

The Mehri Language of Oman

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The Mehri Language of Oman

By

Aaron D. Rubin



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For Kim

With Love

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And finally, to Kim, my wife, my best friend, my chief editor, and primary inspiration, I thank you for everything. This book, like everything in life, is far better because of you.

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
AAL	<i>Afroasiatic Linguistics</i> , Johnstone 1975a (see Bibliography)
Ar.	Arabic
C	consonant
cf.	compare
com.	common (gender)
cp	common plural
cs	common singular
cstr.	construct
def.	definite
dimin.	diminutive
d.o.	direct object
du.	dual
f.	feminine
fd	feminine dual
fp	feminine plural
fs	feminine singular
G	guttural letter (ʔ, ʕ, ġ, h, ħ, or x)
gemin.	geminate
glott.	glottalic
gutt.	guttural
HL	<i>Harsūsi Lexicon</i> , Johnstone 1977 (see Bibliography)
intrans.	intransitive
i.o.	indirect object
JL	<i>Jibbāli Lexicon</i> , Johnstone 1981 (see Bibliography)
lit.	literally
m	masculine
md	masculine dual
mp	masculine plural
ms	masculine singular
ML	<i>Mehri Lexicon</i> , Johnstone 1987 (See Bibliography)
MSA	Modern South Arabian

n.	note
o.a.	one another
obj.	object
OSA	Old South Arabian
pl.	plural
sg.	singular
s.o.	someone
s.t.	something
trans	transitive
V	vowel
var(s).	variant(s)
$X > Y$	X develops into Y.
$X < Y$	X derives from Y.
$X \rightarrow Y$	X becomes Y; this symbol is used for derived forms, such as forms with the definite article or a possessive suffix.
*	An asterisk marks a reconstructed or underlying form.
**	A double asterisk indicates a non-existent or ungrammatical form.

TEXT CITATION

All Mehri examples cited in this book are taken from the texts collected by T. M. Johnstone, as published in the book *Mehri Texts from Oman: Based on the Field Materials of T. M. Johnstone*, edited by Harry Stroomer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz), 1999. Passages are cited by text number and “line” number, so 35:11 refers to Text 35, “line” number 11. I put the word “line” in quotation marks, because the numbered “lines” in Stroomer’s edition often run more than one line on the page. Verse may be a more appropriate term, though this word can imply other things.

A NOTE ON TRANSCRIPTION

The transcription of Mehri in Johnstone’s texts is very inconsistent. Not only does the transcription as published in Stroomer’s edition differ from Johnstone’s typewritten versions, which in turn differ from his handwritten notes (see the samples in Stroomer 1996, 1999), but the transcription is internally inconsistent in the published edition. For example, in the published edition, the 1cp independent pronoun is transcribed *nhā*, *nəhā*, or *ənḥā*; the ms imperative ‘eat!’ is transcribed *tē*, *téh*, or *tē*; the particle *tē* is sometimes transcribed *tā*, *ta*, or *tá*; and the verb ‘he gave him’ appears as *wəzəmih*, *wəzəməh*, *wzəməh*, *wzmēh*, *wəzəməh*, *wzəməh*, and *wəzmáh*! Hundreds of variant transcriptions could be listed. We find that *ī* and *ē* are very often interchangeable, as are *ū* and *ō*, and the syllables *əC* and *Cə* (see further in §2.2). In this grammar, I have for the most part not altered this inconsistency, and so I present the texts largely as they were published. Any changes that I did make are listed in the Appendix entitled “Corrections to Stroomer’s Edition of Johnstone’s Texts”. I have, however, felt free to alter the English translations of Johnstone’s texts, as I felt necessary. There are scores of places in which the translations found in Stroomer’s edition are inaccurate, or at least awkward in style.

As for the system of transcription used for individual consonants, I have followed Johnstone except in a few cases. The differences are:

Johnstone	This Book
e	ə
ḍ	ḏ
ḍ̣	ḏ̣

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Mehri is a Semitic language spoken in Yemen, in the easternmost governorate of Al-Mahra, and across the border in Oman, in the western part of the governorate of Dhofar, in the high desert plateau (Nagd) north of the coastal mountains. The total number of Mehri speakers is probably around 100,000, with well over half of this group living in Yemen.

Mehri is one of six languages known collectively as the Modern South Arabian (MSA) languages, which in turn are part of the Semitic language family. In addition to Mehri, the MSA languages are Jibbali (or Šḥeri), Ḥarsusi, Soqotri, Hobyot (or Hobi), and Baṭḥari.¹ Mehri, Jibbali, and Soqotri in turn have a number of dialects.² The term ‘Modern South Arabian’ can be misleading, since these languages are not to be closely connected with Arabic or the set of languages collectively called Old South Arabian (OSA). The linguistic domain of the MSA languages is restricted to eastern Yemen, western Oman, and the island groups of Soqatra and Kuria Muria. None of the MSA languages has a tradition of writing.

1.1. *Dialects of Mehri*

Mehri can be divided into two basic dialect groups. There is a western group spoken in Yemen, which can be called Yemeni Mehri or Southern Mehri, and there is an eastern group, which can be called Omani Mehri, Dhofari Mehri, or Nagd Mehri. In Omani Mehri, the language is natively called *məhráyyət*. The political boundary between Yemen and Oman probably does not perfectly correspond to the dialect boundary, but the terms Yemeni and Omani Mehri are sufficiently accurate. Within Yemeni Mehri, we can also distinguish western and eastern (or *sharqiyya*) dialects.³ It is unclear if there is any dialectal

¹ Overviews of the MSA languages and dialects can be found in Johnstone (1975), Lonnet (1985; 2006), and Simeone-Senelle (1997).

² Counted among the Soqotri dialects is that of ‘Abd-el-Kuri, on which see Wagner (1959).

³ On the Yemeni dialects, see further in Simeone-Senelle (2002: 388).

variation within Omani Mehri, but it seems that there is none of any significance. This is not unexpected, since, compared to Yemeni Mehri, Omani Mehri is spoken by a smaller population in a smaller geographical area.⁴

1.2. Previous Scholarship on Mehri

The existence of the Modern South Arabian languages was first brought to the attention of Europeans by James Wellsted, a British Lieutenant in Her Majesty's Indian Navy. In 1835, Wellsted published a list of words in Soqotri, which he had collected during his survey of the island in 1834.⁵ However, it was Fulgence Fresnel, the French consul in Jeddah, writing on Jibbali in 1838, who first recognized the existence of a new branch of the Semitic language family.⁶ Fresnel's work really marks the beginning of Modern South Arabian studies.

The first published information on Mehri was a short word-list given by Wellsted in his popular travel narrative, *Travels to the City of the Caliphs*, published in 1840.⁷ A longer word-list was published soon after by a missionary named (Johann) Ludwig Krapf (1846), who included the Mehri numbers and some short phrases, as well as the first published Mehri "text", a translation from Arabic of Genesis 24:1-7. H.J. Carter, a surgeon who had traveled with Wellsted, published an even longer list of Mehri words and phrases (1847), providing also some discussion of phonology. Heinrich von Maltzan, known for his travels in the Arab world, published two grammatical studies of Mehri (1871, 1873b) and a short comparative word-list (1873a). Additional Mehri words can be found scattered in a few other nineteenth century publications.⁸ Unfortunately, none of the nineteenth-century data on Mehri or any other Modern South Arabian language was collected by a linguist, and so the value and scope of these publications is often limited.

⁴ Johnstone's texts 59, 71, and 80 (published in Stroomer 1999) deal specifically with misunderstandings due to dialectal differences in vocabulary.

⁵ Wellsted (1835a). Wellsted briefly discusses the language on pp. 211-12, and a word-list appears on pp. 220-29. Much of the data, with abundant printing errors, is found also in Wellsted (1835b: 165-66).

⁶ Discussion of classification appears in Fresnel (1838a: 513ff), but more detailed grammatical discussion appears in Fresnel (1838b, 1838c). Annotated versions of these and other works of Fresnel can be found in the fine study by Lonnet (1991).

⁷ The list of thirty-seven words appears on pp. 26-27.

⁸ See Leslau (1946) for a complete bibliography of MSA studies until 1945.

A major turning point in the field of Modern South Arabian studies came in 1898, when a scholarly expedition to Southern Arabia was launched by the Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, now called the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Fieldwork on MSA was carried out by the Austrian scholars David Heinrich Müller, Alfred Jahn, and, a couple of years later, by Wilhelm Hein. Two informants, one from Yemen and one from Soqatra, were also brought to Vienna, where they spent much of the year 1902. The result of this team's efforts was a great wealth of textual material in Mehri, Jibbali, and Soqatri, published between 1902 and 1909, which greatly advanced the field of MSA. For Mehri, the most relevant publications are Jahn (1902), which includes a substantial glossary, Müller (1902, 1907), and Hein (1909).⁹ From this material also came the grammar of Jahn (1905), the important five-part (published in seven) grammatical study of Bittner (1909-15), and the short linguistic study of Rhodokanakis (1910). These remain the most comprehensive grammatical studies of Mehri to date. It must be pointed out that the Mehri texts collected by the Austrian expedition all represent the Yemeni (southern) dialect of the language.

In 1937, Bertram Thomas published a sketch of four MSA languages, one of which was Mehri.¹⁰ This included the first new data on MSA collected in over thirty-five years. Thomas had had no previous knowledge of the material collected by the Austrian expedition, and so he provides an important independent witness to the languages. Unfortunately, Thomas was not a trained linguist, as he himself readily admits. Like so many of his nineteenth century predecessors, he was simply an adventurous traveler with a keen interest in language.¹¹ Thomas does have one significant distinction, in that he was the first to collect and publish data on Ḥarsusi and Baṭḥari, two MSA languages that were previously unknown to the scholarly world. In fact, Thomas's work remains to this day almost the only published work on Baṭḥari.

In 1953, Ewald Wagner published his excellent study of Mehri syntax, the most detailed grammatical study of Mehri from the time of Bittner until today. Wagner's data all came from the publications of

⁹ Hein died in 1903, at the age of only 42, but his materials were edited and published by Müller.

¹⁰ See also the study of Thomas's data by Leslau (1947).

¹¹ Thomas (1932) is a fascinating account of his travels in Arabia, including his time among speakers of Modern South Arabian languages. Interestingly, Johnstone's texts 42, 75, and 76 (in Stroemer 1999) are similar to stories that Thomas recounts on pp. 246-51, 239-42, and 219-22, respectively.

the Austrian expedition (Müller, Jahn, and Hein) and from Thomas's sketch. His work remains indispensable for the study of Mehri and the other MSA languages.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Thomas Muir Johnstone of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, carried out fieldwork in Oman. The results of his efforts were dictionaries of three MSA languages (Ḥarsusi, Jibbali, and Mehri), a number of important articles, and two posthumously published text collections, on Mehri and Ḥarsusi (see Bibliography).¹² Much of Johnstone's Mehri material was collected in 1969-70 in Dubai. Afterward, he was able to bring his most productive informant, Ali Musallam, to London for a year, and he continued to work with Ali in Oman on subsequent visits in the mid-1970s. Johnstone's Mehri data all reflect the Omani dialect, in contrast with the Yemeni material collected by the Austrian expedition and by those researchers who have come after Johnstone (see below). This makes Johnstone's already weighty contributions to Mehri studies all the more valuable.

Sadly, Johnstone died in 1983, just one week shy of his fifty-ninth birthday. He managed to see the publication of his Ḥarsusi and Jibbali dictionaries, which appeared in 1977 and 1981, respectively, but his *Mehri Lexicon* was published only after his death, in 1987. With nearly five hundred pages of Mehri-English entries (often including comparative MSA material), a one hundred and forty-page English-Mehri word-list, fifty pages of verbal paradigms, and an additional ten pages of grammatical discussion, the *Mehri Lexicon* was a massively important contribution to the field of Semitic studies. Unfortunately, as Johnstone was not able to oversee the publication of his incomplete manuscript, the lexicon is filled with an enormous amount of typographical and other errors. The Mehri texts collected by Johnstone were edited and published in 1999 by Harry Stroomer, and it is on these texts that this grammar is based (see below, §1.5).¹³

Around the same time that Johnstone was active in the field, a Japanese researcher named Aki'o Nakano was also pursuing field research. The results of visits to Yemen in 1971 and 1974 and a stay in Oman in 1974 were a comparative lexicon of Yemeni Mehri, Jibbali,

¹² Johnstone also collected about eighty Jibbali texts, but these have not been published.

¹³ Stroomer (1996) is a preliminary publication of the first five of Johnstone's Mehri texts, though the transcription of the texts differs from that of the 1999 edition. The earlier publication, however, includes a greater number of textual notes, nearly all of which are references to entries in the *ML*.

and Soqoṭri, published in 1986. The lexicon has some value, but unfortunately, the book is riddled with errors and must be used with great caution.

Subsequent to the work of Johnstone there has been some activity in the research of Yemeni Mehri. Beginning in 1983, two French scholars, Antoine Lonnet and Marie-Claude Simeone-Senelle, made several trips to Yemen to do fieldwork on Mehri, Soqoṭri, and Hobyot. The result has been a number of important investigative articles and surveys, published both as a team and individually, which have added much to the field of MSA studies.

Between 2001 and 2004, a young Austrian scholar named Alexander Sima collected a large corpus of Mehri texts, both from an informant he brought over to Germany and from informants in Yemen. Sima published several important articles on Mehri, and wrote the bulk of a grammar, which he intended to submit for his Habilitation. Sadly, in late 2004, Sima was killed in a car accident in Yemen, only a few months before completing his work. He was just thirty-four years old. His text corpus was published in the summer of 2009 (as the present book was in its final stages), edited by Janet Watson and Werner Arnold. These texts are a goldmine of information, and greatly expand the available data on the language. It is hoped that Sima's grammar will also appear.

Janet Watson, who did much to prepare Sima's texts for publication, has also done fieldwork in Yemen and Oman, and is currently preparing her own grammar of the Yemeni *Sharqiyya* dialect. Given her expertise in Yemeni Arabic, this grammar is sure to be of high quality.

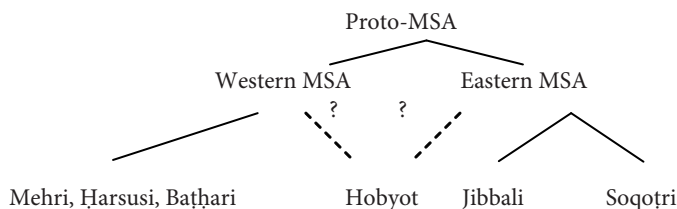
Finally, there was a recent dissertation on Yemeni Mehri poetry by Samuel Liebhaber (2007). Though the topic of the dissertation is not purely linguistic, a number of poetic texts are included, along with valuable commentary. Liebhaber is also publishing a separate edition of some of the poetic texts he has collected (Liebhaber forthcoming a). In this edition, the texts are given both in Roman transcription and in a modified Arabic script. Though this is not the first publication to use Arabic script to transcribe Mehri,¹⁴ this is probably the first intended partly for a native Mehri readership.

¹⁴ Cf. Simeone-Senelle, Lonnet, and Bakheith (1984).

1.3. *The Position of Mehri Within MSA*

At present, there exists no modern comprehensive grammatical study, synchronic or diachronic, of any MSA language. The grammars of Baṭḥari and Hobyot are especially poorly known. Therefore, the internal subgrouping of the MSA languages cannot yet be determined with certainty. However, it is clear that Ḥarsusi and Baṭḥari—each of which have speakers numbering only in the hundreds—are very closely related to Mehri, as they share a number of innovative features. For example, in these three languages the active participle has developed into a future tense, while Jibbali and Hobyot have developed other means of expressing the future, and Soqotri has no such development.¹⁵ Ḥarsusi and Baṭḥari are even intelligible by Mehri, and so they could be considered dialects of Mehri.

There are several morphological isoglosses between Jibbali and Soqotri that suggest that these two form a group. For example, they share the conditioned loss of prefixed *t-* in certain verbal forms, as well as remnants of certain productive feminine forms ending in *-i*.¹⁶ Hobyot, discovered by scholars only thirty years ago, shows heavy influence from both Mehri and Jibbali, but it exhibits independent innovations as well.¹⁷ Its exact classification remains difficult, however, in no small part because of the almost total lack of published data on this language. The languages may be tentatively classified as in the figure below, which is based on Lonnet (2006):



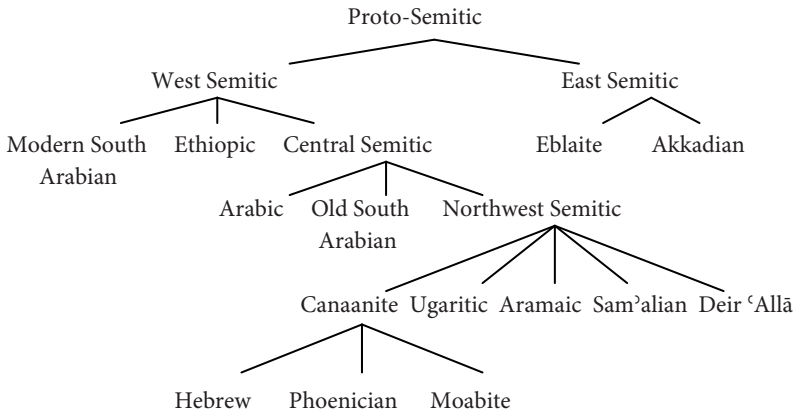
¹⁵ On this development in Mehri, see Rubin (2007).

¹⁶ On the loss of *t-*, see Johnstone (1968, 1980), Testen (1992), and Voigt (2006). Both Johnstone (1980) and Testen note the importance of this feature in grouping these two languages. On feminine marking with the suffix *-i*, see Lonnet (2008).

¹⁷ The existence of Hobyot was first mentioned by Johnstone (1981: xii) and almost no data on the language have ever been published. Some data can be found in Lonnet (1985) and Arnold (1993); bits of data from various publications of Simeone-Senelle can also be found in her 1997 outline of MSA.

1.4. The Position of MSA in Semitic

The Semitic family of languages is one of the longest attested, most widely studied, and, thanks to Arabic, most widely spoken in the world. Yet with regards to the proper subgrouping of the Semitic family, a consensus has not been reached among scholars, and probably never will be. The following figure illustrates the subgrouping of the Semitic language family as it is best understood given the facts available to date.¹⁸



The exact position of MSA within West Semitic is unclear. It is probable that, like the Ethiopian branch, MSA is distinct from Central Semitic, since it did not participate in the innovation of the indicative *yaqtulu* form.¹⁹ But do MSA and Ethiopian stem from a single node? Many have argued just this. They share many features—most of which are also shared by Arabic and/or Old South Arabian—but these features are mainly shared retentions from Proto-Semitic or are the result of areal phenomena (e.g., the leveling of *k*-suffixes in the perfect). The most important morphological feature shared by MSA and Ethiopian to the exclusion of Arabic and OSA is the presence of the imperfective form *yaqattāl*; this, however, is also a retention from Proto-Semitic (as

¹⁸ For a comprehensive discussion of the subgrouping of the Semitic languages, see Rubin (2008a).

¹⁹ A minority of scholars, most notably David Cohen and his students, have suggested that the MSA imperfective form (e.g., Mehri *yākūtāb*) does in fact stem from *yaqtulu*, and not from the Proto-Semitic **yVqattVl*; cf. Cohen (1974; 1984: 68–75) and Lonnet (2005: 187–88). See Goldenberg (1977: 475–77; 1979) for an argument against this scenario.

attested by its presence in Akkadian), and is therefore of no use in classification. At present, MSA should be considered an independent branch of West Semitic.

From the first discovery of the MSA languages in the nineteenth century until quite recently, it was assumed by most scholars that the Old South Arabian languages must be the ancestors of the Modern South Arabian languages.²⁰ Both groups are attested in Southern Arabia; both groups preserve the three Proto-Semitic sibilants (*s*, *š*, *ś*), in contrast with almost all other Semitic languages; both make broad use of internal (broken) plurals; and the languages share a number of lexical items. But N. Nebes has shown, based on the orthography of forms made from weak verbal roots, that the OSA languages, like Arabic, possessed an imperfective of the Central Semitic type.²¹ J. Huehnergard has since given further evidence in favor of the classification of the OSA languages as Central Semitic.²²

The recognition that the OSA languages should be classified as Central Semitic has made it clear that the MSA languages cannot be derived from the OSA languages. However, even without this fact, the innovations present in OSA and lacking in MSA should have made this clear, for example the presence of a suffixed definite article *-(h)n* in all OSA languages.

It has been suggested that Ḥaḍramitic—in some respects the most divergent of the OSA languages—may still in fact be connected with the Modern South Arabian languages. Ḥaḍramitic is the most easterly of the OSA languages, and its homeland (the Ḥaḍramawt, in central Yemen) approaches the Mahra, the westernmost area of present-day Modern South Arabian territory. More importantly, Ḥaḍramitic exhibits some curious isoglosses with MSA, namely the contrasting initial consonants of the third person pronouns, the preposition *h-* ‘to’, and some possible lexical items.²³ Despite these connections between Ḥaḍramitic and MSA, there are a number of features of Ḥaḍramitic that preclude it from being the ancestor of the modern languages, most importantly the merger of *s* and *θ*, and possibly also *z* and *ḏ*,

²⁰ Although many scholars made such a connection with accompanying doubts, it was the short article of Porkhomovsky (1997) that has been most influential in disproving this assumption.

²¹ Nebes (1994). Nebes also provides discussion of the history of the debate.

²² Huehnergard (2005).

²³ Noteworthy isoglosses can also be cited for MSA and other OSA languages. For example, the MSA word for ‘one’ that is reflected in Mehri *ṭād* is found outside of MSA only in Qatabanic (*ṭd*).

each of which are distinct in the modern languages;²⁴ the use of the common OSA preposition *bn* ‘from’, versus Mehri *mən*, Soqotri *mən*, etc.;²⁵ and the presence of the suffixed definite article in Ḥaḍramitic, versus the prefixed article (or complete lack of article) in Modern South Arabian. Therefore, it seems safest to say only that the similarities between Ḥaḍramitic and MSA may be due to language contact.²⁶

1.5. *The Grammar*

The grammar described in this book is based on the Omani Mehri texts collected by Johnstone, as published by Stroomer (1999). Topics in phonology, morphology, and syntax are covered, though the coverage is disproportionate compared to what is found in most grammars. Because the system of transcription is imperfect, because the audio versions of these texts are also imperfect (see below, §1.7), and because an excellent overview of Mehri phonology has already been written by scholars with first-hand field experience,²⁷ phonology is treated here only briefly. Those features of phonology that most affect the morphology are discussed. With regard to morphology, all of the basic topics are covered, but in the realm of verbal morphology I have chosen to restrict the scope of my treatment. This is in part because fifty pages of verbal paradigms can be found already in Johnstone’s *ML*. Mehri verbal morphology is immensely complex, due to the large number of “weak” root letters that have resulted in various phonetic changes, and there simply are not enough verbal forms attested in Johnstone’s texts to provide complete paradigms for most verb types; Johnstone himself had to elicit verbal forms in order to complete his paradigms. Therefore, a thorough treatment of verbal morphology would simply be a re-hashing of what Johnstone has already printed. In my treatment of the verbal system, I have spent more time discussing the derived stems and the use of the tenses, both areas in which Johnstone left much to be said. A large part of this grammar is devoted to the syntax of Mehri. There are certainly areas in which more could have been said, but I have chosen to focus on those features which are most remarkable or most practical for reading Mehri texts. Each fea-

²⁴ Beeston (1984: 68). Note that the interdental and dental/alveolar stops have fallen together in some dialects of Mehri and in Soqotri (i.e., $\theta > t$ and $\delta > d$), but this is an internal development.

²⁵ Arguably, the modern preposition could be explained as an Arabic borrowing.

²⁶ For further on this issue, see Rubin (2008a).

²⁷ Lonnet and Simeone-Senelle (1997).

ture described is well illustrated with examples from the texts. An index of these textual examples is included at the end of this volume.

I have restricted myself in this book to the Omani Mehri of Johnstone's texts, to the exclusion of other published Mehri material. This was done for a number of reasons. First, Johnstone's texts reflect a different dialect than the large corpus of material collected by the Austrian expedition, and it seemed wiser and clearer to try and describe well one type of Mehri, rather than try to describe multiple dialects simultaneously. Moreover, the material collected by the Austrians, and the work based on their material (e.g., that of Bittner 1909-15) is not always accurate. Second, Yemeni Mehri has been treated in a number of publications, and several first-rate scholars are currently working on additional descriptions of Yemeni Mehri. Third, other published material on Omani Mehri (namely, that of Thomas 1937) is, though very interesting and important, not very sound in terms of its linguistic method.

My philosophy in compiling this grammar was essentially to deduce as much as possible directly from the texts, without the interference of previous descriptions of Mehri. Of course, previous works were invaluable in their help, but, as much as possible, I consulted these only after forming my own initial theories. To this end, Johnstone made the following remark, in an unpublished manuscript:

I have not been preoccupied in the course of my own field work to run down errors in the work of my predecessors, since I have found it on the whole easier not to study their publications too closely. Certain of the wrong ideas I did acquire from them did mislead me seriously, and these of course stick in my mind.²⁸

Johnstone was referring to the works of the Austrian expedition. Of course, I have many more predecessors than Johnstone did, authors of the far more reliable material of the last three decades (including that of Johnstone himself). Still, in compiling this grammar, I was wary of having too many presuppositions based on earlier publications, preferring to reach my own conclusions. Despite this philosophy, and despite the restricted scope of this grammar, reference will occasionally be made to other corpora, where useful and appropriate.

²⁸ This manuscript, entitled "The reliability of the SAE [= Südarabische Expedition] publications on the MSA languages", is in the possession of A. Lonnet, who very kindly allowed me to borrow it for study.

1.6. *Johnstone's Texts*

The corpus of Johnstone's texts published by Stroomer (1999) includes 106 texts, numbered 1 to 104, with the addition of 14A and 71A. The texts cover a variety of genres. There are conversations, folk tales (often quite humorous, and sometimes bawdy), explanations of cultural practices, tribal histories, biographical stories, and poems. A few of the texts are translations, either from English or from the Yemeni Mehri texts of the Austrian expedition. Overall, the texts are immensely interesting, both as windows into Mehri culture and as entertaining stories.

A number of Johnstone's texts exist in multiple drafts, both handwritten and typed, as Stroomer describes in the preface to his edition. In such cases, the drafts often disagree on issues of transcription. Citations of the texts in the *ML* also often include variants in transcription from what appears in the drafts or in the published versions. Moreover, Stroomer himself made editorial decisions regarding transcription, with no aim at internal consistency. The result is that, as already noted, transcription of the texts is inconsistent, and the reader must be aware of this issue.

1.7. *Johnstone's Audio Material*

For most of Johnstone's 106 texts, there exist audio recordings, which were made in the 1970s. The original recordings are located in the Durham University Library, to which Johnstone willed all of his papers. Copies of these recordings are held in the British Library Sound Archives (reference C733), which has also transferred the tapes onto compact discs. Mrs. Bernice Johnstone kindly gave me permission to receive copies of her late husband's material, and I obtained CD copies of tapes 115-122.²⁹ Of the 106 texts printed in Stroomer's edition (numbered 1-104, with 14A and 71A inserted), I was able to consult the audio for 87 texts. The texts for which I did not find audio recordings are 7-11, 43, 78, 86, and 94-104. There are an additional five texts that are missing just some lines or words. Audio probably exists for some or all of these missing texts, but I was unable to find them without going to London and sifting through many more recordings.

²⁹ Tape 115 turned out to contain only Johnstone's Ḥarsusi text 3, published by Stroomer (2004).

The recordings of the Mehri texts are of limited value. They are obviously not recordings of natural speech, but rather of a native speaker reading from a transcript.³⁰ Since Mehri is not normally written, the reading is very unnatural. As he struggles to read his own language (and in many cases, his own words), the reader stumbles, pauses, and corrects himself often. The audio exhibits many deviations from the printed edition, though these are usually minor. The audio is still valuable for hearing the sounds of Mehri, and for cross-checking the many items in the printed edition of the texts that seem to be mistakes (see Appendix). In general, I assume the printed text to be correct, unless a form seems ungrammatical or illogical, in which case I rely on the audio.

³⁰ This native speaker is Ali Musallam, Johnstone's primary informant. See the preface to the *ML*.

CHAPTER TWO

PHONOLOGY

2.1. Mehri Consonants

The following table illustrates the phonemic inventory of Mehri:

	Labial	Labiodental	Interdental	Dental/ Alveolar	Lateral	Palato- Alveolar	Velar	Pharyngeal	Glottal
<i>Stops</i>									
unvoiced				<i>t</i>			<i>k</i>		ʔ
voiced	<i>b</i>			<i>d</i>			<i>g</i>		
glottalic				<i>t̚</i>			<i>k̚</i>		
<i>Fricatives</i>									
unvoiced		<i>f</i>	<i>t̪</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>ʃ</i>	<i>ʂ</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>ħ</i>	<i>h</i>
voiced			<i>ð</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>(j)</i>	<i>ġ</i>	<i>(ʕ)</i>	
glottalic			<i>ð̚</i>	<i>ʒ</i>	<i>z̪</i>	<i>ʂ̚</i>			
<i>Nasal</i>	<i>m</i>			<i>n</i>					
<i>Trill</i>				<i>r</i>					
<i>Approximant</i>	<i>w</i>					<i>y</i>			

Notes:

- The consonant *j* occurs only in loanwords. In the texts, it is found in the word *janbáyyat* ‘dagger’ (from Arabic *janbiyyat*-).
- The consonant *ʕ* is rare. See below, §2.1.2.
- The consonant *ʔ* is often lost. See below, §2.1.2.
- The phoneme *l* is realized as *w* in some environments. See below, §2.1.4.
- Johnstone classified the phoneme *z̪* as voiced, rather than glottalic, but it behaves like the other glottalic consonants. See below, §2.2.1.
- The phoneme *ʂ̚* is very rare. It only occurs in two words in the texts: *ʂōbəʔ* (var. *ʂōbaʔ*) ‘fingers’, and *mənʂəbēt* ‘bow’. In at least some Yemeni dialects this phoneme is an affricate, and is thus transcribed *č* in some publications (cf. Sima 2009).
- In Yemeni dialects, *g* is realized as a palatal [j] or [dʒ].

2.1.1. *The Glottalics*

The consonants ǧ, ƙ, ʂ, ɬ, ʃ, and ʒ are glottalic. Another term used for such consonants is “ejective”. Semitists often refer to these consonants as “emphatic”, a term which is rather vague. In Arabic, these “emphatic” consonants are pharyngealized, while in the Ethiopian languages they are glottalic. Johnstone was the first scholar to recognize that these consonants were in fact glottalics in Mehri (and in the other MSA languages), and his first announcement of this fact in 1970 (published as Johnstone 1975b) was very important to the field of Semitics.

It seems that the glottalic articulation of the “glottalic” consonants is not always present. Johnstone (*AAL*, p. 6) makes two important points:

1. Aspiration of most of the voiceless non-glottalic consonants constitutes an important element in the distinction of glottalic/non-glottalic pairs.
2. The degree of glottalization can vary in strength, depending on a number of factors, such as whether a consonant is initial, medial, or final, and the effect of contiguous consonants.

As Johnstone also notes, it is not completely clear how the glottalic consonants fit into the categories of voiced and voiceless. Johnstone (*AAL*, p. 7) wrote that they are “perhaps best defined as partially voiced”. What is certain is that the glottalics pair with voiced consonants when it comes to certain morphological features, for example the appearance of the definite article (§4.4) and the prefix of the D/L-Stem (§6.2). The glottalics also form an isolated category when it comes to certain phonetic changes, though many of these changes are also caused by guttural consonants (see below, §2.2.1).

Recent fieldwork by Janet Watson has resulted in some very interesting data on the glottalic consonants in Yemeni Mehri and her work is certain to greatly improve our understanding on this topic.¹

It should be mentioned that the consonants ǧ, ʃ, and ʒ are transcribed by some scholars as ƙ, ɬ, and ʂ, respectively. The symbol ʃ for ʒ is probably preferable, since ʒ does not make it clear that this phoneme is the glottalic counterpart of ʃ. Johnstone believed this phoneme to be the *voiced* counterpart of ʃ, rather than a glottalic, which explains his

¹ See Watson and Bellem (forthcoming).

use of *ž*. But *ž* clearly patterns with the other glottalic consonants (see §2.2.1). The question of *č* versus *š* is an open one, and it seems that perhaps this phoneme is realized in different ways among the Mehri dialects. It is not an especially important question when it comes to transcription, since this phoneme only occurs two or three times in all of Johnstone's texts.

2.1.2. The Consonants ʾ and ʿ

The consonant ʿ has in most environments become ʾ or zero. For example, in word-initial position, we find the verbs ʾ*aygəb* 'love' and ʾ*ayməl* 'do, make', the noun ʾ*āyn* 'eye', the number ʾ*ōšər* 'ten', and the particle ʾ*ād* 'still, yet', all of which we know from comparative evidence originally had initial ʿ*ayin*.² In the middle of a word, ʿ normally disappears, as in:

bād 'after' < **báʿ(a)d*
ṭām 'he tasted' < **ṭaʿám*
šāk 'he called' < **šaʿák*
sēt '(long) period of time' < **sáʿat*

In a relatively small number of cases, medial ʿ becomes ʾ. This seems to happen when ʿ was preceded or followed by a long vowel or diphthong, as in *bəʾēli* 'owners' (cf. sg. *bāl*), *nəʾaym* 'soft', and *nəʾit* 'udder'.

In word-final position, ʿ is lost in all verbs (e.g., *hūma* < **hūməʿ*; see below, §2.2.2), but for nouns and adjectives it sometimes remains. It is difficult to come to any conclusions on word-final ʿ in nouns and adjectives, since there is some inconsistency in transcription. For example, we find *arba* 'four', but *arōbəʾ* 'fourth' (though the one attestation of *arba* [12:10] is pronounced *arbaʾ* on the audio).

In some cases, medial ʿ is preserved in transcription and pronunciation. Probably the most common examples are the word *bəʾayr* 'male camel' (cf. *bēr* 'camels') and *ʿaynət* 'a little' (see §5.5.1), but there are several other examples, like *kēʿyōt* 'female spirit' (68:13) and *səbʿayyət* 'shawl, loincloth' (85:16).³ On the effect that the consonant ʿ has on certain vowels, see further below (§2.2.2).

² Cf. Arabic *ʿagaba*, *ʿamala*, *ʿayn*, *ʿašr*, and *ʿād*.

³ The pronunciation of the ʿ can be heard clearly on the audio.

The consonant ʾ is normally lost in medial position, as in:

rōh ‘head’ < **ráʾ(a)h*

fōl ‘omen’ < **fáʾ(a)l*

sōl ‘demand payment of a debt’ < **saʾál*

The sequence *aʾ(a)* must have first become *ā*. However, the fact that *aʾ(a)* became *ō* (as in *rōh* and *sōl*), but *aʿ(a)* became *ā* (as in *bād* and *ṭām*), shows that the shift of **ā* > *ō* happened before the loss of ʿ, and that when *aʿ(a)* became *ā*, the shift of **ā* > *ō* was no longer operative. That is to say, we can posit a relative chronology for the following sound changes:

1. **aʾ(a)* > **ā* (e.g., **ráʾ(a)h* > **rāh*)
2. **ā* > *ō* (e.g., **rāh* > *rōh*)
3. **aʿ(a)* > *ā* (e.g., **ṭaʿam* > *ṭām*)

In initial position, Johnstone’s transcription of ʾ is inconsistent. This is especially apparent when prefixed clitics are involved. For example, we find both ʾ*al* and *əl*, ʾ*tēm* and *ətēm*, *l-ʾād* and *l-ād*, *w-ʾāmōr* and *w-āmōr*. Even where the ʾ is written, it is usually not pronounced.

In final position, ʾ is usually lost, though we find it, for example, in adjectives of the pattern *CəCayC*, e.g., *bəray* ‘free (of debt); innocent’, *ḏəray* ‘strange’, and *ṭəray* ‘fresh, damp’.

Finally, it should be noted that in the *ML*, ʿ and ʾ are often confused, so one should always be wary of this fact.

2.1.3. The Non-occurrence of *h-*

The phoneme *h*, when followed by *ə* or no vowel, is lost before *h* or *ḥ*. That is,

$$h(ə)C > C / C = h, ḥ$$

This rule affects the preposition *h-* ‘to; for’ and the *h*-prefix of the *H*-Stem. So, for example, there are a number of cases in which we expect the preposition *h-* (§8.8) before an indirect object, but it is not present:

amtəwē həbēr ‘pasture for the camels’ (13:8)

ənḥōm nəḥlēb ḥənfayən ‘we should milk for ourselves’ (35:20)

- ʾāmōr ḥāmēh ‘he said to his mother’ (42:3)
 ʾāmōr hēxər ḥəbrē ‘the old man said to his son’ (83:2)
 ʾāmərək ḥərbātiye ‘I said to my friends’ (91:4)
 səḥaṭ ḥəmətəh ‘he slaughtered for his sister-in-law’ (94:48)

In at least two cases, we find the expected *h*- in the printed edition, namely, *h-ḥāgərīt* (68:14) and *hə-ḥaywəl* (91:11). But this is simply a difference in transcription; on the audio, the *h*- is not pronounced. The transcriptions in 68:14 and 91:11 would actually be preferable, if we were attempting to standardize written Mehri.⁴

In the H-Stem perfect, which has the pattern *həCCūC*, the prefix *hə*- is lost when the first radical is *h* or *ḥ*. For example, we find the perfects *hmū* ‘call, name’, *ḥnūt* ‘make s.o. break an oath’, *ḥrūk* ‘burn (trans.)’, *ḥye* ‘cure’, and *ḥyil* ‘trick s.o.’. However, this is not especially noteworthy, since the prefix *hə*- is usually lost when the first root consonant is voiceless (see §6.3).

2.1.4. The Loss of *l*

In Omani Mehri, the consonant *l* is subject to phonetic change when it occurs in the environment *CV__C*, whether or not the final *C* is part of the same syllable. When the preceding vowel is stressed, the sequence *VL* becomes *ē* (*ā* after a guttural or glottalic), and when unstressed, the *l* is simply realized as *w*. That is to say:

$$\begin{aligned} CV\acute{I}C &> C\acute{e}C \text{ or } C\acute{a}C \\ CVI\bar{C} &> CVwC \end{aligned}$$

We can see this change in nouns that have the pattern *CVCC*:

- ʾēf ‘1000’ (< *ʾalf)
 gēd ‘skin’ (< *gald)
 ḥām ‘dream’ (< *ḥalm)
 kawb ‘dog, wolf’ (< *kalb) (with unexpected *aw*)
 kēt ‘speech’ (< *kalṭ)
 kāb ‘mind; heart’ (< *kalb)

⁴ The texts of the Austrian expedition are more inconsistent with the transcription of *h*- before *h* or *ḥ*, and this has caused some occasional confusion among subsequent scholars. On this, see the brief discussion in Bittner (1913b: 51-52).

The *l* is present in all of the plural forms of the above words, e.g., *ḥalawm* ‘dreams’ and *kəlob* ‘dogs’. We also find this change in marked feminine nouns of the pattern CVCC-, as in:

ḥawkāt ‘ring’ (< **ḥalkāt*)
kəwbēt ‘female dog, wolf’ (< **kəlbēt*)
kəwtēt ‘story’ (< **kəltēt*)
kəwsēt ‘button’ (< **kəlsēt*)
məwkēt ‘possession of a woman in marriage’ (< **malkēt*)
xəwfēt ‘window’ (< **xəlfēt*)
xəwkāt ‘mole’ (< **xəlkāt*)

As with the masculine nouns, the *l* is present in the plural forms, e.g., *kəlabtən* ‘female dogs’ and *xəloyəf* ‘windows’. The loss of *l* can also be seen in a few nouns of other patterns, for example *ḡawḡayn* ‘fatness’ (root *ḡlḡ*), *məwsē* ‘rain’ (root *lsw*), *məsəwmūt* ‘sacrificed animal’ (root *slm*), and *səwsəlēt* ‘chain’ (root *slsl*). Also, even when a noun does not normally meet the conditions for loss of *l*, it may do so when a suffix is added, as in *kəbəylət* ‘tribe’ vs. *aḡəbētkəm* ‘your tribe’ (38:16, < **aḡəbāltkəm*).

When the syllable *lə-* occurs word initially—as with other syllables of the shape *Cə-* whose initial consonant is a liquid or nasal—it is often realized *əl-*. Consequently, the initial sequence *əl-* often shifts to *əw-*. This affects a small number of nouns and adjectives, like *əwbədēt* ‘noise’, *əwbōn* ‘white’, and *əwfōk* ‘soft cheese curds’.

