25)
لهن شي فرسيت لا *lahinna / šay farsēt lā* 'but I don't have the opportunity' (M.txt)

In contrast to Mahriyōt, a PP-initial main clause in Mehreyyet may have bipartite negation as opposed to monopartite post-negation to emphasise the negation.

(26)
الشي صفوت بخبير ذومه لا *al-šay ṣfōt bi-xbēr ḏōmah lā* 'I haven't heard that news' (M.txt)

PP-initial conditional clauses have monopartite post-negation in the unmarked case, but may exhibit bipartite negation, as in example (28) below:

(27) *wa-hām bīs ḳrūn lā / tkūn ḳarḥayt* 'And if she has no horns, she's [described as] *ḳarḥayt*' (M)

(28) *wa-lū mank lā / ankāʔan bawmah lā* 'If it weren't for you m.s., I wouldn't have come here' (M.PES)

(29) *aśigarīt klift / hām al-būk ḥamāt lā* 'The climb is difficult, if you m.s. don't have strength' (M.PES)

PP-initial clauses introduced by the attributiviser *ḏa-* typically have bipartite negation (cp. Mahriyōt *ḏ-šēh fēśäl lā* 'he who has no work' Sima11:9):

(30) *ḏa-l-šēh mġarbēt lā / yūḳōf* 'He who has no knowledge remains silent' (M)

(31) *ḏa-l-šēh ᴬgawāzᴬ lā* 'He who has no passport' (M)

In the unmarked case, main clauses of all types which start with a non-topicalised NP have monopartite post-negation. Of the following examples of pronoun-initial clauses, (31a) and (31b) are locational clauses, (32a) and (32b) nominal clauses, and (33a) and (33b) verbal clauses:

Pronoun-initial clauses
(31a) *hōh bawmah lā* 'I am not here' (M)

(31b) *hēt bark abayt lā* 'You s. aren't at home' (M)

(32a) *hōh fōna ḥbūr lā* 'I wasn't cold before' (M)

(32b) *hēt ansyūt lā / hēt ār ḳaʔyūt* 'You s. are not human, you are a spirit' (M)

(33a) *hō ḳdark latiḳḳah waḥśī lā* 'I can't drink it m. all myself' (M)

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(33b)
وهوه وداك هيس ذهائن لا *wa-hōh wadak tēs ḏa-hāśan lā* 'I don't know what it f. is about' (M.txt)

In contrast to Mahriyōt, however, the predicate in pronoun-initial utterance-initial declarative clauses may have bipartite negation in Mehreyyet. Bipartite negation here is claimed by speakers to strengthen the negation:

(34) *al-hēh wōḏam yiḳāʔ šīn lā* 'There is no need for him to be with us' (M)

(35) *lā, al-hēh ḏa-haʔnoh lā* 'No, he didn't do it deliberately' (M)

(36) *waylōb al-hōh sīrōna waḥśay lā* 'I'm certainly not going on my own!' (M)

In contrast to Mahriyōt, Mehreyyet typically exhibits bipartite negation of pronoun-initial conditional and circumstantial clauses.

(37) *hām al-hēh man ḥaybī lā* 'If it m. weren't for my father' (M)

(38) *adammis faṣṣawt tilifūn / wa-l-sēh ḏa-haʔnūt lā* 'She probably leant on her phone while she wasn't aware' (M)

Again in contrast to Mahriyōt, pronoun-initial hypotactically and paratactically linked complement clauses typically have bipartite negation in Mehreyyet, as in the following examples:

(39) *hāśan haġrabūk tay / ḏa-l-hōh šūḳafk lā illōh* 'What made you m.s. know that I wasn't able to sleep last night?' (M)

(40) *haṣbaḥk / al-hōh ḳdark lā* 'It turned out [= I became] that I was unable to' (M)

(41) *ḏa-śnawwan ḥnafs / al-sēh ankayta fīsēʔ lā* 'She thinks she won't be back soon' (M)

(42) *hankūr / al-hēh śaff ḏa-msēr ʕādī lā* 'He realised it m. was not the track of a normal pace' (M.N)

(43)
 نثنوك الهوه قدرون لنكاء خلال ئيثرحيوم حوليتن ليومه لا *ḏa-śnawwak / al-hōh ḳadrōna lankā* ᴬ*xilāl*ᴬ *ayśar ḥāyōm ḥawlaytan lyōmah lā* 'I think I won't be able to come during these next ten days' (M.txt)

The predicate in clauses with an initial noun or demonstrative invariably has monopartite negation in both main and subordinate clauses.