The shift of *Vl* to *Vw* or *ē* is also very prevalent in verbs that have *l* as a root consonant. From verbs whose first root consonant is *l*, we either find the alternation of *l* and *w* throughout the paradigm (e.g., with G-Stems), or we find *w* consistently (e.g., with H-Stems), for example:

əwbūd ‘he hit, shot’ (< **ləbūd*, cf. *yəlūbəd* ‘he hits, shoots’)
yəwbōs ‘he wears’ (< **yəlbōs*, cf. *libəs* ‘he wore’)
ḥəwbūs ‘he dressed (s.o.)’ (< **ḥəlbūs*, cf. *G libəs* ‘he wore’)
əwtēḡ ‘he was killed’ (< **lətēḡ*, cf. *lūtəḡ* ‘he killed’)⁵

⁵ The G perfect *əwtūḡ* is also sometimes found in place of *lūtəḡ*.

From verbs whose second root consonant is *l*, we find forms like:

ḥēmāk ‘I dreamt’ (< **ḥālmāk*, cf. *ḥaylām* ‘he dreamt’)
ḡawḱawt ‘she looked’ (< **ḡālḱáwt*, cf. *ḡālōḱ* ‘he looked’)
kāwtūt ‘she told’ (< **kāltūt*, cf. *kālūt* ‘he told’)
ḥawbō ‘they (two) milked’ (< **ḥālbō*, cf. *ḥālūb* ‘he milked’)
yāḡāḱām ‘they look’ (< **yāḡāḱām*, cf. *yāḡawlāḱ* ‘he looks’)
tāšḡēsān ‘she argues with’ (< **tāšḡālsān*, cf. *šāḡēlās* ‘he argued with’)
sāwbōna ‘will wait (ms)’ (< **sālbōna*, cf. *sīlāb* ‘he waited’)

And from verbs whose final root consonant is *l*, we find forms like:

āḥtawēk ‘I went crazy’ (< **āḥtawālk*, cf. *āḥtawūl* ‘he went crazy’)
šxawālēk ‘I sat’ (< **šxawālālk*, cf. *šxawālūl* ‘he sat’)
šālēs ‘take it!’ (< **šālāls*, cf. *šālāli* ‘take me!’)

The loss of *l* is blocked before a guttural letter, as in *šalh* ‘safe-conduct; truce’, *lāḥām* ‘he touched’, and *ḥālḥawḱ* ‘he rounded up (animals)’; before *y*, as in *sālyēba* ‘will wait (mp)’; and when *l* is followed by another *l*, as in *dāllōna* ‘(I) will guide’ and *dāllāk* ‘I guided’. There is also one case of the loss of *l* being blocked before the glottalic *t*, namely, *yālṭōf* (15:10); the loss is not blocked before all glottalics (cf. *ḡawḱawt*, above), but perhaps this is the rule before *t*.

2.1.5. The Loss of *t*

The prefix *tā-* is sometimes lost in pronunciation when it occurs before the consonants *t*, *s*, *š*, *ś*, and *ṣ̌*. In several places in Johnstone’s texts, the prefix is missing in transcription, although in one of these cases the *tā-* is present in the audio version:

tēyān (15:18) (< *tātēyān*) (*tā-* audible on audio!)
ṭaym (35:5) (< *tāṭaym*) (*tā-* not audible on audio)
tīyān (35:12) (< *tātīyān*) (*tā-* not audible on audio)
šēžām (57:8) (< *tāšēžām*) (*tā-* not audible on audio)
tābēk (94:21) (< *tātbēk*; cf. *tātbēš*, 94:22) (no audio found)

In a few other places, the prefix *tā-* is not pronounced, but is indicated in transcription in parentheses:⁶

⁶ See also the paradigm of the verb *attūma* ‘listen’, in the *ML*, pp. lvi-lvii.

(tə)tawyən (7:3) (no audio found)
(tə)šəhēgəs (22:32) (*tə*- not audible on audio)
(t)səyūr (44:9) (*tə*- not audible on audio)
(tə)šāri (54:19) (*tə*- not audible on audio)
(tə)ttəkən (64:6) (*tə*- not audible on audio)
(tə)šəlūlən (68:9) (*tə*- not audible on audio)
(tə)šakfi (74:17) (*tə*- not audible on audio)
(tə)ṭōm (75:22) (*tə*- not audible on audio)

A comparison of the transcription with the audio reveals a number of places in which the prefix *tə*- is transcribed, but not heard on the audio, for example:

tətéhəh (15:6) (*tə*- not audible on audio)
tətiyən (15:17) (*tə*- not audible on audio)
təšəbərən (27:23) (*tə*- not audible on audio)
tšakf (37:2) (*tə*- not audible on audio)
təsyūrən (37:4) (*tə*- not audible on audio)
təśnēš (48:7) (*tə*- not audible on audio)
təṭwahi (75:6) (*tə*- not audible on audio)
təsyērəm (89:12) (*tə*- not audible on audio)
təsbēt (89:13) (*tə*- not audible on audio)

However, there are also examples where the prefix is found both in transcription and on the audio:

təśéməh (3:12; 85:28) (*tə*- audible on audio)
təsmēhəm (24:41) (*tə*- audible on audio)
təšábrən (58:9) (*tə*- audible on audio)
təslébi (76:17) (*tə*- audible on audio)
təśēmi (83:5) (*tə*- audible on audio)
təślēli (85:24) (*tə*- audible on audio)

Further investigation in the field is needed to see how regular the loss of *tə*- really is. It should be added that the Mehri numeral ‘9’ (see §9.1.1 for the forms) seems to exhibit this same loss of historical *tə*- before *s*, and that the loss of the *t*- prefix has parallels in Jibbali and Soqotri.⁷

Finally, it is relevant to note here the non-occurrence of the particle *ǝ*- before the prefix *tə*- (see §7.1.10).

⁷ See further in Testen (1988) and the references therein.

2.1.6. *Gemination*

Consonant gemination exists in Mehri, though it plays almost no role in derivational or inflectional morphology. Gemination is simply lexical in words like *ġiggēn* ‘boy’ (vars. *ġiggēn*, *ġaggēn*, *ġigēn*, and *ġaygēn*), *ġaggēt* ‘girl’, *ħəllāk* ‘barber’, *bə-ħəllay* ‘at night’, *sənnawrət* ‘cat’, *’amma* ‘as for’ (§12.5.3), *ħənnawn* ‘small’, and *xəmmōh* ‘five’.

Gemination does not occur word finally, and so a final geminate cluster is simplified. This is most noticeable with verbs whose second and third root consonants are identical (geminate verbs). A few examples are:

rəd ‘he came back’, cf. *rəddəm* ‘they came back’
ham ‘name’, cf. *həmməh* ‘his name’
kāl ‘all; each’, cf. *kəlləh* ‘all of it’

Some nouns and adjectives exhibit gemination in the masculine, but not in the feminine; others exhibit gemination in the plural, but not in the singular. An example is *xəddōmət* ‘workers’ (sg. *xōdəm*). Gemination here is obviously part of the morphology of the plural pattern, but such examples are met infrequently and are mainly (or possibly all) borrowings from Arabic.

There are a number of nouns with the pattern *CəCCōC* or *CəCCāC* that designate occupations. One might suggest that in this pattern the gemination is a feature of derivational morphology. However, these words are most likely just borrowings from Arabic. Examples are *ħəllāk* ‘barber’, *ṣəyyōd* ‘fisherman’, *ħəṣṣāb* ‘butcher’, *dəllōl* ‘guide’, and *ħəddōd* ‘blacksmith’.

With some T-Stem verbs, gemination results from assimilation, e.g., *naṭṭəb* ‘fall off, drop (intrans.)’ (< **naṭṭəb*) and *əttūma* ‘listen’ (< **əhtūma*). See further in §6.5.1 and §6.5.3.

2.1.7. *The Shift of b > m*

There is an assimilatory sound change in Omani Mehri **bVn > mVn*. This is seen in the following words in the texts:

məndawḵ ‘rifle’ < Arabic *bunduq*
mənədəm ‘person’ < *bənədəm* (lit. ‘son of Adam’)
(’əm)-mən ‘between’ < *’əm-bən*

The *ML* (p. 268) also lists a noun *mənnəy* ‘builder’, which must be from the root *bny* (the *ML* also lists a noun *bənnāy*, p. 50). Forms of the above words with the original *b* are found in Yemeni Mehri dialects, e.g., *beyn* ‘between’ (Jahn 1905: 125; Bittner 1914a: 12) and *bnādam* ‘person’ (Sima 2009: 230, text 45:2).

2.2. Mehri Vowels

Mehri vowels are a source of considerable disagreement, and I will leave it to those who have done fieldwork to figure out the system precisely. In Johnstone’s system (as outlined in the *ML*), there are six long vowels, two certain short vowels, and four diphthongs:

Long vowels:	<i>ā ē ē ī ō ū</i>
Short vowels:	<i>a ə (ε)</i>
Diphthongs:	<i>ay aw əy əw</i>

As already noted, the transcription of vowels in the texts (and in the *ML*) is inconsistent. This is in part due to some variation in the pronunciation itself. The vowels *ī* and *ē* are very often interchangeable, as are *ū* and *ō*. This is reflected in the audio, as well. I have tried in this grammar (except when citing passages from Johnstone’s texts) to be consistent in the use of either *ī* or *ē*, *ū* or *ō*. The vowels *ī* and *ū* are susceptible to diphthongization (see below, §2.2.1 and §2.2.2) and this fact helps to decide whether a form has an underlying *ī* or *ē*, *ū* or *ō*.

The long vowel *ē* is in most cases an allophone of *ā*, but as Johnstone points out (*ML*, p. xiii), minimal pairs can be found, e.g., *bār* ‘he went at night’ ~ *bēr* ‘camels’. The short vowel *ε* does not seem to be phonemic. It is used in transcription as a variant of both *ə* and *a*, though more often for the latter. Stressed *é* is sometimes found in place of *ē*, just as *á* is sometimes found in place of *ā*. Short *ε* is used most consistently in the set of singular possessive suffixes attached to plural nouns (§3.2.2). Note that the short vowel *ə* can, and very often does, carry stress.

The diphthong *ay* seems to alternate with *ā* in the environment *C__r*, as in *gayr* ~ *gār* ‘except’, *xayr* ~ *xār* ‘better’. The preposition *ǧār* ‘on’, which has the base *ǧayr-* before suffixes (§8.22), also exhibits this alternation, though in a predictable manner.

We also find other vowel symbols in Johnstone’s transcription. Stressed *ó* (usually followed by *h*) is a variant transcription of *ō* (e.g., *trōh* ~ *tróh* ‘two’; *hō* ~ *hóh* ‘I’). Stressed *ú* is a very rare variant tran-

scription of *ō* or *ū* (e.g., *ħərōhk* ~ *ħərúhk* ‘your head’). Short *u* (< *əw), written as an independent word, is often used as a variant of the conjunction *wə-* (see §12.1.1). A short *i* is used in place of *ī* in predictable environments: when it occurs word-finally (unstressed) in polysyllabic words (e.g., *báyti* ‘my house’, *tēti* ‘women (dual)’); when it serves as a variant pronunciation of the unstressed initial or medial sequence *yə* (e.g., *ǵátiǵək* ~ *ǵátyǵək* ‘you got angry’; *ǵ-yəħōm* ~ *ǵ-iħōm* ‘(that) he wants’; *yǵǵbōr* ~ *iǵǵbōr* ‘horns’); and, usually, when it serves as the linking vowel for the dual and plural possessive suffixes attached to plural nouns (e.g., *ħáziħəm* ‘their goats’; see §3.2.2). Short *i* also occurs as a rare variant of *ī* in a few words, like *ǵiggēn* ~ *ǵiggēn*, as well as in the transcription of a few Arabic words and names found in the texts.

Nasalized long vowels occur in Mehri in a very few words, and are of doubtful phonemic status. The vowel *ō̃* occurs in just a single word, *ħō̃* ‘where?’, which plainly derives from **hōn* (cf. Harsusi *hōnəh*), which in turn comes from **ʔān* (cf. Hebrew *ʔān* ‘where?’). We can find a near minimal pair, *ħō̃* ‘where?’ vs. *hō* ‘I’, but given that *ō̃* occurs in no other words, we can hardly call it phonemic. A nasalized vowel is also occasionally used to transcribe the word for ‘yes’. So we find, for example, *ʔahā̃* (27:27) or *ēhē̃* (80:14) (both confirmed by the audio) in place of the more common transcriptions *ahā* and *ehē*. But this nasal vowel is no more phonemic than the nasal vowel often heard in English ‘huh?’ or ‘uh-huh’. On one additional case of a nasal vowel, see §11.9.

On the relationship of the vowels and word stress, see §2.3.

2.2.1. The Effects of Glottalic Consonants on Vowels

The glottalic consonants *ǵ*, *k*, *ʕ*, *t*, and *z* cause the changes *ī* > *ay*, *ū* > *aw*, and *ē* > *ā*, when these vowels bear primary stress. (The phoneme *š* is so rare that there is no evidence for *š* followed by *ī*, *ū*, or *ē*.) These changes have the following effects, in synchronic terms:

For *ī* > *ay*:

1. The vowel *ī* in the first syllable of Gb perfects becomes *ay*, e.g., *ħayrəb* ‘approach, be near’, *ǵayma* ‘be thirsty’ (cf. *tībər* ‘break’, *wiħa* ‘be, become’).
2. The vowel *ī* which occurs before certain object suffixes on 3ms and 3fp perfects (see §3.2.3) becomes *ay*, e.g., *zərħayh* ‘he stabbed him’ (cf. *wəzmīh* ‘he gave him’) and *šəbħaysən* ‘he tied them’ (cf. *ǵəbrīsən* ‘he met them’).

3. The vowel *ī* which occurs in the 3mp perfect of many H-, Š1-, and T2-Stem verbs becomes *ay*, e.g., H *həḳṣaym* ‘they spent the afternoon’ (cf. *hənsīm* ‘they breathed’), and T2 *əntəḳayl* ‘they chose’ (cf. *əftəḳīr* ‘they wondered’).
4. The suffix *-īta* of the fs active participle becomes *-ayta*, e.g., *ṣḥəṭayta* ‘will slaughter (fs)’ (cf. *kəwṭīta* ‘will tell (fs)’).

For *ū* > *aw*:

5. The vowel *ū* which follows the second root consonant in Ga-, H-, and Š1-Stem perfects becomes *aw*, e.g., G *rəṣawn* ‘he tied up’ (cf. *ḡəlūk* ‘he looked’) and H *həḃṣawr* ‘he saw well’ (cf. *həḡḡūl* ‘he cheered up’). In the Ga-Stem, this means that the 3ms and 3mp perfects look identical when the second root consonant is a glottalic.
6. The 3fs suffix *-ūt* of most perfects becomes *-awt*, e.g., *həwṭəḳawt* ‘she secured’ (cf. *həḡəllūt* ‘she boiled’), though we find exceptions, e.g., *žāṭūt* ‘she took’. There is alternation even within the same verb paradigm, e.g., *ṣəḳōt* ‘she called’ (64:29), but *ṣəḳawt* ‘she called’ (99:43).
7. The vowel *ū* which follows the first root consonant in the G imperfect becomes *aw*, e.g., *əḳawdər* ‘I can’ (cf. *əwūzəm* ‘I give’).
8. The vowel *ū* in the first syllable of Ga perfects whose final root letter is *ʿ*, *ḡ*, *ḥ*, or *x* (see §2.2.2) becomes *aw*, e.g., *ḳawla* ‘he let’, root *ḳlʿ* (cf. *nūka* ‘he came’, root *nkʿ*), and *ṭawrəḥ* ‘he let’ (cf. *sūbəḥ* ‘he swam’).
9. The vowel *ū* which occurs before the 2ms object suffix when attached to 3ms and 3mp perfect (see §3.2.3) becomes *aw*, e.g., *ṣəḳawk* ‘he called you’ (cf. *kəsūk* ‘he found you’).
10. The plural suffix *-ūtən*, most commonly found attached to active participles, becomes *-awtən*, e.g., *məḟḳawtən* ‘will let marry (cp)’ (cf. *əzmūtən* ‘will swear (fp)’).

For *ē* > *ā*:

11. The feminine suffix *-ēt* becomes *-āt*. This applies to nouns (e.g., *ḟəzzāt* ‘silver’, *wərḳāt* ‘note, paper’) and to the forms of some perfects (e.g., G passives *xəwḳāt* ‘she was born’ and *səḃṭāt* ‘she was hit’).

12. The *ē* of Ga subjunctives and imperatives becomes *ā*, e.g., *yağğāž* ‘he winks’ (cf. *yađlāl* ‘he guides’) and *ākāf* ‘shut up!’ (cf. *āzēm* ‘give!’).
13. The *ē* after the second root letter of G passives becomes *ā*, e.g., *rašān* ‘he was tied up’ (cf. *kaḇēr* ‘he was buried’).

This list is not exhaustive, but covers the most important and commonly seen changes. Note that most guttural consonants also cause these changes, but because they also have other effects, they are treated separately below.

As noted above, these changes of *ū*, *ī*, and *ē* only take place when these vowels bear primary stress. So we find, for example, *žifōn* ‘guests’, *ṭihōr* ‘pure (mp)’, with primary stress on the final syllable, and *ke‘ayēti* ‘two female spirits’, with primary stress on the penultimate syllable.⁸

2.2.2. The Effects of Guttural Consonants on Vowels

Guttural letters (velar and pharyngeal fricatives and the glottal stop and fricative) cause a number of sound changes, though they have their greatest effect on the formation of verbs. The letters ʕ, ġ, ḥ, ḫ, and x can all be considered ‘weak’ root letters with respect to the verbal system, in that they all cause phonetic changes in the verbal paradigm. However, the gutturals are not a totally uniform group.

The four velar and pharyngeal fricatives (ʕ, ġ, ḥ, and x) all cause the same changes as the glottalics, that is, *ī* > *ay*, *ū* > *aw*, and *ē* > *ā*. So, we find:

For *ī* > *ay*:

1. The vowel *ī* in the first syllable of Gb perfects becomes *ay*, e.g., *ḥaybər* ‘be cold’ (cf. *ṭibər* ‘break’).
2. The vowel *ī* which occurs before certain object suffixes on 3ms and 3fp perfects (see §3.2.3) becomes *ay*, e.g., *nəkayhəm* ‘he came to them’, root *nkʕ* (cf. *kəsīhəm* ‘he found them’, root *ksʕ*) and *səmḥays* ‘he excused her’ (cf. *bəgdīs* ‘he chased her’).
3. The vowel *ī* which occurs in the 3mp perfect of many H-, Š1-, and T2-Stem verbs becomes *ay*, e.g., *ḥəbgayž* ‘they hated’ (cf. *hənsīm* ‘they breathed’).

⁸ An exception is *kaγšōr* ‘short (mp)’ (< **kīšōr*), in which unstressed *ī* became *ay*, probably because there are two glottalics in this word.

4. The suffix *-īta* of the fs participle becomes *-ayta*, e.g., *əwtǵáyta* ‘will kill (fs)’ (cf. *kəwtīta* ‘will tell (fs)’).

For *ū > aw*:

5. The vowel *ū* which follows the second root consonant in H- and Š1-Stem perfects becomes *aw*, e.g., *həbawr* ‘he took out (animals) at night’ (< **həb‘awr*) and *həbgawz* ‘he hated’ (cf. *həǵfūl* ‘he cheered up’). In the H-Stem, this means that the 3ms and 3mp perfects look identical when the second root consonant is a guttural. Unlike with glottalics (see Rule #5, §2.2.1), this rule does not apply to G-Stems whose second root consonant is a guttural letter; see §7.2.5 and §7.2.6.
6. The 3fs suffix *-ūt* of most perfects becomes *-awt*, e.g., *nəfǵawt* ‘she threw’ (cf. *fətəkūt* ‘she went out’).
7. The vowel *ū* which follows the first root consonant in the G imperfect becomes *aw*, e.g., *nəǵawlək* ‘we look’ (cf. *nəǵūzəm* ‘we swear’). There are exceptions, like *yǵōrəb* ‘he knows’; it is unclear if this is just an issue of transcription.
8. The vowel *ū* in the first syllable of Ga perfects whose final root letter is *‘, ǵ, h, or x* (see below) becomes *aw*, e.g., *xawda* ‘cheat’, root *xd‘* (cf. *nūka* ‘come’).⁹
9. The vowel *ū* which occurs before the 2ms object suffix when attached to 3ms and 3mp perfect (see §3.2.3) presumably becomes *aw*, though no examples occur in the texts.
10. The plural suffix *-ūtən*, most commonly found attached to active participles, becomes *-awtən*, e.g., *kəlawtən* ‘will leave (fp)’, root *kl‘* (cf. *ǵəzmūtən* ‘will swear (fp)’).

For *ē > ā*:

11. The feminine suffix *-ēt* becomes *-āt*. This applies to nouns (e.g., *fərḥāt* ‘happiness’) and presumably to the 3fs forms of those perfects ending in *-ēt* (e.g., G passives), though no examples occur in the texts.
12. Rule #12 in the previous section (§2.2.1) does not apply to guttural letters, since the subjunctives and imperatives of all middle

⁹ The verb *xawda*, which appears in the *ML* but not in the texts, is probably the only verb that has one of the gutturals *‘, ǵ, h, or x* for both its first and last root letters.

guttural verbs have the paradigm vowel *ō* (like Gb-Stems). See §7.2.5 and §7.2.6.

13. The *ē* after the second root letter of G passives becomes *ā*, e.g., *səhāt* ‘it (m.) was slaughtered’ (cf. *ḵəbēr* ‘he was buried’).
14. The *ē* after the first root letter of Š2-Stem perfects and imper-fects becomes *ā*, e.g., *šəxārəg* ‘he interpreted’ (cf. *šəhēwəb* ‘he imagined’). (This rule presumably applies to glottalic conso-nants as well, though there are no examples in the texts.)

Verbs whose second or third root consonant is a guttural (ʔ, ʕ, ġ, h, ḥ, and x) can be divided into a variety of verbal classes, and paradigms can be found for most of these in Johnstone’s *ML* (see also the relevant sub-sections of §7.2). Many of the peculiarities associated with these consonants are related to the types of changes discussed above. One major type is missing in the *ML*, however, and the verbs of this type are worthy of some discussion here. These are Ga-Stem verbs whose third root consonant is any of the six gutturals. For these verbs, in place of the normal pattern *CəCūC* of the perfect, we find instead the pattern *CūCəC*. So, in synchronic terms, there is a sound rule:¹⁰

CəCūG > *CūCəG* / *G* = ʔ, ʕ, ġ, h, ḥ, or x

So there exist such G-Stem verbs as:

dūbəh ‘collect honey’¹¹
dūləx ‘seize’
fūḵəḥ ‘cut in half’
fūtəḥ ‘open’
gūdəḥ ‘drift to shore’
lūtəġ ‘kill’ (but cf. n. 5, above)
mūləʔ ‘fill’ (see §6.1.4, n. 3)
nūfəġ ‘throw’
nūgəḥ ‘succeed’
nūṣəḥ ‘advise’
sūbəḥ ‘swim’
sūməḥ ‘forgive’

¹⁰ There are exceptions when the second root letter is a glottalic, e.g., *fəžāḥ* ‘be embarrassed’ and *məžawġ* ‘chew’ (variant *mūžəġ*).

¹¹ However, it must be mentioned that each of the several occurrences of this verb in text 77 sounds like *dəbūh* on the audio. This verb type needs further investigation.

sawrəx ‘make a bang, fire (intrans.)’¹²

ṭawbəx ‘make a mark’

ṭawrəḥ ‘leave, let’

When the final root letter is ʿ (or, in a few cases, ʔ), this consonant is dropped and the preceding vowel becomes *a*, as in:

hūma ‘hear’

kūsa ‘find’

ḵawla ‘let, leave’

ḵawṭa ‘cut’

mūna ‘hold’

nūka ‘come, bring’

rūfa ‘go up’

tūba ‘follow’

Verbs with final ʿ are treated in Johnstone’s paradigms in the *ML*, but it is worth making clear that these are really a subset of the general final guttural type, which exhibits the sound change *CəCūG* > *CūCəG*. This sound change, by the way, is not limited to G-Stem verbs. It also applies to T2-Stems, which normally have the shape *əCtəCūC* in the 3ms perfect (e.g., *əftəkūr* ‘ponder’), and to T1-Stems, which normally have the shape *yəCtəCūC* in the imperfect. So we find, for example, T2 *əftūrəḥ* ‘he was delighted’ (not ***əftərūḥ*) and T1 *yəktūməḥ* ‘he is disappointed’ (not ***yəktəmūḥ*).

H-Stems, which normally have the form *yəhəCCūC* in the 3ms imperfect (e.g., *yəhəbhūl* ‘he cooks’) are also affected, showing that the sound rule also applies to forms of the shape *əCCūG*. So we find, for example, *yəhənūdəx* ‘he fumigates’ and *yəhəṣawbəḥ* ‘it becomes in the morning’ (the latter with the additional change of *ū* > *aw* after the glottalic *ṣ*). H-Stems are not totally consistent with this, however. It seems that masculine plural passive participles, which can have the pattern *məCCūC* (a variant of *məCCōC*) are similarly affected; cf. *mələwtəḡ* ‘killed’ < **məlūtəḡ* < **məltūḡ*. However, we do not find this rule applying to the H-Stem perfect, which has the basic shape *həCCūC*; instead,

¹² The unexpected shift of *ū* to *aw* in the first syllable of this verb is either due to the combination of *r* + *x* in this word, or reflects an original glottalic *ṣ* as the first root letter. In fact, the Arabic cognate (from which this verb was presumably borrowed) is *ṣaraxa* ‘shout’. In Jibbali, the root is also *ṣrx* (*JL*, p. 242), but Ḥarsusi has *srx* (*HL*, p. 112).

we find perfects of the shape $həCCāG$ (e.g., $həṣbāḥ$) or $həCCēG$ (e.g., $həndēx$) (see §7.2.8).

Because G-Stem verbs with a final guttural undergo this change $CəCūG > CūCəG$, they wind up looking identical to D-Stem verbs in the 3ms perfect. As a result, these verbs are sometimes conjugated as if they were D-Stems. For example, from the verb $lūtəḡ$ ‘kill’, we find both a G-Stem 3mp $əwtawḡ$ ($< *lətwawḡ$) and a D-Stem 3mp $lətḡəm$ ‘they killed’.

2.2.3. The Effects of Liquids on Vowels

In several places, we find that the changes of $ū > aw$ and $ī > ay$, which regularly occur following glottalics and certain gutturals, also take place following the liquids r or l . In such cases, there is normally a glottalic or guttural consonant elsewhere in the root. Some examples are the verbs $həzrawb$ ‘be ill’, $rayzi$ ‘to be acceptable’, and $həṭlawḵ$ ‘release’; the past participles $məḡrayb$ ‘well-known’ and $məlawtəḡ$ ‘killed (mp)’ ($< *məlūtəḡ < *məltūḡ$); and the nouns $kərawš$ ‘money’ (plural pattern $CəCūC$) and $šəṭrayr$ ‘rag, strip of cloth’. We also find the change of $ū > aw$ in the environment of two liquids, as in the 3fs perfect form $fərrawt$ ‘she flew’ and the 3ms perfect $əstəlawl$ ‘wander aimlessly’.¹³

One possible example in which the word has no glottalic or guttural is the verb $šərawḡ$ ‘sew’. In the texts, this verb occurs only in the 3mp perfect, $šərawḡ$ (20:28), where we expect aw . In the *ML* (p. 383) the form $šərawḡ$ is given also as the 3ms perfect (for expected $šəruḡ$), but this may be an error; in the English-Mehri word-list at the back of the *ML* (p. 588), the verb ‘sew up’ is listed as $šəroḡ$.

2.3. Word Stress

Most words only have one long vowel or diphthong, in which case the stress falls on the long vowel or diphthong. Johnstone claims in both the *ML* (p. xiii) and *AAL* (p. 10) that long vowels (including diphthongs) can only occur in open stressed syllables or in stressed, word-final syllables ending with a single consonant. If this statement is correct, then one must add, as Johnstone does, that a word can have more than one stressed syllable. So, for example, Johnstone would have to say that in words like $ʾāmōr$ ‘he said’ and $ʾāmərūt$ ‘she said’ the

¹³ There is some inconsistency with these T2-Stems. For example from the root frr , the *ML* has in one place the form $əftərūr$ (p. lv), and elsewhere $əftərawr$ (p. 97).

first and last syllables are stressed, and a word like *ṭāṭidayən* (24:25) is stressed on all three syllables.¹⁴ On the audio, however, it does not seem to be the case that all long vowels in a word with multiple long vowels are stressed. In words with three long vowels, like *ṭāṭidayən* (24:25), *āfērōr* (26:8), *ḥītārikən* (26:16), the first and third do seem to carry stress. In words with two long vowels, it is not so clear, and more field research needs to be conducted. We have already seen proof above (§2.2.1) that there are cases in which long vowels must be called unstressed in order to explain certain sound changes.

When a word does not have a long vowel or diphthong, the rules for stress are not so apparent. Stress is usually predictable based on the appearance of a long vowel in other forms of the word. For example, in *ġəbərāthəm* ‘she met them’ (31:9), stress on the third vowel is predictable from the unsuffixed form *ġəbərūt* ‘she met’. In a similar way we can predict the stress of *nákam* ‘they came’ (26:20; cf. *nūka* ‘he came’) and *gəzámk* ‘I swore’ (31:5; cf. *gəzūm* ‘he swore’). In other cases, for example in an H-Stem subjunctive form like *təhákṣəm*, stress position is fixed simply by the verbal paradigm. Stress can also be predictable given that certain syllables never take stress, such as the affixes of the imperfect/subjunctive, the definite article, the suffixes of the perfect, and others.

In Stroomer’s edition of Johnstone’s texts, stress is not consistently marked, and in some cases is marked incorrectly. In this grammar, when reproducing passages from the texts, stress marking is normally ignored. The exceptions are the vowels *á* and *é*, which I reproduce as in Stroomer’s edition. Elsewhere in this grammar, stress is marked where appropriate in the paradigms and grammatical discussion.

¹⁴ In text 24:25, for example, Johnstone marks the diphthong as stressed: *ṭāṭidáyən*. Note that the glide here is part of the diphthong, as well as the onset of the final syllable.

CHAPTER THREE

PRONOUNS

3.1. Independent Personal Pronouns

Following are the independent forms of the Mehri personal pronouns:

	sing.	dual	plural
1c	<i>hō</i>	<i>əkay</i>	<i>nḥā</i>
2m	<i>hēt</i>	<i>ətay</i>	<i>ətēm</i>
2f			<i>ətēn</i>
3m	<i>hē</i>	<i>(hay)</i>	<i>hēm</i>
3f	<i>sē</i>		<i>sēn</i>

Notes:

- The 3ms form is transcribed occasionally as *hah*.
- The first and second person dual forms are very rare in the texts; the third person dual does not occur at all.
- The 1cp form is often transcribed as *ənḥā* or, less often, *nəḥā*.
- The 2p forms appear in a very few passages as *tēm* and *tēn*, that is, without the initial syllable.

These pronouns have several functions. Most commonly, they are used as the subject or predicate of a non-verbal sentence (§13.1) or as the subject of a verbal sentence. Examples of such non-verbal sentences are:

- hō ḡayḡ fəkayr* ‘I am a poor man’ (91:3)
hō aḡāk ‘I am your brother’ (34:28)
hēt ḡaywəl ‘you are crazy’ (94:36)
hēt kənnawn ‘you are little’ (91:15)
hēt ḡayḡ ‘you are a man’ (93:6)
hē ḡiḡēn ḡaywəl ‘he is a crazy boy’ (91:8)
ḥō sē ‘where is she?’ (65:9)
nḥā kənyawn ‘we were children’ (89:11)
əkay ḡayw ‘we (two) are brothers’ (74:22)

ətay həbanyə ‘you (two) are my sons’ (74:23)

hēm xəšəmhə ‘they are his enemies’ (64:18)

And examples of verbal sentences are:

ʾəššōt fənway w-ʾəššək hō ‘she got up before me, and then I got up’ (97:43)

hō ašədki, ʾār ətēn dəlləkən lā ‘I am telling the truth, but you didn’t know your way!’ (99:41) (Note that the phrase *hō ašədki* is non-verbal)

kō hēt təbayk ‘why are you crying?’ (19:6)

hō hōm šūk ‘I want (to go) with you’ (76:4) (cf. *hōm šūk*, 76:7)

In general, however, pronouns are omitted in the great majority of verbal sentences. This is even true when the verb is an active participle, which is not marked for person (§7.1.6). When the pronoun appears, it can give contrastive emphasis, as in the first two examples above, but in most cases there is no special reason for its appearance, as in the last two examples above. Passages in which the pronoun is omitted are abundant, but a few representative examples are:

ʾāmōr: əl šīnək təh lā ‘he said: I have not seen it’ (23:14)

nəkōna b-ğəgənōt u xaynīta bīkəm ‘you will have a daughter and she will betray you’ (24:2)

bə-kəm tḥōm təšōm lay aməndawkək ‘for how much will you sell me your rifle?’ (39:1)

wə-kō əl səyərs lā ‘why didn’t you go?’ (97:22)

An independent personal pronoun can also be fronted, to emphasize a subject (usually *hēt*) or the object of a preposition:

hō əl šay ʾar ḏōməh ‘I have only this’ (73:5)

wəlākən ətēm l-ʾəḥād yəkawdər līkəm lā ‘but you, no one could get the better of you’ (73:12)

hēt əl hēt axayr mənīn lā ‘you are not better than us’ (61:4)

wə-hēt, əl hēt ḥōkəm lā ‘you’re not the ruler!’ (91:29)

hēt əl hēt ḏ-əḥtəmk lā ‘you can’t be sure’ (82:3)

An independent pronoun can also be used to clarify a direct object suffix, or it can function as an object in cases where no verb is present:

kəsəki, hō w-arībēy, ḏə-nəžhōk ‘he found us, my friend and me, laughing’ (91:22)
ḏōmāh yəsdadki, hō wə-ḥāmāy, warx u zōyəd ‘this is enough for us, me and my mother, for a month or more’ (42:10)
shayli fənōhən agənēd u mägōrən hō ‘finish the branches first, and then (you can have) me’ (42:29)

A personal pronoun can be used to strengthen a possessive or objective suffix, indicating contrastive emphasis. This is rather rare with possessive suffixes, but less so with objective suffixes:

abkāryən nəhā ‘our cows (as opposed to his)’ (6:8)
əgōrəb aḡāy hō ‘I know my own brother’ (64:16)
b-arāyək hēt ‘(no,) as you please!’ (101:3) (in response to *b-arāyək*, 101:2)
təḥōm tāzəmən ḥəbrək nətāhəh, aw təḥamən əntahk hēt ‘do you want to give us your son to eat, or do you want us to eat you!’ (2:3)
tawwək təklei hō l-əsīr ‘you ought to let me go’ (20:43)
təḥaymi hō əl-tāf ‘do you want me to scout?’ (29:13)
təšhīd ḏə-hē kafayləs awkəlay hō šérə ‘do you bear witness that he, her guardian, has empowered me, the judge’ (100:5)

Finally, the independent pronouns can also follow the genitive exponent *ḏ-* (§12.4), in which case they function as possessive pronouns (‘mine, yours, ours, etc.’). This is an unusual phenomenon for a Semitic language. The secure attested examples (all of which are first persons) are:

ḏōmāh ḏ-hō ‘this is mine’ (75:21)
ḏōmāh adabh ḏə-hō ‘this honey is mine’ (or: ‘this is honey of mine’) (77:7)
trōh ḏə-nḥā ‘two of ours’ (89:4)
hē ḏə-hō ‘it’s mine’ (67:8)

In 87:1, we find *ḏə-həh* in a poem, translated as ‘what was his’. As transcribed in the text, we might analyze the *həh* in this phrase as the preposition *h-* ‘to; for’ (see §8.8) + the 3ms suffix, i.e., ‘to/for him’. But perhaps *həh* is a mistaken transcription for the independent pronoun

hē, in which case we would have *ǎh-hē* ‘his’, paralleling *ǎh-hō* ‘mine’ in the examples above. Both analyses seem to work in this poetic passage.

3.2. Suffixed Pronouns

3.2.1. Suffixes on Singular Nouns

To express pronominal possession, a special suffixed form of the pronoun is attached to the noun. There are two closely related sets of suffixes used with nouns, one used with singular nouns and one with plural nouns. The suffixes that attach to singular nouns are:

	sing.	dual	plural
1c	-i	-(ə)ki	-(ə)n
2m	-(ə)k	-(ə)ki	-(ə)kəm
2f	-(ə)š		-(ə)kən
3m	-(ə)h	-(ə)hi	-(ə)həm
3f	-(ə)s		-(ə)sən

Notes:

- A noun with a possessive suffix must also have the definite article (see §4.4).
- The 1cd and 2cd forms are identical, and so must be distinguished by context.
- When a noun ends in a consonant (as is most often the case), the helping vowel *ə* often appears before the suffix (with the exception of the 1cs).
- When a noun ends in a vowel, the 1cs form is usually transcribed as -y.

To illustrate the forms of these suffixes, we can use the nouns *hayb* ‘father’ and *gā* ‘brother’:

hayb: *háybi*, *háybək*, *háybəš*, *háybəh*, *háybəš*, *háybəki*, *háybəki*,
háybəhi, *háybən*, *háybəkəm*, *háybəkən*, *háybəhəm*, *háybəšən*

gā: *ağāy*, *ağāk*, *ağāš*, *ağāh*, *ağās*, *ağāki*, *ağāki*, *ağāhi*, *ağākəm*,
ağākən, *ağāhəm*, *ağāsən*

Many nouns alter their shape slightly when adding possessive suffixes. It is usually the vowel of the final syllable that is affected, though first person forms are usually immune to this change (or have a separate change). The most common change is the reduction of the syllable-final vowel to *ə*. So, for example, the noun *bayt* ‘house’ has the shape *bət-* before all suffixes except the first person:¹

bayt: *abayti, abátk, abátš, abátəh, abáts, etc., abáthəm*

Another example is *brīt* ‘daughter’ (def. *ḥəbrīt*), which has the 1cs form *ḥəbrayti* (var. *ḥəbrīti*), but the base *ḥəbrát-* before all other suffixes. This is typical for many nouns ending in the suffix *-īt*.

brīt: *ḥəbráyti, ḥəbrát(ə)k, ḥəbrátš, ḥəbrátəh, ḥəbráts, etc., ḥəbráthəm*

Similar to nouns with the suffix *-īt*, nouns with the (rarer) feminine suffix *-ūt* have a diphthong before the 1cs possessive, but *-ə-* elsewhere. For example, the forms of *məkəwrūt* ‘lover’ are:

məkəwrūt: *amkəwráwti, amkəwrát(ə)k, amkəwrátš, amkəwrátəh, amkəwráts, etc., amkəwráthəm*

Note the irregular nouns *ḥām* ‘mother’ and *ḥəbrē* ‘son’, both of which have the 1cs suffix *-áy* (variant *-áy*), and the linking vowel *ē* (variant *ī*) before the remaining suffixes.

ḥām: *ḥāmáy, ḥāmēk, ḥāmēš, ḥāmēh, ḥāmēs, etc., ḥāmēsən*
ḥəbrē: *ḥəbráy, ḥəbrēk, ḥəbrēš, ḥəbrēh, ḥəbrēs, etc., ḥəbrēsən*

¹ This is not representative of nouns with the pattern *CayC*. For example, *gay* ‘man’ and *xayl* ‘uncle’ retain their shape before all suffixes.

3.2.2. Suffixes on Plural Nouns

The suffixes that attach to plural nouns are:

	sing.	dual	plural
1c	-yɛ	-iki	-(i)yən
2m	-kɛ	-iki	-ikəm
2f	-ʃɛ		-ikən
3m	-hɛ	-ihi	-ihəm
3f	-sɛ		-isən

Notes:

- As noted already in §3.2.1, a noun with a possessive suffix must also have the definite article (see §4.4).
- The dual and plural suffixes are the same as those attached to singular nouns, except that the suffixes are preceded by the vowel *-i-*. This *-i-* is sometimes also transcribed *-ī-* (or *-ē-*), except in the 1cp.
- The 1cp suffix is realized either as *-iyən*, with a glide *y* between *-i-* and the suffix *-ən*, or as *-yən*, with the *-i-* being realized consonantly.
- The singular suffixes are occasionally transcribed with a preceding *-ə-* (or *-i-* in the 1cs). This seems to be most common when the noun ends in a glottalic consonant.
- The final *-ɛ* of the singular forms is sometimes transcribed as *-a*.