Main clause
(44) *abayt nōb wīyan lā* 'The house isn't very big' (M)

(45) *ḥaybitk ṣalḥayt lā* 'Your m.s. female camel isn't fat' (M)

(46) *ḏōmah yinōfa śī lā* 'This m. is no use' (M)

Subordinate clause
(47) *aḥḥazmayyat [hām aḏnōbas bih śiffə lā] ykūn ḏōmah ʔayb* 'The ḥazmayyat [camel], if her tail doesn't have much hair, that m. is a fault' (M.N)

(48) *īrān ṯḥōm sūriya tiftēk lā* 'Iran doesn't want Syria[4] to leave' (M)

(49)
استاذ عمور اموه اساتذه انكياء لا ^A^*ustāḏ* ^A^*ʕamūr īmōh* ^A^*asātiḏah* ^A^*ankyēyāʔ lā* 'The lecturer said, 'The lecturers aren't coming today'' M.txt

In the unmarked case, VP-initial main and complement clauses have monopartite post-negation.

Main clause
(50) *siddam lā* 'They m. didn't make up' (M)

(51) *imših bīṣak lā* 'Yesterday it m. didn't snap' (M)

(52) *wat ḏa-ḥatūgak tʔōmar lā lā* 'When you m.s. are in need, you don't say, 'No'' (M)

Complement clause
(53) *aġarbah yifōraḥ b-ārēb lā* 'I know he doesn't like Arabs' (M)

(54) *ġrūb maharradūtan tah lā* 'He knew they m. wouldn't send him back' (M)

A VP- or pronoun-initial main clause without an initial topic may have bipartite negation in Mehreyyet, although this occurs considerably less in our data[5] than suggested by Rubin for the Johnstone texts (Rubin 2010: 265–266). Bipartite negation is almost invariably characteristic of non-utterance-initial clauses, most particularly second conjuncts, and where it does occur in utterance-initial clauses it serves to add strength to the negation.[6] Thus, both the following partially elicited clauses express the proposition 'I didn't forget my phone in the restaurant', with negation strengthened in the first bipartite example:

(55) *al-hanhayk tilifūnī bark amṭām lā* 'I didn't forget my phone in the restaurant' (M)

(56) *hanhayk tilifūnī bark amṭām lā*

Bipartite negation may serve to disambiguate a clause in Mehreyyet. The monopartite example (57) is ambiguous between negation of the main verb or negation of the verb in the subordinate clause. The bipartite examples (58) and (59) disambiguate: (58), placing the pre-negator before the main verb, negates the main verb, and (59), placing the pre-negator before the subordinate clause, negates the subordinate clause.

(57) *wkōh hēt klaṯk hīs ḏa-hēt ṭbaxk lā* 'Why didn't you m.s. tell her that you cooked?' ~ 'Why did you tell her that you didn't cook?' (M)

(58) *wkōh hēt al-klaṯk hīs ḏa-hēt ṭbaxk lā* 'Why didn't you m.s. tell her that you cooked?'

(59) *wkōh hēt klaṯk hīs ḏa-l-hēt ṭbaxk lā* 'Why did you m.s. tell her that you didn't cook?'

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[4] i.e. the Syrian government. Recorded in February 2011 during the protests in the Arab world that removed the presidents of Tunisia and Egypt.

[5] Including those supplied by T.M. Johnstone's consultant, Ali Musallam.

[6] In the context of many approaches to JC, which see the rise of the post-negation as a reinforcement of an apparently weak pre-negator, the pattern referred to here, whereby the post-negator is reinforced by the pre-negator, is noteworthy.

The predicate in syndetically linked VPs, and in VPs and verb-initial clauses linked by the adversative conjunct *ār hīs* more, often has bipartite rather than monopartite negation in Mehreyyet, as exemplified below:

(60) *hōh baʔlīt abayt / wa-l-hamrīta lā* 'I'm f.s. one of the family and I won't be shy [and hold back [from eating]' (M)

(61) *ḥōm laġtayr ār hīs al-matwiyak lā* 'I wanted to speak, but I couldn't' (M)

Bipartite negation of VP-initial conditional clauses occurs far more frequently in Mehreyyet than in Mahriyōt.

(62) *wa-hām al-ḏa-ratkaz ḥayḏantsa lā* 'and if her [the camel's] ears aren't pointing up' (M.N)

In at least one case, lexical factors determine the choice between monopartite and bipartite negation: VPs involving *aḥōm* 'I want' have bipartite negation in main clauses more frequently than other verbs. The frequency of occurrence of pre-negated *aḥōm* in Mehreyyet has led to *lḥōm* occurring in place of *aḥōm* in positive clauses, as in (64) and (65) below:

(63) *lḥōm lankā lā* 'I don't want to come' (M)

(64) *lḥamš b-xayr* 'I want you f.s. well' (M)

(65)
لحمش تكتيبي هه *lḥamš taktēbī hēh* 'I want you f.s. to write to him' (M.txt)

3.3 Indefinite pronoun predicand
Clauses with an initial indefinite pronoun predicand *ḥād ~ aḥād* are usually singly post-negated by *lā* in all three dialects:

(66) *hâd yinôka bä-warqât ĕ lâ* 'niemand kommt mit einem Papier' (no one comes with a paper) (Wagner 1953:33)

(67) *w-ḥād mänkīh ḏ-äṭōräb l-ḥād lā, w-ḥād mänkīh yäfrōḳ ḥād lā* 'Neither of you DUAL has [officially] offered protection to the other, but neither of you DUAL fears the other' (Sima48:27)

(68) *ḥād yiḳōdar yiśnē śī lā* 'No one can see anything' (M)

3.4 Co-ordinated clauses
Syndetically linked independent-pronoun-initial clauses exhibit monopartite post-negation in WYM, but may exhibit bipartite negation in Mahriyōt, as in the examples (69) and (70) below:

(69) *bäḳʕāt tkūn bäk ʕamḳ, [tälḥaḳs mälsē wīyän wīyän lā, / wa-l-sēh mṣā b-järbīb tāl ḳaśʕayt ḳaśʕayt lā]* 'The place is in the central region, the rain doesn't reach it that much, nor is it as dry as on the coastal plain' (Sima23:10)

(70) *mhärʕay axah färd män ḳbīlät ġayj män ḳbīlät [l-hēh ġayj mḳaddäm lā, / wa-l-hēh ḳbīl lā]* 'a normal person is someone from the tribe who is neither a leader nor a *ḥalfēt*-partner' Sima48:13

(Poly)syndetically linked pronoun-initial clauses (almost) invariably exhibit bipartite negation in Mehreyyet:

(71) *fāmha ḏ-īgirśśan b-aḳaʔ [wa-l-hēh ḏa-rīkab lā / wa-l-hēh ḏ-isyūr lā / wa-l-hēh bark hōla lā / wa-l-hēh bark ḥarḳ lā]* 'His feet were dragging on the ground, and he wasn't mounted and he wasn't walking, and he wasn't in the shadow and he wasn't in the heat' (M.N)

In a co-ordinate complex of verbal predicates, bipartite negation may occur in Mahriyōt and Mehreyyet, at least in the second conjunct, as an alternative to monopartite pre-negation (cf. below).

(72) *ʕamōr abdan [aṭʕamh lā ḳaṭ / wa-l-ḥamh lā]* 'He said, "No way! I won't taste it m. and I don't want it!"' (Mo.N)

(73) *w-ḥābū lyēk ḳād [rīźam / aw l-rīźam lä]* 'These people will either agree or not agree' (Sima48:30)

(74) *hōh ḥiggōna [wa-l-yiḳtalīb bay lā / wa-l-yiṣayṣ lay lā]* 'I am going on the Hajj and they m. shouldn't worry about me or be afraid for me' (M.N)

In syndetically linked conjuncts where the sense of negation is strengthened, *(a)ḥād*-initial clauses may have bipartite negation in Mahriyōt and Mehreyyet.

(75) *w-śī ḥābū män Ṣūr wa-l-ḥād mnän sīläm lā* 'I had people from Ṣūr with me, and not one of us was saved' (Sima75:23–24)

(76)
لا ثي به ولاحاد مرتاحين امحبوس *amaḥbōs ᴬmurtāḥīnᴬ wa-l-aḥād bih śī lā* 'The prisoners are happy, and no one has anything [wrong] with him' (M.txt)

3.5 Negation within comment of topic–comment clause
Unlike what is found in WYM (cf. Wagner 1953: 33), Mehreyyet usually displays bipartite negation, and Mahriyōt may display bipartite negation when the whole predication within the comment of a topic–comment clause is negated and the predicand within the comment is an independent pronoun.[7] Where a clause takes an initial noun or demonstrative predicand, a negated clause is said by Mehreyyet informants to be topicalised preferably. In the negated topic–comment clause, the anaphoric pronoun predicand of the comment clause is usually pre-negated.[8] In the less acceptable negated non-topic–comment clause, the predicand is not pre-negated. Thus, while both the following clauses are acceptable, the topic–comment clause in (78) is preferable:

(77) *aḵlēm gīd lā* [lit: the pen good not] 'The pen is not good' (M.ES)

(78) *aḵlēm al-hēh gīd lā* [lit: the pen not it m. good not] 'The pen is not good' (M.ES)

Further contextual examples of bipartite negation within topic–comment clauses from Mehreyyet include:

(79) *bawmah agaww / al-hēh ṣabṭ lā* 'Here the weather isn't reliable' (M)

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[7] Bipartite negation where a clause takes an initial independent pronoun is significantly more common in Mehreyyet than in Mahriyōt: the 75 Jōdab texts in Sima (2009) show six tokens of pre-negated *hēh* 'he' and three tokens of pre-negated *sēh* 'she', but no other independent pronouns are pre-negated. There are no examples of pre-negated pronouns in the Rēhan texts.

[8] However, even here there are exceptions, as in Mehreyyet: لا بومه سئه نصرى *naṣrā sēh bawmah lā* 'Nasra isn't here' (M.txt); *wa-ḏīmah sēh karmaym lā taghūm* 'That f. isn't a mountain moving' (M).

(80) *[ṭayt / al-sēh ḥūrūt wīyan lā] nʔōmar haṣarīt* [lit: one f. not she very black not we call *haṣarīt*] 'one f. [camel] that is not very black we call *haṣarīt*' (M)

(81)
اجبيل / الهه اقاء ذهبار لا *agbēl / al-hēh aḳāʔ ḏa-hbɛːr lā* 'The mountains are not the place for camels' (M.txt)

In Mahriyōt, the personal-pronoun-initial predicate of a topic–comment clause may have bipartite negation, but considerably fewer instances of bipartite negation are shown here than in Mehreyyet. In the following examples, the predicate of the topic–comment clause is separated by /, and the entire topic–comment clause placed in square brackets where it occurs in a larger context. Compare (82) below, in which bipartite negation is exhibited, with (83), in which it is not.

(82) *w-ṣarbī ynōkaʕ b-[{śī} / l-hēh lbōn lā]* [lit: and post-monsoonal comes with {s.th.} not it m. white not] 'And the post-monsoonal fat has {something} that is not white' (Sima27:22)

(83) *järmīyät / sēh xwōrät lā* [lit: jarmīyat it f. xwōrat not] 'The *jarmīyat* camel is not [like] the *xwōrat* camel' (Sima47:75)

The VP predicate of a topic–comment clause may have bipartite negation in Mahriyōt, as in (84) below, but more frequently has monopartite negation, as in (85).

(84) *ăr ḳăd [hēt maḥḥ ḏēk xōzär / lä-träḳnäh wīyän lā]* 'That [uncooked] fat, that butter, you m.s. can't preserve it m. very long' (Sima58:42)

(85) *wa-ʔār [hōh baʕś manhām / aġarbaham lā]* 'but I, some of them m., I don't know them' (Mo)

In Mehreyyet, a PP-initial predicate in a topic–comment clause may have monopartite negation, particularly when the topic is a personal pronoun:

(86) *hēt bayš ṣābar h-aḳanyawm mākanī [hōh / bay ṣābar lā]* 'You f.s. have patience with children, but I don't have patience' (M)

(87) *nḥah / šīn ṣfōt lā manh* 'We haven't had any news about him' (M)

(88) *bāś min ḥārawn / bīsan ḳrūn lā* 'Some goats, they f. don't have horns' (M)

In the case of a substantive or demonstrative topic, the PP-initial predicate of a topic–comment clause more commonly has bipartite negation, as in the examples below:

(89) *arabd / al-hēh dīwē lā* [lit: treachery not to it m. cure not] 'There is no cure for treachery' (M)

(90) *wa-hēh ġayg ḳaṭ [aḳrawš ḏa-ḥagg / al-šīh ḳrawš lā]* 'And he was a man certainly [in terms of] money for the Hajj, he had [= with him] no money' (M)

(91)
بعلي مسكوت المنهيم خبير ثيلأ *baʔlī maskūt / al-manhēm xbēr śī lā* 'The people of Muscat, there is no news of them m.' (M.txt)

In Mahriyōt, by contrast, a PP-initial predicate in a topic–comment clause has monopartite post-negation, irrespective of the morpholexical identity of the topic:

(92) *ḥābū / šīhäm xaṣṣōr lā* 'People don't have a relish' (Sima12:38)

(93) *bīḏōrät – bäk ḳalbi – / šīs häbbōt lā* 'Sowing, I think, doesn't have a song' (Sima63:48)

(94) *nḥah / šǟn śī ʕilm lā būmäh* 'We don't have any experience here' (Sima2:70)

Bipartite negation in topic–comment clauses is mandatory in Mahriyōt and Mehreyyet, but apparently not in WYM, where a personal pronoun topic takes an anaphoric pronoun as predicand of the clausal predicate (cf. Rubin 2010: 265).

(95) *w-hēh / l-hēh xōdäm ḏ-ḏäkmäh baʕl mōl lā* 'and he who is [no longer] a worker for that m. livestock owner' (Sima18:24)

(96) *hōh / al-hōh waḥī lā* 'I am not an angel' (M)

(97) *hām āzūm al-śī wa-[hēh fnōhan / al-hēh šīh śī lā]* 'When [someone] is determined [to do] something, and before he has nothing' (M.N)

However, where the anaphoric pronoun is post-posed to the predicate, bipartite negation is not found unless a second anaphoric pronoun also occurs predicate-initially. Thus, (98) and (99) below, which exhibit bipartite negation, contrast with (100), which does not.