To illustrate the forms of these suffixes, we can use the nouns *ḥəbōn* ‘sons’ and *xəlōwək* ‘clothes’:

ḥəbōn: *ḥəbányɛ*, *ḥəbánkɛ*, *ḥəbánʃɛ*, *ḥəbánhɛ*, *ḥəbánse*, *ḥəbániki*,
ḥəbániki, *ḥəbánihi*, *ḥəbán(i)yən*, *ḥəbánikəm*, *ḥəbánikən*,
ḥəbánihəm, *ḥəbánisən*

xəlōwək: *xəláwķiyɛ*, *xəláwķəkɛ*, *xəláwķəʃɛ*, *xəláwķəhɛ*, *xəláwķəsɛ*,
xəláwķiki, *xəláwķiki*, *xəláwķihi*, *xəláwķiyən*, *xəláwķikəm*,
xəláwķikən, *xəláwķihəm*, *xəláwķisən*

The final *-ən* of external feminine plurals (see §4.3.2) is dropped before adding suffixes, for example:

ʾāyēntən ‘eyes’: *ʾāyánt(i)yɛ*, *ʾāyántkɛ*, *ʾāyántʃɛ*, *ʾāyánthɛ*, *ʾāyántse*,
ʾāyántiki, *ʾāyántiki*, *ʾāyántihi*, *ʾāyánt(i)yən*, *ʾāyántikəm*,
ʾāyántikən, *ʾāyántihəm*, *ʾāyántisən*

ġawtən ‘sisters’: *aġátye*, *aġátke*, *aġátše*, etc., *aġátisən*

ḥādōtən ‘hands’: *ḥādátye*, *ḥādátke*, *ḥādátše*, etc., *ḥādátisən*

A singular noun ending in *-ē* may take the suffixes meant for plural nouns, e.g., *aʾəšēye* ‘my supper’ (42:26).

3.2.3. Suffixes on Verbs

With perfect tense verbs, pronominal object suffixes are attached only to third person forms. With imperfect, subjunctive, and imperative forms, the suffixes can be attached to any form ending in a vowel or the final root consonant. Participles do not take object suffixes.²

There is one set of suffixes attached only to the 3ms and 3fp forms of perfect tense verbs, the two of which are always identical. These suffixes are:

	sing.	dual	plural
1c	<i>-áy / -əy</i>	<i>-əki</i>	<i>-in</i>
2m	<i>-ūk</i>	<i>-əki</i>	<i>-ikəm</i>
2f	<i>-áyš</i>		<i>-ikən</i>
3m	<i>-ih</i>	<i>-əhi</i>	<i>-ihəm</i>
3f	<i>-is</i>		<i>-isən</i>

Notes:

- Unlike the pronominal suffixes used with nouns, these suffixes carry stress.
- The initial vowel *ī* of the plural and 3s suffixes is often transcribed as *ē* or *ə*.
- The initial vowel of the 2ms suffix is rarely transcribed as *ō*.
- The initial vowels of the singular and plural suffixes are diphthongized when following a guttural or glottalic consonant: *ī* becomes

² There is one possible exception to this statement. The form *məhaġfələn* ‘cheer us up!’ (lit. ‘you’ll cheer us up’, 52:3) must be a ms H-Stem participle of the root *√ġfl* with a 1cp object suffix. The participle would seem to be functioning here as an imperative, which is perhaps why the suffix is tolerated. However, this transcription is almost certainly faulty. The audio suggests that the correct transcription is *mō hāġfələn*, that is, a particle *mō* (§12.5.12) plus an imperative *hāġfələn*. If this is the case, then the suffix on *hāġfələn* is unproblematic. The particle *mō* may, in fact, go with the preceding imperative *ʾāmēr* ‘sing!’. The participle *māġtəbəri* (94:43) is translated ‘meet me’, as if it had an object suffix, but this is just a mistranslation. This is a md form, and should be translated ‘we (two) will meet’; see §6.5.1, n. 13.

ay and *ū* becomes *aw* (see §2.2.1 and §2.2.2). The variant vowel *ā* is not affected, nor are the 1cs, 2fs, and dual suffixes.

- The initial vowels of the suffixes sometimes become zero or *ə* when following a weak verb whose final root consonant is *w* or *y* (e.g., *təwū* ‘eat’, *kəlū* ‘bring home (animals)’), and sometimes with middle-weak verbs as well. They are never lost, however, after Gb verbs with root-final *y* (e.g., *šīni* ‘see’).
- Before suffixes, there is often a vowel reduction in the verbal stem (e.g., *wəzūm* ‘he gave’ > *wəzəm-*)

Some examples are:

wəzəməy ‘he gave me’ (18:6) *šəllay* ‘they (f.) took me’ (40:23)
āzəməūk ‘he invited you’ (22:81) *səwbəyš* ‘he waited for you’ (75:7)
bəgədēh ‘he chased it’ (14A:2) *šxəbəriḥ* ‘he asked him’ (12:7)
šənyīs ‘he saw her’ (15:10) *ḡəbrīsən* ‘he met them’ (99:40)
həddələn ‘he guided us’ (60:8) *wəzəmiḥəm* ‘he gave them’ (10:10)

šaḳāwk ‘he called you’ (20:25) (< **šaḳūk*)
həməyh ‘he heard it’ (40:8) (< **həm‘ih*)
šḥəṭāyh ‘he slaughtered it’ (48:23) (< **šḥəṭih*)
ḳəbšāyh ‘they (f.) bit him’ (92:4) (< **ḳəbših*)
kəsīs ‘he found it’ (22:69) (< **kəs‘īs*)
kəsāki ‘he found us (two)’ (91:22) (< **kəs‘āki*)
nəḳāyn ‘he came to us’ (20:25) (< **nəḳ‘in*)
təbāysən ‘he followed them’ (63:3) (< **təb‘isən*)

There is another set of suffixes that are attached to 3fs, 3d, and many 3mp perfect tense verbs, as well as all imperfects, subjunctives, and imperatives that end in a vowel or the final root consonant:

	sing.	dual	plural
1c	-i / -əy	-ki	-(ə)n
2m	-(ə)k	-ki	-kəṁ
2f	-(ə)k		-kən
3m	-(ə)h	-hi	-həṁ
3f	-(ə)s		-sən

Notes:

- Unlike the suffixes used with 3ms and 3fp perfects, these suffixes are unstressed, with the occasional exception of the 1cs.
- The suffixes can attach to a 3mp perfect verb only if the form ends in the final root consonant (e.g., *wəzawm* ‘they gave’, 3mp of *wəzūm*). Suffixes do not attach to those 3mp perfects with suffixed *-(ə)m* (e.g., *tabam* ‘they followed’, 3mp of *tūba*); see further in §3.3.
- When stressed, the 1cs suffix *-i* is diphthongized to *-ay* after a glottalic or guttural consonant. The rarer, variant suffix *-əy* is not affected by glottalics.
- The 2p and 3p suffixes can also be preceded by *ə*, though this is very rare.
- The final *-ō* of the 3d perfect forms is replaced by *ay* before object suffixes (as it is also before the conditional suffix *-ən*).³

Some examples of perfects are:

ḵarbāti ‘she came near me’ (36:12)
šxəbīrəh ‘they asked him’ (3:10)
təbātəh ‘she followed him’ (15:9)
šənyáts ‘she saw her’ (15:13)
ənkáthi ‘it (f.) came to them’ (17:2)
ḡərbəthəm ‘she knew them’ (48:28)
šənyáyəh ‘they (two) saw him’ (84:6)
šənyáyys ‘they (two) saw her’ (94:41)
wzáwməy ‘they gave me’ (4:9) (cf. the variant *wzáwmi*, 20:60)
ḡəbáwri ‘they met me’ (62:4)
ʾāzáwmən ‘they invited us’ (38:10)
šxəbīrhəm ‘they asked them’ (72:2)
ḥəláwbəsən ‘they milked them’ (35:7)

Imperfects/Subjunctives:

təllḥámi ‘you (ms) touch me’ (22:20)
əḡərbək ‘I know you’ (20:46)

³ The form *nkōh*, which is translated in Johnstone’s texts as ‘they [two] got to him’ (74:19) seems to defy this rule. However, this transcription must represent a simple 3rd form *nkō*, with no object suffix. Unfortunately, there are just two certain dual forms with suffixes in Johnstone’s texts. Both of these are from the verb *šini* ‘see’, and are given in the examples below (84:6; 94:41).

əmdáħk ‘I flatter you’ (52:18)
yəbəgdəh ‘it was chasing him’ (95:4)
tāzəməh ‘you (ms) invite him’ (22:66)
nəwtágs ‘we kill her’ (24:9)
yəsďádki ‘it is enough for us (two)’ (42:10)
təhəwkəbən ‘you (fs.) bring us in’ (75:6)
nəhaddəlákəm ‘we will show you’ (60:5)
əl-səxbərħəm ‘I ask them’ (28:6)

Imperatives:

ərşáni ‘tie (ms) me up!’ (24:28)
šākəh ‘call (ms) him!’ (22:24)
əwbəds ... *u-wtágs* ‘shoot (ms) her ... and kill her!’ (6:10)
wəzəmħəm ‘give (ms) them!’ (37:14)

When a fs imperative or 2fs imperfect form ends in *-i*, this is usually dropped before the addition of an object suffix. This results in some ambiguous forms, such as *āzēmi*, which can be either a simple fs imperative, ‘give!’ (e.g., 22:60), a fs imperative + 1cs suffix, ‘give (fs) me!’ (e.g., 32:19), or a ms imperative + 1cs suffix, ‘give (ms) me!’ (e.g., 53:4).⁴ Another example is the form *śəlāli* ‘carry me!’, which can be either the ms imperative (*śəlēl*) + 1cs (e.g., 46:2) or the fs imperative (*śəlēli*) + 1cs (e.g., 89:14). Other ambiguous forms are *āzəmən* ‘give (fs.) us!’ (e.g., 32:21), which looks like the fp imperative *āzēmən* (e.g., 20:4), and *təğərbəh* ‘you (fs) know him’ (e.g., 94:34), which is identical to *təğərbəh* ‘she knows him’ (e.g., 94:36). In the rare cases when *-i* does not drop, it is realized as *y*, as in *āzēmyəh* ‘give (fs) it!’ (22:60). Bare 2fs imperatives are often distinguished by ablaut in the verb stem from a form with a suffixed 1cs object, for example *təħaymi* ‘you want’ (e.g., 97:37) vs. *təħámi* ‘you (fs) want me’ (e.g., 32:19).

It should be mentioned that when a verb takes a double direct object, either object can appear as a pronominal suffix. Compare the following two sentences containing the verb *wəzūm* ‘give’:

wəzmīs ħəgawrəh ‘he gave her to his slave’ (85:25)
wəzmīs adrəħəm ‘he gave her the money’ (85:5)

⁴ The form *‘āzəmi* ‘give (fs) me!’ is also found (55:4).

3.3. Direct Object Pronouns (*t-*)

In addition to verbal suffixes, there also exists a set of direct object pronouns, which are built on a direct object marker *t-* plus pronominal suffixes. This particle *t-* occurs only with suffixes. The full set of forms is as follows (with one unattested form in parentheses):

	sing.	dual	plural
1c	<i>tay</i>	<i>táki</i>	<i>tīn</i>
2m	<i>tīk</i>	<i>(táki)</i>	<i>tīkām</i>
2f	<i>tayš / tīš</i>		<i>tīkən</i>
3m	<i>təh</i>	<i>táhi</i>	<i>tīhām</i>
3f	<i>tīs</i>		<i>tīsən</i>

Notes:

- The particle *t-* declines just like the prepositions *b-*, *k-*, and *l-* (see §7.22), except for the special 2ms form *tīk* and the 2fs variant form *tīš*.
- The 2fs forms *tayš* and *tīš* are variants that occur with roughly equal frequency in the texts.
- The 1cs has the rare variant *tī* (e.g., 2:4).

The direct object pronouns are used in complementary distribution with the verbal object suffixes, as they are used only when a verbal suffix cannot be added to the verb form (see §3.2.3). Specifically, the direct object pronouns are used with all first and second person perfects; 3mp perfects that have a suffixed *-m*; imperfect and imperative forms that have an inflectional suffix; and all participles and conditionals. Examples are:

wəzəmk təh ‘I gave him’ (53:4)
kūsəm təhi lā ‘they didn’t find them’ (23:22)
yərdiyəm təh ‘they will throw him’ (20:31)
haddələm tīn ‘show us!’ (60:4)
təwyōna tay ‘you will eat me’ (99:30)

A verb that takes a double direct object can be followed by two direct object pronouns, for example:

yəşşək mən akənyawn ḏ-yəğšābəm *tay təh* ‘I am afraid that the children will take it away from me’ (37:22)
wə-šərōmāh əl wəzəmk tīn tihəm lā ‘now you (still) have not given them to us’ (91:30)

3.4. Demonstratives

Mehri demonstratives fall into two classes, near and far. For each class there is a set of longer forms and a set of shorter forms. The forms are:

Near demonstratives (‘this, these’):

ms. <i>ḏōmāh</i>	fs. <i>ḏīmāh</i>	cp. <i>ʔalyōmāh</i>
ms. <i>ḏē</i>	fs. <i>ḏī</i>	cp. (none attested)

Far demonstratives (‘that, those’):

ms. <i>ḏákāmāh</i> / <i>ḏákāmāh</i>	fs. <i>ḏák(ə)māh</i>	cp. <i>ʔalyákāmāh</i>
ms. <i>ḏēk</i>	fs. <i>ḏayk</i> / <i>ḏīk</i>	cp. <i>ʔalyēk</i>

While the longer forms of the near demonstrative are very common, the shorter forms are quite rare, each occurring just a few times. The ms form *ḏē* is found as such in just one passage (albeit five times, 48:31). Elsewhere, it is variously transcribed as *ḏēh* (77:5), *ḏə-* (72:5; 85:37), *əḏ-* (72:3), and *ḏ-* (72:3), each of which should be corrected to *ḏē* (with no hyphen). The shorter near fs form *ḏī* occurs just three times in the texts (31:39; 99:19, 20).

In contrast to the near demonstratives, the shorter and longer far demonstrative sets occur with roughly equal frequency. The longer ms far demonstrative is nearly always transcribed as *ḏákāmāh*, making it identical to the fs form; it is just once transcribed *ḏákāmāh* (37:15), and once *ḏēkāmāh* (32:20). The shorter far demonstratives *ḏēk* and *ḏayk* / *ḏīk* also are found a few times as *ḏək* (e.g., 52:13, 99:19, and, according to the audio, 57:14), with a reduced vowel. (On the use of *ḏək* as an introductory particle, see §12.5.8.)

The demonstratives can be used independently as pronouns, for example:

ḏōmāh hē ‘this is he’ (37:22)
ḏōmāh šawr gīd ‘that’s a good idea/advice’ (90:6)
ḏōmāh ḏ-ʔaymāl akəssēt ḏīmāh ‘the one who made up this story’ (48:31)

- ðōmāh ḥayri* ‘this is my donkey’ (46:12)
ðe ḥaybi wə-ðe aḡay ‘this is my father and this is my brother’ (48:31)
ðīmāh tēti ‘this is my wife’ (46:16)
ðəkāmāh yəkdēr ‘that one will be able’ (42:47)
’alyōmāh ḥəbənyə ‘these are my sons’ (74:23)
’alyək rəddām ḥəbēriḥām ‘those ones took back their camels’ (12:14)

Much more commonly, the demonstratives function as attributive adjectives, as in:

<i>amkōn ðōmāh</i> ‘this place’ (10:12)	<i>tōgər ðōmāh</i> ‘this rich man’ (65:14)
<i>ḥəwōdi ðīmāh</i> ‘this valley’ (42:17)	<i>sənēt ðīmāh</i> ‘this year’ (39:12)
<i>aḡayg ðe</i> ‘this man’ (77:5)	<i>ḥəwōdi ði</i> ‘this valley’ (31:3)
<i>ḥābū ’alyōmāh</i> ‘these people’ (62:13)	<i>xəlōwəḵ ’alyōmāh</i> ‘these clothes’ (37:5)
<i>aḵā ðəkāmāh</i> ‘that land’ (63:1)	<i>aḵāzəb ðəkāmāh</i> ‘that lucerne’ (37:15)
<i>ənḥōr ðəkāmāh</i> ‘that day’ (54:7)	<i>agzāyrət ðəkāmāh</i> ‘that island’ (74:3)
<i>aḡayg ðēk</i> ‘that man’ (42:47)	<i>ḥərōm ðīk</i> ‘that tree’ (94:37)
<i>ḥābū ’alyək</i> ‘those people’ (65:6)	<i>aḡəyōg ’alyakāmāh</i> ‘those men’ (41:10)

When used attributively, the demonstrative usually follows the noun and the noun must have the definite article (see §4.4). Examples of the demonstrative preceding its head noun are rare, but examples are: *ðōmāh aḡəggēn* ‘this boy’ (76:12) and *ðīmāh ḥāmēk* ‘this mother of yours’ (15:17) (cf. *aḡərōyi ðōmāh* ‘these words of mine’, 94:23). For discussion and for other examples of demonstratives preceding their head nouns, see §14.

3.5. Indefinite Pronouns

3.5.1. *’əḥād* ‘someone’

The pronoun *’əḥād* has the meaning of ‘someone’ or ‘anyone’. Combined with a negative, it has the meaning ‘no one’. The combination *’əl ’əḥād* is almost always contracted to *l-’əḥād*. Examples are:

ʾəḥād lə-hīs tay ‘is anyone like me?’ (42:3)
hām ʾəḥād mənḵēm kərbay ‘if any one of you come near me’ (47:11)
mən ʾawr ʾəḥād yəḥātōm ǧār aḵōbər ‘sometimes someone spends
the night by the grave’ (54:3)
ʾəl kəsk bīs ʾəḥād lā ‘I found no one in it (the valley)’ (38:2)
l-ʾəḥād hərfōna tīs lā ‘no one will move it’ (67:5)
wə-l-ād ʾəḥād ǧəlūm ʾəḥād lā ‘and no one was unfair to anyone ever
again’ (66:10)
w-əl ʾəḥād yəḵawdər yəḥlōm ʾəḥād lā ‘no one can touch anyone’
(104:38)

In one case (45:5), the initial syllable is elided in transcription, leaving *ḥād*. This should be corrected to *ʾəḥād*, which is heard on the audio.

wəlē ʾəḥād ənḵaykəm ‘has anyone come to you?’ (45:5) (Stroomer:
wəlē ḥād)

And in one passage, *ʾəḥād* has the translation ‘some’ or ‘some people’:

ʾəḥād yəšbayd w-ʾəḥād yəšəsdūk. wə-ʾəḥād yōmər ǧ-yəḥlōm ‘some
don’t believe it and some believe it. Some think he was dreaming’
(92:6)

Note that *ʾəḥād*, which is clearly derived from the common Semitic numeral ‘one’, has been completely lost in the numeral system of Mehri, and the root survives only in this usage.

In one passage, the numeral *ṭāṭ* (var. *ṭād*) ‘one’ is used in a negative (partitive) context in place of *ʾəḥād*, meaning ‘no one’:

wə-kō əl ṭād mənḵēm yəḥawrəf ašāwər ǧīməh ‘how come not one of
you would move this stone?’ (67:8)

On the alternation of *ʾəḥād* and *ṭād/ṭāṭ*, see further in §3.5.3.

3.5.2. *šī* ‘something’ and *šī-lā* ‘nothing’

The literal meaning of *šī* is ‘thing’ (cf. 65:14), but it is most often used with the meaning of ‘something’ or ‘anything’, for example:

hō kəsk šī ‘I found something’ (37:22)
wīḵa lūk šī ‘has something happened to you?’ (42:7)

hām ʾəḥād yəḡōrəb sī ‘if anyone knows anything’ (65:7)
təḥōm mən hənay sī ‘you want something from me’ (77:4)
āzēməh sī ‘give him something!’ (91:10)
hamak tīs ḡətəryōt sī ‘did you hear her say anything?’ (94:17)

There also may be a variant form *sīən*, which occurs once independently (on the compound *kāl-sīən*, see §3.5.4). The audio has just *sī* in this passage, so the transcription is possibly a mistake.

məhaffək təh ḥəbrīti mən ḡayr sīən ‘I will give my daughter to him in marriage without anything (i.e., without a bride-price)’ (42:42)
 (audio: *mən ḡayr sī*)

The negative *sī-lā* means ‘nothing’, ‘anything’, for example:

wəzyēma tīkəm sī-lā ‘we will give you nothing’ (35:14)
əl šəh sī-lā ‘he had nothing’ (65:1)
wə-l-ʾəḥād yəšānūs yəḡətayr sī-lā ‘and nobody dared to say anything’ (85:17)
əl ḥəssək bə-sī-lā ‘I wasn’t aware of anything’ (103:3)

The hyphenation in the transcription suggests that *sī-lā* is a single word, but in most cases the *lā* (optionally preceded by *əl* earlier in the clause) can be seen as simply negating the entire clause. When ‘nothing’ is used as a subject, the simple *sī* is used, and the whole phrase is negated with the usual (*əl*) ... *lā* (see §13.2.1):

əl sī yədūm lā ‘nothing lasts’ (98:15)

In combination with a preceding or following noun in an interrogative sentence, *sī* also has the sense of ‘any’, for example:

kəskəm mətwē-sī yəmə ‘did you find any grazing today?’ (26:3)
ʾād wəzyēma tīn šxōf sī ‘are you going to give us any milk yet?’ (35:13)
wəlē rəḥmēt sī šīhəm sənēt ḏīməh ‘have they had any rain this year?’ (45:3)

Likewise, the negative *sī-lā* can mean ‘not any’ or ‘no’, as in:

rawn u bēer, wālākən əbḳār sī-lā ‘sheep and camels, but not any cows’ (29:15)

hām šūk dərēhəm sī-lā ‘if you don’t have any money’ (86:8)

əl wīḳa ḥarb sī-lā ‘there has been no war’ (104:28)

Both *sī* and *sī-lā* can also be used existentially, though examples are very few. Among these are:

wālē sī ’āyd ‘are there any sardines?’ (27:9)

əl sī žayga ḳarayb lā ‘there is no shelter nearby’ (17:12)

hē əl sī-lā ḳār ḥəməh ‘there was nothing at the water’ (95:11)

əl sī məh fənwikəm lā ‘there is no water in front of you’ (94:37)

sī-lā məh bawməh ḳarayb ‘there is no water here nearby’ (99:29)

The last two examples show an interesting difference. In the first (94:37), *sī* is used as an existential, and the whole clause is negated by *əl ... lā*. In the second (99:29), *sī-lā* is in itself a negative existential.

3.5.3. *kāl ’əḥād* and *kāl ṭāt* ‘everyone; each one’

‘Everyone’ is usually expressed by *kāl ’əḥād*, as in:

kāl ’əḥād yəšənḏūr bə-səlamtəh ‘everyone makes a vow on his safe-keeping’ (16:4)

yāmərəm ḥābū wə-kāl ’əḥād ḏə-ḡərbīhəm ‘(so) people say and everyone that knows them’ (104:30)

kāl ’əḥād yəḥātūm ḥāl xašməh ‘everyone spends the night with his enemy’ (104:39)

In a couple of passages, the phrase *kāl ’əḥād* occurs in combination with *ḥābū*, and together these can be translated as either ‘everyone’ or ‘all the people’, for example:

šəwḡs ḥābū kāl ’əḥād lə-sēkənəh ‘everyone went home’ (lit. ‘the people went, each one to his community’) (9:10)

mət ḡəzōt ḥəyawm yəšəwḡs ḥābū kāl ’əḥād lə-sēkənəh ‘when the sun goes down, everyone goes home’ (54:3)

The phrase *kāl ’əḥād* can also be literally translated as ‘each one’, as in:

hīs ertawam, kāl ʾəḥād zāt arawah ‘when they had drawn lots, each one took his share’ (99:7)

More often, ‘each one’ is expressed by *kāl tāt* (var. *kāl tād*), for example:

kāl tāt islūl šawri trayt təlōfəf ‘each one carries two flat stones’ (71A:1)

kāl tāt kəlūt bə-ḳəssətəh ‘each one told his tale’ (74:24)

śəl śātayt məsawmər u tək kāl tāt bə-xāf ‘he took three nails and banged each one into a hoof’ (76:16)

kāl tāt bə-ḥaydəh əškay ‘each one (had) in his hand a sword’ (104:32)

But in a couple of passages, *kāl tāt* is best understood as ‘everyone’, as in:

kāl tāt yāgōb yəgrēb agīd mən aḳōməh ‘everyone wants to know the good from the bad’ (73:12)

bārəm kāl tād h-abətəh ‘everyone went home’ (lit. ‘to his home’) (97:28)

In one place (35:10), *kāl tāt* is transcribed *ka-tāt*, and this loss of *l* is reflected in the audio version.

In summary, *kāl ʾəḥād* and *kāl tāt* are perhaps technically interchangeable, though *kāl ʾəḥād* is usually used for ‘everyone’, and *kāl tāt* for ‘each one’.

A few times we also find *kāl* used by itself meaning ‘all’ or ‘everyone’, for example:

kāl ḏ-nūka yawmər ‘everyone who came said’ (42:42)

kāl ʾamawr ‘everyone said...’ (42:43)

sēn bər mōt kāl ‘they were all already dead’ (99:39)

Notice in the above examples that *kāl* can be treated as grammatically plural (like English ‘all’).

3.5.4. *kāl-śīən* ‘everything’

The idea of ‘everything’ is expressed in Mehri with *kāl-śīən*, for example:

bawmāh kāl-šīan gōli ‘here, everything is expensive’ (18:15)
aṣābār axayr mən kāl-šīan ‘patience is better than everything’ (61:9)
ktēbām hayni kāl-šīan ḏā-wīka ‘write (down) for me everything that happens’ (66:1)
hēt fəyazk lay bā-kāl-šīan ‘you have overcome me in everything’ (76:17)
šīhām kāl-šīan ‘they have everything’ (104:36)

In one case (15:21), a shorter form *kāl-šī* is transcribed, but since the audio has *kāl-šīan*, this is probably just an erroneous transcription. And in a few cases, *kāl-šīan* is strengthened by a redundant *kallāh* ‘all of it’ (see §5.5.3), for example:

tōli gərawb kāl-šīan kallāh ‘then they understood (knew) everything’ (67:9)
kālētī lay bā-kāl-šīan kallāh ‘tell me everything!’ (85:34)
ḳālōna kāl-šīan kallāh ‘he will leave (behind) everything’ (98:11)

3.5.5. Other Indefinite Pronouns

On rare occasion, the words *mənēdām* ‘person’ and *ṭāṭ* ‘one’ have the function of *ʔəḥād* ‘someone’, though with *mənēdām* a literal translation as ‘person’ also makes good sense. Examples are:

kālūt lay mənēdām ḏ-əl yəbayd lā ‘someone who does not lie told me’ (57:12)
hənēkām tāmərām hībō hām wəzəmkām ṭāṭ ḳəhwēt ‘what do you all say if you give someone coffee?’ (59:13)

The word *ḥōgət* ‘something’ (likely an Arabism) is attested twice, and seems to be synonymous with *šī*.

həgədayk ḥōgət ‘I have forgotten something’ (70:6)
ʔamayli hənəfš tāmāyli ḥōgət ‘pretend you are doing something’ (94:8)

3.6. Reflexives

Reflexivity in Mehri is occasionally expressed by means of a verbal pattern, though examples translated with a real reflexive in English are few. Some examples are:

sē šəḵərawt ‘she hid herself’ (85:22)

hām šəhwabk ‘if you warm yourself (by the fire)’ (86:4)

šəbdəs ‘separate yourself from her’ (94:43)

See further in §6.4 and §6.5. However, Mehri has also developed a reflexive pronoun based on suffixed forms of the noun *nōf* (def. *hənōf*). The noun is never used without suffixes. Following are the forms (with unattested forms in parentheses):

	sing.	dual	plural
1c	<i>hənōfi</i>	<i>(hənfáyki)</i>	<i>hənfáyən</i>
2m	<i>hənáfik</i>	<i>(hənfáyki)</i>	<i>hənfáykam</i>
2f	<i>hənáfš</i>		<i>(hənfáykən)</i>
3m	<i>hənáf(ə)h</i>	<i>(hənfáyhi)</i>	<i>hənfáyham</i>
3f	<i>hənáfš</i>		<i>(hənfáyhən)</i>

Notes:

- The 1cs is transcribed also as *əhnōfi*.
- The -áy- of the plural forms has a variant -əy-, e.g., 1cp *hənfəyən* (28:14). In fact, the only attested form of the 2mp is *hənfəykəm* (28:15).
- The duals and plurals are formed as if based on a plural noun, and so they take the suffixes used for plural nouns (see §3.2.2).

Following are some examples of the reflexive pronoun in context:

kšəf hənafk ‘expose yourself!’ (24:40)

ğatri šīs hənafs ‘he spoke with her herself (i.e., not through an intermediary)’ (48:11)

‘əzēmi hənafš ‘give yourself to me!’ (48:23)

əlūtəğ hənōfi ‘I will kill myself’ (75:24)

hībō təkūsa hənáfik ‘how do you find yourself?’ (i.e., ‘how do you feel?’) (84:8)

The reflexive pronoun is also used in the idiom *‘aymāl hənōf*- ‘pretend’ (lit. ‘make oneself’), which occurs about a half-dozen times in Johnstone’s texts. A few of these are:

- 'āməlūt hənafs gayg 'she pretended to be a man' (lit. 'she made herself a man') (48:27)
 gār w-ʾayməl hənafh bər mōt 'he fell and pretended he was dead' (64:21)
 tāt yāmōl hənafh ḏə-gēlaw 'one will pretend he is ill' (84:2)
 'āmayli hənafs tāmāyli ḥōgət 'pretend you are doing something!' (94:8)

Other, less common idioms that use the reflexive pronoun are *səyūr k-hənōf*- 'go to the bathroom' (lit. 'go with oneself') (cf. 97:37), *səyūr b-hənōf*- 'be oneself again, recover' (cf. 25:16), and *šnū hənafh* 'have one's fortune told' (lit. 'have oneself seen') (cf. 24:1).

Also note that a reflexive meaning can be expressed with a simple pronominal form, as in:

śxōf hənūk 'milk for yourself (lit. 'for you')' (63:6)⁵

3.7. Reciprocals

Reciprocals are most often expressed by means of a T-Stem verb. For example:

- katəwtəm hābū* 'the people talked with each other' (63:13)
əntawhəm 'they fought with each other' (70:4)
hēm əl gətərbəm lā 'they did not know one another' (74:9)
təḥaym təgtēsəm '(if) you want to argue with each other' (77:8)

See further in §6.5. However, Mehri has also developed a special reciprocal pronoun, *tātīday*- 'each other', to express reciprocity. Following are the forms (with unattested forms in parentheses):

⁵ It is true that both the printed edition and the audio have *hənūk* here, but given that we expect *hūk* 'for you' in this context (from the preposition *h*- 'to; for'), rather than *hənūk* (from the preposition *hāl* 'at, by, beside'), one wonders if this is in fact a mistake for *hənafk* '(for) yourself'.

	dual	plural
1c	(<i>ṭāṭīdayki</i>)	<i>ṭāṭīdayən</i>
2m	(ṭāṭīdayki)	<i>ṭāṭīdaykəm</i>
2f		(<i>ṭāṭīdaykən</i>)
3m	<i>ṭāṭīdayhi</i>	<i>ṭāṭīdayhəm</i>
3f		<i>ṭāṭīdaysən</i>

The pronoun *ṭāṭīday-* can be preceded by a preposition where the context requires it. There are about ten occurrences of *ṭāṭīday-* in Johnstone's texts, some of which are:

ʾāmārō hə-ṭāṭīdayhi: hēt nəgays 'they (two) said to one another: you are impure' (4:17)

nəḥōm nərsān ṭāṭīdayən 'let's tie each other up' (24:25)

tōli fəhēməm ṭāṭīdayhəm 'then they understood one another' (59:14)

nakam ḥābū u faskəm tihəm mən ṭāṭīdayhəm 'people came and separated them from one another' (61:5)

ayṭayl šəbūk arikōb lə-ṭāṭīdaysən 'the fox tied the camels to one another' (99:52)

In one case a construction 'one' + preposition + 'one' is used in place of the reciprocal pronoun:

yəṭkawk šəwayr ṭayt ḡār ṭayt 'they throw stones on one another' (lit. 'one upon one') (16:2)

The only other occurrence of this construction is iterative in meaning.

agarbəm ṭāṭ bād ṭāṭ 'they tried, one after the other' (50:3)

3.8. Relative Pronouns

3.8.1. Relative *ḡ-*

The basic relative pronoun in Mehri is *ḡ(ə)-* (var. *əḡ-*) 'who, that, which'. It does not decline for gender or number, and it does not matter if the antecedent is human or non-human. The relative can be followed by a verbal or non-verbal clause. Some examples are:

ṭawyəḥ ġayg əḏ-ḏayma wə-ḏ-gawya ‘a man who was thirsty and hungry came to him’ (13:9)
kūsəm məṣār ḏə-milə’ dərēhəm ‘they found a turban that was full of money’ (68:2)
zəḥākəm ḥābū ḏə-hənīn mən aḡayg ‘the people that were by us laughed at the man’ (71:4)
tōli ’āmōr ’āśər ḏə-ḡayg ḏə-yāgōb b-aḡaggēt ‘then the friend of the man who was in love with the girl said...’ (75:6)
ḥəftōk xəlōwək əḏ-ḏayrəḥ ‘he took off the clothes that were on him’ (75:7)
yəxlīfək ḡayōg ḏ-axayr mənək ‘men who are better than you will replace you’ (76:5)
ḥātəmk b-ḥəwōdi ḏə-sərīn ‘I spent the night in the valley that is behind us’ (80:4)
hō ḡayg ḏ-əl šay kawt lā ‘I am a man who has no food’ (lit. ‘I am a man that with me is no food’) (92:2)

In some cases, a resumptive subject pronoun follows the relative. In all of these the antecedent functions as the subject of a non-verbal clause within the relative clause. Examples are:

šīnən rawn bāz ḏ-əl sēn bə-xayr lā ‘I saw some goats that were not well’ (26:6)
ḥēm ḡār rəḥmānōt ḏ-əl sēh mēkən lā ‘they were on vegetation that was not much’ (30:1)
ṭāṭ mənəkēm ḏə-hē təwayl yəsyēr yəkḥəd bərk xan ‘one of you who is tall(er than me) should go down into the hold’ (91:18)
ḥəḡūm əl-sēkən ḏə-hē sərīn yəllō ‘it attacked the community that is behind us yesterday’ (102:4)

If the antecedent is the direct object of the relative clause, then a resumptive object pronoun must be used, for example:⁶

əl kəsk ’əḥād lā ḏ-əḡarbəḥ ‘I didn’t find anyone that I knew’ (lit. ‘that I knew him’) (34:20)
kəlūṭ ḥābū bə-ləḥān ḥəmayh ‘he told the people all that he had heard’ (40:8)

⁶ In general, a resumptive pronoun is used whenever a direct object precedes the verb, regardless of whether or not a relative clause is involved. Cf. *kāl kəbayli yəḥarbəm təḥ* ‘they fought any tribesman’ (104:37).

bə-rhōyab ð-əhakəmsən ‘in the towns that I rule’ (66:1)
ʾəs aḡayg ð-watxəfəm təh aḡəyōg ‘the man to whom the men had
 come got up’ (73:5) (*watxəf* ‘come to’ takes a direct object)
qərū aqawt ðə-hərḳays ‘he hid the food that he had stolen’ (84:5)

A resumptive pronoun must also be used if the relative is in a prepositional relationship with the antecedent, as in:

ʾəs aḡayg əð-hātīm hənīh aḡəyōg ‘the man with whom they were
 spending the night got up’ (73:11)
ḡəhmō h-arḥəbēt ðə-bīs aḡəḡənōt ‘they went to the place where the
 girl was’ (75:4)
hēt siri bərk xəlōwəḳ ðə-hō nakak bərkīhəm ‘you go in the clothes
 that I came in’ (75:8)

The relative can *optionally* be omitted, especially when the antecedent is indefinite. Some examples of this are:

bə-žāfōr xawr hamməh arērī ‘in Dhofar is a lagoon whose name is
 Rawri’ (7:7)
ḡəlawḳ ʾəḥād yəḡōrəb aḡərōyi ‘they looked for someone who spoke
 my language’ (34:25)
šay ḡayg yəḥōm yəṭāf layš ‘I have a man who wants to visit you’
 (38:15)
wəlē əkūsa ʾəḥād yəmzūz ‘perhaps I will find someone who smokes’
 (94:25)
l-aḡərē ð-aḡayg yəḥəmē ‘on behalf of the man who was listening’
 (63:13)
kəsōna bū tḡarbəhəm ‘you will meet people that you know’ (37:16)
hām hēt ḥōkəm təḥawkəm bə-ḥaḳ ‘if you are a ruler who rules
 justly...’ (74:20)

In the last two passages above (37:16 and 74:20), it is possible that the relative *ð-* is missing for phonological reasons, since *ð-* is normally suppressed before an initial *t-* (see further in §7.1.10.1).

The relative *ð-* can also be used with no antecedent, with the meaning ‘(the) one who’ or ‘that/those which’. Examples are rare in the texts, but a few are:

šarōmāh hēt tākā ḏ-əwbədk tāt ‘now you should (pretend to) be one who has shot someone’ (72:4)

ḏ-əl šəh məzawbət lā ‘the one who does not have shelter’ (87:2)

əl bihəm ḏ-ʾāwənīn lā ‘there is not among them anyone who has helped us’ (91:14)

ḏə-syūr yəxəlōf ġayrəh ‘something else (lit. besides it) will take the place of that which has gone’ (97:27)

ḏ-yəhōm yəḳṭaʿan ‘the one who wants to cut us off’ (98:9)

šərdid həziham kalsən, ġayr ḏə-bər šəṭəm tīsən amhərə ‘they got back all of their goats, except for those that the Mehris had already slaughtered’ (104:34) (Note also the resumptive pronoun *tīsən*)

Keeping with the above use, the relative *ḏ-* can also be used following an independent or interrogative pronoun, with the meaning ‘the one that, the one who’, as in:

hēt ḏə-ġəbbək ənxihe ‘you are the one who defecated under it’ (3:18)

hēt ḏə-hrəkək abayrən ‘you are the one who stole our camel’ (23:10)

hō ḏ-ləṭġək tīs ‘I am the one who killed it’ (42:43)

hō ḏə-kəsk təh fənōhən ‘I am the one who found it first’ (77:3)

mōn ḏə-xəyūn būk ‘who is the one who betrayed you?’ (22:89)

However, in most cases in which we find *ḏ-* following a pronoun, it is the verbal prefix *ḏ-* (§7.1.10).

On the use of *ḏ-* as a genitive exponent, see §12.4; in conjunction with some numerals, see §9.1.4 and §9.3; to form possessive pronouns, see §3.1; and as a verbal tense marker, see §7.1.10.

3.8.2. *kāl ḏ-* ‘whoever’

The combination of *kāl* with the relative pronoun *ḏ-* has the meaning ‘whoever’, ‘anyone who’, or ‘the one that’. With an interceding *mən*, this construction can also have the meaning ‘whoever/whichever (one of)’. Some examples are:

kāl ḏə-ḥərūf ašāwər ... həh agawhərət ‘whoever moves the stone ... the jewel is for him’ (67:6)

kāl ḏə-yəhōm xədmēt u məskēn, yənkē ‘whoever wants work and a place to live, let him come’ (74:7)

kāl ǝ-šəh dəreḥəm yəḵawdər yəsələl səlēb ‘whoever has money can carry a gun’ (94:28)

wə-kāl ǝ-ftōk mən ḥōtəl, yəlatgəm təh ‘whoever came out from the tamarisk they killed’ (104:20)

kāl mənḥēm ǝ-ḥərfis kəsōna hədayyət ‘whichever one of them moves it will find the present’ (67:5)

kāl mənīn ǝ-bdō, yəgšōš ḥərohəh ‘whoever of us lied will have his head cut off’ (24:37)

3.8.3. *ləhān*

Mehri possesses a special relative pronoun *ləhān* (var. *əlhān*), meaning ‘all that’, ‘everything (that)’, or ‘whatever’. It can be followed by a verbal or non-verbal clause. Examples of its use are:

wəzyēma tik ləhān təḥōm ‘they will give you everything (whatever) you want’ (65:8)

w-əlhān kəsk nxāse hē ǝ-hō ‘and whatever I find under it, it’s mine’ (67:8)

šaxbərḥəm ləhān gətəryəm yəllō ‘ask them everything (what) they said last night’ (74:20)

zəgdəm həbēr əlhān kūšəm ‘they seized whatever camels they found’ (lit. ‘the camels, all that they found’) (104:14)

šētəm amrawkəb w-əlhān bərkīhəm ‘he bought the vessels and all that was in them’ (74:6)

šītəm ləhān šəh ‘he bought all that he had’ (74:12)

kəlūt ḥābū bə-ləhān həmayh ‘he told the people all that he had heard’ (40:8)

The final example above illustrates two important points. First, *ləhān* can be the object of a preposition. Second, the verb following *ləhān* can have a resumptive pronoun, though this is not usual.