(98) *aġāy al-hēh bawmah lā* 'My brother, he isn't here' (M)

(99) *aġāy al-hēh bawmah hēh lā* 'My brother, he isn't here' (M)

(100) *aġāy bawmah hēh lā* 'My brother, he isn't here' (M)

*aġāy al-bawmah hēh lā

In other cases of anaphora, bipartite negation is usually found to the exclusion of monopartite negation in Mehreyyet. Co-referentiality is indicated in the following examples by subscript ₁.

(101) *ʕāyantan₁ ṭawran bīsan arḥūmat lākan al-sēn₁ ᴬmahammᴬ lā ʕāyantan* 'The eyes also have a beauty aspect, but they are not very important, the eyes' (M.N)

(102) *amšaġarēt yḳāʔ aġaṯyas₁ al-hēh₁ ḳṣayr lā* 'The next thing is that her neck should not be short' (M.N)

Compare the following example from Mahriyōt, where bipartite negation is not exhibited in the case of anaphora:

(103) *ḏōmäh₁ ḏ-hēh₁ mšandīb lā* 'the one m. who is not someone with *raʕbūt* knowledge' (Sima1:38)

3.6 ʕād (ād) ... lā structures
In all major dialects of Mehri including WYM (Bittner 1914: 31; Wagner 1953: 33), bipartite negation occurs where the clause is modified by the adverbial particle *ʕād (ād)* 'still; yet'. With few exceptions,[9] *l-* precedes *ʕād* where the *ʕād* element is negated along with the following phrase, and follows *ʕād* where only the following phrase is negated. Thus, Mehreyyet *l-ād śinkə tēham lā* 'I haven't seen them m. again' (i.e. I am no longer in a state

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[9] e.g. *amūr ḏōmah [l-ād ġduh lā] ḏōmah bawmah hēh* 'He said, "That one m. has not died. He is here."' (M); or double pre-negation, as in: *l-ād al-bih wōram lā* 'There wasn't yet a road' (M).

where I see them) contrasts with *ād al-śinkə tēham lā* 'I have not yet seen them m.' (i.e. I am still in a state where I have not seen them).

3.6.1 *ʕād (ād) la-*
ʕād (ād) la- typically negates a following locational or verbal clause.

Locational clause
(104) *ḥābū ʕād l-šīhäm byōt mākän lā* 'People didn't yet have many houses' (Sima33:17)

(105)
واد الشين ضيفت ذوقوت هيس تيس لا *w-ād al-šīn ṣyaft ḏ-ūḳōt hīs tīs lā* 'We have not yet had a wedding like it f.' (M.txt)

Verbal clause
With a following perfect verb, *ʕād (ād) la-* denotes that the action or state has not, or had not, yet occurred:

(106) *ʕād lä-ḥfäḳk lā* 'I hadn't yet got married' (Sima4:2)

(107) *ād al-aḥād xadmīs lā* 'No one had yet made it f.' (M)

With a following imperfect verb and the focus adverbial *ār*, *ʕād (ād) la-* may restrict the action or state to the time or place indicated. Here the clause is singly pre-negated, at least in Mehreyyet, as for other exception clauses:[10]

(108) *ād al-ahōmaʔ aġrōy ḏōmah ār ṣarōmah* [lit: I don't hear that talk except now] 'That is the first time I've heard that talk' (M)

(109) *ād al-aśaynham ār īmōh* [lit: I don't see them m. except today] 'I saw them m. for the first time today' (M)

3.6.2 *l-ʕād (l-ād)*
l-ʕād (l-ād) may negate a following nominal (110), verbal (111) or locational clause (112) and (113) in all three dialects.

(110) *ū hê, / lâd ĭ šeh ḥass ě lâ* 'und er selbst war unbesinnungslos' (he was no longer conscious) (Wagner 1953:33)

(111) *l-ʕād yaxyūs lā* 'It m. will no longer go bad' (Sima27:10)

(112) *wa-nṣᵃrōmäh särḥat ḏīmäh / l-ʕād sēh mākän lā* 'And now we don't have this custom much anymore' (Sima20:24)

(113) *ḳhawr / l-ād bīs śxōf wīyan lā* 'The ḳhawr [camel], she doesn't have much milk left' (M)

In both Mahriyōt and Mehreyyet, though more commonly in Mahriyōt, *ʕād*-initial phrases may lack the pre-*ʕād* negator in verbal and locational clauses. No examples of this structure were found in the published WYM data. Exceptional instances of monopartite post-negation can only be interpreted as negation of the entire phrase including *ʕād (ād)*:

(114) *nṣᵃrōmäh ʕād yärʕaybäm lā* 'Now don't they m. do *raʕbūt* anymore?' (Sima1:56)

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[10] No examples of this type of structure are attested in the Mahriyōt data.

(115) *ʕād widʕak hīboh laʕmōl lā* 'I no longer knew what to do' (Sima4:5)

(116) *ād ḥābū ḏa-ḥsawbah ṣaḥḥ lā* 'People no longer thought he was alive' (M)

4 Negative command
Negative command is expressed by the subjunctive followed by *lā* in all three dialects.[11] My database for Mehreyyet and Stroomer (1999) contain a few examples of bipartite negation in negative commands, but the majority of examples are singly post-negated in both Mahriyōt and Mehreyyet. Examples include:

(117) *tǧīra ḳahwēt láʔ* 'Don't drink coffee!' (Simeone-Senelle 2011:1103)

(118) *taġtīr at-tā bählīt ṯīt lā!* 'Don't say a single word!' (Sima33:28)

(119) *tāṣayṣī lā* 'Don't f.s. be afraid!' (M)

In Mehreyyet, bipartite negation of a negative command may occur to strengthen the prohibition, when *ād* precedes the verb, and in second conjuncts. No examples of bipartite negation of a negative command are attested in either the Mahriyōt or WYM data.

(120) *al-tabarḳay lā / sīrī l-xarxawr ḥōram mayar fanwayš* 'Don't f.s. run! Go slowly! The road in front of you is steep' (M)

(121) *l-ād thasray lā bi-śigarīt xṭayrat* 'Don't f.s. speed down dangerous hills again!' (M)

5 Constituent negation
A particular constituent within a proposition may be negated to the exclusion of other constituents. Constituent negation usually involves monopartite post-negation in all dialects, but in the case of co-ordinated negated phrases may involve monopartite pre-negation (see section 6.3). It is, however, sometimes difficult to distinguish constituent negation from negation of the predicate. Negation of a repeated predicand in the second conjunct but not in the first, for example, could either be seen as negation of the predicand or negation of an elided predicate, as in (122) below.

(122) *baʕẓ ḥābū yaʕtäḳīdäm b-^Ašaʕwaḏäh^A / w-baʕẓ lā* 'Some people believe in magic and some don't' (Sima1:31)

Similarly, negation of the fronted adverb in the example below takes scope over the whole predicate.

(123) *ṭawr lā / hamak bahlīt arabīyat* 'Not once did I hear an Arabic word' (M)

Negation of the constituent occurs in reformulative apposition, when a negated phrase is apposed to an incorrect positive phrase:

(124) *ʕādi hōh ḳannūn – ḳannūn lā* 'I was young – not [very] young' (Sima33:2)

(125) *ṯrōb lyōmäh ār ḳanyūn – ḳanyūn lā* 'Those branches are just small – not small' (Sima90:18)

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[11] According to work by the Wiener Expedition, in WYM the negated indicative is more common in negative commands than the negated subjunctive (Wagner 1953: 13), but this is not confirmed by Simeone-Senelle (1994: 206).

Similarly in conjoined adverbs, the constituent in the second conjunct may be negated to the exclusion of the first:

(126) *hōh aġṣ́ōn minsēn āṣamī / ṣarōmah lā* 'I used to find them f. sweet, [but] not now' (M)

(127) *kanhūr tayw nhūr / wa-nhūr lā* 'In the past, she used to eat one day and one day not' [i.e. she used to eat every other day] (M)

(128)
وقونا من فنوهن ذغروب اعينت وين لا *wḳōna man fnōhan ḍa-ġrūb aʔaynat / wīyan lā* 'He may have already known a little, but not much' M.txt

6 Fixed phrases and co-ordinated negated phrases
Possible evidence for monopartite pre-negation being the original form is found in frozen fixed phrases. Monopartite pre-negation takes place in fixed phrases and in cases of co-ordinated negated phrases usually restricted to two conjuncts.

6.1 Negative phrases and clauses
Fixed negative phrases, such as *la-hanw-* 'not in mind' and *wa-l-ḳayrab ~ wa-l-ḳarabūt* 'not at all!', post-posed conditional clauses *hām (ḍa-)al* X 'if not X', and negative phrases invoking God involve monopartite pre-negation in Mahriyōt and Mehreyyet. No examples of pre-negated fixed negative phrases were found in the WYM data.

(129) *la-hanwīh* 'He didn't mean it' (M)

(130) *la-hanwī ḥiskə*[12] *bih lā* 'I didn't mean it. I didn't notice it' (M)

(131) *aġāk ḍa-ġatyaḍ lay imših – wa-l-ḳarabūt ~ wa-l-ḳayrab* 'Did your m.s. brother get angry with me yesterday?' 'Not at all!' (M)

(132) *šay wḳōna ʔašrayn / hām al-axayr* 'I have around twenty, if not more' (M)

(133) *yaftūṣ́aḥ aġayg / hām al-syūr šīham* 'The man will be embarrassed, if he doesn't go with them m.' (M)

(134) *abēlī al-tawuzmī tēṯ ūṭōmah* 'God please don't give me a woman like that!' (M)

Both in co-ordinated phrases in which the second element alone is negated and in co-ordinated negated clauses and phrases, monopartite pre-negation is often found to the exclusion of both monopartite post-negation and bipartite negation in all three dialects.[13] Monopartite pre-negation is found in these cases irrespective of the morpholexical properties of the clause-initial element. Data such as these and data which show monopartite pre-negation exclusively in set phrases suggest that the original negator was the initial element and that bipartite negation resulted from the addition of a negative element based on the anaphoric negator *lā*.