3.8.4. *Relative mən hāl*

The phrase *mən hāl*, which as a preposition means ‘from (the presence of)’ (see §8.9), is also used as a relative ‘where’, for example:

ḵərū təwyəh bərk dəhlīl mən hāl l-’əḥād yəsānyəh lā ‘he hid his meat in a cave where no one would see it’ (13:7)

sīrəm bəh ta hāl hārōm mən hāl kəbšəh yəḏbīr ‘go with him to the tree where the hornet stung him’ (25:13)

nakam kərmaym mən hāl kādēt yəsūkən ‘they arrived at the mountain where Kadet was living’ (64:11)

bərk amḥəfərōt mən hāl aḡəyōg ḥəfawr ‘into the hole where the men had been digging’ (88:11)

ṭayt mənsēn təsxəwəlūl ḡār šāwər mən hāl taḡabələn lay ‘one of them would sit on a rock where they could keep an eye on me’ (89:3)

Many times *mən hāl* is used without an antecedent, in which case it can mean either ‘wherever’, ‘(in/to) a place where’, or ‘the place where’, as in:

səḥāṭ wōz mən hāl təḡēr yəsanyəm təh lā ‘he slaughtered a she-goat, (in a place) where the merchants could not see him’ (4:2)

mən hāl nakak, zəḥayk mənī ḥābū ‘wherever I came to, people laughed at me’ (34:10)

mən hāl aḡayg sōfər, təsafrən šəh ‘wherever the man traveled, she would travel with him’ (74:10) (Stroomer, incorrectly: ‘when the man...’)

aḡhōm mən hāl l-’əḥād yənnūka lā ‘I (can) go where no one else can go’ (76:1)

ḥasənən mən hāl šīnək təh ‘show us (the place) where you saw it’ (95:8)

Mən hāl can also mean ‘from where’, as in:

hō kəfdōna bərk ḥəwōdi mən hāl nakan ‘I will go down into the wadi where we came from’ (70:6)

sīrō aḡayg wə-tētəh tē ḡār kəramōt mən hāl yaḡəbəlayən səkən ‘the man and his wife went onto a hill, from where they could watch the community’ (94:41)

šīni səkənəh mən hāl gəḥēm ‘he saw the community where he had come from’ (98:1)

In one case we find *tē mən hāl*, meaning ‘up to where’:

šəl akādər tē mən hāl ḥārawn təḥəḡsawmən ‘he took the pot up to where the goats were out for the day’ (1:7)

And in one place we find *mən hāl* combined with the particle *ǝ-*, but this is probably the verbal prefix *ǝ-* (§7.1.10) and not the relative:

nkā bə-ǝrōh ǝ-arēsīt mən hāl ǝ-ʾālēk ‘bring the snake’s head from where it was hung’ (42:43)

3.8.5. *ǝyalla tāt ǝ-*

There is one attestation in Johnstone’s texts of the relative phrase *ǝyalla tāt ǝ-* ‘whoever’ (lit. ‘whichever one that’):

hō ǝ-ǝrəbk ǝyalla tāt ǝ-yənkā bawməh ǝrfōna tīs ‘I know that whoever comes here will move it’ (67:5)

This phrase is rare enough that it causes the reader on the audio to stumble and read *hām tāt* for *ǝyalla tāt*.

CHAPTER FOUR

NOUNS

4.1. Gender

Mehri has two grammatical genders, masculine and feminine. Masculine nouns have no formal marker. Feminine nouns are sometimes recognizable by the presence of a suffix *-īt*, *-ēt* (*-āt* after glottal-ics), *-ūt*, *-ōt*,¹ or *-ət*. Feminine nouns frequently lack an explicit feminine marker, however, in which case the gender of an individual noun is simply lexical. Following are some examples of marked and unmarked feminine nouns:

Marked feminine: *bāhlīt* ‘word’, *bāḵarēt* ‘cow’, *fāzzāt* ‘silver’, *ḡaggēt* ‘girl’, *ḡagānōt* ‘girl’, *kāswēt* ‘clothing’, *kawtēt* ‘tale’, *ḵahwēt* ‘coffee’, *ḵassēt* ‘story’, *lawḵat* ‘bottle’, *māḵsōt* ‘dead tree’, *nōbēt* ‘bee’, *rāḥbēt* ‘town’, *rēšīt* ‘snake’, *saḥrāt* ‘witch’, *sānēt* ‘year’, *ṣayḡāt* ‘jewelry’, *šānēt* ‘sleep’, *wārḵāt* ‘note, paper’, *xādmēt* ‘work’, *xāwfēt* ‘window’, *xālūt* ‘paternal aunt’, *yābīt* ‘she-camel’

Unmarked feminine: *’āgrēz* ‘testicle’, *’āgawz* ‘old woman’, *’ārḵayb* ‘mouse’, *’ayn* ‘eye’, *bayt* ‘house’, *bōḵar* ‘young she-camel’, *dānyē* ‘world’, *fām* ‘leg, foot’, *fārḥayn* ‘horse’, *gēzāl* ‘boulder’, *ḥarōž* ‘acacia’, *ḵarmaym* ‘mountain’, *māndawḵ* ‘rifle’, *māwsē* ‘rain’, *maws* ‘razor’, *māzrāḥ* ‘tooth’, *rikēb* ‘riding-camel’, *šāwār* ‘rock’, *ṭābārāyn* ‘hyena’, *wōdi* ‘valley’, *wōrām* (def. *ḥōrām*) ‘road’, *wōz* (def. *ḥōz*) ‘she-goat’

It appears that all singular nouns ending in *-t* have feminine gender, even if the *t* is part of the root. For example, both *bayt* ‘house’ and *ḵawt* ‘food’ are grammatically feminine. Plural nouns ending in *-(ə)t* are normally masculine, however, as in *zāyawrāt* ‘jars’ (sg. *zāyr*); see §4.3.3 for additional examples.

¹ Johnstone suggested (*AAL*, p. 20) that the *-ōt* suffix is characteristic of trisyllabic nouns, while *-ēt* is characteristic of disyllabic nouns. This does not seem to hold up.

A very few nouns seem to be of variable gender, such as *hərōm* ‘tree’, *məwsē* ‘rain’, and *kəlōn* ‘bride/groom’.² The noun *səwēhər* serves as the plural of both masculine *sēhər* ‘warlock, wizard’ and feminine *saḥrət* ‘witch’.³

Some masculine nouns referring to animate beings have a recognizable feminine counterpart, while others do not. Feminine nouns referring to humans most often have an explicit feminine-marking morpheme, though there are exceptions, like *hāmē* ‘mother’.

Masculine	Feminine
<i>ġiggēn</i> ‘boy’	<i>ġəgənōt</i> ‘girl’
<i>gōr</i> ‘male servant’	<i>gərīt</i> ‘female servant’
<i>bāl</i> ‘master’	<i>bālīt</i> ‘mistress’
<i>həbrē</i> ‘son’	<i>brīt</i> ‘daughter’ (def. <i>həbrīt</i>)
<i>dīd</i> ‘paternal uncle’	<i>dīt</i> ‘maternal aunt’
<i>xayl</i> ‘maternal uncle’	<i>xəlūt</i> ‘paternal aunt’
<i>ḥaym</i> ‘brother-in-law, father-in-law’	<i>ḥəmayt</i> ‘sister-in law, mother-in-law’
<i>ḥayr</i> ‘male donkey’	<i>hīrīt</i> ‘female donkey’
<i>kawb</i> ‘dog, wolf’	<i>kəwbēt</i> ‘bitch’
<i>sēhər</i> ‘warlock’	<i>saḥrət</i> ‘witch’
<i>ribay</i> ‘companion’	<i>ribēt</i> ‘companion’
But:	
<i>ġayg</i> ‘man’	<i>tēt</i> ‘woman’
<i>ḥayb</i> ‘father’	<i>hāmē</i> ‘mother’
<i>bəʾayr</i> ‘male camel’	<i>yəbīt</i> ‘female camel’
<i>tayh</i> ‘male goat’	<i>wōz</i> ‘female goat’
<i>hēxər</i> ‘old man’	<i>ʾāgawz</i> ‘old woman’

Not all nouns referring to animate females are feminine in gender, however. For example, the nouns *dərḥīs* ‘one-year old female (goat) kid’, *fərayz* ‘young she-camel’, and *ḥōṭər* ‘two- or three-month old female (goat) kid’ are all grammatically masculine.

² *Kəlōn* is often qualified to remove ambiguity, and so we find *tēt kəlōn* ‘bride’ (9:7), *aġġgēt kəlōn* ‘bride’ (75:7), and *aġayg kəlōn* ‘groom’ (75:10). But cf. *sē kəlōn* ‘she is a bride’ (75:6) and *nūka ḥəynīt təwōli kəlōn* ‘the women came to the bride’ (9:7).

³ The common plural form is treated as feminine. The only attestations of *səwēhər* referring to men are in 7:3 and 7:7, and the accompanying verbs are 3fp. That *səwēhər* is referring to men is made clear by the use of masculine singular *sēhər* in 7:1 and 7:4. There is also a noun *sēhər* meaning ‘magic, witchcraft’, attested in 7:5 and 7:8.

It should also be pointed out that feminine nouns that are marked in the singular need not be, and usually are not, marked in the plural. For example, the plurals of *bəhlīt* ‘word’, *nōbēt* ‘bee’, *rēsīt* ‘snake’ are *bəhēl*, *nəwēb*, and *riyēs*, all of which lack a feminine marker. And as a corollary, nouns that lack a feminine marker in the singular can exhibit a suffix *-t* in the plural, as with *məndawḵ* ‘rifle’, pl. *mənadḵət*. See further below (§4.3.3).

4.2. Duals

Nouns in Mehri possess a distinct dual form, as do pronouns and verbs. Unlike the formation of noun plurals, the formation of the dual is remarkably simple. For almost all nouns, regardless of gender, the dual is formed simply by adding the suffix *-i* to the singular, for example:

<i>warx</i> ‘month’, du. <i>warxi</i>	<i>tēt</i> ‘woman’, du. <i>tēti</i>
<i>ḵawzərət</i> ‘date-basket’, du. <i>ḵawzərəti</i>	<i>ḡiggēn</i> ‘boy’, du. <i>ḡiggēni</i>

In actual use, the dual form of the noun is nearly always followed by the numeral ‘2’ (m. *troh*/*trō*, f. *trayt*). As when followed by any numeral, the noun lacks the definite article (see §9.1.1). Examples from the texts are:

<i>warxi troh</i> ‘2 months’ (17:11)	<i>tēti trayt</i> ‘2 women’ (2:1)
<i>ḵōni troh</i> ‘2 horns’ (88:7)	<i>fərhayni trayt</i> ‘2 horses’ (24:11)
<i>ḵādəri trō</i> ‘2 pots’ (35:17)	<i>sənēti trayt</i> ‘2 years’ (37:18)
<i>’āšəri troh</i> ‘2 nights’ (98:6)	<i>yəbīti trayt</i> ‘2 camels’ (32:9)
<i>ḡaygi troh</i> ‘2 men’ (104:5)	<i>ṣawri trayt</i> ‘2 rocks’ (71A:1)

In speech, this dual ending *-i* is interpreted by Mehri speakers as part of the following numeral. Sometimes this is reflected in Johnstone’s transcription, e.g., *ṭawr ətroh* ‘2 times’ (65:11), in place of *ṭawri troh*.

In a few places, the numeral ‘2’ precedes the noun, in which case the noun is in the plural:

<i>troh śəhawd</i> ‘2 witnesses’ (9:4; 100:1)	<i>troh ḡayw</i> ‘2 brothers’ (40:1)
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Johnstone (AAL, p. 21) cites two nouns that exhibit a unique, unpredictable dual, namely *ḡayg* ‘man’ (dual *ḡawgi*) and *ḡaggēt* ‘girl’ (dual *ḡaggawti*). He also says that these unique dual forms can some-

times be used without an accompanying numeral; the attested example of *aḡawgi* ‘the two men’ (4:14) confirms this. Also note the unusual case of *fakḥi* ‘half’, whose dual form *fakḥi* serves also as its plural, a use which is quite logical, semantically. Dual *fakḥi* can occur without an accompanying numeral (cf. 65:12, 77:10).

Adjectives do not have a dual form, so a dual noun is modified by a plural adjective, as in:

ṣawri trayt təlōfəf ‘two flat stones’ (71A:1)

The dual form also does not occur with possessive suffixes. So, when the numeral ‘2’ follows a noun with a possessive suffix, that noun will be in the plural, as in:

aḡəthe trayt ‘his two sisters’ (15:1)

In terms of subject-verb agreement, we find both dual verbs with plural noun subjects and plural verbs with dual noun subjects. However, dual noun subjects and dual verbs do not usually co-occur, presumably for reasons of redundancy. Among the few examples of a dual noun subject with a plural verb are:

ḡiḡēni tərō watxəfəm ‘two boys came’ (35:1)

nūka kē‘əyēti trayt ‘two female spirits came’ (68:6)

This is not connected with word order, as shown by the above examples. Compare the preceding examples to the following, which have dual verbs, but plural nouns:

kəfdō tēgər ‘the (two) merchants went down’ (4:12)

sirō həmbərawtən ‘the (two) boys went’ (35:16)

sirō həḡirōn ‘the (two) slaves went’ (65:10)

dərtō həḡērtən ‘the (two) slave girls went around’ (97:31)

An exception is *aḡawgi əḥtəwəlō* ‘the two men have gone crazy’ (4:14); surely it is not a coincidence that *aḡawgi* is one of the two nouns with an unpredictable dual.

Note, however, that when the number ‘two’ is used independently, it does require a dual verb:

troh rəkəbō bərk hawri ‘two (men) got into the canoe’ (60:6)
troh ǝ-yəsīrō ‘two (people) were going’ (68:1; 72:1)
troh sīrō ‘two went’ (84:4)

In some cases, all verbs in a narrative sequence remain either dual or plural, as determined by the first verb. For example, in 35:1 (given above), the verb is plural because of the dual noun preceding it. But all of the verbs and pronouns referring to the ‘two boys’ remain plural for the next several lines, even though the dual noun is not mentioned again. In 35:10, on the other hand, after a short break in the narrative about the ‘two boys’, we find a dual verb (*šəllōni*), after which the verbs and pronouns are dual for the next several lines. In other cases, we find just one dual verb, followed in sequence by several plural verbs (e.g., 72:2). Many times, however, we find flip-flopping between dual and plural verbs (e.g., 66:3). In short, there seems to be a lot of flexibility in the use of dual verbs.

4.3. Plurals

Mehri exhibits two types of plural marking on nouns. There are external plurals, meaning that an explicit plural-marking suffix is used, and there are internal plurals, meaning that plurality is indicated by means of internal vowel changes, with or without the addition of a suffix. In general, internal plurals are far more common in Mehri than external plurals; for masculine nouns they are used almost exclusively.

A few nouns have a suppletive plural, meaning that they form their plural from a different base. Such are *ǧiggēn* ‘boy’, pl. (*h*)*əmbərawtən*;⁴ *yəbīt* ‘she-camel’, pl. *bēr*; *nəhōr* ‘day’, pl. *yūm*; *kəhwēt* ‘coffee shop’, pl. *məkōhi*.⁵ One could argue that *tēt* ‘woman’ (pl. *yənīt*) falls into this category from a synchronic perspective, though historically both forms are from the same root, $\sqrt{nt}$. A few nouns occur only in the plural, e.g., *bū* ‘people’.

⁴ The definite form of *əmbərawtən* is *həmbərawtən*. It is possible that *həmbərawtən* is once used where we expect an indefinite. See below, §4.4.

⁵ *Məkōhi* (attested in 48:13) is the broken plural of *məkəhōyət*, the Yemeni Mehri word for ‘coffee shop’, which occurs in text 48:14 (though the audio has *kəhwēt* here). The *ML* (p. 227) says that it is also the plural of the Omani Mehri word *kəhwēt* ‘coffee shop’. On the language of text 48 in general, see §9.3, n. 4.

There are several nouns that can behave as collectives or plurals, including *bēr* ‘camels’,⁶ *rawn* ‘goats’, *ṣayġət* ‘jewelry’, *tōmār* ‘dates’, and *wōz* ‘goats’. The words *ṣayġət* ‘jewelry’ and *wōz* ‘goats’ can also have a singular meaning, i.e., ‘ornament’, and ‘goat’, while *bēr*, *rawn*, and, probably, *tōmār* cannot have a singular meaning.⁷ The collective *ḏabbēt* ‘flies’ can be treated as grammatically singular (e.g., 29:7) or as a plural (29:4); *ḏabbēt* can also, according to the *ML*, have a singular meaning ‘fly’, for which there is a morphologically plural form *aḏbēb* (29:18). The plural noun *hārōm* ‘tree’ can also be used with a singular meaning, and in fact is more commonly used than its actual singular form *harmayt*.⁸

4.3.1. Masculine External Plurals

Nouns with true masculine external plurals are very rare in Mehri. According to Johnstone (*AAL*, p. 20), the external masculine plural morpheme is *-in*. He cites the example *gəfənīn* ‘eyebrows’, sg. *gəfōn*, which is in the *ML* (defined as ‘eyelashes, eyelids’), but this word does not occur in the texts. Plurals in *-in* are actually exceedingly rare in the texts. Two examples are *kətābīn* ‘books’ (25:18), sg. *kətōb*, and *may-tayn* ‘dead (people)’ (40:4), sg. *mōyət*.⁹ Other examples can be found in the *ML*, such as *ḏənōb/ḏənābīn* ‘tail’, *ġōb/ġābbīn* ‘excrement’, *ḵārōš/ḵārāšīn* ‘mosquito’, and *zəwōd/zəwādīn* ‘supplies’.

⁶ Though *bēr* seems to be the generic word for ‘camels’, it also serves as the plural of *yəbīt* ‘female camel’.

⁷ Text 73, entitled “Four starving men and a date”, has examples of *tōmār* translated as ‘date’. However, though *tōmār* is certainly grammatically singular in this text, there is no evidence (save Johnstone’s translation) that it should be translated ‘date’ rather than ‘dates’. In fact, the phrase *‘aynət tōmār* ‘a few dates’ (73:5) seems to support *tōmār* as a collective. This phrase is translated as ‘a single date’ in the printed edition, though elsewhere *‘aynət* clearly means ‘a little’ (§5.5.1).

⁸ In some cases, it would seem possible that the translation is misleading. For example, in 70:2, we find the phrase *kūsən ġayg bāl hārawn ḏ-yəlūbəd hārōm*, translated as ‘they found a goat herder beating a tree’. But in the context, ‘beating trees’ could be an equally possible translation. However, cf. 70:3, *hārōm ḏ-yəlābdəh* ‘the tree that he was beating (it)’, where the 3ms resumptive object suffix makes it clear that *hārōm* is singular. Similarly, we can cite *kūsən hārōm ḏə-bəh hful, wəlākən ḏayrəh iḏəbōr məkən* ‘we found a tree that had ripe figs, but there were many hornets on it’ (25:3), which has a ms suffix referring to *hārōm* on both *bəh* and *ḏayrəh*. In 94:37, *hārōm* is modified by the singular demonstrative *ḏik*.

⁹ The mp form *məxāsərīn* ‘mixed’ (60:1) seems to be an Arabized form (as noted in the *ML*, p. 451), though it is not clear if this verbal root occurs in Arabic with this meaning. There is a verb *xəsūr* ‘mix’ in Mehri, however.

In addition to the very rare suffix *-īn*, we find the likewise rare masculine plural morpheme *-ōn*. Examples from the texts are *gīrōn* ‘slaves’, sg. *gōr*, and *zīfōn* ‘guests’, sg. *zayf*. We also find this morpheme in the feminine collective *’agzōn* ‘old women’, which can be used as the plural of *’āgawz* (e.g., 97:8).

The most common suffix found with masculine plurals is *-ət*, though this is nearly always used in conjunction with an internal plural pattern (see §4.3.3). An example of *-ət* used independently is *dəllōlət* ‘guides’ (60:8), sg. *dəllōl* (cf. also *həddōdət* ‘blacksmiths’, sg. *həddōd*, listed in the *ML*, p. 166). A small number of masculine nouns take the feminine external plural marker, on which see §4.3.2.

4.3.2. Feminine External Plurals

The external feminine plural marker is *-tən/-ōtən/-ūtən/-āwtən*. This suffix (in the forms *-ōtən/-ūtən/-āwtən*) is used with many adjectives, including most of those of the pattern *CəCayC* (see §5.2), and with all active participles (see §7.1.6). With nouns, however, it is much less common, though it is found on some frequently occurring feminine nouns, especially those referring to humans and body parts. Feminine external plurals found in Johnstone’s texts are:

- ’ayn*, pl. *’āyēntən* ‘eye’
- brīt*, pl. *bāntən* ‘daughter’
- ǧay*, pl. *ǧayōtən* ‘scent’ (masculine?)
- fīkā*, pl. *fākyōtən* ‘cover’ (masculine?)
- gənyōt*, pl. *gənnaytən* ‘female jinnē’
- gərit*, pl. *gērtən* ‘slave-girl’
- ǧayfēn*, pl. *ǧəfənōtən* ‘dress’ (masculine?)
- ǧəggēt*, pl. *ǧəggōtən* ‘girl’
- ǧəgənōt*, pl. *ǧəgənawtən* ‘girl’
- ǧayt*, pl. *ǧawtən* ‘sister’
- ham*, pl. *həmōtən* ‘name’ (masculine?)
- hayd*, pl. *hādōtən* ‘hand’
- həyḏēn*, pl. *həyḏantən* ‘ear’
- kəwbēt*, pl. *kəlabtən* ‘bitch’
- zəfir*, pl. *zəfartən* ‘plait (of hair)’¹⁰

¹⁰ The *ML* gives the plural form as *zəfarūtən*, but the form *zəfartən* occurs in the texts (75:13; 85:10). It is clearly feminine, since we find *fs tayt* ‘one’ referring to this word in 75:13 and *fp bīsən* ‘them’ in 85:10.

Unfortunately, the attestations of the nouns *ḡayʿ*, *fīkā*, *ḡayfēn*, and *ham* are not in contexts that allow us to know whether they are masculine or feminine.¹¹ There is at least one certainly masculine noun that exhibits the plural suffix *-tən*, namely:

əmbərawtən ‘boys’ (def. *ḡəmbərawtən*; used as the plural of *ḡiggēn* ‘boy’)

Some masculine nouns with the prefix *mə-* have plurals in *-ūtən* (e.g., *məhēsən* ‘soothsayer’, pl. *məsənyūtən*), but these are all historically active participles, and all active participles from derived stems have the common plural ending *-ūtən* (§7.1.6).

Before possessive suffixes (§3.2.2), the plural marker *-tən* is reduced to *-t* and *-Vtən* is reduced to *-ət*, as in *ḡəbantse* ‘her daughters’ (15:4), *agəthe* ‘his sisters’ (15:1), *ʾāyāntše* ‘your (f.) eyes’ (42:27), *ḡādāthe* ‘his hands’ (75:10), and *azēfəratš* ‘her hair’ (85:7).

4.3.3. Internal Plurals

As already noted, by far the most common method of indicating the plurality of a noun is changing the vocalic pattern. For the most part, internal plural forms are unpredictable. If we grouped into sets nouns whose singular and plural patterns were the same (e.g., sg. *hēxər*, pl. *hīxār*; sg. *nēḡər*, pl. *nīḡār*), there would be dozens of such groups.¹² In general, internal plurals themselves can be loosely classified according to several types:

Type 1: Internal plurals indicated with the change of a single vowel or diphthong.

This type includes many quadriliteral nouns of the pattern *CəCCiC* (var. *CəCCayC*; pl. *CəCCōC*):¹³ *dəhlīl* (pl. *dəhlōl*) ‘cave, hole’, *dərḡīs* (pl. *dərḡōs*) ‘one-year old female (goat) kid’, *ḡərdīs* (pl. *ḡərdōs*) ‘ground; desert’, *kərmaym* (pl. *kərmōm*) ‘mountain’, *kətfīf* (pl. *kətfōf*) ‘wing’, *məḡlīb* (pl. *məḡlōb*) ‘young camel’, *məḡtaym* (pl. *məḡtōm*) ‘camel-rope’, *məḡrīr* (pl. *məḡrōr*) ‘beehive’, *məndīl* (pl. *məndōl*) ‘handkerchief’, *ṣəṭrayr* (pl. *ṣəṭrōr*) ‘rag,

¹¹ *Ham* ‘name’ is masculine in Yemeni dialects; cf. Sima (2009: 230, text 45:1).

¹² See, for example, the extensive coverage of Jahn (1905: 35-63).

¹³ This also includes passive participles; see §7.1.8.

strip of cloth', *yəğrayb* (pl. *yəğrōb*) 'crow, raven', *zənbīl* (pl. *zənbōl*) 'basket'

Several masculine kinship terms: *dīd* (pl. *dōd*) 'paternal uncle', *hayb* (pl. *hawb*) 'father (pl. parents)', *haym* (pl. *hawm*) 'brother-in-law; father-in-law; (pl.) parents-in-law', *xayl* (pl. *xawl*) 'maternal uncle'

And others: *'āṣər* (pl. *'āṣawr* or *'āṣōr*) 'night', *'āzayz* (pl. *'āzawz*) 'bone', *fərayz* (pl. *fərōz*) 'young she-camel', *nīd* (pl. *nōd*) '(water-) skin', *rikēb* (pl. *rikōb*) 'riding-camel', *hōrəm* (pl. *hayrəm*) 'road (def.)'

Type 2: Internal plurals with total pattern replacement.

Examples include: *'āgrēz* (pl. *'āgōrəz*) 'testicle', *'āṣər* (pl. *'āyśōr*) 'friend', *bōkər* (pl. *bəkōr*) 'young she-camel', *bark* (pl. *bīrōk*) 'knee', *bayt* (pl. *bəyūt*) 'house', *ğayg* (pl. *ğəyōg*) 'man', *hēxər* (pl. *hīxār*) 'old man', *hōṭər* (pl. *hītār*) '(goat) kid', *kādər* (pl. *kaydōr*) 'pot', *karš* (pl. *kərawš*) 'money; Maria Theresa dollar', *kayd* (pl. *kəyūd*) 'rope', *kawb* (pl. *kəlōb*) 'dog, wolf', *nēhər* (pl. *nīhār*) 'wadi', *sēkən* (pl. *səkōn*) 'community', *śab* (pl. *śəbōb*) 'youth', *tōgər* (pl. *təgēr*) 'merchant, rich man',¹⁴ *warx* (pl. *wōrəx*) 'month', *xəṣm* (pl. *xəṣawm*) 'enemy', *zayga* (pl. *zīgē*) 'pen, enclosure'

Type 3: Internal plurals with pattern replacement and an infixed *w*.

Examples include: *'ātər* (pl. *'ātōwər*) 'perfume', *faṭx* (pl. *fəṭōwəx*) 'hit, blow', *mərkēb* (pl. *mərawkəb*) 'ship', *məsmər* (pl. *məsawmər*) 'nail', *məxbāṭ* (pl. *məxawbəṭ*) 'cartridge', *nēḏər* (pl. *nəḏōwər*) 'vow', *xəlēk* (pl. *xəlōwək*) 'cloth, dress (pl. clothes)', *xōtəm* (pl. *xəṭōwəm*) 'ring'

Type 4: Marked feminine singulars with internal, unmarked feminine plurals (some with infixed *y*).

¹⁴ The word *tōgər* also has a plural form *təgərēt*. It is unclear if *təgēr* and *təgərēt* are really free variants. *Tōgər* can also function as an adjective meaning 'rich', and it seems that *təgərēt* may be used for the adjective plural (e.g., 65:8), and *təgēr* for the noun plural (e.g., 4:1).

Examples include: *bahlīt* (pl. *bāhēl*) ‘word’, *bākārēt* (pl. *bākār*) ‘cow’, *dəgərīt* (pl. *dēgər*) ‘bean’, *gəzayrət* (pl. *gəzōyər*) ‘island’, *hərmayt* (pl. *hərōm*) ‘tree’, *jənbəyyət* (pl. *jənōbi*) ‘dagger’, *qəbaylāt* (pl. *qəbōyāl*) ‘tribe’, *nōbēt* (pl. *nəwēb*) ‘bee’, *rəhbēt* (pl. *rəhōyəb*) ‘town’, *rēšīt* (pl. *rīyēs*) ‘snake’, *saḥrət* (pl. *səwēḥər*) ‘witch’, *ṣəfəriyət* (pl. *ṣəfōri*) ‘pot’, *wəhnət* (pl. *wəhōyən*) ‘shoulder blade’, *xəwfēt* (pl. *xəlōyāf*) ‘window’

Type 5: Internal plurals with suffixed *-t* (some with infix *w* or *y*).

These are usually masculine nouns, including: *hērək* (pl. *hərawkət*) ‘thief’, *ḥōkəm* (pl. *ḥākōmāt*) ‘ruler’, *qəbayn* (pl. *qəbawnāt*) ‘scorpion’, *mālēk* (pl. *məlaykət*) ‘angel’,¹⁵ *rībay* (pl. *ərbāt*) ‘companion’, *əskayn* (pl. *əskawnāt*) ‘knife’, *əškay* (pl. *əškayyāt*) ‘sword’, *xōdəm* (pl. *xəddōmāt*) ‘worker, servant’, *zayr* (pl. *zəyawrāt*) ‘jar’

A feminine example is: *məndawk* (pl. *mənadkət*) ‘rifle’

Certain nouns can be classed as irregular, either because their plural is formed from a different base (see §4.3 for examples) or because the base is phonologically altered in the plural. Examples fitting the latter category are *ḥəbrē* (pl. *ḥəbōn*) ‘son’, *ḡa* (pl. *ḡayw*) ‘brother’, *tēt* (pl. *yənīt*) ‘woman’, and *wōrəm* (pl. *ʾayrəm*) ‘road’. On the similarly irregular plural bases of ‘daughter’ and ‘sister’, see §4.3.2.

4.4. Definite Article

The existence of a definite article in Mehri was for a long time not recognized, because Mehri dialects differ with regard to this feature. It is safe to say, however, that a definite article exists in the Omani dialect of Mehri.¹⁶ The form of the definite article is normally a prefixed *a-* (occasionally transcribed *ə-*), but with some words the article is a prefixed *ḥ-* or *h-*. Data on the article are complicated by the inconsistent transcription of Johnstone’s texts, and by the fact that many words

¹⁵ The *ML* (p. 266) lists a plural *məlōkət*, but in the texts (4:9), we find *məlaykət*, which is confirmed by the audio. It is unclear if *mālēk* ‘king’ has a different plural than *mālēk* ‘angel’.

¹⁶ The definite article in Mehri was only first suggested (tentatively) by Thomas (1937: 243), who was the first to collect data on Omani Mehri. Johnstone (1970a) published the real description of the definite article in Mehri, and Sima (2002a) is an important study on the same topic.

cannot take a definite article at all. The rules governing the shape of the article (or its non-appearance) are not hard and fast, and for a number of words the definite form is lexical; that is, the definite form of many words must be learned individually. Nevertheless, we can formulate some general rules. For the article *a-*, we can observe the following:

- a. The definite article *a-* is found before the consonants *b, d, ḏ, ḑ, g, ġ, j, k, l, m, n, r, s, š, t, w, y, z*, and *ž* (voiced and glottalic consonants), though not all nouns beginning with these consonants take the article *a-*. Examples are *bayt* ‘house’ (def. *abayt*), *dabh* ‘honey’ (def. *adabh*), *ḏabbēt* ‘flies’ (def. *aḏabbēt*), *ḏawma* ‘thirst’ (def. *aḏawma*), *gəzayrət* ‘island’ (def. *agzayrət*), *ğayg* ‘man’ (def. *ağayg*), *jənbəyyət* ‘dagger’ (def. *ajənbəyyət*), *kā* ‘place’ (def. *akā*), *lang* ‘launch’ (def. *alang*), *məkōn* ‘place’ (def. *amkōn*), *nəhōr* ‘day’ (def. *anhōr*), *rībay* ‘companion’ (def. *arībay*), *šadk* ‘truth’ (def. *ašadk*), *šōbā* ‘fingers’ (def. *ašōbā*), *tāba* ‘manners’ (def. *aṭāba*), *wərēk* ‘papers’ (def. *awrēk*), *yəğrayb* ‘raven, crow’ (def. *ayəğrayb*), *zənbīl* ‘basket’ (def. *azənbīl*), *žayga* ‘pen’ (def. *ažayga*).
- b. The definite article *a-* is also used with nouns beginning with *ʾ*, though only when the *ʾ* derives from etymological *ʿ*. The appearance of the article is inconsistent. For example, we find *ʾāšər* ‘night’ (def. *aʾāšər* or *ʾāšər* ‘night’), and *ʾāysē* (def. *aʾāysē* or *ʾāysē*). Further research is needed to see how much of this inconsistency is due to the transcription.¹⁷
- c. The definite article *a-* usually does not occur (or, one could say it has the shape *Ø*) before the consonants *f, h, ḥ, k, s, š, t, ṭ*, and *x* (voiceless, non-glottalic consonants).

It should be pointed out that the vowel *a* is often deleted in the syllable following the definite article *a-*. For example:

bəḵār ‘cattle’ → def. *abḵār*
gəzáyrət ‘island’ → def. *agzáyrət*

¹⁷ There is some inconsistency with words beginning with other consonants as well, but this is usually a matter of transcription. For example, we find *nəhōr xəwfit* ‘the next day’ in 22:48, but *anhōr xəwfit* in 30:8; on the audio both passages are read with *anhōr*. Similarly, we find *anhōr ḏə-gəmət* ‘Friday’ in 85:4, but *nəhōr ḏə-gəmət* in 85:10; again, both are read *anhōr* on the audio. In the Appendix, I do not always indicate these inconsistencies, but I do indicate clear mistakes like *ğayg* ‘man’ for *ağayg* ‘the man’ in 22:8.

nəhōr ‘day’ → def. *anhōr*
wərēk ‘papers’ → def. *awrēk*

But not:

mənēdām ‘human being’ → def. *amənēdām*
məwsē ‘rain’ → def. *aməwsē*
ḵarawš ‘money’ → def. *aḵarawš*

Clusters of three consonants do not seem to be tolerated, though sometimes the transcription suggests otherwise. For example, we find *məsgēd* ‘mosque’ → def. *amsgēd* (4:13), but the audio confirms that this is pronounced *aməsgēd*. Similarly, we find *kəswēt* → def. *akswēt* (38:8, audio *aksəwēt*), and *wərḵāt* ‘note, paper’ → def. *awrḵāt* (85:17, audio *awərḵāt*; cf. 85:18).

The articles that have the shape *h(ə)-* or *hə-* are far more complicated. For several nouns, especially those with etymological initial ʾ, an initial *h(ə)* has become part of the base of the noun, rather than simply the article. This includes the words *ḥayb* ‘father’, *ḥām* ‘mother’, *ḥəbrē* ‘son’ (but construct *bər*; see §4.6),¹⁸ *ḥōtəl* ‘tamarisk’, *ḥəllay* ‘night’, *ḥəyḏēn* ‘ear’, and *ḥayməl* ‘right’, each of which can be either indefinite or definite. This initial *h-* of these words may stem from a sound change affecting initial ʾ, a change which is seen elsewhere, in words like *ḥō* ‘where’ (< *ʾān; cf. Hebrew ʾān ‘where?’) and *ḥāwəlay* ‘first’ (cf. Arabic ʾawwal). In words like *ḥayb* ‘father’, *ḥām* ‘mother’, and *ḥəbrē* ‘son’, therefore, it is not correct to think of the prefix *h(ə)-* as the definite article, since it does not have this specific function with these words.

A definite article *h(ə)-* or *hə-* does appear, however, on a good number of words. Let us begin with the more common article *h(ə)-*, which is found on words whose initial consonants (synchronically-speaking) include ʾ, *b*, *d*, *f*, *g*, *l*, *m*, *n*, *r*, *s*, *w*, and *y*. Examples are: ʾarnayb ‘hare’ (def. *ḥarnayb*), *bū* ‘people’ (def. *ḥābū*), *brīt* ‘daughter’ (def. *ḥəbrīt*), *dīd* ‘uncle’ (def. *ḥədīd*), *fəroḵ* ‘flocks, camps’ (def. *ḥəfroḵ*), *gōr* ‘slave’ (def. *ḥāgōr*), *mōh* ‘water’ (def. *ḥəməh*), *nōb* ‘big (f.)’ (def. *ḥənōb*), *nīd*

¹⁸ Though ʾ is not strictly etymological in the noun *ḥəbrē*, we might assume an initial prosthetic syllable, as in Arabic ʾibn. Or, perhaps the initial *ḥəbrē* is analogical, as I suggest for *ḥədīd* and *ḥədīt* below. The plural *ḥəbōn* has an indefinite form *bōn*, though the form *ḥəbōn* is also used as an indefinite (cf. 7:3).

‘(water-)skin’ (def. *ḥanīd*), *nōf* ‘self’ (def. *ḥanōf*-),¹⁹ *rīt* ‘moon’ (def. *ḥārīt*), *rōh* ‘head’ (def. *ḥārōh*), *rawn* ‘goats’ (def. *ḥārawn*), *sālōb* ‘arms, weapons’ (def. *ḥāslōb*), *wōdi* ‘valley’ (def. *ḥawōdi*), *wōz* ‘goat(s)’ (def. *ḥōz*), *wōrām* ‘road, way’ (def. *ḥōrām*), *yūm* ‘days’ (def. *ḥayūm*), *yānīt* ‘women’ (def. *ḥaynīt*).

Many of the nouns with the definite article *h(ə)*- have an etymological initial *ʾ*, which is sometimes reflected in the long *ā* of the definite article *ḥā*-. For example, *bū* is probably from the same root **b* ‘father’; *gōr* is cognate with Arabic *ʾajir* and Akkadian *agru* ‘laborer’; *rīt* is probably cognate with Hebrew *ʾor* ‘light’; *rawn* is cognate with Syriac *ʾarnā* ‘mountain goat’; and *yānīt* is cognate with Syriac *ʾa(n)tātā* and Hebrew *ʾiššā* ‘woman’, as well as with Arabic *ʾuntā* ‘female’. Definite plurals like *ḥāfrōk* ‘flocks, camps’ (sg. *fark*) and *ḥāgdōl* ‘feet’ (sg. *gēdāl*), and *ḥāslōb* ‘arms, weapons’ (sg. *sālēb*) must reflect a broken plural pattern **aCCaC*.

Many nouns with initial *y*, like as in *yūm*, also take a definite article *ḥV*.²⁰ Others, like *mōh*, *rōh*, *nōb*, *nōf*-, and *wōz* do not have etymological initial *ʾ* or *y*, but they do each have the pattern *CōC*, so perhaps some analogy took place with words of this pattern.²¹ The noun *wōdi* may also fit with these nouns, since the pattern is nearly identical. The noun *nīd* may also belong here; its plural is *nōd*, so presumably this attracted the article *h(ə)*-, which then spread to the singular. Nouns like *brīt*, *dīd*, and *dīt* (def. *ḥādīt*) perhaps take the article *ḥə*- on analogy with other kinship terms like *ḥayb* and *ḥām*. So, the appearance of an article *h(ə)*- can be explained in most cases, though it cannot necessarily be predicted.

In some cases, the prefix *hV*- is reinterpreted as part of the base (i.e., not as a definite article), mirroring the words *ḥayb* ‘father’, *ḥām* ‘mother’, and *ḥābrē* ‘son’. For example, *ḥāmbərawtən* is the definite form of *əmbərawtən* ‘boys’, and both forms occur in the texts. However, in one place we find *ḥāmbərawtən* used with a numeral, after which an

¹⁹ The form *ḥanōf*- only occurs with suffixes, and so always appears as definite within the texts; see further in §3.6. *Nōf* is to be connected with Arabic *naḥs* ‘soul; self’.

²⁰ Some nouns with initial *y*- vary by dialect, and even Johnstone’s own data are inconsistent on occasion. For example, for *yātīm* ‘orphan’ (pl. *yātōm*), the *ML* lists the definite forms *ḥaytīm* and *ḥaytōm*. But in the texts we find the definite plural form *aytōm* (16:2), as well as the definite fs *aytāmūt* (32:11). See further in Sima (2002a).

²¹ *Wōz* is listed in the *ML* under the root *ʾwz*, but must be connected etymologically with Arabic *ʾanz*, Hebrew *ʿēz*, etc. It is possible that this word is being treated as if its first root letter were *ʾ* < **z*, or that the article *h*- is a result of the pattern *CōC*, as I suggest above.

indefinite noun is required (§9.1). The passage is *šāṭayt ḥambərawtən* ‘3 boys’ (84:1); cf. expected *šāṭayt əmbərawtən* (91:1). However, based on the audio, which is not totally clear, there is a good chance that *ḥambərawtən* is simply a faulty transcription in 84:1, and that *əmbərawtən* is correct. We also find *ḥōrəm ṭayt* ‘one way’ (62:4), in both the text and the audio, where the definite form *ḥōrəm* can only be analyzed as indefinite.²² The indefinite form *wōrəm* does occur elsewhere in Johnstone’s texts. As noted above (n. 18), definite *ḥəbōn* appears in place of the expected indefinite form *bōn* in 7:3. It should be mentioned that the *ML* gives a form *’ēm* ‘mother’ as the indefinite of *ḥām*, but Johnstone indicates that it is very rare (it is not in the texts).

The article *hə-* (var. *ha-*) is much less common than *h(ə)-*, occurring with a few words, all of them plural. The most commonly met words with *hə-* are *bēr* ‘camels’ (def. *ḥəbēr*) and *ərbāt* ‘companions’ (def. *ḥərbāt*). Analysis of the article *hə-* is complicated by the fact that the data are not so clear. For example, the definite form of the noun *səlōb* ‘weapons’ is attested in the texts in the form *ḥəsəlābhē* ‘his weapons’ (48:26). In the *ML*, no plural is given for the singular (collective) form *səlēb*, but in the *HL* the Mehri plural is given as *hə-slōb*. The audio for 48:26 is inconclusive, since word-initial *h* and *ḥ* are often hard to distinguish. Another difficult case is the plural of *səkən* ‘community’, *səkōn*, whose definite is attested in the texts with both *ḥa-* and *ha-*, e.g., *ḥaskənihəm* ‘their communities’ (76:4; 76:13) and *haskənihəm* ‘their communities’ (72:6). Audio *seems* to confirm each of these, though, again, *ḥa-* and *ha-* are very hard to distinguish on the audio.²³ We also find in the texts a definite plural form *həsḥōb* ‘youths’ (sg. *ṣab*, 42:47). The *ML* and *HL* also give the form *həsḥōb*, though the audio attests *həsḥōb*. So, although the data are not consistent, we have three possible plurals with *hə-*, each with initial voiceless fricatives (*s* or *ṣ*) and each with the same vocalic pattern: *həsḥōb*, *həsḥōb*, and *həskōn*. Perhaps *ha-/hə-* occurs as a variant of *ḥa/ḥə* before some voiceless fricatives in plurals of this pattern? But this still would not explain the *hə-* of *ḥəbēr* and *ḥərbāt*.

It should be pointed out that the article *hV-* or *hV-* may not appear on all forms of a noun. For example, *səkən* ‘settlement, community’ has no definite article in the singular but the plural is *həskōn* (or

²² See Appendix, n. 12.

²³ The passage from 72:6 is also cited in the *ML* (p. 346), with the transcription *həskənihəm*. We also find initial *hə-* in 35:22 (*həskənihi*) and 91:1 (*həskənyən*) where again the audio has *ḥa-* or *ha-*. The *ML* (p. 346) also lists the definite form as *həskōn*.

ḥaskōn, see above); *rībay* ‘companion’ has the definite form *arībay*, but plural is *arbat* (def. *ḥarbat*).

Finally, as already discussed (§3.2.1), the definite form of the noun is the form to which possessive suffixes must be attached, for example:

ḡayt ‘sister’ → *aḡayti* ‘my sister’
ḵādār ‘pot’ → *aḵādārək* ‘your pot’
rībay ‘companion’ → *arībēkəm* ‘your companion’
wōz ‘goats’ → *ḥazyən* ‘our goats’
rōh ‘head’ → *ḥarōhi* ‘my head’

4.5. Diminutives

There are several patterns for forming diminutive nouns in Mehri, though overall diminutives are rather rare. There are less than a dozen different diminutive nouns attested in Johnstone’s texts. The attested forms are:

’ākērāmōt ‘little pelvis’, dimin. of *’ākarmōt* ‘pelvis’ (88:9)
’āwāddōt ‘small (amount of?) sardines’, dimin. of *’āydēt* ‘sardine’ (45:8)
ḡayḡgīn ‘boy’, dimin. of *ḡayg* ‘man’ (8:4)
ḥarmēyēn ‘bushes’, dimin. of *ḥarōm* ‘tree(s)’ (26:4)
kārāmōt ‘hill, little mountain’, dimin. of *karmaym* ‘mountain’ (88:9; 94:41)
rəḥbānōt ‘little place’, dimin. of *rəḥbēt* ‘place’ (60:3)
rəḥmānōt ‘little vegetation’, dimin. of *rəḥmēt* ‘vegetation; rain’ (30:1)
śawēḥar ‘new moon; first part of the first crescent of the moon’, dimin. of *śēḥar* ‘first crescent of the moon’ (82:1)
sāwānōt ‘little while’, dimin. of *sēt* ‘long period of time’ (18:6; 36:21; 94:19)
wəḵētēn ‘little time’, dimin. of *wəḵt* ‘time’ (81:4)
xādmēnōt ‘little job’, dimin. of *xādmēt* ‘work, job’ (57:4)

Note also the diminutive adjective *rəwāḥāk* ‘a little ways away’ (83:3, dimin. of *rēḥək* ‘far’). This small set of forms is not enough to draw any solid conclusions about the formation of diminutives in Mehri. We can simply note some features that apply to two or more forms, such as the use of the suffixes *-ōt* and *-ānōt* (var. *-ēnōt*) and the infixation of

w between the first and second root consonants. For further on diminutives in Mehri and other MSA languages, the reader should consult Johnstone (1973).

4.6. Construct State

The construct state, a characteristic feature of the Semitic language family, has all but disappeared from Mehri, which instead makes use of the particle *ǧ-* to express a genitive relationship (see §12.4).²⁴ However, remnants of the older construction survive with a handful of words, usually with a limited semantic function. In some cases a unique construct form of the noun is preserved. These are:

bər (cstr. pl. *bəni* or *bən*) ‘son of’; *bərt* ‘daughter of’: These constructs are limited to two main functions. The first is in conjunction with proper names. In Johnstone’s texts, names are almost always substituted by the generic word *fəlān* ‘so-and-so’, as in *hō bər (bərt) fəlān* ‘I am the son (daughter) of so-and-so’. The second use is with the compound family words *bər dīd* ‘cousin’ (lit. ‘son of an uncle’), *bər gā* ‘nephew’ (lit. ‘son of a brother’), and their feminine equivalents.

bət ‘house of’: This is restricted to the sense of ‘clan, familial line’, and is not used when referring to possession of an actual house (which would be expressed as *abayt ǧ-*).

bāl (cstr. pl. *bə’ēli*; f. *bālīt*): This is the most productive of the construct forms. It is often used in constructions involving professions, e.g., *bālrawn* ‘goat-herder’ (f. *bālītrawn*, pl. *bə’ēlirawn*), *bāl bēr* ‘camel-herder’, *bāl bəkār* ‘cow-herder’, *bə’ēli ǧhfōy* ‘herder of suckling mother-camels’, *bāl ’āyś* ‘rice merchant’, and *bāl kəs-wēt* ‘clothing merchant’. The construct is also productive in the meaning of ‘owner of’, as in *bāl kəhwēt* ‘coffee seller’ (also *bāl məkəhōyət*), *bāl hawri* ‘owner of the canoe’, *bāl səyyārəh* ‘(taxi-car) driver’, and *bə’ēli abdən* ‘the *beden* (boat) owners’; and in the meaning ‘people of’, as in *bə’ēli arḥəbēt* ‘the people of the town’, *bə’ēli šarḥ* ‘party-goers’, and *bə’ēli aǧəbəl* ‘the people of the mountains’. Note also the more idiomatic *bāl xayr* ‘a well-off

²⁴ Watson (2009) is an important study of the construct state and other genitive constructions in Yemeni Mehri.

person' (47:12), *bə'ēli aṭāba aḳōmāḥ* 'those with bad manners' (29:5), and *bāl ḥəməḥ* 'the one (cup) with water in it' (22:60).²⁵

In addition, a construct phrase is sometimes used in phrases involving quantities (partitives), most commonly with *'aynət* 'a little (bit)' (see also §5.5.1). Examples are:

'aynət 'ātərēt 'a little buttermilk' (35:2)

'aynət tōmər 'a little bit of date' (75:3) (Stroomer: 'a single date')

'aynət təmbōku 'a little tobacco' (94:33)

fiḡōn ḳəhwēt 'a cup of coffee' (18:12)

ḳālēw šxōf 'a bucket of milk' (63:16)

xayməḥ rīkōb ḳawt 'five camel-loads of food' (65:15)

rīkēbi ṭrayt ḳawt 'two camel-loads of food' (98:13)

As elsewhere in Semitic, only the second member of a construct phrase can take the definite article, for example:

bālrawn 'a goat-herder' → def. *bāl ḥārawn* 'the goat-herder'

bə'ēli bəḳār 'cow-herders' → def. *bə'ēli abḳār* 'the cow-herders'

²⁵ The feminine *bālīt* is also used in the noun phrase *bālīt aḳāma* 'flintlock' (64:9). In the *ML* (and *HL*), *ḳāma* is glossed as 'percussion cap'. Presumably the feminine *bālīt* is used because *məndawḳ* 'rifle' is a feminine noun.

CHAPTER FIVE

ADJECTIVES

5.1. Agreement

Adjectives can be used attributively (as in ‘the good boy’) or predicatively (as in ‘the boy is good’). In either case, a Mehri adjective will always agree in gender and number with the noun it modifies (with the exception of duals; see below). When used attributively, an adjective will also agree with the noun in definiteness. Adjectives follow the same rules as nouns when it comes to the appearance of the definite article (§4.4). Attributive adjectives follow the noun. Following are some examples:

Attributive adjectives:

- hēt ġayg ħaywəl* ‘you are a crazy man’ (98:7)
hēt tēt ħawəlēt ‘you are a crazy woman’ (98:8)
watxəfəm b-wōdi nōb ‘they arrived at night in a big valley’ (42:15)
ħəbrətk ħənōb ‘your big (older) daughter’ (97:34)
wbaysi bə-xəlōwək yədōn ‘put on new clothes’ (24:6)
wə-kō hēt ǧələmk aǧiggēn fəḵayr ‘why did you wrong the poor boy?’ (36:34)
šəndərk ǧ-əl-həwfək aḵayǧ amhaḵbəl ‘I vow I will pay you next summer’ (lit. ‘the coming summer’) (39:16)
aǧay sōx bə-ḵəṭar ‘my big (older) brother was in Qatar’ (34:20)

Predicate adjectives:

- ħaybi fəḵayr* ‘my father was poor’ (34:4)
əttēt rəḥaymət ‘the woman was beautiful’ (38:11)
aǧəǧənōt bərs nōb ‘the girl was already big’ (24:5)
aǧiggēn ḵəway wə-xəfayf ‘the boy was strong and quick’ (42:2)
aməndawḵək dəwaylət ‘your rifle is old’ (39:3)
hēt šəḥ ‘you (m.) are alive’ (20:58)
hēt məsəwmēt ‘you (f.) are Muslim’ (54:14)

The examples *ġayg ħaywəl* ‘a crazy man’ (98:7) and *ħaybi fəḵayr* ‘my father was poor’ (34:4), which could be translated elsewhere as ‘a man is crazy’ and ‘my poor father’, show that attributives and predicatives are not always distinguishable out of context.

The one exception to the agreement rule is a noun in the dual. Adjectives have only singular and plural forms, so a dual noun is modified by a plural adjective, for example:

ṣawri trayt təlōfəf ‘two flat stones’ (71A:1)

An adjective modifying the first member of a genitive phrase (see §12.4) will follow the entire phrase. Whether an adjective in such a position modifies the first or second member of the phrase, if not clear from gender/number agreement, must be gleaned from context. Examples are:

ħabrīt ḏ-aṣəyyōd ħənōb ‘the old(er) daughter of the fisherman’ (97:33)

ħabrē ḏə-ħōkəm aḵənnawn ‘the small (younger) son of the ruler’ (97:46)

ħayb ḏ-aġġgēn amərayz ‘the father of the sick boy’ (65:8)

In the first example above, the adjective *ħənōb* is feminine and so must modify *ħabrīt*. But in the other two examples, the adjective agrees in gender and number with either noun. If context allowed it, these last two sentences could be translated instead as ‘the son of the young ruler’ and ‘the sick father of the boy’.

5.2. Declension

Adjectives normally have separate forms for masculine and feminine, though some (e.g., *rēhəḵ* ‘far’) have only a common singular form. For those with a distinct feminine form, the feminine will end in either *-ət*, *-īt* (*-ēt*), *-ūt*, or *-t*, (with *-ət* and *-īt* being more common), but the choice of ending is often unpredictable.

Adjectives behave like nouns when it comes to forming plurals, in the sense that one finds plurals of both the internal and external type. Adjective plurals are somewhat more predictable than noun plurals, however. In addition, external plurals are more common with adjectives than they are among nouns. Despite their similarity to nouns,

adjectives need to be treated separately because of the variability one finds in the treatment of gender. For just as some adjectives have a common singular form (that is, one form for both masculine or feminine), so too some adjectives have a common form in the plural. This is not always predictable, since an adjective that distinguishes gender in the singular does not necessarily do so in the plural. We can divide adjectives into four classes, based on the level of gender and number distinction:

Type 1: All genders and numbers distinct.

Examples: *kōmāh* 'bad, evil', fs *kāmḥət*, mp *kāmḥīn*, fp *kāmḥōt*
rəḥaym 'beautiful', fs *rəḥaymət*, mp *riḥōm*, fp *rəḥamtən*

This includes adjectives of the common pattern *CəCayC*: *bəray* 'free (of debt); innocent', *bəxayl* 'mean', *dəwayl* 'worn out', *dəxayl* 'forsworn', *ḏəray* 'strange', *fəḳayr* 'poor',¹ *ḡəlayḏ* 'fat', *ḡərayb* 'strange', *ḡəzayr* 'deep', *ḥəmayg* 'stupid', *ḥəsaym* 'respectable', *kəraym* 'generous', *ḳəṣayr* 'short, low', *ḳəway* 'strong', *mərayz* 'sick', *nəgays* 'unclean', *nəḳayd* 'unpleasant',² *nəḳay* 'innocent', *rəḥaym* 'beautiful; kind', *rəxays* 'cheap', *səmayḥ* 'flat', *śədayd* 'tough; tiresome', *təḥayr* 'pure', *təḳayl* 'heavy',³ *ṭəray* 'fresh, damp', *ṭəwayl* 'long', *xəfayf* 'light; quick', *xəlay* 'unmarried; empty-handed', *zəḥayb* 'prepared'

Adjectives ending in *-áy* (many of which refer to a cultural group):
'ənsay 'human', *'āmḳay* 'middle', *'ārəbay* 'Arab', *fəḡəśay* 'well-stocked in milk', *ḡənnay* 'jinnie', *ḥənday* 'Indian', *ḥəbəsay* 'Ethiopian', *ḥərsay* 'Ḥarsusi', *ḥāwəlay* 'ancient; former', *məḥray* 'Mehri'

Adjectives of the pattern *CəCēC* (several of which refer to a physical defect; vars. *CəCāG*, *'āCēC*): *'āḡēm* 'dumb', *dəḳēm* 'blunt', *ḏəlā*

¹ In the *ML* (p. 92), the fs form is given as *fəḳayr*, identical to the ms form. This is almost certainly a mistake. Jahn (1902: 177) lists a distinct fs form for Yemeni Mehri. The *HL* (p. 32) also lists a distinct fs form for Ḥarsusi.

² In the *ML* (p. 294), no mp form is given. This is presumably just an oversight. The fp form does occur in the texts (87:4).

³ In the *ML* (p. 416), the fs form is given as *təḳayl*, identical to the ms form (cf. n. 1, above). This is certainly a mistake, and I found a distinct fs form (*təḳlāt*) recorded in some of Johnstone's handwritten notes (kindly loaned to me by A. Lonnet). Jahn (1902: 231) also lists a distinct fs form for Yemeni Mehri, as does Nakano (1986: 149).

‘crippled’, *fəṭā* ‘naked’, *ʃənēw* ‘deaf’, *śəḥāḥ* ‘sharp’, *təfəl* ‘lame’, *xərəs* ‘gap-toothed’, *xəṭēm* ‘weak, sickly’ (exception: *ʾāwēr* ‘blind’; see Type 2)

Adjectives of the pattern *CōCəC* (vars. *CōCi*, *CōCa*): *ʾōkəl* ‘wise’, *fōsəl* ‘lazy’, *gōli* ‘expensive’, *kōməḥ* ‘bad, evil’, *kōsi* ‘cruel’, *šōfi* ‘pure, clear’, *šōga* ‘brave’

Adjectives of the pattern *məCCiC* (var. *məCCayC*): mainly passive participles (see §7.1.8), but also others, like *məskayn* ‘poor fellow’

And others: *ʾāgəz* ‘lazy’, *baydi* ‘untruthful, lying’, *ḥaywəl* ‘crazy’, *ḳayša* ‘dry’, *əlyōn* ‘soft’, *məslaym* ‘Muslim’,⁴ *sēḥəl* ‘easy’, *ṣəḥ* ‘alive, healthy’, *yəḍīn* ‘new’

It must be pointed out that adjectives of the same ms pattern do not necessarily have the same feminine and plural forms. For example, most of the adjectives of the common pattern *CəCayC* have fs forms of the shape *CəCayCət* (e.g., *bəxaylāt*, *kəraymāt*, *rəḥaymāt*, *śədaydāt*), but from *ḥəmayg*, we find fs *ḥəmgīt*, and from *xəfayf*, fs *xəfəft*. Most adjectives of this same pattern have mp forms of the shape *CiCōC* (e.g., *bīxōl*, *kīrōm*, *rīḥōm*, *śīdōd*), but from *dəxayl*, we find mp *dəxələ*,⁵ and from *mərayz*, mp *mərwōz*.⁵

Type 2: Gender distinction in the singular, but common gender in the plural.

Example: *gīd* ‘good’, f. *gódāt*, cp. *gīyēd*

This includes basic color words: *ʾōfər* ‘red, brown’, *ḥəzawr* ‘green, yellow’, *ḥōwər* ‘black’, *əwbōn* ‘white’

And others: *ʾāwēr* ‘blind’, *gīd* ‘good’, *gāḥər* ‘other, another’, *məšēgər* ‘second, other’, *mətalli* ‘other, second; later’

⁴ I do not consider this a passive participle in Mehri, since it is a borrowing from Arabic, and since it does not behave exactly like a passive participle. The fs form is *məsəwmēt*, while passive participles normally have fs forms ending in *-ōt*.

⁵ Most of the fs and mp forms discussed in this paragraph are taken from the *ML*, not from the texts.

Type 3: Singular and plural are distinct, but both with common gender.

Example: *təwfif* ‘flat’, cp. *təlōfəf*

Besides *təwfif*, there are no certain examples of this type. We find in the *ML* words like *məgrayb* ‘well-known’, *məshayr* ‘famous’, and *məṣwīb* ‘wounded’, with no fs, and only a single plural form given (in these cases, all of the shape *məCCōC*). But these are passive participles, which normally decline for gender in both singular and plural (see §7.1.8). It is possible that some of these are gender specific (see below), or, more likely, that the lexicon entry is just incomplete.

Also included (by default) in this category of adjectives that have a single form for both singular and plural are those few adjectives that are used only with masculine or feminine nouns. Those that are used only with feminine nouns usually lack a feminine marker.

Feminine only: *ʾāgawz* ‘old’ (of people only),⁶ *dənyēt* ‘pregnant’, *mədṇay* ‘heavily pregnant’, *nōb* ‘big’

Masculine only: *hēxər* ‘old’ (of people only),⁷ *šōx* ‘big’

Most interesting in this latter category is the fact that adjectives for ‘big’ are gender specific, as are the adjectives for ‘old’ (of people).⁸

Type 4: No inflection at all (one form for all genders and numbers).

Example: *rēhək* ‘far, distant’ (cs and cp)

Others: *kərayb* ‘near’, *kāṣəm* ‘cold’, *maṭk* ‘sweet’, *ṣāfər* ‘yellow, green’, *wəṭyō* ‘inadequate, in poor condition’, *xəlē* ‘empty, alone’

Most of the adjectives in this category are nominal in origin. Cf. *kāṣəm* ‘coldness’, *ṣāfər* ‘brass’, and *xəlē* ‘desert’.

A final note on declension in general: The type of gender marking exhibited by an adjective is no indication of whether or not one finds

⁶ This is probably nominal in origin, as it is most often used alone as a noun, ‘old woman’, but its adjectival use can be seen in *hāmēh ʾāgawz* ‘his old mother’ (65:9).

⁷ Like *ʾāgawz*, *hēxər* is normally used as a noun, ‘old man’. Its adjectival use can be seen in *haybəh hēxər* ‘his old father’ (64:6).

⁸ For inanimate things, one can use the adjective *dəwayl* ‘old, worn out’ for either gender. Interestingly, Yemeni Mehri has feminine forms of *šōx*, namely, fs *šaxt* (e.g., Sima 2009: 230, text 45:1) and fp *šiyaxtan* (e.g., Sima 2009: 84, text 9:3).

an internal or external plural. So, for example, both *kōmāḥ* and *ḥaywəl* are classed as Type 1, yet the former has an external masculine plural and the latter has an internal one.

5.3. Substantivation

An adjective can also be used on its own, functioning as a noun. A substantivized adjective can refer to a person, a thing, or an abstract concept:

ʾāmōr aḱənnawn ... tōli kəlūt šōx ‘the young one said ... then the elder one said’ (74:15)

yāmərəm aməhrē ‘the Mehri sing (well)’ (84:5)

šīnək ḥəwrūt ǧār aḱōbər ‘I saw something black at the grave’ (54:9)

kāl tāt yāgōb yəǧrēb aǧīd mən aḱōmāḥ ‘everyone wants to know the good from the bad’ (73:12)

wərawd ḥəmoh ǧəkəmāḥ šōx wə-ḱənnawn ‘(both) young and old have gone down to that water’ (95:11)

fər ʾōfər ‘the brown one jumped’ (37:15)

The numeral *tāt* ‘one’ can also be used with adjectives as in English:

tāt ḥaywəl ‘a madman’ (lit. ‘a crazy one’) (60:10)

tāt ʾōfər u tāt ḥōwər u tāt əwbōn ‘a brown one, a black one, and a white one’ (37:14)

Just as adjectives can behave as nouns, so too can nouns look like adjectives. A noun can be used in apposition to another noun (or noun phrase), with the result that it looks like an attributive adjective. For example:

aǧayg aḱayf ‘the guest’ (22:62)

aǧəyōg aḱīfōn ‘the guests’ (4:3)

aǧəyōg adəllōlāt ‘the guides’ (60:8)

tēt saḥrət ‘a sorceress’ (6:9)

aǧəgənōt aytəmūt ‘the orphan girl’ (32:11)

wōz tərḱāz ‘a spotted goat’ (25:13)

ǧayg bāl xayr ‘a well-off man’ (47:12)

In each of the above examples, the first word of each phrase is seemingly superfluous.

5.4. Comparatives

Comparative forms are quite rare in Johnstone's texts. Several of the attested comparatives have the shape *əCCāl* (vars. *əCCēC*, *aCCāC*), namely:

əkṭēr 'more' (99:28; 103:2) (see §13.2.7)

əklāl 'less, smaller' (41:8)

aṭwāl 'longer' (66:7)

Other comparatives of this shape can be found in the *ML*, e.g., *əkṣām* 'colder', *əhrēk* 'hotter', and *əshēl* 'easiest'. The pattern has clearly been borrowed directly from the Arabic elative pattern *ʾaCCaC*, and many of these adjectival roots have likewise been borrowed from Arabic. However, if we compare Mehri *əklāl* with Arabic *ʾaqallu*, we see that the pattern has been generalized to cover geminate roots in Mehri.

The most frequently occurring comparative in the texts, by far, is *axayr* 'better', the comparative of *xayr* 'good'. Though the base adjective *xayr* comes from Arabic, the comparative *axayr* seems to be a Mehri innovation. In addition to the basic meaning 'better', *axayr* can also mean 'more', and can be used as an adverb 'especially' or 'mostly'. It is also attested three times in the variant form *xār*.⁹ Examples of its various meanings are:

axayr hīkəm yāqām sədəḳā 'it was better for them to be friends' (50:5)

hō axayr mənḱēm 'I am better than you' (61:8)

aṣābər axayr mən kal-šīən 'patience is better than anything' (61:9)

ḥaybi axayr mənay yōmər 'my father sings better than me' (52:2)

yəxlifək ġəyōg ḏ-axayr mənḱ 'men who are better than you will replace you' (76:5)

xār hūk təhētəm 'it's better for you to spend the night' (31:3)

nāṣāṣəh axayr mən kal-šīən 'we fear it more than anything' (7:2)

axayr āṣər ḏ-agəmēt 'mostly on Friday night' (7:7)

⁹ In each of the three attested cases (31:3; 37:18; 42:14), *xār* is followed by the preposition *h-*. However, there are also several examples of *axayr* followed by *h-* (e.g., 28:19; 50:5).

Note that comparative forms do not decline for gender or number (cf. the example above from 76:5), and that the preposition of comparison is *mən* (see §8.13).¹⁰

The data for the comparative form *(a)xass*, meaning ‘worse’ or ‘less’, are problematic. Consider the following three passages in which this word is attested, as they are printed:

yəmō əl hē axašš əlā mən əmšē ‘today is no worse than yesterday’ (26:4)

xaş ‘*aynət* ‘a little less’ (27:24)

wzəmāh šātayt dīrē ‘*xass mən aḏar*’ *ḏə-ḱənnawn* ‘he gave him (on a total of) three yards a yard short’ (66:4)

The form in 26:4 is a typographical error in Stroomer’s edition, and should read *axass*. In fact, this passage is quoted in the *ML* (p. 448) with the form *axass*. The form in 27:24 cannot be considered a simple typographical error, since this passage appears in the *ML* (p. 449) with the same form *xaş*. Perhaps this was a mistaken transcription, prompted by the initial ‘ in the following word? In the audio for this text, it does sound like the reader says *xass*. In 66:4, the one text in which we find *(a)xass* printed with non-glottalic *s*, the relevant passage is difficult. The translation given above is the one that appears in Stroomer’s edition. Another possible translation might be ‘three cubits diminished by a child’s cubit’.¹¹ To complicate matters, the *xass* is missing altogether from the audio! Without the *xass*, the passage makes much more sense:

wzəmāh šātayt dīrē ‘*mən aḏar*’ *ḏə-ḱənnawn* ‘he gave him three cubits [= forearms], (based) from the forearm of a child [i.e., a shorter cubit]’ (66:4, emended)

The form *(a)xass* (with *s*) seems secure, based on cognates from the other MSA languages (e.g., Ḥarsusi *xass* ‘worse’) and from Arabic (*xassa* ‘to lessen’). However, two of the three printed examples have *š*, and the one that does not may be a ghost form. Moreover, Jahn (1902:

¹⁰ An exception is with the noun *zōyəd* ‘more’, as in *zōyəd əl-faḱḱ* ‘more than half’ (69:6). On *zōyəd*, see §13.2.5.

¹¹ This was suggested to me by A. Lonnet.

197) lists the form *ḥaṣṣ* (= *xaṣṣ*) ‘weniger, schlechter’. Thus it is difficult to come to any secure conclusion regarding the form of this word.¹²

Finally, mention should be made here of the form *xəyōr* ‘best’. This is a noun (cf. 70:7 *xəyōrsən* ‘their best (ones)’), and it is unclear if this can ever be used as a superlative adjective.

5.5. Quantifiers

5.5.1. ‘*aynət* ‘a little’

The word ‘*aynət* means ‘a little (bit)’. It can be used on its own as a noun, or as a quantifying adjective before another noun. In this latter use, we can also describe ‘*aynət* as a noun in the construct state (see §4.6), but since the construct has essentially been lost in Mehri, it is perhaps more useful in a synchronic description to call ‘*aynət* a quantifier. All of the examples of ‘*aynət* as a quantifier from the texts are:

‘*aynət* ‘ātārēt ‘a little buttermilk’ (35:2)

‘*aynət* tōmār ‘a little bit of date’ (73:5) (Stroomer: ‘a single date’)

‘*aynət* təmbōku ‘a little tobacco’ (94:33)

5.5.2. *bāz* ‘some’

The word *bāz* (< Arabic *ba‘d*) means ‘some’, and is indeclinable. As a quantifying adjective, it occurs just a few times in the texts, always following an indefinite plural or collective noun. The attestations are:

bū *bāz* ‘some people’ (38:10)

rawn *bāz* ‘some goats’ (26:6)

xəlōwəḵ *bāz* ‘some (other) clothes’ (37:6)

Bāz can also function as a noun, either used alone or in conjunction with a definite noun. In the latter case, *bāz* is followed by partitive *mən* (§8.13). Examples are:

¹² Note that we do find alternation of *s* and *ṣ* elsewhere. For example, we find the roots *sdḵ* and *ṣdḵ*, both meaning ‘be true’. And even though according to the *ML*, the root is *sdḵ* when used as a verb, in the texts we sometimes find *ṣdḵ* (e.g., 23:3; 40:28). See also Appendix, n. 4.

bāz mən amśənyōtən ð-əktəbīn, u bāz yərayb ‘some of the soothsayers have books, and some chant while possessed’ (25:18)
bāz źərūf ‘some (of the goats) are pregnant’ (26:8)

On the use of *śī* as ‘any, some’, see §3.5.2.

5.5.3. *kāl* ‘each, every; all’

The frequent word *kāl* is used with both nouns and pronominal suffixes, and has the meanings ‘each, every’, ‘all (of)’, and ‘the whole’. Before suffixes, the base *kall-* (*kal-* or *kallə-* before the heavy 2p and 3p suffixes) is used. Preceding an indefinite singular noun, *kāl* means ‘each, every’. Examples are:

kāl wōz ‘every goat’ (3:7)
kāl sənēt ‘every year’ (32:13)
kāl ’āšər ‘every evening’ (42:17)
kāl mārēz ‘every sickness’ (65:7)
bə-kāl əmkōn ‘everywhere’ (lit. ‘in every place’) (70:2)
kāl ṭroh aw kāl śāṭayt ‘each two or each three’ (71A:1)

Following a definite singular noun, and always with a resumptive pronominal suffix, *kāl* means ‘the whole’. For example:

anhōr kalləs ‘the whole day’ (lit. ‘the day, all of it’) (10:16)
šayh kalləh ‘the whole desert’ (23:3)
xarf kalləh ‘the whole summer’ (25:5)
həyawm kalləs ‘the whole day’ (36:27)
həllaywəh kalləh ‘his whole night’ (85:27)
aḳəssēt kalləs ‘the whole story’ (91:28)

Following a definite plural noun, *kāl* means ‘all (of the)’. If the noun has a pronominal suffix, then *kāl* must have a resumptive pronominal suffix; otherwise it does not.

həziham kalləsən ‘all of their goats’ (11:2)
amōləs kalləh ‘all of her property’ (32:30)

sawēḥar kāl ‘all of the witches’ (2:8)¹³
ḥāyrēm kāl ‘all of the roads’ (23:23)
ḥabēr kāl ‘all of the camels’ (29:5)
ḥayūm kāl ‘all (of the) days’ (52:12)
ḥābū kāl ‘all of the people’ (63:1)
təgēr kāl ‘all of the merchants’ (66:10)
arḥōyab kāl ‘all countries’ (74:5)
ḥambərawtən kāl ‘all of the (other) children’ (89:20)
ḥaynīt ḏ-arḥəbēt kāl ‘all of the women of the town’ (37:11)¹⁴
bə’ēli arḥəbēt kāl ‘all the people of the town’ (97:5)

The last two examples show that if *kāl* modifies a noun in a genitive phrase (whether the particle *ḏ-* or a construct is used), *kāl* must follow the entire phrase, like any other adjective (see §5.1).

We also find *kāl*, with pronominal suffixes, used in apposition to another direct object (nominal or pronominal), meaning ‘all of’. Examples are:

ḥəbēsəm tihəm kalhəm ‘lock them all up’ (lit. ‘lock them up, all of them’) (46:17)
kəlētī lay bə-kāl-šīən kalləh ‘tell me absolutely everything’ (85:34)
ḏəbīw taywihəm kalləh ‘they roasted all of their meat’ (99:6)
ṣḥataysən kalsən ‘he slaughtered all of them’ (99:39)
’ölək bīs aṣaygət ḏəkəməh kalləs ‘he hung on it [the tree] all of that jewelry’ (99:48)

Related to the above is the use of *kāl* in apposition to the subject of a passive verb. There is one attested example of this:

kəsūt ḥārawn ḏə-səḥāṭ kalsən ‘she found that the goats had all been slaughtered’ (99:42)

Kāl is also used in several pronominal compounds. On *kāl ’əḥād* and *kāl ṭāt* ‘everyone; each one’, see §3.5.3; on *kāl-šīən* ‘everything’, see §3.5.4; and on *kāl ḏ-* ‘whoever’, see §3.8.2.

¹³ This phrase is translated in the printed edition as ‘every witch’. That this translation is incorrect is proven not only by the fact that *kāl* follows the noun, but also because the following verb *yəṣ* is feminine plural.

¹⁴ In the printed edition, the translation incorrectly reads ‘the women of the whole town’, which in Mehri would be *ḥaynīt ḏ-arḥəbēt kalləs*.

The rare construction *l-ādēd* ḏ- is synonymous with *kāl* in its meaning of ‘each, every’. It is attested only twice, in both cases followed by a plural noun:

l-ādēd ḏ-ʾāṣōr ‘every night’ (6:7)

l-ādēd ḏ-ḥəyūm ‘every day’ (17:11)

5.5.4. *mēkən* ‘a lot, many’

The word *mēkən* ‘a lot (of), many, much’ can be used as either an adjective or a noun. When used as an adjective, it follows the head noun, which can be either definite or indefinite. Examples of *mēkən* used as an adjective are:

bū mēkən ‘many people’ (54:1; 65:6) (but definite *ḥābū* in 9:7; 67:3)¹⁵

rawn mēkən ‘many goats’ (99:36)

amōl mēkən ‘a lot of property’ (34:4; 58:1)

ʾayṣē *mēkən* ‘a lot of food’ (73:11)

ḵərawš mēkən ‘a lot of money’ (86:7)

ḥīṭār mēkən ‘a lot of kids’ (89:2)

Some examples of *mēkən* used independently as a noun are:

xəṣəmḵe mēkən ‘your enemies are many’ (10:12)

yəlūtəḡ mēkən bə-škayəh ‘he killed many with his sword’ (69:7)

ḥārōsən wə-xasərən mēkən ‘we got married and have spent a lot’ (72:2)

¹⁵ The passage in 67:3 reads: *hēt ʾəmələk ḥābū mēkən raḥt*. Johnstone translates ‘you have given the people great happiness’. However, since *mēkən* everywhere else follows the noun that it modifies, a better translation is ‘you have given (lit. made) many people happiness’.

CHAPTER SIX

VERBS: STEMS

Like other Semitic languages, trilateral Mehri verbal roots appear in a variety of derived verbal stems, each characterized by particular vowel patterns and, in some cases, the addition of certain prefixed or infix elements. The basic stem is designated the G-Stem (for German *Grundstamm* ‘basic stem’), according to the conventions of Semitic linguistics. There are six derived verbal stems: the D/L-Stem, the H-Stem, two Š-Stems (which I call Š1 and Š2), and two T-Stems (which I call T1 and T2). In addition, there are also quadrilateral and quinqueliteral verbs, though these—especially the latter—are very few in number. Each verbal stem will be treated in turn below, with regard to both its form and its function.

For the verbal paradigms given in this chapter, I have had to rely a good deal on the paradigms found in Johnstone’s *ML*, though these were all checked and corrected, as much as possible, based on forms found in the texts. As for the sample verbs listed in the sections devoted to meaning, nearly all of these come from the texts themselves.

6.1. *G-Stem*

In Mehri, the G-Stem is divided into two types, an A type (Ga) and a B type (Gb). There is also an internal passive of the Ga type. The distribution of Ga and Gb verbs is often simply lexical, though in some cases the two types can be seen to have a different function. The meanings of Ga vs. Gb verbs are taken up below (§6.1.4).

6.1.1. *Ga-Stem*

The Ga-Stem is characterized by a shape *CəCūC* (often transcribed *CəCōC*) in the 3ms perfect. The 3mp perfect of the strong verb is formed by ablaut only. There are distinct imperfect and subjunctive stems. Following is the full conjugation of the Ga verb *katūb* ‘write’:

	Perfect	Imperfect	Subjunctive	Conditional
1cs	<i>kətábk</i>	<i>əkūtáb</i>	<i>l-əktēb</i>	<i>l-əktēbən</i>
2ms	<i>kətábk</i>	<i>təkūtáb</i>	<i>təktēb</i>	<i>təktēbən</i>
2fs	<i>kətábš</i>	<i>təkētáb</i>	<i>təktēbi</i>	<i>təktēbən</i>
3ms	<i>kətūb</i>	<i>yəkūtáb</i>	<i>yəktēb</i>	<i>yəktēbən</i>
3fs	<i>kətábūt</i>	<i>təkūtáb</i>	<i>təktēb</i>	<i>təktēbən</i>
1cd	<i>kətábkī</i>	<i>əkətbō</i>	<i>l-əktəbō</i>	<i>l-əktəbáyən</i>
2cd	<i>kətábkī</i>	<i>təkətbō</i>	<i>təktəbō</i>	<i>təktəbáyən</i>
3md	<i>kətbō</i>	<i>yəkətbō</i>	<i>yəktəbō</i>	<i>yəktəbáyən</i>
3fd	<i>kətbōtō</i>	<i>təkətbō</i>	<i>təktəbō</i>	<i>təktəbáyən</i>
1cp	<i>kətūbən</i>	<i>nəkūtáb</i>	<i>nəktēb</i>	<i>nəktēbən</i>
2mp	<i>kətábkəm</i>	<i>təkátbəm</i>	<i>təktēbəm</i>	<i>təktēbən</i>
2fp	<i>kətábkən</i>	<i>təkátbən</i>	<i>təktēbən</i>	<i>təktēbən</i>
3mp	<i>kətáwb</i>	<i>yəkátbəm</i>	<i>yəktēbəm</i>	<i>yəktēbən</i>
3fp	<i>kətūb</i>	<i>təkátbən</i>	<i>təktēbən</i>	<i>təktēbən</i>

Imperative: ms *kətēb*, fs *kətēbi*, mp *kətēbəm*, fp *kətēbən*

Participle: ms *kətbōna*, fs *kətbīta* (var. *kətbēta*), md *kətbōni*, fd *kətbáwti*, mp *kətyēba*, fp *kətbūtən*

6.1.2. Ga Internal Passive

The Ga-Stem is the only stem for which there is evidence of an internal passive in Johnstone's texts, though Ga passives are still relatively rare. There are only about forty or forty-five attestations overall. Following are the forms:

	Perfect	Imperfect	Subjunctive	Conditional
1cs	<i>kətábk</i>	<i>əktōb</i>	<i>l-əktōb</i>	<i>l-əktībən</i>
2ms	<i>kətábk</i>	<i>təktōb</i>	<i>təktōb</i>	<i>təktībən</i>
2fs	<i>kətábš</i>	<i>təktáybi</i>	<i>təktáybi</i> ¹	<i>təktībən</i>
3ms	<i>kətēb</i>	<i>yəktōb</i>	<i>yəktōb</i>	<i>yəktībən</i>
3fs	<i>kətbēt</i>	<i>təktōb</i>	<i>təktōb</i>	<i>təktībən</i>

¹ The *ML* (p. xxii) gives the 2fs subjunctive form as *təktōb* (actually, *tərkōz*, since Johnstone uses the paradigm root *vrkz*), but this is very likely a mistake. The expected form is *təktáybi*, identical with the imperfect. Cf. the Gb imperfect and subjunctive form *tətbáyri* (§6.1.3). Unfortunately, no relevant forms are attested in the texts.

	Perfect	Imperfect	Subjunctive	Conditional
1cd	<i>kətábki</i>	<i>əktabē</i>	<i>l-əktabē</i>	<i>l-əktabáyən</i>
2cd	<i>kətábki</i>	<i>təktabē</i>	<i>təktabē</i>	<i>təktabáyən</i>
3md	<i>kətbē</i>	<i>yəktabē</i>	<i>yəktabē</i>	<i>yəktabáyən</i>
3fd	<i>kətabtē</i>	<i>təktabē</i>	<i>təktabē</i>	<i>təktabáyən</i>
1cp	<i>kəṭēbən</i>	<i>nəktōb</i>	<i>nəktēb</i>	<i>nəktībən</i>
2mp	<i>kətábkəm</i>	<i>təktīb</i>	<i>təktēbəm</i>	<i>təktībən</i>
2fp	<i>kətábkən</i>	<i>təktōbən</i>	<i>təktēbən</i>	<i>təktībən</i>
3mp	<i>kəṭēbəm</i>	<i>yəktīb</i>	<i>yəktēbəm</i>	<i>yəktībən</i>
3fp	<i>kəṭēb</i>	<i>təktōbən</i>	<i>təktēbən</i>	<i>təktībən</i>

Imperative: none

Participle: (see §7.1.8)

For further discussion on the use of the G passive, see §7.1.7.