Syndetically co-ordinated negated clauses and phrases of all types are typically singly pre-negated in all three dialects, with pre-negation of both conjuncts.

6.2 Co-ordinated negated clauses

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[12] < *ḥissak bih.
[13] As in Ḥarsūsi (Johnstone 1977: 2).

Of the following examples from Mahriyōt, the first two are negated verbal clauses, of which the first takes an initial indefinite pronoun, and the final example a negated clause of attribution.

(135) *l-ḥād wīdaʕ b-ḏikm śäfrēt ḥläkmäh / wa-l-ḥād wīdaʕ b-hãh śī mädfīn* 'And no one knew about that knife there and no one knew what was hidden' (Sima42:19)

(136) *l-äśunyäs / wa-lä-śśunyä* 'I don't see her and she doesn't see me' (Sima76:9)

(137) *tʕajnäh at-tä yḳāʕ [l-hēh ḳwī ḳwī, / wa-l-hēh rġāź rġāź]* 'You m.s. kneed it m. until it is neither too tough nor too soft' (Sima84:4)

Of the following examples of co-ordinated negated clauses from Mehreyyet, examples (138a) and (138b) are verbal clauses; (139a) and (139b) are nominal clauses – a clause of attribution and a clause of proper inclusion respectively; (140a) and (140b) are locational clauses.

(138a) *hōh [al-hōh ḏa-gilwak / wa-l-hōh b-xayr]* 'I am neither ill nor well' (M)

(138b) *lū amnādam yiwōda l-hān wḳōna lih taksāyan tah [l-ād yitāyw / wa-l-ād yiṣḥōk]* 'If man knew what was coming to him you would find him no longer eating and no longer laughing' (M.R)

(139a) *ḥaybīt ḏīmah [al-sēh ṭwaylat / wa-l-sēh ḳṣayrat] amḳiyēt* 'This camel is neither tall nor short, [she's] in between' (M)

(139b) *la-hēh nagd / wa-l-hēh śḥayr* 'It is neither the desert nor the mountains' (M)

(140a) *hōh ġayg [ḏa-l-šay ᴬgawāzᴬ / wa-l-šay ᴬiṯbātᴬ]* 'I am a man who has no passport and no identification papers' (M.N)

(140b) *amūr hōh [al-šay ᴬgawāzᴬ / wa-l-šay ᴬayya ḥāgahᴬ]* 'He said, 'I haven't got a passport or anything'' (M.N)

6.3 Co-ordinated negated phrases
Co-ordinated negated noun phrases, adjective phrases, verb phrases and prepositional phrases are pre-negated in all three dialects.

(141) *ū ġálagak [lâ śiwôṭ / ū lâ nûr]* 'und hast du weder Feuer noch Licht gesehen?' (have you seen neither fire nor light?) (Wagner 1953: 33)

(142) *wa-l-ḥād mnãn sīläm lã, [l-śōx mnãn / wa-l-ḳannūn] ʕsē hōh* 'Not one of us was saved, neither old nor young, apart from me' (Sima75:24)

(143) *ġayg [al-xṣawb līham ba-xaṭṭ / wa-l-xṣawb līham bi-śī]* 'The man hadn't sent them m. a letter or sent them anything' (M)

6.4 Co-ordinated negative/positive clauses and phrases
Co-ordinated positive and negative clauses and phrases are typically pre-negated.

(144) *āṣar ṭwayl wa-ḥyūm hīs tah / wa-l-kūsan ṣdayḳ ḏ-iḳaṣran tah* 'The night is long and the daytime too and we've found no friend to shorten it' (M.R)

Where a positive phrase is co-ordinated to its negative counterpart, it frequently involves repetition of the verb.

(145) *aḥḥawalk / w-lī aḥḥawalk* 'whether I understand or not' (Mo)

(146) *[tḥōm / w-lī tḥōm] madī laḥkām lūk* 'whether you m.s. like or not I'll force you' (Mo)

The second clausal conjunct may be elliptical in co-ordinated negated clauses and phrases.