6.1.3. Gb-Stem

The Gb-Stem has several characteristics that distinguish it from the Ga-Stem. These include a 3ms perfect shape *CīCəC* (var. *CēCəC*); stress on the initial syllable in nearly all forms of the perfect; a 3mp perfect with a suffix *-əm*, rather than ablaut; ablaut in the 2mp and 3mp imperfect, rather than a suffixed *-əm*; and identical forms of the imperfect and subjunctive (except for the *l-* prefix of the 1cs and 1cd forms). The Gb participle is identical in shape to the Ga participle. Following is the full conjugation of the Gb verb *tībər* ‘break’:

	Perfect	Imperfect	Subjunctive	Conditional
1cs	<i>təbrək</i>	<i>əṭbōr</i>	<i>l-əṭbōr</i>	<i>l-əṭbīrən</i>
2ms	<i>təbrək</i>	<i>təṭbōr</i>	<i>təṭbōr</i>	<i>təṭbīrən</i>
2fs	<i>təbrəš</i>	<i>təṭbáyri</i>	<i>təṭbáyri</i>	<i>təṭbīrən</i>
3ms	<i>tībər</i>	<i>yəṭbōr</i>	<i>yəṭbōr</i>	<i>yəṭbīrən</i>
3fs	<i>təbrūt</i>	<i>təṭbōr</i>	<i>təṭbōr</i>	<i>təṭbīrən</i>
1cd	<i>təbrəki</i>	<i>yəṭbərō</i>	<i>l-əṭbərō</i>	<i>l-əṭbəráyən</i>
2cd	<i>təbrəki</i>	<i>təṭbərō</i>	<i>təṭbərō</i>	<i>təṭbəráyən</i>
3md	<i>təbrō</i>	<i>yəṭbərō</i>	<i>yəṭbərō</i>	<i>yəṭbəráyən</i>
3fd	<i>təbartō</i>	<i>təṭbərō</i>	<i>təṭbərō</i>	<i>təṭbəráyən</i>

	Perfect	Imperfect	Subjunctive	Conditional
1cp	<i>tábrən</i>	<i>nətbōr</i>	<i>nətbōr</i>	<i>nətbīrən</i>
2mp	<i>təbarkəm</i>	<i>tətbīr</i>	<i>tətbīr</i>	<i>tətbīrən</i>
2fp	<i>təbarkən</i>	<i>tətbōrən</i>	<i>tətbōrən</i>	<i>tətbīrən</i>
3mp	<i>təbrəm</i>	<i>yətbīr</i>	<i>yətbīr</i>	<i>yətbīrən</i>
3fp	<i>tībər</i>	<i>tətbōrən</i>	<i>tətbōrən</i>	<i>tətbīrən</i>

Imperative: ms *təbōr*, fs *təbáyri*, mp *təbīr*, fp *təbōrən*²

Participle: ms *təbrōna*, fs *təbrīta* (var. *təbrēta*), md *təbrōni*, fd *təbráwti*, mp *təbyēra*, fp *təbrūtən*

6.1.4. Ga vs. Gb Meaning

Previous scholars have suggested that the Gb pattern denotes ‘middle’ or ‘stative’ verbs, but such a blanket statement is inaccurate. It is true that a good number of Gb verbs are statives or middles, such as:

’aywər ‘be(come) blind’
dayni ‘become pregnant’
ǧayma ‘be(come) thirsty’
fiǧəl ‘break (intrans.), get broken (of teeth)’
gīlāw ‘be(come) feverish’
ḥaybər ‘be(come) cold’
mīlā’ ‘be(come) full’
mīrət ‘be(come) red-hot’
mīrəž ‘be ill’
sīləm ‘be(come) healthy, safe’
šība ‘be(come) satisfied’
tīgər ‘be(come) rich’
wīka ‘be, become; stay’

However, the Gb class also includes a number of transitive verbs. Some of the more common Gb transitive verbs are:

’aygəb ‘love’
’ayməl ‘do, make’
fiṭən ‘remember’

² Very few Gb imperatives are attested. The fs is normally of the shape *təbáyri*, but once we find a form corresponding to the shape *təbəri* (*mátəli*, 102:16). No plural imperatives are attested in the texts.

libəs ‘wear, put on (clothes)’
ḥayləm ‘dream’
ḵaybəl ‘accept’
śini ‘see’
wīda ‘know’
wīṣəl ‘arrive at, reach’

There are also Ga verbs that are intransitive or stative, such as *ḡəmūs* ‘disappear’ and *wəḵawf* ‘be(come) silent’. So, one can say that many stative verbs fall into the Gb class, but one cannot say that most Gb verbs are statives or that all statives are Gb.

Some roots appear to have both a Ga and Gb type. Often in such cases, the Gb functions as the medio-passive of the Ga, as in:

Gb *bīžək* ‘snap, tear (intrans.)’ vs. Ga *bəžawk* ‘snap, tear (trans.)’
 Gb *bīžər* ‘tear (intrans.)’ vs. Ga *bəžawr* ‘tear (trans.)’
 Gb *ṭībər* ‘break (intrans.), be broken’ vs. Ga *təbūr* ‘break (trans.)’
 Gb *fīḵəs* ‘burst (intrans.), explode’ vs. Ga *fəḵawś* ‘shatter (trans.)’
 Gb *mīlə* ‘be(come) full, fill (intrans.)’ vs. Ga *mōlə* / *məlū* ‘fill (trans.)’³

In other cases, the Ga and Gb are similar or identical in meaning, for example:

Ga *ḵərüb* and Gb *ḵayrəb* ‘approach, be near’
 Ga *zəḡūd* and Gb *zīgəd* ‘seize s.o.’s animals’

6.2. D/L-Stem

The D/L-Stem is characterized by a long vowel following the first root consonant in the perfect and subjunctive, and by a suffix *-ən* on all imperfect forms. The base pattern of the strong verb in the perfect is (a)CōCəC. The prefix *a-* appears only when the initial root letter is voiced or glottalic, similar (but not identical) to the distribution of the

³ The Ga 3ms form *mōlə* appears in the texts and in the *ML* (p. 265). The 3ms form *məlū* also appears in the *ML* (p. xxxii), and the attested perfects (e.g., 2fs *mōləš*, 97:7) suggest a 3ms form *məlū* (cf. the paradigm for *bənū* in the *ML*, p. xxxi). The form *mōlə* (or *mūlə*) is what we expect for a verb whose final root letter is ‘ (see §2.2.2), but the attested perfects and the imperfect listed in the *ML* (*yəmayl*, p. 265) behave as if its final root letter is *w* or *y*.

definite article (see §4.4). For example, we find 3ms perfect *abōšar* and *aḳōbəl*, but *sōfər* and *hōḏər*. Following is the full paradigm of a strong verb in this stem (*arōkəb* ‘put [a pot] on the fire’):

	Perfect	Imperfect	Subjunctive	Conditional
1cs	<i>arākbək</i>	<i>arākbən</i>	<i>l-arōkəb</i>	<i>l-arākbən</i>
2ms	<i>arākbək</i>	<i>tarākbən</i>	<i>tarōkəb</i>	<i>tarākbən</i>
2fs	<i>arākbəš</i>	<i>tarākbən</i>	<i>tarēkəb</i>	<i>tarākbən</i>
3ms	<i>arōkəb</i>	<i>yarākbən</i>	<i>yarōkəb</i>	<i>yarākbən</i>
3fs	<i>arkəbēt</i>	<i>tarākbən</i>	<i>tarōkəb</i>	<i>tarākbən</i>
1cd	<i>arākbəki</i>	<i>arkəbáyən</i>	<i>l-arkəbē</i>	<i>l-arkəbáyən</i>
2cd	<i>arākbəki</i>	<i>tarkəbáyən</i>	<i>tarkəbē</i>	<i>tarkəbáyən</i>
3md	<i>arkəbē</i>	<i>yarkəbáyən</i>	<i>yarkəbē</i>	<i>yarkəbáyən</i>
3fd	<i>arkəbtē</i>	<i>tarkəbáyən</i>	<i>tarkəbē</i>	<i>tarkəbáyən</i>
1cp	<i>arākbən</i>	<i>narākbən</i>	<i>narōkəb</i>	<i>narākbən</i>
2mp	<i>arākbəkəm</i>	<i>tarākbən</i>	<i>tarākbəm</i>	<i>tarākbən</i>
2fp	<i>arākbəkən</i>	<i>tarākbən</i>	<i>tarākbən</i>	<i>tarākbən</i>
3mp	<i>arākbəm</i>	<i>yarākbən</i>	<i>yarākbəm</i>	<i>yarākbən</i>
3fp	<i>arōkəb</i>	<i>tarākbən</i>	<i>tarākbən</i>	<i>tarākbən</i>

Imperative: ms *arōkəb*, fs *arēkəb*, mp *arākbəm*, fp *arākbən*

Participle: ms *marōkəb*, fs *markəbēta*, md *marākbī*, fd *markəbēti*,
cp *markəbūtən*

For verbs that do not have prefixed *a-* in the perfect, the prefix vowel of all other tenses is *ə*, not *a*. For example, for the verb *sōfər* ‘travel’, we find imperfect/conditional *yəsəfrən*, subjunctive *yəsōfər*, and participle *məsōfər*. Occasionally, the prefix vowel *ə* is found even where we expect *a*. For example, the ms participle of *aḳōšər* ‘fall short in generosity; shorten’ is found once as expected *maḳōšər* (18:15) and once as *məḳōšər* (77:4). This is just due to inconsistent transcription.

6.2.1. D/L-Stem Meaning

It is not possible to assign a productive or consistent meaning to the D/L-Stem. Johnstone called it the intensive-conative stem (AAL, p. 12), but this designation is not justified. The two most common, meaningful types of D/L-Stem verbs are denominatives and causatives

of intransitive verbs. A great many must simply be considered lexical. It is also important to recognize that a significant percentage of Mehri D/L-Stems have counterparts in the Arabic D-Stem (Form II, *fa''ala*) or L-Stem (Form III, *fā'ala*), and many or most of these are likely Arabic borrowings or calques. Among the verbs that are causatives of intransitives, we find:

- 'āyēs 'look after, keep alive' (cf. G 'āyōs 'live, survive'; Arabic G 'āša 'be alive', D 'ayyaša 'keep alive')
- abdid 'separate (trans.)' (no G attested in Mehri, but cf. Arabic G badda 'disperse (intrans.)', D baddada 'disperse (trans.)')
- aḡwīr 'distract, attract s.o.'s attention' (cf. G ḡaywār 'be careless, not pay attention')
- 'ōlāk 'hang (trans.)' (no G in Mehri, but cf. T1 'ātlāk 'be hung up', T2 'ātālāk 'hang (intrans.)'; also cf. Arabic D 'allaqa 'hang (trans.)')
- ḥōḏār 'warn s.o.' (cf. G ḥāḏūr 'be on one's guard', and the more common T2 ḥāḏḏūr 'be careful'; Arabic D ḥaḏḏara 'warn')
- ḥōmāl 'load' (cf. transitive G ḥōmāl 'carry, bear'; Arabic D ḥammala 'load')
- ḥyīl 'trick s.o.' (cf. G ḥayūl 'be senile')
- aḵōḏām 'put in front of, offer (food)' (cf. ḵādūm 'come, go before'; Arabic D qaddama 'put in front of, offer')
- aḵōṣār 'fall short in generosity; shorten' (cf. G ḵaṣawr 'be/fall short; run short of')
- sōlām 'save, preserve; surrender' (cf. G sīlām 'be safe, be saved'; Arabic D sallama 'save, surrender')
- awōṣāl 'take, bring s.o.' (= H hawṣawl; cf. G wīṣāl 'arrive'; Arabic D waṣṣala 'take, bring s.o.')
- xōrāb 'spoil, damage' (cf. G xayrāb 'be spoilt'; Arabic D xarraba 'destroy')

As for denominatives, we find:

- ḥōni 'dye with henna' (cf. ḥaynē 'henna'; Arabic D ḥanna'a 'dye with henna')
- aḵōfi 'go away' (cf. ḵafē 'back', so lit. 'turn one's back to')
- arōba 'give s.o. protection' (probably denominative from ribay 'companion, fellow tribesman')
- aṣyīḥ 'shout' (cf. ṣayḥ 'voice'; Arabic D ṣayyaha 'shout, cry out')
- aṭōrāf 'put aside' (cf. ṭarēf 'side')

aṭyif ‘collect aloe’ (cf. *ṭayf* ‘aloe’)
xwīṣ ‘collect *xawṣ* for basket-weaving’ (cf. *xawṣ* ‘palm leaves used for weaving baskets’)

A few D/L-Stem verbs seem to be deadjectival:

abōri ‘free (from debt or guilt)’ (cf. *bəray* ‘free’)
kōrəm ‘be generous to’ (cf. *kəraym* ‘generous’)
aḵōmāḥ ‘foil (plans), frustrate; disappoint’ (cf. *ḵōmāḥ* ‘bad’)
azhib ‘dress up a woman in finery’ (cf. *zəhayb* ‘prepared, ready’)

A great many D-Stems must simply be considered lexical, such as the following:

’ōbəl ‘try, test’
awōḏən ‘call to prayer’ (cf. Arabic D *’aḏḏana* ‘call to prayer’)
’ōləm ‘mark; teach’ (cf. Arabic D *’allama* ‘teach’)
’āwēg ‘delay, divert’
’āwēn ‘help’ (cf. Arabic L *’āwana* ‘help’)
’āyēt ‘cry out; weep’ (cf. Arabic D *’ayyaṭa* ‘cry out’)
’ōzər ‘pester, annoy’
abōrək ‘bless’ (cf. Arabic L *bāraka* ‘bless’)
abōśər ‘give good news’ (cf. Arabic D *baššara* ‘bring news’)
dōləx ‘seize (s.t. small)’
admīm ‘grope, feel about’ (cf. Q *adamdəm*, with the same meaning)
fask ‘separate (people fighting)’
fōxər ‘beautify, dress up’
agōrəb ‘try’ (cf. Arabic D *jarraba* ‘test, try’)
aḡyīḏ ‘anger’ (cf. T1 *ḡatyəḏ* ‘get angry’)
hōdi ‘divide, share’ (cf. Arabic L *hādā* ‘exchange gifts’)
hōnəd ‘feel sleepy’ (perhaps denominative from *hənūd* ‘drowsiness’)
ḥōrəm ‘swear (not to do s.t.)’ (cf. Arabic D *ḥarrama* ‘declare s.t. forbidden; refrain from s.t.’)
ḥōṣəl ‘acquire, get’ (= G *ḥəṣawl*; cf. Arabic G *ḥašala* and D *ḥaššala* ‘obtain, get’)
kōməl ‘finish’ (cf. Arabic D *kammala* ‘finish’)
aḵōbəl ‘watch, keep an eye on’ (cf. Arabic L *qābala* ‘stand opposite, face’)

aḳwīn ‘measure’
amōsi ‘kiss’
arōtəb ‘arrange, tidy up’ (cf. Arabic D *rattaba* ‘arrange’)
sōfər ‘travel’ (cf. Arabic L *sāfara* ‘travel’)
ašōli ‘pray’ (cf. Arabic D *šallā* ‘pray’)
šūbəh ‘suspect; look like’ (cf. Arabic L *šābaha* ‘look like’)
twīb ‘repent’
awdīd ‘assign tasks’
awōləm ‘prepare (trans.)’
awōkəl ‘authorize, empower’ (cf. Arabic D *wakkala* ‘authorize, empower’)
awōšəf ‘describe’ (= H *həwšawf*)
awōši ‘advise’ (cf. Arabic D *waššā* ‘advise’)
xōbət ‘cock (a gun)’
xōtər ‘risk, endanger’ (cf. *xətār* ‘danger’; Arabic L *xāṭara* ‘risk, endanger’)

6.3. H-Stem

The H-Stem is characterized by a prefixed *h* throughout the paradigm. The base pattern in the perfect is of the shape *həCCūC*. Following is the full paradigm of a strong verb in this stem (*hərkūb* ‘mount’):

	Perfect	Imperfect	Subjunctive	Conditional
1cs	<i>hərkābbk</i>	<i>əhərkūb</i>	<i>l-əhārkəb</i>	<i>l-əhārkəbən</i>
2ms	<i>hərkābbk</i>	<i>təhərkūb</i>	<i>təhārkəb</i>	<i>təhārkəbən</i>
2fs	<i>hərkābš</i>	<i>təhərkáybi</i>	<i>təhārkəb</i>	<i>təhārkəbən</i>
3ms	<i>hərkūb</i>	<i>yəhərkūb</i>	<i>yəhārkəb</i>	<i>yəhārkəbən</i>
3fs	<i>hərkəbūt</i>	<i>təhərkūb</i>	<i>təhārkəb</i>	<i>təhārkəbən</i>
1cd	<i>hərkābbki</i>	<i>əhərkəbō</i>	<i>l-əhərkəbē</i>	<i>l-əhərkəbáyən</i>
2cd	<i>hərkābbki</i>	<i>təhərkəbō</i>	<i>təhərkəbē</i>	<i>təhərkəbáyən</i>
3md	<i>hərkəbō</i>	<i>yəhərkəbō</i>	<i>yəhərkəbē</i>	<i>yəhərkəbáyən</i>
3fd	<i>hərkəbtō</i>	<i>təhərkəbō</i>	<i>təhərkəbē</i>	<i>təhərkəbáyən</i>
1cp	<i>hərkūbən</i>	<i>nəhərkūb</i>	<i>nəhārkəb</i>	<i>nəhārkəbən</i>
2mp	<i>hərkābbkəm</i>	<i>təhərkīb</i>	<i>təhārkəbəm</i>	<i>təhārkəbən</i>
2fp	<i>hərkābbkən</i>	<i>təhərkūbən</i>	<i>təhārkəbən</i>	<i>təhārkəbən</i>
3mp	<i>hərkīb</i>	<i>yəhərkīb</i>	<i>yəhārkəbəm</i>	<i>yəhārkəbən</i>
3fp	<i>hərkūb</i>	<i>təhərkūbən</i>	<i>təhārkəbən</i>	<i>təhārkəbən</i>

Imperative: ms *hárkəb*, fs *hárkəbi*, mp *hárkəbəm*, fp *hárkəbən*

Participle: ms *məhárkəb*, fs *məhərkəbēta*, md *məhárkəbi*, fd *məhərkəbēti*, cp *məhərkəbūtən*

In the perfect, the initial *h* of the H-Stem is sometimes dropped, especially when the first root consonant is voiceless, but the loss of *h* is not predictable. For example, we find *tmūm* ‘finish’, but *həthūm* ‘imagine’; *frūk* ‘frighten’, but *həftūk* ‘take out/off/away’. Loss of *h* is much rarer before voiced consonants, but an example is *mlū* ‘fill’ (cf. *həmlūk* ‘give legal possession of a wife’).⁴ With verbs that lose the prefixed *h* in the perfect, the *h* reappears in many (but not all) forms of the other tenses (e.g., 3ms perfect *frūk* ‘he frightened’, but 3ms subjunctive *yəhafrək*).

6.3.1. H-Stem Meaning

The primary function of the Mehri H-Stem is as a causative (cf. Hebrew *hiph’il*, Arabic *ʾafʿala*). The causative meaning is usually derived from a G-Stem verb. Some examples are:

- hāsūs* ‘rouse, wake up (trans.); bear (fruit)’ (cf. G *ʾəs* ‘rise, get up; grow’)
- hāwūr* ‘make blind’ (cf. G *ʾaywər* ‘be blind’)
- həbhūl* ‘cook, prepare’ (cf. G *bəhēl* ‘be cooked, ready’)
- həbkū* ‘make s.o. cry’ (cf. G *bəkū* ‘cry’)
- həbkū* ‘put aside, save’ (cf. G *bəkū* ‘be left over, remain’)
- həbrūk* ‘make (camels) kneel’ (cf. G *bərūk* ‘kneel (of camels)’)
- həbawr* ‘take out (animals) at night’ (cf. G *bār* ‘go out at night’)
- hādūg* ‘suckle’ (= D/L *ʾōdæg*; cf. G *ʾādūg* ‘suck (at the breast)’)
- hədlūl* ‘lead, guide’ (= G *dəl* ‘lead, guide’)
- hədxawl* ‘make s.o. swear’ (cf. G *dəxāl* ‘swear, promise’)
- həðhūb* ‘flood (trans.)’ (cf. G *ðəhēb* ‘be flooded’)
- həfhūs* ‘boil (meat and potatoes)’ (cf. G *fəhēs* ‘boil (intrans.)’)
- frūd* ‘frighten (animals)’ (cf. G *fərūd* ‘stampede, panic’)
- frūk* ‘frighten’ (cf. G *fīrək* ‘be afraid’)
- həftūk* ‘take out/off/away’ (cf. G *fətūk* ‘come/go out’)
- həgawr* ‘knock down’ (cf. G *gār* ‘fall’)

⁴ The lack of *h* in the perfect *mlū* may have something to do with the confusion of the H-Stem forms with the forms of the G-Stem *məlū* (see preceding note, and *ML*, p. 265).

- həglūl* ‘light a fire; boil (trans.)’ (cf. G *gəl* ‘be alight; boil (intrans.)’)
hwū ‘drop, make fall’ (cf. G *həwū* ‘fall’)
həkfūd ‘bring/let down’ (cf. G *kəfūd* ‘go down’)
həksē ‘dry (trans.)’ (cf. G *kayśa* ‘be dry’)
hwūb ‘warm by the fire’ (cf. G *hīwəb* ‘get warm’)
hənūt ‘make s.o. break an oath’ (cf. G *haynəṭ* ‘swear a lie, break an oath’)
hrūk ‘burn (trans.)’ (cf. G *hayrək* ‘get burnt’)
hyē ‘cure’ (cf. G *haywa* ‘get better, be cured’)
həwbūs ‘dress s.o.’ (cf. G *libəs* ‘wear’)
həwšawk ‘stick (trans.), attach’ (cf. G *liṣək* ‘stick (intrans.), adhere’)⁵
mlū ‘fill (trans.)’ (cf. Gb *mīlə* ‘be full’; = Ga *mōlə*)
həmlūk ‘give s.o. legal possession of a woman in marriage’ (cf. G *məlūk* ‘possess’)
həmrūt ‘heat red-hot’ (cf. G *mīrət* ‘be(come) red-hot’)
həmwūt ‘kill’ (cf. G *mōt* ‘die’)
həndūr ‘give milk; suckle’ (cf. G *nədūr* ‘drink milk (used of babies)’)
hənḳawb ‘throw off (usually of a mount)’ (cf. G *nīḳəb* ‘fall off (a mount)’)
hərkūb ‘mount s.o.’ (cf. G *rəkūb* ‘ride, mount’)
hərwū ‘give to drink’ (cf. G *raywi* ‘drink to repletion’)
śnū ‘show’ (cf. G *śīni* ‘see’)
tmūm ‘finish (trans.), complete’ (cf. G *təm* ‘be finished, finish (intrans.)’)
twū ‘feed’ (cf. G *təwū* ‘eat’)
həwkūb ‘put in’ (cf. G *wəkūb* ‘enter’)
həwkā ‘put, put down’ (cf. G *wīka* ‘be, become’)
həwrūd ‘take down to water’ (cf. G *wərūd* ‘go down to water’)
həwšawl ‘take s.o. somewhere’ (cf. G *wīṣəl* ‘arrive, reach’)
xdūm ‘employ, give work’ (cf. G *xədūm* ‘work’)
xlūs ‘mislead’ (cf. G *xəlūs* ‘get lost’)
həzyūd ‘increase (trans.); give more’ (cf. G *zəyūd* ‘increase (intrans.); be(come) more than’)

Other H-Stem causatives have extended or narrowed in meaning, but the derivation can still be seen, for example:

⁵ The *ML* (p. 256) lists *həwšūk*, but this should properly be transcribed *həwšawk*; cf. the 3mp perfect *həwšayk*, attested in 17:9.

- həðrō* ‘let the blood of a goat run over a sick person’ (cf. G *ðayrə* ‘bleed (intrans.)’)
həğfūl ‘cheer s.o. up’ (cf. G *ğəfūl* ‘be carefree’, Š *šəğfūl* ‘be cheerful’, *ğayfəl* ‘cheerful’)
həğwūš ‘put down one’s feet under water’ (cf. G *ğōš* ‘dive’)
həḵşawm ‘spend the afternoon (to avoid the heat)’ (cf. G *ḵayşəm* ‘be cool’)
hərżū ‘reconcile with s.o. (usually a wife)’ (cf. G *rayzi* ‘be agreeable’)
həwşawb ‘hit (with a bullet)’ (cf. G *şawb* ‘be/go straight’)

Some H-Stem verbs do not have a corresponding G-Stem verb, but might still be seen as causative in meaning. Such are:

- hālūk* ‘light (trans.), kindle’ (cf. G *’ālūk* ‘make a fire’)
həðnawn ‘imagine’ (cf. *ðan* ‘thought’)
fḵō ‘cover’ (cf. Š *šəfḵō* ‘cover oneself’)
fūk ‘give in marriage’ (cf. Š *šəfūk* ‘get married (female subject only)’)⁶
həgnē ‘warm (trans.)’ (cf. Š *šəgnē* ‘get warm’)
həgyūg ‘bear young (of animals)’ (cf. *gayg* ‘man’)
kawr ‘(make s.t.) roll down’
hḵū ‘give water to’ (cf. G *həḵū* ‘irrigate; give a drink’, anomalous *təḵ* ‘drink’)
hmū ‘call, name’ (cf. *ham* ‘name’)
həndēx ‘fumigate, perfume with incense smoke’ (cf. T1 *naddəx* ‘get smoke in one’s eyes’, *nīdēx* ‘(incense-)smoke’)
hənḥū ‘burn (trans.)’ (cf. Š *šənḥū* ‘get burnt’)
hərbā ‘lift/pull/take up’ (cf. Š *šərbā* ‘climb to the top of s.t.’)
hərxū ‘release, let go’ (cf. Š *šərxū* and T1 *ratxi* ‘be untied, be released’)
šawḵ ‘light (on fire), burn (trans.)’ (cf. T1 *šatūk* ‘miss, long for’)⁷
hətlawḵ ‘release, set (a horse) after’ (cf. T1 *ṭatləḵ* ‘be released’)
həwrē ‘keep away, hold back (trans.)’ (cf. Š *šəwrē* ‘back off, stand down’)

⁶ On this anomalous verb, see further in §7.2.13.

⁷ The form *šawḵ* is difficult to explain, if the root is *šwḵ*. The T1-Stem, assuming it is connected, reflects a root *šwḵ*, though *šawḵ* behaves as if its root were *š’ḵ* (cf. *kawr*). If the root were originally *žwḵ*, as suggested in the *ML* (p. 387), we could perhaps argue for a change of G perfect **žwūḵ* > **žūḵ* > **žawḵ* > *šawḵ*, reanalyzed as an H-Stem on analogy with verbs like *kawr*. The subjunctive form given in the *ML* is *yəhašəḵ*, which can only be an H-Stem.

However, many H-Stems do not seem to function as causatives, and must simply be considered lexical. Some have roots that appear in other stems, while others do not. Many of these verbs that do not function as causatives (and many of those that do, for that matter) must have simply been borrowed from the Arabic C-Stem (Form IV, *ʿafʿala*). Such are:

- hāmūn* ‘trust (in s.o.)’ (cf. Arabic C *ʿāmana* ‘trust (in s.o.)’)
hāmūr ‘order’ (cf. Arabic G *ʿamara* ‘order’ vs. Mehri G *ʿāmōr* ‘say’)
hānō ‘decide, intend’ (no related verbs; cf. *mānē* ‘intent, intention’)
hārūs ‘marry, get married’ (Arabic G *ʿarasa* or D *ʿarrasa* ‘get married’)
hātūm ‘spend the night’
həbğawz ‘hate’ (cf. G *bəğāz* ‘dislike’; Arabic C *ʿabğada* ‘hate’, but G *bağida* ‘be hated’)
həbşawr ‘see well’ (cf. Arabic C *ʿabşara* ‘see’)
həbtā ‘be late, be delayed’ (cf. *bəṭay* ‘slow, late’; Arabic C *ʿabṭa* ‘a’ ‘be late’)
flūt ‘escape, flee, run away’ (cf. Arabic C *ʿaflata* ‘escape’; in Mehri cf. D/L *fōlāt* ‘free oneself’, T1 *fatlāt* ‘be untied’)
frā ‘begin’
frūk ‘recover from a fever’ (on the homophonous *frūk* ‘frighten’, see above)⁸
həfsēh ‘stop doing, leave off’
həğdō ‘forget, lose’
həğşawb ‘lose s.t. of importance’ (there does not seem to be a connection between this verb and G *ğəşawb* ‘disarm, take by force’)
hḵawṭ ‘give birth (used of camels)’
ḥwūl ‘understand (a language)’ (probably cf. Arabic C *ʿaḥwala* ‘convert, translate’)
kbūr ‘stay with s.o. to drink milk’
həkbūl ‘arrive, draw near’ (cf. Arabic C *ʿaqbala* ‘draw near’)
həmrüz ‘nurse, look after’ (this is the opposite of causative; cf. G *mīrəz* ‘be ill’)
hənfēx ‘blow, breathe’ (seems to = G *nəfx*)

⁸ This verb is considered an H-Stem in Johnstone’s *ML* (based on the imperfect forms listed), but the forms in the texts (84:6, 7, 8) are ambiguous and could be either G- or H-Stems.

- həngūd* ‘go to Negd (in Dhofar)’ (denominative from *Nagd*; cf. Arabic C *ʿanjada* ‘travel in the Negd’)
- hənkūr* ‘feel; understand, realize’ (cf. G *nīkər* ‘understand, catch on’)
- hənsūr* ‘have had enough sleep’ (no related verbs; probably cf. Arabic C *ʿanšara* ‘resurrect from the dead’)
- hərgūf* ‘shiver (with fever)’ (cf. Arabic C *ʿarjafa* ‘shiver’)
- hərhūn* ‘pawn; leave s.t. as a pledge’ (cf. Arabic C *ʿarhana* ‘pawn; leave s.t. as a pledge’)
- hərsū* ‘cast anchor’ (cf. Arabic C *ʿarsā* ‘cast anchor’)
- hərxawš* ‘give permission to leave’ (cf. Š *šərxawš* ‘take/want leave’; Arabic D *raxxaša* ‘permit’)
- həšbāh* ‘be/happen in the morning; become’ (apparently denominative from *sobəh* ‘morning’; cf. Arabic C *ʿašbaḥa* ‘be/happen in the morning; become’)
- həsfūr* ‘whistle’ (cf. Arabic G *šafara* ‘whistle’, but Judeo-Arabic C *ʿašfara* ‘whistle’)
- həthūm* ‘think, imagine, suspect’
- həwfū* ‘pay in full’ (perhaps cf. *wōfi* ‘honest’)
- həwḥū* ‘come to help’
- həwlū* ‘go back to, turn towards, direct oneself to’ (cf. Arabic C *ʿawlā* ‘turn back/towards’)
- həwšawf* ‘describe’ (= D/L *awōšəf*; cf. *wašf* ‘description’ (< Arabic))
- xšawb* ‘send; send for’
- həzbūr* ‘feel pleasure at s.o.’s misfortune’
- həžrawb* ‘be ill’

6.4. Š-Stems

Mehri possesses two stems that are characterized by a prefixed š. The one which we will call Š1 is by far the more common of the two Š-Stems. It has the basic pattern šəCCūC in the perfect, and its conjugation (in all tenses) is parallel to that of the H-Stem (*həCCūC*). The other Š-Stem, which we will call Š2, has the basic pattern šəCēCšəC in the perfect. The Š2, like the D/L and T2, is characterized by a suffixed *-ən* on all imperfect forms. Johnstone refers to both of the Š-Stems as causative-reflexive verbs (AAL, p. 13), but this designation is not very accurate, as will be seen below.

6.4.1. Š1-Stem Form

Following is the full paradigm of a strong verb in the Š1-Stem (*šakbūr* ‘consider large’):

	Perfect	Imperfect	Subjunctive	Conditional
1cs	<i>šakbárk</i>	<i>ašakbūr</i>	<i>l-ašakbār</i>	<i>l-ašakbārən</i>
2ms	<i>šakbárk</i>	<i>təšakbūr</i>	<i>təšakbār</i>	<i>təšakbārən</i>
2fs	<i>šakbárš</i>	<i>təšakbáyri</i>	<i>təšakbār</i>	<i>təšakbārən</i>
3ms	<i>šakbūr</i>	<i>yəšakbūr</i>	<i>yəšakbār</i>	<i>yəšakbārən</i>
3fs	<i>šakbārūt</i>	<i>təšakbūr</i>	<i>təšakbār</i>	<i>təšakbārən</i>
1cd	<i>šakbárki</i>	<i>ašakbārō</i>	<i>l-ašakbārē</i>	<i>l-ašakbāráyən</i>
2cd	<i>šakbárki</i>	<i>təšakbārō</i>	<i>təšakbārē</i>	<i>təšakbāráyən</i>
3md	<i>šakbārō</i>	<i>yəšakbārō</i>	<i>yəšakbārē</i>	<i>yəšakbāráyən</i>
3fd	<i>šakbārtō</i>	<i>təšakbārō</i>	<i>təšakbārē</i>	<i>təšakbāráyən</i>
1cp	<i>šakbūrən</i>	<i>nəšakbūr</i>	<i>nəšakbār</i>	<i>nəšakbārən</i>
2mp	<i>šakbárkəm</i>	<i>təšakbūr</i>	<i>təšakbārəm</i>	<i>təšakbārən</i>
2fp	<i>šakbárkən</i>	<i>təšakbūrən</i>	<i>təšakbārən</i>	<i>təšakbārən</i>
3mp	<i>šakbūr</i>	<i>yəšakbūr</i>	<i>yəšakbārəm</i>	<i>yəšakbārən</i>
3fp	<i>šakbūr</i>	<i>təšakbūrən</i>	<i>təšakbārən</i>	<i>təšakbārən</i>

Imperative: ms *šakbār*, fs *šakbāri*,⁹ mp *šakbārəm*, fp *šakbārən*

Participle: ms *məšakbār*, fs *məšakbārēta*, md *məšakbāri*, fd *məšakbārēti*, cp *məšakbārūtən*

6.4.2. Š1-Stem Meaning

As mentioned above, Johnstone refers to the Š-Stems as causative-reflexive verbs. This designation does not really apply to more than a handful of Š1-Stems. Among the examples in the texts are:

šāgūl ‘hurry (oneself)’ (cf. H *hāgūl* ‘make s.o. hurry’)
šəbdūd ‘separate oneself from’ (cf. H *abdēd* ‘separate (trans.)’)

⁹ The only attested Š-Stem fs imperative in Johnstone’s texts is *šāgəl* (94:15), which lacks a final *-i*. However, since a final *-i* appears in the fs imperative of the H-Stem (which, like the Š-Stem lacks a suffix in the 2fs subjunctive form), a suffixed *-i* is expected in the fs imperative of the Š-Stem. Unfortunately, I found no audio for text 94.

šəhwūb ‘warm oneself by the fire’ (cf. H *hwūb* ‘warm by the fire (trans.)’)

šəḵḥawb ‘play the harlot’ (cf. H *həḵḥawb* ‘turn a woman into a harlot; seduce’)

šərbā ‘climb (to the top)’ (cf. H *hərbā* ‘lift, pull up’)

There are a few verbs that might be called causative-passive, since they can be seen as the passive of a corresponding causative (H-Stem) verb. Such are:

šədlūl ‘be guided; need directions’ (cf. H *hədlūl* ‘lead, guide’)

šəfūḵ ‘get married’ (used with female subject only) (cf. H *fūḵ* ‘give in marriage’)¹⁰

šəḵwū ‘become strong’ (cf. G *ḵaywi* ‘be strong’; cf. H *həḵwū* ‘strengthen’)

šəmlūk ‘be given legal possession of a woman in marriage’ (cf. H *həmlūk* ‘give s.o. legal possession of a woman in marriage’)

šəwnēx ‘rest; be rested’ (cf. H *həwnēx* ‘give s.o. rest’)

šərdūd ‘get back; ask for s.t. back’ (cf. H *hərdūd* ‘give back’)

šəwṣawb ‘be wounded, be hit (with a bullet)’ (cf. H *həwṣawb* ‘hit (with a bullet)’)

šəwfū ‘be revenged for s.o., avenge s.o.; be paid in full’ (cf. H *həwfū* ‘settle, pay in full’)

šəxtūn ‘be circumcised’ (cf. G *xətn* ‘circumcise’, H *həxtūn* ‘have a child circumcised’)

šəzyūḵ ‘get fed up; have trouble’ (cf. G *žəyūḵ* ‘be fed up’, H *həzyūḵ* ‘make s.o. fed up’)

A few Š1-Stems have a meaning something like ‘believe s.o./s.t. is X’:

šəbdū ‘believe s.o. is lying’ (cf. G *bədn* ‘lie, tell a lie’)

šəkbūr ‘consider large’

šəḵtūr ‘be too much; think s.t. is too much’ (cf. G *kītər* ‘be abundant’, H *həḵtūr* ‘say/give more’)

šəṭṭəwəl ‘find guests unwelcome; (+ reflexive *hənōf-*) think oneself a burden’ (cf. G. *ṭṭəwəl* ‘be heavy’, H *həṭṭəwəl* ‘put a heavy loan on’)

šəsdūḵ ‘believe s.o. is telling the truth’ (cf. G *sədn* ‘tell the truth’)

¹⁰ On this anomalous verb, see further in §7.2.13.

However, the great majority of Š1-Stems can only be categorized as lexical. Examples are:

- šāḏūr* ‘refuse s.o.’ (cf. H *hāḏūr* ‘excuse, excuse oneself’)
šāfō ‘recover, improve in health’ (cf. *šāfyət* ‘health’)
šāmūn ‘believe; fall in with s.o.’s wishes’ (cf. H *hāmūn* ‘trust’)
šānūs ‘dare’
šāsūr ‘love, like, be keen on’
šāzō ‘be/get worried about’
šōda ‘curse, insult’ (cf. *dāwēt* ‘complaint’)
šōdhūk ‘look, look down’
šōdrūk ‘survive’ (cf. G *dārūk* ‘come quickly to help’, D/L *adōrāk* ‘save s.o.’s life by giving water’)
šāftēh ‘be mated (female animals)’ (cf. G *fəth* or *fütəh* ‘open’)
šāghūm ‘set off (in the morning)’ (cf. G *gəhēm* ‘go, go in the morning’)
šāghawd ‘be(come) convinced’ (cf. G *gəhād* ‘deny, refuse’)
šāgbūr ‘ask for help’ (cf. H *šāgbūr* ‘give help’)
šāglū ‘buy s.t. at a high price’ (cf. H *hāglū* ‘sell s.t. at a high price’)
šəwḡawr ‘raid’
šəhmūm ‘be encouraged, be bold’
šəhgū ‘stand firm; settle a difficulty’
šəhyūr ‘be paralyzed with fear’ (cf. G *həyūr* ‘be confused, get lost’)
šəklūl ‘catch (in one’s hands)’ (cf. H *klūl* ‘catch (s.t. dropping)’)
šəklūt ‘listen to a tale’ (cf. G *kəlūt* ‘tell’)
šəktūb ‘have s.o. write (a charm)’ (cf. Arabic Ct *istaktaba* ‘have s.o. write s.t.’)
šəkrū ‘hide (intrans.), hide o.s.’ (cf. G *karū* ‘hide (trans.)’) (reflexive, but there is no recorded H-Stem of this root)
šəkrawr ‘confess’ (= G *kar*)
šəqšawr ‘run out of, run short of’ (very close to G *qəšawr* ‘be/fall short; run short of’)
šəqṭā ‘become despondent, tired (of a situation)’ (cf. G *qayṭā* ‘be tired’)
šəqzū ‘be paid off, receive blood-money’ (cf. G *qəzū* ‘pay, pay blood-money’)
šəmdūd ‘take s.t. (from s.o.)’ (cf. H *həmdūd* ‘give’)
šəmrūz ‘fall ill; be ill’ (cf. G *mīrəz* ‘be ill’; H *həmrūz* ‘nurse’ is not causative)

- šandūm* ‘renege, ask for s.t. back’ (cf. G *nīdām* ‘repent of s.t., be sorry about’)
šanḏūr ‘vow, promise’ (H *hanḏūr* seems to have the same meaning)
šanḥawr ‘complain, lodge a complaint’
šanṣawr ‘be victorious’ (cf. *nēṣar* ‘victory’)
šarḥawm ‘get rain (in a dry period)’ (cf. *rəḥmēt* ‘rain’)
šəṣfū ‘find out, gather news’ (cf. *šəfōt* ‘news’)
šəṣḥāḥ ‘be(come) healthy’ (cf. *šəḥ* ‘alive, healthy’, *šəḥḥāt* ‘health’)
šəṣḥawr ‘be branded’ (cf. G *šəḥār* ‘brand’)
šəwgūs ‘go (in the early evening)’ (cf. H *həwgūs* ‘take out/bring home beasts in the early evening’)
šəwkūf ‘sleep, fall asleep’ (cf. H *həwkūf* ‘let s.o. ill rest on one’s shoulder; set up (a stone)’)
šəwdē ‘keep safe’ (cf. H *həwdē* ‘give s.o. protection’; Arabic Ct *istawda*‘a ‘entrust, give for safekeeping’; Mehri *abēli šəwədēkəm* (35:15) is probably a calque of Arabic *istawda*‘*kumu llāha*)
šəwrē ‘back off, stand down’ (cf. H *həwrē* ‘keep away, hold back (trans.)’)
šəxbūr ‘ask’ (cf. Arabic tD *taxabbara* and Ct *istaxabara* ‘inquire’)
šəzyūm ‘run short of milk’ (cf. *žaymāt* ‘shortage of milk’)

It should be noted that while a large number of D/L-Stems and H-Stems have clear Arabic counterparts, most Š1-Stems do not. And when there is an Arabic cognate, the Š1-Stem does not regularly correspond to any one Arabic verbal stem. For example, from the above lists, *šādōr*, *šanṣawr*, *šəxtūn* and, probably, *šōda* correspond to Arabic Gt-Stems (Form VIII, *ifta*‘*ala*); *šəktūb*, *šəktūr*, *šəmdūd*, *šəṭṭawl*, and *šəwdē* correspond to Arabic Ct-Stems (Form X, *istaf*‘*ala*); *šāgōl*, *šəmlūk*, *šəwfū*, and *šəxbūr* correspond to both tD- and Ct-Stems (Forms V and X, *tafa*‘*ala* and *istaf*‘*ala*); *šəḥyūr* corresponds either to a tD- or Gt-Stem (Form V or VIII, *tafa*‘*ala* or *ifta*‘*ala*); *šəwgawr* and *šəḵrawr* to C-Stems (Form IV, ‘*af*‘*ala*); *šāmōn* to both a C- and Gt-Stem (Forms IV and VIII, ‘*af*‘*ala* and *ifta*‘*ala*); *šāfō* and *šəzyūk* to a tL-Stem (Form VI, *tafā*‘*ala*); *šəkbūr* to both a C- and Ct-Stem (Forms IV and X, ‘*af*‘*ala* and *istaf*‘*ala*); and *šəsdūk* to a D-Stem (Form II, *fa*‘*ala*). This can be seen more clearly in the following table:

	D	C	tD	tL	Gt	Ct
<i>šōda</i>					x	
<i>šāḏōr</i>					x	
<i>šāfō</i>				x		
<i>šāgōl</i>			x			x
<i>šāmōn</i>		x			x	
<i>šəwḡawr</i>		x				
<i>šəhyūr</i>			x		x	
<i>šəkbūr</i>		x				x
<i>šəktūb</i>						x
<i>šəktūr</i>						x
<i>šəḡrawr</i>		x				
<i>šəmdūd</i>						x
<i>šəmlūk</i>			x			x
<i>šəṇṣawr</i>					x	
<i>šəsdūk</i>	x					
<i>šəṭḡawl</i>						x
<i>šəwdē</i>						x
<i>šəwfū</i>			x			x
<i>šəxbūr</i>			x			x
<i>šəxtūn</i>					x	
<i>šəzyūk</i>				x		

As evident from the table, the Mehri Š1-Stems most often correspond to Arabic Ct- and Gt-Stems, but without the regularity or predictability we see in the Mehri D/L- and H-Stems.

6.4.3. Š2-Stem Form

Following is the full paradigm of a strong verb in the Š2-Stem (*šəṇēsəm* ‘sigh’):

	Perfect	Imperfect	Subjunctive	Conditional
1cs	<i>šəṇásmək</i>	<i>əšṇásmən</i>	<i>l-əšṇēsəm</i>	<i>l-əšṇásmən</i>
2ms	<i>šəṇásmək</i>	<i>təšṇásmən</i>	<i>təšṇēsəm</i>	<i>təšṇásmən</i>
2fs	<i>šəṇásməš</i>	<i>təšṇásmən</i>	<i>təšṇēsəm</i>	<i>təšṇásmən</i>
3ms	<i>šəṇēsəm</i>	<i>yəšṇásmən</i>	<i>yəšṇēsəm</i>	<i>yəšṇásmən</i>
3fs	<i>šəṇəsmēt</i>	<i>təšṇásmən</i>	<i>təšṇēsəm</i>	<i>təšṇásmən</i>

	Perfect	Imperfect	Subjunctive	Conditional
1cd	<i>šənsámki</i>	<i>ašnəsmáyən</i>	<i>l-əšənsəmē</i>	<i>l-əšnəsmáyən</i>
2cd	<i>šənsámki</i>	<i>təšnəsmáyən</i>	<i>təšənsəmē</i>	<i>təšnəsmáyən</i>
3md	<i>šənsəmō</i>	<i>yəšnəsmáyən</i>	<i>yəšənsəmē</i>	<i>yəšnəsmáyən</i>
3fd	<i>šənsəmtō</i>	<i>təšnəsmáyən</i>	<i>təšənsəmē</i>	<i>təšnəsmáyən</i>
1cp	<i>šənásmən</i>	<i>nəšnásmən</i>	<i>nəšnēsəm</i>	<i>nəšnásmən</i>
2mp	<i>šənásməkəm</i>	<i>təšnásmən</i>	<i>təšnásməm</i>	<i>təšnásmən</i>
2fp	<i>šənásməkən</i>	<i>təšnásmən</i>	<i>təšnásmən</i>	<i>təšnásmən</i>
3mp	<i>šənásməm</i>	<i>yəšnásmən</i>	<i>yəšnásməm</i>	<i>yəšnásmən</i>
3fp	<i>šənēsəm</i>	<i>təšnásmən</i>	<i>təšnásmən</i>	<i>təšnásmən</i>

Imperative: (none attested)

Participle: ms *məšnēsəm*, fs *məšənsəməta*, md *məšnásmi*, fd *məšənsəməti*, cp *məšənsəmətən*

6.4.4. Š2-Stem Meaning

Johnstone, in his *ML* (p. lxiii), claimed that many verbs of the Š2 pattern have an implication of reciprocity, and this claim holds true. That is not to say that these are reciprocal verbs. For example, *šənēwəš* ‘wrestle with’ and *šəgēləs* ‘quarrel with’ can have a singular subject and direct object. However, the actions referred to (wrestling and quarrelling) are reciprocal in nature. Likewise, *šəlēbəd* means ‘shoot back at’ and takes a singular subject, but the implication is that shots are being fired in both directions. If these were true reciprocals, they would mean ‘wrestle with one another’ and ‘shoot at one another’, etc. This kind of explicit reciprocity is normally expressed with a T-Stem (see below, §6.5). Attested Š2 verbs with implied reciprocity are:

šādəl ‘bet s.o.’

šədēyən ‘borrow’ (cf. D/L *adyēn* ‘give credit; lend money’)

šəgēləs ‘quarrel with; scold s.o.’ (cf. T1 *gatləs* ‘quarrel with one another’)

šəlēbəd ‘hit, shoot back at’ (cf. G *əwbūd* ‘hit, shoot’)

šənēwəš ‘wrestle with, struggle with’ (cf. T2 *əntəwūš* ‘wrestle with one another’)

šəwēd ‘arrange a meeting; promise’ (cf. *wēd* ‘appointment, promise’)

šəzēfər ‘struggle with s.t.’

Other Š2 verbs have no implication of reciprocity, and must simply be considered lexical. Such are:

šəgēmāl ‘take all of s.t.’ (cf. G *gāmūl* ‘buy the whole of s.t.’, *gāmlēt* ‘total’)

šəhēwəb ‘imagine, think’

šəxārəg ‘read; interpret’ (cf. Arabic D *xarraja* ‘interpret, deduce’ and Ct *istaxraja* ‘deduce’)

As already mentioned, and as is clear from the lists of Š1- and Š2-Stems, Š2 verbs are overall much less common in the texts.

6.5. T-Stems

Mehri possesses two derived verbal stems that are characterized by an infix *t*. Both T-Stems occur fairly frequently. The one which we will call T1 has the basic pattern *CátCəC* in the perfect. The other stem, which we will call T2, has the basic pattern *əCtəCūC* in the perfect. The T2-Stem, like the D/L- and Š2-Stems, is characterized by a suffixed *-ən* on all imperfect forms. Johnstone refers to both of the T-Stems as reflexives, but this designation covers just a minority of T-Stem verbs. Besides reflexives, we find reciprocals, passives, and a number of verbs without a clear derivational meaning.

6.5.1. T1-Stem Form

The T1-Stem is characterized by an infix *t*, which is inserted between the first and second root letters. The base pattern of the strong verb in the perfect is *CátCəC*. Following is the full paradigm of a strong verb in the T1-Stem (*nátfəz* ‘cut one’s foot’):

	Perfect	Imperfect	Subjunctive	Conditional
1cs	<i>nátfəzək</i>	<i>əntəfūz</i>	<i>l-əntifəz</i>	<i>l-əntəfzən</i>
2ms	<i>nátfəzək</i>	<i>təntəfūz</i>	<i>təntifəz</i>	<i>təntəfzən</i>
2fs	<i>nátfəzəš</i>	<i>təntəfáyzi</i>	<i>təntifəz</i>	<i>təntəfzən</i>
3ms	<i>nátfəz</i>	<i>yəntəfūz</i>	<i>yəntifəz</i>	<i>yəntəfzən</i>
3fs	<i>nətfəzūt</i>	<i>təntəfūz</i>	<i>təntifəz</i>	<i>təntəfzən</i>

	Perfect	Imperfect	Subjunctive	Conditional
1cd	<i>nátfəzki</i>	<i>əntəfzō</i>	<i>l-əntəfzē</i>	<i>l-əntəfzáyən</i>
2cd	<i>nátfəzki</i>	<i>təntəfzō</i>	<i>təntəfzē</i>	<i>təntəfzáyən</i>
3md	<i>nətfəzō</i>	<i>yəntəfzō</i>	<i>yəntəfzē</i>	<i>yəntəfzáyən</i>
3fd	<i>nətfəztō</i>	<i>təntəfzō</i>	<i>təntəfzē</i>	<i>təntəfzáyən</i>
1cp	<i>nátfəzən</i>	<i>nəntəfūz</i>	<i>nəntīfəz</i>	<i>nəntəfzən</i>
2mp	<i>nátfəzkəm</i>	<i>təntəfiz</i>	<i>təntəfzəm</i>	<i>təntəfzən</i>
2fp	<i>nátfəzkən</i>	<i>təntəfūzən</i>	<i>təntəfzən</i>	<i>təntəfzən</i>
3mp	<i>nátfəzəm</i>	<i>yəntəfiz</i>	<i>yəntəfzəm</i>	<i>yəntəfzən</i>
3fp	<i>nátfəz</i>	<i>təntəfūzən</i>	<i>təntəfzən</i>	<i>təntəfzən</i>

Imperative: ms *nətifəz*, fs *nətifəz*,¹¹ mp *nətfəzəm*, fp *nətfəzən*

Participle:¹² ms *məntīfəz*, fs *məntəfzēta*, md *məntəfəzi*,¹³ fd *məntəfzēti*, cp *məntəfzūtən*

When the second root consonant is *s*, *š*, *ś*, *t*, *d*, *ḏ*, *ḑ*, *z*, or *ž*, then the *t* of the stem assimilates to this consonant in the perfect, for example *naṭṭəb* < **naṭṭəb*, *fažžəḥ* < **fatžəḥ*. When the second root consonant is *d*, the assimilation of the cluster *td* seems to result in *tt*, though this is alternately transcribed as *dd* or *tt* (see n. 14, below).

6.5.2. T1-Stem Meaning

A number of T1 verbs are reciprocals, and as such they are conjugated only for the dual and plural. Such are:

battəd (or *baddəd*)¹⁴ ‘part from one another’
gatləs ‘quarrel with one another’
ğatbər ‘meet one another’ (cf. G *ğəbūr* ‘meet s.o.’)
ğatrəb ‘know one another’ (cf. G *ğərüb* ‘know’)

¹¹ The fs imperative (like the 2fs subjunctive) is distinguished from the ms in verbs whose third root letter is *y*, e.g., *ğətayr* ‘speak’, fs. *ğətayri* (cf. 94:9, 10).

¹² Only about ten T1-Stem participles are attested in the texts.

¹³ The paradigmatic md form in Johnstone’s *ML* (p. lxx) is the incorrect *məntətzīta*, a form clearly mangled by a typesetter. Luckily, there is one md form attested in the texts, namely, *məğtəbəri* ‘we will meet’, which is mistranslated as ‘meet me’ (94:43).

¹⁴ Forms with double *tt* are found in 12:9, 12:13, 94:47, and in the paradigms in the *ML* (p. xlviii). Forms with double *dd* are found in 82:5 and in the *ML* entry for *vbdd* (p. 42). This probably represents an inconsistency in transcription, not in language; the audio for 82:5 confirms the pronunciation *tt*.

ḥatrəb ‘be at war with one another’ (= T2 *əḥtərüb*; cf. D/L *ḥōrəb* ‘be at war with s.o.’; Arabic tD *ḥarraba* and Gt *iḥtaraba* ‘be at war with one another’)
katlät ‘talk to one another’ (cf. G *kəlūt* ‘tell’)
latbəd ‘fight with one another’¹⁵ (cf. G *ləbūd* ‘hit, shoot’)
latḥək ‘catch up on one another’ (cf. G *ləḥāk* ‘catch up to, overtake’; Arabic tL *talāḥaqa* ‘overtake one another’)
lattəg ‘kill one another’¹⁶ (cf. G *lūtəg* ‘kill’)
naṭṭəb ‘fall off, drop (intrans.)’ (cf. H *hənṭawb* ‘drop (trans.), let fall’)
ṭətān ‘stab one another’ (cf. G *ṭān* ‘stab’)

Others can be loosely classified as passives, intransitives, or reflexives, most often with a corresponding G-Stem:

fattək ‘be released, set free’ (cf. G *fək* ‘release’)
fatkəḥ ‘break in half (intrans.); be half gone’ (cf. D/L *fōkəḥ* ‘break in half (trans.)’)
fəzzəḥ ‘be embarrassed’ (cf. G *fəzāḥ* ‘be embarrassed (d.o. = by s.o.)’, D/L *fōzəḥ* ‘embarrass s.o.’)
gətfən ‘keep one’s face covered (of woman)’ (cf. G *gəfūn* ‘be in seclusion the week before marriage (of woman)’, T2 *əgətfūn* ‘hide oneself’)
gəṭḥi ‘gather together (intrans.)’ (always plural)
gəṭma ‘gather (intrans.)’ (always plural; cf. G *gūma* ‘gather (trans.)’; Arabic tD *tajamma‘a* and Gt *ijtama‘a* ‘gather, come together’)
gətyəḏ ‘get angry’ (cf. D/L *əgyēḏ* ‘anger’)
hattəm ‘be sad, be anxious’ (cf. Arabic Gt *ihtamma* ‘be grieved’)
ḥatrək ‘move (intrans.)’ (= T2 *əḥtərūk*; cf. D/L *ḥōrək* ‘move (trans.)’; Arabic tD *taḥarraka* ‘move (intrans.)’)
kaṭṭa ‘be cut, be cut off’ (cf. G *kawṭa* ‘cut, cut off’; Arabic tD *taqaṭṭa‘a* ‘be cut off’)
kaṭtəl ‘spill (intrans.)’ (cf. G *kəl* ‘spill (trans.)’)

¹⁵ In the *ML*, this verb is translated as a passive ‘be hit’, but in a passage like 12:12, it is clearly reciprocal in meaning.

¹⁶ In a couple of places forms of this verb are obscured. For example, *lətəgəm* ‘they killed each other’ (3:19) looks like a D/L perfect, but is probably a typo for *lattəgəm*, as supported by the audio. The form *əwtəgō* ‘they (two) killed each other’ (4:17) looks like a G perfect, but this is presumably < *əwtəgō < the expected *lattəgō*.

ḡatləb ‘change form, change into (intrans.)’ (cf. G *ḡəlūb* ‘turn; turn into (another shape)’)
ḡatməḥ ‘despair, be disappointed’ (cf. D/L *aḡōməḥ* ‘disappoint’)
məṭḥən ‘be angry, be disturbed; be in trouble’ (cf. G *məḥān* ‘give s.o. bad news; disturb s.o.’)
matxək ‘come out, be pulled out (said of a dagger)’ (cf. G *məxāk* ‘draw, pull out (a dagger)’)
naṭṭəb ‘drop (intrans.)’ (cf. H *ḥənṭawb* ‘drop (trans.)’)
səṭḥəb ‘crawl on one’s belly’ (cf. G *səḥāb* ‘drag’)
watḡəḏ ‘wake up (intrans.), awaken’¹⁷ (cf. D/L *awōḡəḏ* ‘wake up (trans.)’)
watxəf ‘remain; arrive (in the evening)’
xatləf ‘change (intrans.); be different’ (cf. G *xayləf* ‘succeed, come after; replace’; Arabic Gt *ixtalafa* ‘be different, differ (intrans.)’)

Still others, including some transitive verbs, are probably best considered lexical:

ḡatri ‘speak’ (can be reciprocal when used in the dual and plural)
ḡatrəf ‘move (trans. or intrans.), go away’ (cf. G *ḡərūf* ‘move, remove’)
ḡātūḡ (*ḡatwəḡ*) ‘need’ (cf. *ḡōḡət* ‘thing; need’; Arabic Gt *iḡtāja* ‘need’)
ḡatnəm ‘collect fodder’ (= D/L *aḡawnəm* and T2 *əḡtənūm*)
matrək ‘draw (a dagger)’ (takes d.o.)
matwi ‘have leisure time’
ratḡi ‘read’
ṣatūḡ ‘miss, long for’ (cf. H *ṣawḡ* ‘light, burn (trans.)’; Arabic tD *taṣawwaqa* and Gt *iṣtāqa* ‘long for’)

Two T1 verbs require special attention. First is the verb *tək* ‘drink’, historically a T-Stem of the root $\sqrt{hḡy}$ (cf. H *ḡḡū* ‘give drink; irrigate’), which has become totally irregular and anomalous.¹⁸ Second is the verb *ṣītəm* ‘buy’, which is historically a T-Stem of the root $\sqrt{s'm}$ (cf. G *ṣōm* ‘sell’), but has come to behave completely as a Gb-Stem verb, as if from the root *ṣtm*.

¹⁷ The T-Stem is also found used transitively, e.g., *təḡḡəm tay* ‘wake me up!’ (99:5) and *ḡō mətṭūḡəḏ tīs* ‘I will wake her up’. Cf. the intransitive *watḡəḏəṣ lā* ‘you did not wake up’ (99:12).

¹⁸ The full conjugation is given in the *ML*, p. liii–liv. See also §7.2.13.

Finally, note that T1-Stems can correspond to an Arabic tD-Stem (Form V, *tafaʿʿala*), tL-Stem (Form VI, *tafāʿala*), or Gt-Stem (Form VIII, *iftaʿala*). On the Arabic counterparts to the T2-Stem, see below, §6.5.4.

6.5.3. T2-Stem Form

Like the T1-Stem, the T2-Stem is characterized by an infixed *t* following the first radical consonant. However, whereas the infix is adjacent to the second radical in the T1-Stem, where it is subject to regressive assimilation, it is adjacent to the first radical in the T2-Stem, and not subject to assimilation. For example, while the infixed *t* assimilates to the following *s* in the T1 form *kassi* (< **katsi*), it does not assimilate to the preceding *s* in the T2 form *əstəyūr*. There is, however, irregular assimilation found in some verbs, such as *əttūma* ‘listen’ (< **əhtūma*), *ḥəḏḏūr* (for expected **əhtəḏḏūr*), and *wəddawd* (for expected **əwtədūd* or **əwtədawd*). Forms like *əḏtəmūm* (listed in Johnstone’s *ML*) show that dentals and interdental do not regularly assimilate in this verbal stem. Following is the full paradigm of a strong verb in the T2-Stem (*əftəkūr* ‘think, wonder’):

	Perfect	Imperfect	Subjunctive	Conditional
1cs	<i>əftəkárk</i>	<i>əftəkīrən</i>	<i>l-əftəkūr</i>	<i>l-əftəkīrən</i>
2ms	<i>əftəkárk</i>	<i>təftəkīrən</i>	<i>təftəkūr</i>	<i>təftəkīrən</i>
2fs	<i>əftəkárs̄</i>	<i>təftəkīrən</i>	<i>təftəkáyri</i>	<i>təftəkīrən</i>
3ms	<i>əftəkūr</i>	<i>yəftəkīrən</i>	<i>yəftəkūr</i>	<i>yəftəkīrən</i>
3fs	<i>əftəkərūt</i>	<i>təftəkīrən</i>	<i>təftəkūr</i>	<i>təftəkīrən</i>
1cd	<i>əftəkárki</i>	<i>əftəkəráyən</i>	<i>l-əftəkərē</i>	<i>l-əftəkráyən</i>
2cd	<i>əftəkárki</i>	<i>təftəkəráyən</i>	<i>təftəkərē</i>	<i>təftəkráyən</i>
3md	<i>əftəkərō</i>	<i>yəftəkəráyən</i>	<i>yəftəkərē</i>	<i>yəftəkráyən</i>
3fd	<i>əftəkərtō</i>	<i>təftəkəráyən</i>	<i>təftəkərē</i>	<i>təftəkráyən</i>
1cp	<i>əftəkūrən</i>	<i>nəftəkīrən</i>	<i>nəftəkūr</i>	<i>nəftəkīrən</i>
2mp	<i>əftəkárkəm</i>	<i>təftəkīrən</i>	<i>təftəkīr</i>	<i>təftəkīrən</i>
2fp	<i>əftəkárkən</i>	<i>təftəkīrən</i>	<i>təftəkūrən</i>	<i>təftəkīrən</i>
3mp	<i>əftəkīr</i>	<i>yəftəkīrən</i>	<i>yəftəkīr</i>	<i>yəftəkīrən</i>
3fp	<i>əftəkūr</i>	<i>təftəkīrən</i>	<i>təftəkūrən</i>	<i>təftəkīrən</i>

Imperative: ms *əftəkūr*, fs *əftəkáyri*, mp *əftəkīr*, fp *əftəkūrən*

Participle: ms *məftəkīr*, fs *məftəkərēta*, md *məftəkīri*, fd *məftəkərēti*,
cp *məftəkərūtən*

It should be noted that some forms of the T2-Stem are rather rare. For example, there are just two T2 participles attested in the texts, and only five different imperative forms.

6.5.4. T2-Stem Meaning

Roots found in the T2-Stem are most often also attested in the D/L-Stem, though the derivational relationship between the two is not always obvious. If there is a clear relationship, the T2 is usually a passive of the D/L, less often a reflexive. Many T2-Stems are borrowings from the Arabic tD-Stem (Form V, *tafa*‘*ala*) or tL-Stem (Form VI, *tafā*‘*ala*), which have a similar relationship with the Arabic D- and L-Stems. Examples of T2 verbs that are passives or reflexives of the D/L are:

ʾātəlūm ‘learn’ (cf. D/L ʾōlām ‘teach’; Arabic tD *ta*‘*allama* ‘learn’)
ʾātəwūr ‘be hurt’ (cf. D/L ʾāwēr ‘hurt (trans.)’)
wətxawr ‘stay behind, come late’ (cf. D/L awōxər ‘postpone’)
ʾātōši ‘have dinner, eat’ (cf. D/L ʾāši ‘give dinner’)¹⁹
əbtərūk ‘be blessed’ (cf. D/L abōrək ‘bless’; Arabic tD *tabarraka* and tL *tabāraka* ‘be blessed’)
ḥəḏḏūr ‘be careful, be wary’ (cf. D/L ḥōḏər ‘warn’; Arabic D *ḥaḏḏara* ‘warn’ and tD *taḥaḏḏara* ‘be wary’)
əkətəlūb ‘be upset, be worried’ (cf. D/L əkōləb ‘upset’)
əmtəhūl ‘become easier’ (cf. D/L amōhəl ‘ease, lighten’)
əstəhūl ‘go safely, go with good fortune’ (cf. D/L sōhəl ‘bid farewell to’)
əwtəlūm ‘be prepared, be ready (of person or thing)’ (cf. D/L awōləm ‘prepare’)

A number of T2-Stems are reciprocals, again often with a corresponding D/L verb:

¹⁹ The D/L-Stem ʾāši is given in the ML (p. 32), but does not occur in Johnstone’s texts. We might expect the D/L form to be ʾōši, and in fact, this is the form found in Jahn (1902: 166). However, the Ḥarsusi cognate ʾāš, and the same Mehri form ʾāši printed in Johnstone’s HL (p. 11), prove that this is not a typographical error in the ML.

- əhtōdi* ‘divide amongst one another’ (cf. D/L *hōdi* ‘divide, share out’)
- əhtəlūf* ‘make a pact/alliance with one another’ (cf. Š2 *šəḥāləf* ‘make an alliance with s.o.’)
- əhtərūb* ‘be at war with one another’ (= T1 *ḥatrəb*; cf. D/L *ḥōrəb* ‘be at war with s.o.’; Arabic tL *taḥāraba* ‘be at war with one another’)²⁰
- əltəḥawm* ‘touch one another’ (= T1 *lathəm* and Š2 *šələḥəm*; cf. G *ləḥām* ‘touch’)
- əntōwəḥ* ‘fight with one another’
- ərtō* ‘draw lots for portions’ (cf. D/L *arōwa* ‘divide s.t. into portions’, *rawa* ‘lot, portion’)
- ərtəwūg* ‘plot against, make a plan (as a group)’ (cf. D/L *arwīg* ‘consult’, T1 *ratwəg* ‘consult one another’)
- wəddawd* ‘divide tasks among one another’ (cf. D/L *awdīd* ‘assign tasks’)
- əxtəlūf* ‘differ from one another’

Other T2-Stems must be considered lexical. Such are:

- ‘ātəḳawd* ‘believe’ (cf. Arabic Gt *i‘taqada* ‘believe firmly’)
- ‘ātəyūn* ‘betray’
- əbtōza* ‘make purchases’ (cf. Arabic tD *tabaḏḏa‘a* ‘shop, purchase’)
- əftəkūr* ‘think, wonder’ (cf. D/L *fōkər* ‘think’; Arabic tD *tafakkara*)
- əftərüg* ‘watch, look at’ (cf. Arabic tD *tafarraja* ‘watch’)
- əftürəḥ* ‘be delighted only to be disappointed later’ (cf. G *fīrəḥ* ‘be happy’, D/L *fōrəḥ* ‘make happy’)²¹
- əftərūk* ‘dissipate, disperse (intrans.)’ (cf. G *fərūk* ‘distribute guests over various houses’, T1 *fatrəḳ* ‘become separated’; Arabic tD *tafarraqa* and Gt *iftaraqqa* ‘disperse, become separated’)²²
- əḡtəfūk* ‘go astray (of women)’

²⁰ The *ML* lists only the T1 verb *ḥatrəb*, but the T2 verb occurs in 104:28. The T1 verb occurs in 104:29.

²¹ The imperfect form *yəftārḥən* ‘he was happy’ (89:35) is the paradigmatic form for a T2-Stem with a root-final *ḥ* (*ML*, p. lvii; see also §2.2.2). However, the imperfect form *əftərīḥən* ‘I was happy’ (89:21) looks like a paradigmatic T2 imperfect for a strong verb (i.e., as if from **əftərūḥ*).

²² In Johnstone’s *ML* (p. 100), it is claimed that this T2 verb is always plural, which is inaccurate; cf. the 3fs perfect in 98:1.

- əḡtərūb* ‘be away from home, be abroad; go down (of the sun)’ (cf. *ḡərayb* ‘strange’; Arabic tD *taḡarraba* ‘be away from home, be abroad’)
- əttūma* ‘listen to’ (cf. G *hūma* ‘hear’; Arabic Gt *istama’a* ‘listen to’)
- əḥtəwūl* ‘go crazy’ (cf. G *ḥaywəl* ‘be crazy’)
- əktəwūl* ‘panic, get upset’
- ḵəthū* ‘drink coffee’ (cf. *ḵəhwēt* ‘coffee’; Yemeni Arabic *tigahwa* ‘have coffee’)
- əmtōni* ‘wish’ (= T1 *matni*; cf. Arabic tD *tamannā* ‘wish, desire’)
- əmtūrəḡ* ‘roll around in the dust’
- əntəḵawl* ‘choose’ (apparently = G *nəḵawl* and D/L *anōḵəl* ‘choose’)
- əstōmi* ‘shout one’s tribal war-cry’
- əstəwūd* ‘be blackened’²³
- əstəyūr* ‘defecate, go to the bathroom’ (cf. G *səyūr* ‘go’, and the equivalent idiom *səyūr kə-ḥənōf-* ‘go to the bathroom’ (lit. ‘go with oneself’))
- əštəyūd* ‘fish, go fishing’ (cf. *ṣayd* ‘fish’; Arabic tD *taṣayyada* ‘hunt, catch’)
- əstəlawl* ‘wander aimlessly’ (cf. G *śəl* and T1 *śattəl* ‘migrate, move’)
- əwtəkūl* ‘rely on, trust’ (cf. D/L *awōkəl* ‘entrust with’; Arabic D *wak-kala* ‘entrust’ and Arabic tD *tawakkala* ‘rely on, trust’)
- əwtōža* ‘perform ritual ablutions before prayer’ (cf. Arabic tD *tawaḍḍa’a* ‘perform ritual ablutions before prayer’)
- əxtəlūf* ‘disappoint, let s.o. down’ (T1 *xatləf* can also have this meaning)
- əxtərūf* ‘pick, gather fruit’ (cf. G *xayrəf* ‘ripen, bloom’)
- əxtəyūb* ‘be disappointed’ (= T1 *xatyəb*; cf. Arabic tD *taxayyaba* ‘be disappointed’)
- əxtəyūn* ‘have an illusion; give an illusion to s.o.’

As can be seen in the lists of T1- and T2-Stems, a number of roots occur in both stems, with apparently the same meaning. Such are:

- T1 *ḥatrəb* ~ T2 *əḥtərūb* ‘be at war with o.a.’ (cf. Arabic tD and Gt)
- T1 *ḥatrək* ~ T2 *əḥtərūk* ‘move (intrans.)’ (cf. Arabic tD)
- T1 *ḵatnəm* ~ T2 *əḵtənūm* ‘collect fodder’

²³ Johnstone’s *ML* only lists a T1 verb *satwəd* ‘be blackened’ (p. 353). We find in the texts the form *stəwōd* (99:46; better transcribed *əstəwūd*); though listed in the *ML* under *satwəd*, and though it could be an imperfect of *satwəd*, this form is more likely an imperative or 3ms perfect from a T2 verb *əstəwūd*.

- T1 *lathəm* ~ T2 *əltəhawm* ‘touch o.a.’ (cf. Arabic Gt)
 T1 *matni* ~ T2 *əmtōni* ‘wish’ (cf. Arabic tD)
 T1 *xatləf* ~ T2 *əxtəlūf* ‘disappoint s.o., let s.o. down’
 T1 *xatyəb* ~ T2 *əxtəyūb* ‘be disappointed’ (cf. Arabic tD)

Of course, it is possible that we are misled by the brief definitions in the *ML* or the limited contexts in which these verbs occur, and that on closer inspection the T1 and T2 verbs have different nuances. But assuming that the data are accurate, we can explain the identical meanings of the two stems quite easily. Most of these verbs are probably borrowed from Arabic, where the source verb is either a tD or a Gt. There is no rigid patterning for the borrowing of Arabic T-Stem verbs; we find some Arabic tD-, tL-, and Gt-Stems that correspond to Mehri T1-Stems, and some that correspond to Mehri T2-Stems. In these cases, the verb was borrowed into both stems. In the case of *ħatrəb* ~ *əħtərūb*, we see that already in Arabic this verb appears either in the tD- or Gt-Stems with identical meaning.

6.6. *Quadriliterals*

Quadriliteral verbs are relatively rare in Mehri, or at least in Johnstone’s texts, with the exception of the common verb *abarkə* ‘run’. There are three types of quadriliterals: a basic quadriliteral type (Q-Stem), an N-Stem quadriliteral type, and a pseudo-quadriliteral type. These will be discussed in turn below.

6.6.1. *Basic Quadriliterals (Q-Stems)*

Most quadriliteral verbs belong to the category that I call Q-Stems. There are two characteristic patterns for the perfect stem of the strong verb: $(a)C_1aC_2C_3C_4$ (true quadriliterals) and $(a)C_1aC_2C_1C_2$ (reduplicated verbs). The prefixed *a-* of both patterns is the same prefix that is found in the D/L-Stem, and is present in the same environments, namely when the initial root letter is voiced or glottalic. The Q verbs found in Johnstone’s texts are:

- abarkə* ‘run’
adamdəm ‘grope’
aḡsərō ‘chat at night, chat all night’ (cf. *ḡasrawwən* ‘(in) the early evening’)
karbəl ‘crawl on one’s knees’

aḳālād (< **akaʿlād*) ‘roll (trans.)’
amarḥəb ‘welcome’ (cf. Arabic Q *marḥaba* ‘welcome’, denominative from *marḥaba* ‘welcome!’)
amarkəḥ ‘tidy up; drink coffee’²⁴
tarðəm ‘mumble’

These basic quadriliterals can also be found in the Š-Stem (ŠQ verbs). Attested in the texts is:

šadarbəš ‘call a camel by flapping one’s lips’ (cf. Q *adarbəš* ‘flap one’s lips to make a camel come’)

6.6.2. N-Stem Quadriliterals

A less common type of quadriliteral verb is characterized by an *n*- that precedes the root in all tenses. As in some Ethiopian Semitic languages (e.g., Geʿez), the N-Stem is not productive as a derivational stem, but is found only with quadriliteral roots. N-Stem quadriliteral verbs can be of two types: $\text{ənC}_1\text{əC}_2\text{C}_3\text{ūC}_4$ (true quadriliteral) and $\text{ənC}_1\text{əC}_2\text{C}_1\text{ūC}_2$ (reduplicated). The N-Stem quadriliterals attested in Johnstone’s texts are:

ənfədfūd ‘have scabies, swellings’ (cf. *fədfid* ‘scabies, ringworm’)
ənḥəṭəmūl ‘be smashed’
ənḥēbūb ‘shriek (of camels)’²⁵
ənkəwawl ‘have swollen testicles’²⁶
ənšərxawf ‘slip away, sneak away (intrans.)’ (cf. Q *šərxawf* ‘sneak s.t. to s.o.’)
ənṭayrūr ‘flow (of blood)’

²⁴ Johnstone’s text 59 deals with a misunderstanding based on the two very different meanings of this verb in Northern Mehri (‘tidy up’) and Southern Mehri (‘drink coffee’).

²⁵ This verb appears in the *ML* under the root $\sqrt{nḥbb}$ (p. 291), but the form of the perfect suggests that it belongs in this class, perhaps from a root $\sqrt{ḥybb}$.

²⁶ The verb appears in the *ML* under the root $\sqrt{kʿl}$ (p. 200), but the root must be $\sqrt{kwʿl}$, and the underlying form **ənkəwʿūl*; the first *w* of *ənkəwawl* is the radical, while the second is the result of the shift *ū* > *aw*, as a result of the underlying guttural (see §2.2.2). And, in fact, the *JL* gives the root as $\sqrt{kʿl} / kwʿl$ (p. 124).

There is one non-quadriliteral N-Stem attested, namely the participle *mənḵayṭa* (root $\sqrt{\text{ḵṭ}}$, 99:28). This is undoubtedly a direct borrowing of the Arabic N-Stem (Form VII, *inqaṭa'a*).²⁷

6.6.3. Pseudo-Quadriliterals

A third type of quadriliteral is characterized by the perfect pattern $C_1\bar{a}C_2\bar{i}C_3\bar{u}C_3$. Only three of these are attested in Johnstone's texts:

ʾāfirūr 'be(come) red' (cf. ʾōfār 'red, brown')
 xamēlūl '(tears) run silently, well up'
 žəḡayrūr 'scream, shriek'²⁸

Among others in Johnstone's *ML* are:

əwbīnūn 'become white' (< ləbīnūn; cf. əwbōn 'white')
 ḥəwīrūr 'turn black' (cf. ḥōwər 'black')

The fact that several verbs of this type are derived from color words makes obvious the connection between this pattern and the Arabic stem *ifʿalla* (Form IX). This link, and the fact that most of these verbs are derived from attested trilateral roots (cf. the color terms above), means that these verbs are best seen as trilaterals with reduplicated final radicals, and not as true quadriliterals. Therefore, I refer to these verbs as pseudo-quadriliterals.

6.7. Quinqueliterals

Only two quinqueliteral verbs are attested in the texts. One is very common, namely, *šəwəlūl* 'sit, stay', the complete conjugation of which is as follows:

²⁷ Another, pure Arabic verbal form in the texts is *təʿaggəb* 'he was delighted' (22:40) < Arabic *taʿajjab*. See §14.

²⁸ Johnstone considers *žəḡayrūr* a quinqueliteral or a quadriliteral with an infix *y* (p. xlvii). I prefer to see the *i* (reflected in this verb as *ay* because of the preceding guttural) as part of the quadriliteral vowel pattern, and not as an infix or a root letter.

	Perfect	Imperfect	Subjunctive	Conditional
1cs	<i>šxawələk</i> (< *-alk)	<i>əšxawəlül</i>	<i>l-əšxáwwəl</i> ²⁹	<i>l-əšxáwwələn</i>
2ms	<i>šxawələk</i>	<i>təšxawəlül</i>	<i>təšxáwwəl</i>	<i>təšxáwwələn</i>
2fs	<i>šxawələš</i>	<i>təšxawələyli</i>	<i>təšxáwwəl</i>	<i>təšxáwwələn</i>
3ms	<i>šxawəlül</i>	<i>yəšxawəlül</i>	<i>yəšxáwwəl</i>	<i>yəšxáwwələn</i>
3fs	<i>šxawəllüt</i>	<i>təšxawəlül</i>	<i>təšxáwwəl</i>	<i>təšxáwwələn</i>
1cd	<i>šxawələki</i>	<i>əšxawəlō</i>	<i>l-əšxawələ</i>	<i>l-əšxawələyan</i>
2cd	<i>šxawələki</i>	<i>təšxawəlō</i>	<i>təšxawələ</i>	<i>təšxawələyan</i>
3md	<i>šxawəllō</i>	<i>yəšxawəlō</i>	<i>yəšxawələ</i>	<i>yəšxawələyan</i>
3fd	<i>šxawəllətō</i>	<i>təšxawəlō</i>	<i>təšxawələ</i>	<i>təšxawələyan</i>
1cp	<i>šxawəlülən</i>	<i>nəšxawəlül</i>	<i>nəšxáwwəl</i>	<i>nəšxáwwələn</i>
2mp	<i>šxawələkəm</i>	<i>təšxawəlil</i>	<i>təšxáwłəm</i>	<i>təšxáwwələn</i>
2fp	<i>šxawələkən</i>	<i>təšxawəlülən</i>	<i>təšxáwłən</i>	<i>təšxáwwələn</i>
3mp	<i>šxawəlil</i>	<i>yəšxawəlil</i>	<i>yəšxáwłəm</i>	<i>yəšxáwwələn</i>
3fp	<i>šxawəlül</i>	<i>təšxawəlülən</i>	<i>təšxáwłən</i>	<i>təšxáwwələn</i>

Imperative: ms *šxáwwəl*, fs *šxáwwəli*, mp *šxáwłəm*, fp *šxáwłən*

Participle: ms *məšxáwwəl*, fs *məšxawələta*, md *məšxáwwəli*, fd *məšxawələti*, cp *məšxawəlütən*

The only other quinqueliteral verb attested in the texts is *zhəwəlül* ‘slide across (a surface)’, attested just once in a poetic text (79:9).

Since the fourth and fifth root consonants of both the attested quinqueliteral verbs seem to reflect reduplication, it is perhaps better to call these verbs pseudo-quinqueliterals, just as I have called the verbs discussed in §6.6.3 pseudo-quadriliterals. On the other hand, since there is no other type of quinqueliteral attested, it is simpler just to use the term quinqueliteral.

²⁹ In a few passages (94:3, 4, 9) the *l-* is omitted from the 1cs form. This is undoubtedly a typographical error, as mentioned also in §7.1.3, n. 3.

CHAPTER SEVEN

VERBS: TENSES AND FORMS

7.1. Verbal Tenses and Moods

7.1.1. Perfect

All perfects are formed by attaching the following suffixes to the appropriate verbal base:

	sing.	dual	plural
1c	-(ə)k	-(ə)ki	-ən
2m	-(ə)k	-(ə)ki	-(ə)kəm
2f	-(ə)š		-(ə)kən
3m	--	-ō / -ē	-əm / --
3f	-ūt / -ēt	-tō / -tē	--

Notes:

- The 1cs and 2ms perfects are identical for every verb in the language.
- The 3ms and 3fp perfects are identical for every verb in the language.
- The 1cd and 2cd perfects are identical for every verb in the language, just as with the possessive suffixes on nouns (§3.2).
- The 3fs suffix *-ūt* is commonly transcribed *-ōt*.
- When the 3mp form does not have the suffix *-əm*, it is characterized by an internal vowel change instead. As a general rule, this happens whenever the 3ms form has the vowel *ū/ō* in the final syllable.
- The 3fs suffix *-ēt* and the 3d suffixes *-ē* and *-tē* are less common. They are used only with G passives, D-Stems, Š2-Stems, and Q-Stems.