(147) *ḥābū lyōmah [al-šīham muh / wa-l-ḳawt]* [lit: those people, not with them m. water and not food] 'Those people have neither water nor food' (M)

(148) *sēh [al-ṣabarūt min aḳanyawn / wa-l-min ḥābū śīyēx]* [lit: she not manage without the children and not without old(er) people] 'She can't do without [other] children or adults' (M)

7 Stage I´ in Jespersen's Cycle

The element which in bipartite negation is the post-negator does not always come at the end of the proposition, or indeed to the right of the negated term. In some cases, in particular the negation of propositions involving *wīdaʕ* (*wīda*) 'to know' *ḳdūr* 'to be able' or *šānūs* 'to dare', the negative particle may follow the initial verb rather than the whole proposition (cf. also below). This movement of the post-negator closer to the verb arguably represents stage I´ in JC (Lucas & Lash 2010: 380).

In all dialects, final complement clauses may occur to the right of the right-most negator.

(149) *wúdāš lâ ġajinôt ṭayt reḥêmet?* 'hast du nicht ein schönes Mädchen bemerkt?' (aren't you aware of a beautiful girl?) (Wagner 1953: 33)

(150) *w-ʕād šãnusk lā / lšukf aṭ-ṭār säṭḥ* 'and I no longer dared sleep on the roof' (Sima95:14)

(151) *atēṯ msūmēt tḳawdar lā / tšēfaḳ ṯrōh ġaygī ṯrōh* 'a Muslim woman can't marry two, two men' (M.N)

In all three dialects, final adverbials, including adverbial PPs, may occur to the right of the right-most negator.

(152) *hâd yinôka bä-warqât ĕ lâ / hä-msejîd* 'niemand kommt mit einem Papier in die Moschee' (no one comes with a paper into the mosque) (Wagner 1953: 33)

(153) *nᵃṣrōmäh ḏōmäh ḏ-yämṣūṣ ṣamm ḏ-rēśīt, [yäźtärūr lā / mänh]* 'Now the one who sucks out the snake poison, isn't he harmed by it?' (Sima1:44)

(154) *ḥābū [l-ʕād ḥād ysōkän b-Qāṭan lā / nṣᵃrōmäh]* 'No one lives in the dry uplands anymore' (Sima29:33)

(155) *śafs illōh [šukafūt lā / min aśarb ḏa-ḥaflas]* 'It turns out she didn't sleep last night because of the pain in her stomach' (M)

(156) *hanwī śattal lā / man ḥlakmah* 'My mind hasn't moved from there' (M)

Similarly, a post-posed topic, as in (157) and (158), or predicand, as in (159) and (160), may follow *lā* in all three dialects.

(157) *fekkáysĕ lâ / ḥéybes* 'ohne daβ ihr Vater sie verheiratete' (without her father marrying her off) (Wagner 1953: 33)

(158) *ḥād yäbtirnäs lā / śōḥawṭat* 'No one catches it f., the whale' (Sima44:50)

(159) *ʕamōr takmalī lā / faṭh al-maʕīn* 'He said, 'Fatḥ al-Maʕīn won't cope with me!'' (Mo.N)

(160) *ḏah ṭabarūt ḥayḏānah mākanay ḏah ṭabarūt lā / ḥayḏānah* 'That m. one's handle is broken, but that m. one's handle isn't broken' (M)

In one Mehreyyet text (Watson, in press), several instances occur of a pre- and post-negated personal pronoun, with the right-most negative particle preceding rather than following the negated predicate.

(161) *taḵā [al-sēh lā] ḵannitt* [lit: she should be she not small] 'She should be not small' (M)

(162) *wa-fʔamsā nyūb arwaṣtan [al-sēn lā] ṭīrartan* 'and her feet have to be large and wide and not narrow' (M)

8 Conclusion

We have shown that the choice of monopartite pre-, monopartite post- or bipartite negation in all three Mehri dialect groups is at least partially dependent on syntactic factors, and in the case of Mahriyōt and Mehreyyet also on morpholexical factors. We have also seen that bipartite negation in Mehreyyet, at least, can be used to disambiguate clauses.

The presence of monopartite pre-negation in a closed set of fixed negative phrases, the fact that Soqoṭri, the only MSAL that invariably exhibits monopartite pre-negation, appears in other areas of the grammar to be more conservative than other MSAL, and the fact that the MSAL are the only Semitic languages to exhibit post-negation strongly suggest monopartite pre-negation to be the older form. An examination of syntactic constraints on the choice of monopartite or bipartite negation, and consideration of negation patterns in the three dialect groups leads to a conclusion that negation in Mehri is moving along a trajectory from monopartite pre-negation to bipartite negation to monopartite post-negation with some evidence of subsequent leftward movement of the final negator. All three dialects exhibit monopartite post-negation, bipartite negation and monopartite pre-negation; however, Mehreyyet displays bipartite negation in syntactic and morpholexical contexts where Mahriyōt does not, and Mahriyōt exhibits bipartite negation in syntactic contexts in which only monopartite negation is attested in WYM. Thus Mahriyōt occupies a stage in JC between the least conservative WYM and the most conservative Mehreyyet.

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