The basic use of the perfect is as a past tense, for example:

šənðūr h-arəḥmōn ‘he made a vow to God’ (3:3)
hamakən ‘did you hear?’ (20:8)
hēt əl matk əlā ‘you didn’t die?’ (20:69)
bərwōt tēt ‘the woman gave birth’ (24:4)
mōn ’āmōr hūk ‘who told you?’ (36:27)
šxəwəlīl wə-šəmrūz ‘they stayed and he became ill’ (48:6)
kəs bīn šətəh w-abarka ‘he exposed to us his behind and ran away’
 (91:4)
wə-kō əl səyərš lā ‘why didn’t you go?’ (97:22)

The perfect also appears regularly after a variety of particles, including the conditional particles *hām*, *əðə*, and *lū* (see §13.4), and the temporal particles *mət*, *tē*, and *hīs* (see §13.5.3). The combination of the particle *bər* plus the perfect can sometimes be translated with a pluperfect (see §12.5.6). On the perfect combined with the verbal prefix *ð-*, see §7.1.10.2.

In a small number of passages, the perfect is used in a wish or an oath; some of these seem to be fixed expressions. Examples are:

xalyək tēti ‘may I divorce my wife’ (35:5)
abēli šəwədēkəm ‘may God preserve you’ (35:15)
abašrak abēli bə-xayr ‘may God give you good news’ (45:11)
stəwōd awaghək ‘may your face be blackened’ (99:46)¹

7.1.2. Imperfect

All imperfects are formed by attaching a set of prefixes and suffixes to the appropriate verbal base. As discussed in Chapter 6, the D/L-, Š2-, and T2-Stems are categorized by the addition of a suffix *-ən* on all imperfect forms. For this reason, it is convenient to divide the set of imperfect affixes into two types. Note that the prefixes are identical for both sets. Following are the prefixes and suffixes used for all G-, H-, Š1-, and T1-Stems, as well as all quadriliterals, and quinqueliterals:

¹ As noted in §6.5.4, n. 23, *stəwōd* (better transcribed *əstəwūd*) could also be an imperative.

	sing.	dual	plural
1c	<i>ə-</i>	<i>ə-...-ō</i>	<i>nə-</i>
2m	<i>tə-(...-i)</i>	<i>tə-...-ō</i>	<i>tə-...-əm</i>
2f	<i>tə-</i>		<i>tə-...-ən</i>
3m	<i>yə-</i>	<i>yə-...-ō</i>	<i>yə-...-əm</i>
3f	<i>tə-</i>	<i>tə-...-ō</i>	<i>tə-...-ən</i>

Following are the prefixes and suffixes used for all D/L-, Š2-, and T2-Stems:

	sing.	dual	plural
1c	<i>ə-...-ən</i>	<i>ə-...-áyən</i>	<i>nə-...-ən</i>
2m	<i>tə-...-ən</i>	<i>tə-...-áyən</i>	<i>tə-...-ən</i>
2f	<i>tə-...-ən</i>		<i>tə-...-ən</i>
3m	<i>yə-...-ən</i>	<i>yə-...-áyən</i>	<i>yə-...-ən</i>
3f	<i>tə-...-ən</i>	<i>tə-...-áyən</i>	<i>tə-...-ən</i>

Notes to both sets of affixes:

- The 2ms and 3fs imperfects are identical for every verb in the language. In the D/L-, Š2-, and T2-Stems, the 2fs is also identical with these two forms.
- The 2cd and 3fd imperfects are identical for every verb in the language.
- The 2fp and 3fp imperfects are identical for every verb in the language. In the D/L-, Š2-, and T2-Stems, the 2mp is also identical with these two forms.
- In the D/L-, Š2-, and T2-Stems, the 3ms and 3mp imperfects are identical.
- With G-, H-, Š1-, and T1-Stems, in place of the 2fs suffix *-i*, we often find ablaut of the verb stem instead. (See the paradigms in Chapter 6.)
- The prefix *tə-* is sometimes lost in pronunciation and/or transcription before certain consonants (see §2.1.5).
- The final *-ō* of the G dual forms is replaced by *-ē* for G passives.

The imperfect can, in various contexts, indicate almost any tense or aspect. It can be used as a general, habitual, or immediate present; a habitual past; a future; a present or past progressive; or a circumstan-

tial complement. This suggests that the imperfect is basically an imperfective, indicating incomplete action. However, the imperfect can also function as a narrative past tense, with a clear perfective meaning. Following are examples of the imperfect used as a general, habitual, or immediate present:

- ağōrāb axayr mānk* ‘I know better than you’ (19:20)
śīwōṭ, hām sēh rēhək, tənūfa ‘fire, if it’s far away, is useful’ (36:28)
mōn yāsūkən bərk abayt dīmāh ‘who lives in this house?’ (38:11)
kāl ’āšər yəwəzməm təh gəggīt u kawt ’aysē ‘every evening they give him a girl and food for dinner’ (42:17)
đōmāh əl yəhūrək lā ‘this (man) doesn’t steal’ (47:14)
’əl əkawdər l-’attək zōyəd lā ‘I can’t drink anymore’ (49:10)
ağərōyən yəxtəlūf ‘our language differs’ (71:1)
yəsūbət āgatəh ‘he hits his sister (habitually)’ (89:33)
hō ’āgōb bə-tēṭi wə-sē tāgōb bay ‘I love my wife and she loves me’ (94:4)
əsōni ’āfōr ṭawla mən arawrəm ‘I see that a cloud has come up from the sea’ (96:7)
kāl śīən yətmōm wə-yəxlōf ‘everything comes to an end and is replaced’ (98:8)

Following are examples of the imperfect used as a past habitual, past continuous, or imperfective:

- xəṭrāt ṭayt sēkən yāsūkən bə-wōdi* ‘once there was a community that lived in a valley’ (11:1)
sənnawrət təhbōb āgāyg, yəwəzməs śxōf wə-yəltōf bīs ‘the cat loved the man; he would give her milk and was kind to her’ (15:10)
fənōhən ... hām ṭāt gēlāw, yəsyūr hāl əmsənyūtən ‘formerly ... if someone had a fever, he would go to soothsayers’ (25:17)
ḥābū yātəkaydən bīhəm, wəlākən mən sənayn əlyōmāh l-ād ’əḥād yātəkaydən bīhəm lā ‘people used to believe in them, but since those years nobody believes in them anymore’ (25:19)
kāl sənēt təfayd yəbīti ṭrayt aw śhəlīt ‘every year she got back two or three camels’ (32:13)
ağāh sōbər yəsyūr đār aqōbər đ-ağāh w-yəbayk ‘his brother would always go to his brother’s grave and cry’ (40:3)
ḥəmbərawtən sōbər yəntawḥən ‘the children were always fighting’ (50:1)

hō əl əkawdər l-əğəṭayr əngəliziyyət əlā 'ār xawr 'I could speak English only a little' (62:7)

kādēt l-ād yəšānōs yəkfēd arḥəbēt lā 'Kadet didn't yet dare to go down to the town' (64:8)

mət ḥəynīt fəlōk ḥītār, əhōrək amaws ḏə-ḥaybi w-əshōt ḥītār 'when(ever) the women let the (goat) kids out, I would steal my father's razor and slaughter kids' (89:3)

A future tense is most often indicated by an active participle (see §7.1.6), but following are examples of the imperfect used as either a simple or habitual future:

ənkalāk əlā 'we won't let you (go)' (20:72)

məgōrən əzātəš šay w-əhārōs bayš 'then I will take you with me and marry you' (24:19)

'abdan əl ərdūd lā, tē wə-lū əmūt 'I shall never go back, even if I should die' (37:19)

šār w-aḡāk yəḡarbək 'stand (there) and your brother will know you' (40:17)

mət səhēk ḏōmah, əwəzmək məšēḡər 'when you finish this, I will give you something else' (55:5)

l-ād ədōbəh zōyəd 'I will never collect honey again' (77:2) (but cf. *l-ād hō dəbhōna zōyəd lā* with the same meaning, 77:3)

yəktəlīt bay aḡəbōyəl, hām fəlatk wə-ḡalak tik 'the tribes will talk about me, if I run away and leave you' (83:2)

hēt ḡənnawn wə-l-'əḡād yəšényək lā ... l-'əḡād yənūḡəd lūk lā 'you are small and nobody will see you ... nobody will blame you' (91:15)

In narrative contexts, the imperfect can sometimes be used as a simple past (perfective) tense.² This is not terribly common, but there are a few dozen examples in the texts. Sometimes a perfect (or multiple perfects) will begin a narrative sequence, followed by one or more imperfects. But just as often, an imperfect is used as a narrative past tense without a preceding perfect. An imperfect used as a narrative past can also be followed by a perfect in the same sentence. Some examples are:

² There is some discussion of this use of the imperfect in Wagner (1953: 44-47; 2001: 342-43).

yāšūs aḡayg ḏ-tēt w-isālūl aškay wə-yəlūtəḡ ḥāḡōr wə-tēt ‘the woman’s husband got up, drew (his) sword, and killed the slave and the woman’ (5:17)

yənūka iḏābīr, yəḵbāṣay wə-bakk wə-sayark tawōli ḥabye ‘a hornet came along, stung me, and I cried and went to my parents’ (25:4)

tā anhōr xəwfit xətūl aḡayg wə-šini wēl, wə-bdēh wə-yəḥawṣawb aṣāwər ḏə-fənəwih wə-tənūṭəs tawōli aḡayg wə-tāwōr ’āynəḥ tayt ‘then the next day, the man went stalking and saw an oryx, and he missed it and shot the stone in front of him, and it ricocheted towards the man and one of his eyes was blinded’ (30:8)

tē nūka aḡay, yəḡərəbay wə-yabrəka tawalye ‘then when my brother came, he recognized me and ran to me’ (34:27)

tā bə-ḥəllay’ aḡyōḡ bər ḏə-šəwkif, təhūrək məndawḵ wə-təlūtəḡ aḡās ‘then at night, when the men had fallen asleep, she stole a rifle and killed her brother’ (64:30)

tōli təhayw bə-kabs mən ḏār saṭḥ u bəkūt ḥəyawm w-’āṣawr ‘then she dropped the lamb from the roof and cried (several) days and nights’ (75:23)

tōli ḥəmayh šərayf wə-ḡatyəḏ wə-yəḵawfəl əktōb ‘then the *sharif* heard him and got angry and shut the book’ (88:6)

Interestingly, the imperfect is used for the past tense in all four attested passages where *mət* is used in the context of a past narrative; see further in §13.5.3.1.

In a very few places, outside of a conditional sentence, an imperfect is best translated with English ‘would’, as in:

ḵərū təwyəḥ bərk dəhlil mən hāl l-’əḥād yəśanyəḥ əlā ‘he hid his meat in a hole where no one would see it’ (13:7)

hēśən yəfəṭḥəs ‘what would open it?’ (or: ‘what will open it?’) (68:9)

Several of the examples cited above show the imperfect used in the apodosis of a conditional sentences. The imperfect is, in fact, the most commonly met form in this context; see §13.4 for discussion and additional examples.

In Mehri, a past or present progressive, as well as a circumstantial, is usually indicated by the imperfect in combination with the verbal prefix *ḏ-*, as discussed separately below (§7.1.10.1). However, because the verbal prefix *ḏ-* cannot occur before the prefix *t-* (i.e., the prefix of all second person and third feminine imperfects), what looks like a

bare imperfect can also serve to indicate a progressive or circumstantial. In reality, however, these are underlyingly imperfects with the prefix *ǝ-*. See §7.1.10.1 for examples.

7.1.3. Subjunctive

The subjunctive is constructed with nearly the same prefixes and suffixes that are used for the G imperfect. The full set of affixes is:

	sing.	dual	plural
1c	<i>l-ǝ-</i>	<i>l-ǝ-...-ē</i>	<i>nǝ-</i>
2m	<i>tǝ-</i>	<i>tǝ-...-ē</i>	<i>tǝ-...-ǝm</i>
2f	<i>tǝ-(...-i)</i>		<i>tǝ-...-ǝn</i>
3m	<i>yǝ-</i>	<i>yǝ-...-ē</i>	<i>yǝ-...-ǝm</i>
3f	<i>tǝ-</i>	<i>tǝ-...-ē</i>	<i>tǝ-...-ǝn</i>

Notes:

- 1cs and 1cd forms are preceded by the particle *l-*.
- Where the imperfect has the dual suffix *-ō* or *-áyǝn*, subjunctives have *-ē*.
- The characteristic *-ǝn* of the D/L-, Š2-, and T2-Stems is absent in the subjunctive.
- As with imperfects, 2ms and 3fs subjunctives are identical for every verb in the language. With H-, Š1-, and Š2-Stem verbs, many (but not all) T1- and D/L-Stem verbs, and with all quadriliterals and quinqueliterals, the 2fs is also identical with these two forms.
- With many D/L-Stems (including strong verbs), we find ablaut of the verb stem in place of the 2fs suffix *-i*; for some weak verbs (e.g., geminates and II-w/y verbs), the 2fs is identical with the 2ms and 3fs.
- As with imperfects, 2cd and 3fd subjunctives are identical for every verb in the language.
- As with imperfects, 2fp and 3fp subjunctives are identical for every verb in the language.
- The prefix *tǝ-* is sometimes lost in pronunciation and/or transcription before certain consonants (see §2.1.5).

The verbal base to which these affixes attach is usually different than the base used for the imperfect. Only with Gb-Stems, G passives, and some weak G-Stem verbs (namely, verbs with medial gutturals, includ-

ing II-³, but not II-⁴; see §7.2.5 and §7.2.6) are the imperfect and subjunctive forms not distinct. Since all 1cs and 1cd subjunctives are preceded by a particle *l-*, this means that even for verbs that do not distinguish the forms of the imperfect and subjunctive, the 1cs and 1cd forms are always distinct. For example, the form *yāmōl* is the G-Stem 3ms imperfect and subjunctive of the root ‘*ml*, and so context must determine whether it is imperfect or subjunctive. But 1cs *āmōl* can only be imperfect, and *l-āmōl* can only be subjunctive.³

The subjunctive form can be used either independently or dependently, though the latter is far more common. When used independently in the third persons, it can express a number of things, including: 1. suggestion or obligation, equivalent to English ‘should’; 2. a third person imperative, best translated with English ‘let’; 3. a wish, like English ‘may’; 4. uncertainty, like English ‘might’. Examples are:

tēt tərdeḏ l-aḡaygās ‘let the woman return to her husband’ (19:24)
yəkšēf lə-hənaḡāh ‘let him expose himself’ (24:38)
kāl ḏ-yəḥōm xədmēt u məskēn, yənkē ‘anyone who wants work or a place to live, let him come’ (74:7)
šūk ’āmēl gīd ... ’əḥād yəhaḡrək bəh ‘you have a nice farm ... somebody should set it on fire!’ (91:9)
ṭāt yākā k-həbēr wə-ṭāt yākā k-hārawn wə-ṭāt yəkḡēd arḡəbēt ‘one should stay with the camels, one should stay with the goats, and one should go down to town’ (102:1)
abēli yəbōrək būk ‘may God bless you!’ (33:5)
yəḡarḡək abēli b-xayr ‘may God make you happy with well-being!’ (57:13)

Less often, we find a first or second person independent subjunctive, which likewise expresses suggestion, obligation, wishing, or uncertainty, as in:

hībō l-āmōl hām hāmərək lay ‘what should I do if you command me?’ (20:23)
hībō əl-kəḡēd mən ḡayr ḡayri ‘why should I get down from my donkey?’ (46:11)

³ In a few places, forms that are clearly 1cs subjunctives are missing the prefix *l-*. Such are *əśnē* (18:10), *əklēk* (20:37), *əśxawwəl* (94:3, 4, 9), and *əsyēr* (94:26). These are undoubtedly mistakes in transcription, and this is confirmed by the audio for the first two of these. I was unable to find audio for text 94 in order to confirm the latter three.

hām šarūt wəla rəddūt lay, l-əwbads ‘if she stops or comes back at me, I should shoot her’ (54:18) (but see §13.4.1, n. 8)
mət hābū šawgīs, əl-nəkēs l-’āgawz ḏə-mətūt ‘when the people go home, I should dig up the old woman who died’ (65:3)
əl-frēh bə-həbrāy ‘let me rejoice in my son!’ (90:13)
wadak mayt əl-ttākḳəh ... wadak hēsən l-’āmōl həh ‘do you know when I should drink it? ... Do you know what I should do for it?’ (101:7, 9)
’ād tākāy dənyēt? ḏə-’əmələk tay l-ākā dənyēt ‘might you be pregnant again? I think I might be pregnant’ (101:16-17)

A first person plural cohortative is normally expressed with *nəhōm* (lit. ‘we want’) plus a subjunctive verb (see §7.3.2), but *nəhōm* can be omitted if the particle *gəḏewwən* occurs (see §12.5.9).

A subjunctive verb can also be used dependently, as the complement of another verb. By far the most commonly occurring verb that takes a verbal complement is *hōm* ‘want’, which is treated separately below (§7.3). In translation, a subjunctive verb used as a verbal complement often corresponds to an English infinitive. The subjunctive can share a subject with the preceding verb, as in:

əl əgōrəb l-əgətayr ’arəbayyət əlā ‘I didn’t know how to speak Arabic’ (34:18)
əl əkawdər l-əgətayr lā ‘I wasn’t able to speak’ (40:26)
hē šawəd səkənəh yənkēhəm bād nəhōri trayt ‘he promised his community he would come back to them after two days’ (32:5)
kādēt l-ād yəšānōs yəḳfəd arḥəbēt lā ‘Kadet didn’t yet dare to go down to the town’ (64:8)
’āzawm yəhəgēməm līn ‘they decided to attack us’ (60:11)
sīrōna əl-šəkf ‘I’m going to go to sleep’ (84:7)
šəndūr h-arəhmōn yəhaḏhəb nəhər ḏōrə wə-nəhər šəxōf ‘he vowed to God to fill a valley with blood and a valley with milk’ (3:3)
l-ād həbšark əl-bār lā ‘I couldn’t see well (enough) anymore to travel by night’ (80:6)

Alternatively, and very often, the dependent subjunctive can have its own subject, which is the direct object of the preceding verb, as in:

tōli tədōfa hāgərēt təhawḳa səm bərk ’ayšə ḏ-əgās ‘then she paid a female servant to put poison in her brother’s dinner’ (24:46)

əl yāgōb ʾəḥād lā yākā his təh lā ‘he didn’t like anyone to be like him’
(76:11)

ṭəlabk tik təklēt lay ‘I ask you to tell me’ (20:38)

ḥōkəm xəṣawb ḥəmbərawtən yəḥētəməm ḥāl tēt ‘the ruler sent the
boys to stay the night with the woman’ (74:13)

ḳəḷʾay l-əbkē ‘let me cry!’ (22:19)

ḳəlōna tik tərḫā ‘I will let you go up’ (53:4)

ṭəreḥi l-ənkeš ‘let me have intercourse with you!’ (99:46)⁴

*āmōr ḥāgərōn yəḥḫērəm bayr wə-yəḳəlēm ba nəwās bərkīh
wə-yəḥənḥəm bəh šīwōṭ* ‘he told the servants to dig a well, to leave
Abu Nuwas in it, and to burn him with fire’ (20:61)

ḳəṭbōna təwōli aḡayg yənké w-izōṭ tətəḥ ‘I will write the man to
come and get his wife’ (22:79)

These last two examples show that a verb can govern more than one dependent subjunctive.

Some verbs require a preposition before their verbal complement, including *ḥəḏḏūr* (*mən*) ‘be careful, beware, take care (not to)’, *xəzū* (*mən*) ‘refuse’, and *ḫəzāḥ* (*mən*) ‘be embarrassed’. Examples are:

ḥəḏḏūr mən təḏlēm ḥābū ‘take care not to oppress the people’ (74:4)
abʿayr xəzū mən yətāk ḥəmōh ‘the camel refused to drink the water’
(49:16)

ḫəzāḥk mən əl-gəhōm təwōli bū ḏəre ‘I am embarrassed to go to
strangers’ (94:2)

A similar construction is used with *yəṣ* (*mən*) ‘be afraid’, which is treated in the section on complement clauses (§13.5.1 and §13.5.1.1).

A dependent subordinate verb can also occur after a non-verbal phrase, and in such cases is also equivalent to an English infinitive. Some non-verbal phrases that can be followed by a subjunctive are *axayr h-* (var. *xār h-*) ‘it’s better for X to’,⁵ and *ʾāyb l-* ‘it’s a disgrace for X to’. Examples are:

axayr ḥikəm tənkešm tīn ‘it’s better for you to come to us’ (28:19)

xār ḥūk təḥētəm ‘it’s better for you to spend the night’ (31:3)

⁴ The printed edition has *əl-nakš* for *l-ənkeš*, which is probably an error. See the Appendix, n. 31.

⁵ When this is negated, it means ‘it’s better for X not to’, as in the sample sentence from 42:14.

əl xār hūk tagəhōm šihəm lā ‘it’s better for you not to go with them’ (42:14)

’āyb əlikəm təntawhəm səbēb ḏə-ḥəməh ‘it’s a disgrace for you to fight because of water’ (10:6)

Compare the similar use of the subjunctive in the predicate of a non-verbal phrase:

anyatəh bə-ḥyatəh yəhkēm ḥābū bə-ṭəyōb wə-mēd ‘his aim in life was to rule the people well and wisely’ (lit. ‘with goodness and wisdom’) (67:1)

A dependent subjunctive can also indicate purpose. Sometimes these purpose clauses are best translated with English ‘so that’, while other times they are best translated with an infinitive, making them identical to those cases where the subjunctive functions as a simple verbal complement. Some examples are:

nkə əw-boh l-əršank ‘come here so that I can tie you up’ (24:26)

wəzəmīh moh yəttāk ‘he gave him water to drink’ (13:9)

kāl ṭayt təntəkōl ḡayg təsafkəh ‘each of you will choose a man to marry’ (15:21)

səyūr yəśnē ašfōri ‘he went to see the pots’ (36:24)

Sometimes a purpose clause is indicated by a particle *tē* or *l-agərē*, both of which are followed by a subjunctive; see further in §13.5.2.

The subjunctive is also used after a number of particles, including *lēzəm* ‘must’ (§12.5.10), *ndō* ‘let me!’ (§12.5.13), *taww-* ‘ought to’ (§12.5.15), *wōgəb* ‘it is proper that; ought to’ (§12.5.16), *wəṭō-* ‘should’ (§12.5.18), *yəmkən* ‘perhaps’ (§12.5.19), and with the temporal conjunction *tē* ‘until’ (§13.5.3.2).

Finally, the subjunctive can also be found in a few idiomatic expressions, such as following the particle *yā rayt* ‘if only; would that!’. The subjunctive verb itself is the idiom in *l-əḥməd* ‘how nice X must/would be!’ and *yək(ə)lēl b-* ‘there is no damned...!’:

yā rayt l-əśnē ’əḥād mənḥēm ‘if only I could see one of them!’ (94:32)

l-əḥməd azēfərāts ‘how nice her hair must be!’ (lit. ‘let me praise her hair!’) (85:7)

yəkəlēl bəh kəwt ‘there is no damned food’ (26:15)⁶

7.1.4. Conditional

The verbal form that Johnstone called the conditional takes the same set of prefixes as the imperfect and subjunctive. It is characterized by the presence of the suffix *-ən* on all forms, as well as the prefix *l-* on all 1cs and 1cd forms. This means that in those forms characterized by a suffixed *-ən* in the imperfect—namely, the D/L-, Š2-, and T2-Stems—the conditional is identical to the imperfect, except in the 1cs and 1cd. In the other verbal stems, the conditional is formed by adding the suffix *-ən* to the subjunctive, with the result that conditional forms are distinct from the subjunctive, except, for most verbs, the 2fp and 3fp forms, whose subjunctive forms already end in *-ən*. In a few verb types, including Gb-Stems and G-Stems with medial gutturals, the conditional is distinguished also by ablaut of the stem; cf. 3fp subjunctive *təghōmən* ‘they go’ (= imperfect) with conditional *təghīmən*.

In Johnstone’s texts, conditional forms are extremely rare. The only certain conditional forms occur in the apodosis of conditional sentences introduced by *lū* (see §13.4.3). All such examples from the texts are:

wə-lū əl hē haywəl lā, əl yəṣṣaytən həybəth lā ‘and if he were not crazy, he would not have slaughtered his camel’ (55:7)

lū əl bər lūtəgərbōt mənīn lā, əl nəwtēgən təh lā ‘if he had not killed four of us, we would not have killed him’ (83:7)

lū əmnēdām yəḥawsəb ləhān nəkōna təh b-amstaḵbələh, l-’əḥād yāḵān yəškūf lā ‘if a person were to take account of all that will come to him in the future, nobody would sleep’ (98:10)⁷

lū hō kōrək akawt ... wə-nakak bāwməh wə-matk, hībō yāmērən ḥābū? ... wə-l-’əḥād yāmērən ‘l-azīz fəlān’ lā ‘if I had hidden the food ... and had come here and died, what would the people say? ... Nobody would say: Oh woe for so-and-so!’ (98:12)

In addition to these, there are a couple of examples of the form (*l-*) *əkīrən* ‘I wish, would like’, which must be a conditional of the (uncommon) verb *kīwər* ‘love’. In one case the expected *l-* appears, while in

⁶ On this verb, see the entry *kll* in the *ML* (pp. 206-7).

⁷ This passage is repeated nearly verbatim in 98:11.

the other it is absent.⁸ We expect the form to be *l-əkwīrən* (see *ML*, p. xxx), but *l-əkīrən* seems to be a variant. The attested passages are:

l-əkīrən bəri hāl hāmōy ‘I wish I was with my mother!’ (42:23)

hō ’ār əkīrən l-’āmēr ‘I would like to sing’ (52:4)

Because the conditional in many cases does not have a distinct form (that is, it often has the same form as an imperfect or subjunctive), there are many places in which it is possible that an attested verb is conditional. For example, the form *yəkəbəlayən* in 94:41 could, in theory, be parsed as either a 3md imperfect or a 3md conditional of the D-Stem *aḳōbəl*. However, since an imperfect is expected here, and there is no reason to expect a conditional, this form is surely an imperfect. Similarly, in 96:1, the form *yətəxfən* could be parsed either as a 3ms subjunctive with a 1cp object suffix or as a 3ms conditional.⁹ But given the context, the form is unquestionably subjunctive. Following are these two passages in full:

sirō aḡayg wə-tētəh ḡār kərəmōt, mən hāl yəkəbəlayən səkən ‘the man and his wife went onto a hill, from where they could watch the community’ (94:41)

’āmēr həh yətəxfən ḡəhəməh ‘tell him to come to us tonight’ (96:1)

7.1.5. Imperative

The imperative is conjugated for person and number. No dual imperatives are attested in Johnstone’s texts, and the plural is used where we expect a dual (cf. 74:22), so it is unclear if dual imperatives exist at all. The forms of the imperative are essentially those of the second person subjunctive forms minus the personal prefixes, though the feminine singular sometimes has a suffixed *-i* where it is absent in the 2fs subjunctive. Some examples are:

ənkē əw-bō ‘come here!’ (1:4)

əntēr lay ‘untie me!’ (20:48)

⁸ The *l-* is barely audible in the audio of 42:23, so it is possible that the speaker produced *l-əkīrən* in 52:4, and it is just not audible. Johnstone also gives the form *əkīrən* (without *l-*) in the *ML* entry for *kwr* (p. 218), but this may be based on 52:4.

⁹ That the verb *watxəf* ‘come (in the evening)’ can take a direct object is proven elsewhere (e.g., 73:5).

aḳēfi ... w-ʾāmēri hīsən hōm l-ərmēs hənīsən ‘go ... and tell them I
 want to speak to them!’ (85:2)
šxawwəl ‘sit down!’ (82:1)
kəlēti lay ‘tell me!’ (74:18)
ḳəšāšəm həruhs ‘cut off her head!’ (97:52)
həmē, ā həbráy ‘listen, my son!’ (22:77)
tīyən tī ‘eat me!’ (2:4)
āzēməm tin hōba mī ‘give us seven hundred!’ (60:5)
āzəmən həbēryən ‘give us our camels!’ (32:21)
mələham moh ‘fill them with water!’ (97:7)

As in many other Semitic languages, the imperative form is not used in a negative phrase. Instead, a negative command is expressed by a negative subjunctive. As with any negative phrase, the negative particles are variable. We find *əl ... lā*, *l-ād ... lā*, or simply *... lā* (see further in §13.2.1). Some examples are:

əl təḳbēri bay lā ‘don’t nag me!’ (98:13)
təḳtəlōb lā ‘don’t worry!’ (102:3)
əl təḳtəlōb bəh lā ‘don’t worry about it!’ (71:3)
təḳtəwūl lā ‘don’t get upset!’ (19:11)
əl tāšōš lā ‘don’t be afraid!’ (34:25) (but simply *tāšōš lā* in 67:2)
əl təbkī lā ‘don’t cry!’ (75:23)
əl təkəlēti lə-haybi lā ‘don’t tell my father!’ (89:18)
əl təḡətayr ḡəroy kōmāh lā ‘don’t use bad language!’ (90:15)
təklēm təh bawmāh lā ‘don’t leave him here!’ (91:9)
l-ād tsələbs ḡār həmoh lā ‘don’t wait for her at all by the water!’
 (94:15)
l-ʾād təbkē lā ‘don’t cry anymore!’ (40:7)

There is one example in the texts of what looks like a negated imperative, namely, *šēžəm təh lā* ‘don’t worry about him’ (57:8). This is, in fact, a subjunctive form, though the prefix is lost in pronunciation: *šēžəm* < *tšēžəm* < *təšēžəm* (see §2.1.5). It would probably be better to transcribe the underlying form *təšēžəm* here.

7.1.6. Active Participles (Future)

The verbal form known as the active participle is an integral part of the Mehri verbal system, functioning mainly—but not exclusively—as a

future tense. Yet despite its frequency, previous treatments of Mehri have often given little attention to this form.¹⁰ It is debatable whether or not this form should be called the “active participle”, after its origins, or the “future”, after its current usage. I have opted for “active participle”, following Johnstone and other scholars.

For the forms of the active participle, there is a major division between those of the G-Stem and the derived stems, as elsewhere in Semitic. In the G-Stem, the active participle has the following basic forms, which can vary slightly for verbs with “weak” root letters:¹¹

ms	<i>CəCCōna</i>	md	<i>CəCCōni</i>	mp	<i>CəCyēCa</i>
fs	<i>CəCCīta</i>	fd	<i>CəCCáwti</i>	fp	<i>CəCCūtən</i>

In Yemeni Mehri, the feminine plural apparently has the variant form *CəCCátna*, but this form is never found in Johnstone’s texts.¹²

In all derived stems (D/L-Stem, H-Stem, T-Stems, and Š-Stems) and with quadriliteral and quinqueliteral verbs, the active participle is characterized by a prefixed *m(a)-*. The base of the derived-stem active participle is identical to the subjunctive base (i.e., the 3ms subjunctive form minus the prefix). The masculine singular active participle is simply the prefix *m(a)-* plus the base. The other forms are formed from the masculine singular plus the following endings:

fs	<i>-ēta</i>	md	<i>-i</i>	fd	<i>-ēti</i>	cp	<i>-ūtən</i>
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Paradigm forms can be found in Chapter 6. Note that for all derived-stem active participles, there is no gender distinction in the plural. It is perhaps strange that the gender distinction was lost here, but not in the paradigm of the G-Stem active participle. The issue of the loss of gender distinction in the derived-stem active participle may be related to the same phenomenon in the adjectival system. That is to say, some Mehri adjectives also do not exhibit gender distinction in the plural, for no apparent reason (e.g., *gīd* ‘good’, cp *gīyēd*; see §5.2).

As noted already above, the basic function of the active participle in Mehri is as a future tense. Of the approximately 350 attestations of the

¹⁰ Much of the material in this section was presented already in Rubin (2007). This article also treated the historical development of the active participle, both in form and function. On the issue of historical development, see also Lonnet (1994b).

¹¹ I found not a single example of a feminine dual active participle in Johnstone’s texts, so I instead rely on his paradigms in the *ML* (pp. lxix–lxxi) for this form.

¹² Cf. Lonnet (1994b: 234).

active participle in Johnstone's texts (from about 125 different roots), nearly all fall into this category. A few representative examples are:

wə-l-ād hō dābhōna zōyəd lā 'and I will never collect honey again!' (77:6)

agənnay həsṛōna arḥəbēt 'the jinnee will destroy the country' (42:20)
ḥābū nəkēya ... wə-səkyēna bawmāh 'people will come ... and dwell here' (74:5)

abkār wərdūtən aw lā yəmə 'will the cows come down (to the water) today or not?' (27:1)

hēt kənnawn w-ādk 'əl hēt məhārəs əlā 'you are a child and you will not get married yet' (8:8)

ṣākōna hōkəm u mšaxbər təh 'I will call the ruler and ask him' (20:6)
məhawṣəl tik tētk 'it will lead you to your wife' (37:15)

Note that when the subject is pronominal, the pronoun can be, and very often is, omitted. Person, therefore, must frequently be gleaned from context.

Although a future tense meaning is the norm, there are several examples where the active participle is best translated with an English present tense, specifically as a present progressive or immediate present. Sometimes, when this is the case, there is an accompanying adverb such as *ṣərōmāh* 'now', to make the present tense explicit. Examples are:

hō gəzmōna hīkəm məkā hō hērək 'I swear to you that I am not a thief' (47:11)

hō 'ār ərkəbōna ləh 'I am really mounting it [the camel]!' (102:12)
wə-ṣərōmāh 'āməlōna līn gərōy 'and now you are giving us an argument' (lit. 'making for us words') (46:13)

məwṣyēta šūk b-anḳāṭ əlyōmāh 'I am advising you on these points' (90:15)

Some examples, translated in the edition of Johnstone's texts with a present tense, are probably best categorized as futures, and thus cannot reliably be placed in this category. One such sentence is:

wə-nəḥā məšəwḡəsūtən lā 'and we won't go (this evening)' (Johnstone: 'we are not going tonight!') (35:4)

In two cases (of the same verb), the active participle is used as a progressive tense relative to a past tense verb:

hamam bəh məhaqbəl lihəm ‘they heard he was coming towards them’ (32:6)

śanyō aqawm məhaqbəl lāhi ‘they saw a raiding party coming towards them’ (83:1)

The participle *məhaqbəl* can also function as an adjective meaning ‘next’, as in *aqayḏ amhaqbəl* ‘next summer’ (39:16). For other temporal adjectives of this type, see §9.3.

Given the basic future tense meaning of the active participle, it is not at all surprising to find such forms in the apodosis of real conditional sentences, though more often an imperfect is used in this context (see further in §13.4):

təḥōm xədmēt, ʾāmlōna hūk ‘(if) you want work, I will make (it) for you’ (86:2)

hām əl nakak bihəm lā, kəṣṣōna həruhək ‘if you don’t bring them, I’ll chop off your head’ (86:3)

hām əl nakak bis lā, šəṭōna tik ‘if you don’t bring her, I’ll slaughter you’ (86:11)

əḏ hah qaybəl ... bəgdōna tihəm ‘if he accepts ... I will chase them away’ (22:93)

But we also find examples of the active participle in the apodosis of unreal conditionals, possibly having spread from its use in real conditionals:

əḏə hē səyūr šay, hē śanyōna təh ‘if he had been (lit. gone) with me (sexually), he would have seen it’ (55:10)

One example of the preceding type is not technically part of a conditional, but can be considered an equivalent. It serves as the answer to a question with a conditional form (*yāmērən*):

lū hō kōrək aqawt ... wə-nākak bāwməh wə-matk, hībō yāmērən ḥābū? ʾāmyēra: “*ḡayg bəxáyl wə-kawb!*” ‘if I had hidden the food ... and had come here and died, what would the people say? They would say: A mean man and a dog!’ (98:12)

In five places, we also find the active participle in the protasis of a real conditional sentence. One example is:

hām əl sēn wərdūtən əlā, hōm əl-hawrəd həbérye ‘if they (the cows) are not going to come down (to the water), I want to bring down my camels’ (27:3)

In this example, the use of the participle may be explained by the appearance of the same form just two lines earlier (27:1). But the use of the participle in a protasis cannot always be explained this way. For other examples, see §13.4.1.

7.1.7. Internal Passives

Internal passives occur in Mehri mainly, perhaps only, in the G-Stem. Johnstone (AAL, p. 19) says that the H-Stem also exhibits an internal passive on occasion, but there is only one, uncertain H passive in the texts. Even for the G-Stem, attested cases of the internal passive are rather rare. There are about forty internal passive forms in Johnstone’s texts. Internal passives occur in the perfect, imperfect, subjunctive, and conditional, and both the perfect and imperfect forms can be preceded by the verbal particle *ǝ-* (§7.1.10). See §6.1.2 for the full paradigm of the G-Stem passives. Following are some of the attested forms:

yamkən hərək ‘perhaps it was stolen’ (23:4)
əǝ hē bəh lə-hīs aǝyōg, ʔatēm təṣhayt; w-əǝ hē əl bəh fēhəl lā, hē yəṣhōt ‘if he has (a penis) like (other) men, you shall be killed; but if he does not have a penis, he shall be killed’ (24:39)
hō ǝ-əsəlōl ‘I was (being) carried’ (25:15)
xəwqāt bawməh ‘she was born here’ (38:12)
aǝāk bər mōt u bər qəbər ‘your brother is already dead and buried’ (40:10)
ǝ-rəṣank h-arēšīt ‘I have been tied up for the snake’ (42:17)
kəsk hābū ǝ-yərəṣayš ‘I found people pressed together’ (53:3)
kādēt bər əwtēg ‘Kadet has been killed’ (64:29)
tāšōs lā, ʔər wə-səbṭāt bə-xətrāk ‘she won’t get up unless she is hit with a stick’ (65:11)
kəsk tīs bərk dəhlīl bər ǝ-ʔātəmēt ‘I found it in a cave, already bandaged up’ (81:3)
hāməy wəzəməthəm hōṭər bə-hāṭərham ǝ-səḥāt ‘my mother gave them a (goat) kid for their kid that was slaughtered’ (89:5)

təḥōm təwtōḡ ‘you want to get killed’ (94:25)

əl-ḥarāsīs əwtēḡəm mənḥēm təmənīt ‘the Ḥarasis, eight of them were killed’ (104:29)

Note the specialized meaning of passive *xəlēk* ‘be born’ vs. active *xəlūk* ‘create’ (cf. 38:12). Also note that for some verbs the active and passive are identical as a result of phonetic changes (see rule #13 in §2.2.1 and §2.2.2). For example, the form *səḥāṭ* can be either active or passive 3ms perfect, though it is clearly passive in the context of 89:5, given above.

In 97:16, we find the phrase *ksūt agənyət bar təḥnēt təḳayk ḏ-tawkā*, translated in the printed edition as ‘she found the bag of maize ground into flour standing (there)’. The form *təḥnēt* is a 3fs G passive of the verb *təḥhān* ‘grind’. The form *ḏ-tawkā* is not totally clear, but it may be a passive of the H-Stem *həwḳā* ‘put, place’. If so, it would be an imperfect combined with the verbal prefix *ḏ-*, marking a circumstantial (§7.1.10.1).¹³

7.1.8. Passive Participles

Passive participles do not seem to be very productive or common in Mehri, though the category does exist, even if neglected in most recent grammatical treatments. Johnstone mentions in his *ML* (p. xix) that Mehri has both active and passive participles, but fails to mention the passive participle in his sketch in *AAL*. Simeone-Senelle (1997) makes no mention of either participle in her sketch. There is some discussion of passive participles in Bittner (1911: 24-25).

The basic form of the passive participle is of the pattern *məCCīC* (or *məCCayC*, by the changes discussed in §2.2.1 and §2.2.2). This pattern is used not only for G-Stems, but also for H- and T-Stems. This fact was mentioned already by Bittner, and is supported by evidence from Johnstone’s texts. According to Bittner, the passive participle is declined as follows: fs *məCCīCōt*, mp *məCCōC*, fp *məCCáCtən*. Bittner’s forms are supported by those found in Johnstone’s texts.¹⁴ Passive participles are used either as attributive or predicative adjectives. Some examples are:

¹³ In the Yemeni Mehri version of this text recorded by Müller (cf. Müller 1902: 119), Bittner analyzed the corresponding verb (*hūqa*) as an H passive. See Bittner (1915b: 11).

¹⁴ The feminine plural *məsabbōt* in 99:56 (*ḥəbēr məsabbōt* ‘satisfied camels’) is an Arabized form.

- yāmārām məṣḥayr* ‘they say (he is) bewitched’ (7:9) (cf. G *səḥār* ‘bewitch’)
- məkōn məğrayb b-Landən* ‘a famous place in London’ (53:1) (cf. G *ğərüb* ‘know’)
- nēḥar məxtīb* ‘an exhausted side-valley’ (26:15) (cf. T1 *xatyəb* ‘be at a loss’)
- bə‘ayr ǫfər məṣḥayr əl-ḥəróhəh ... u māšīm ḥəyḏēn śayməl* ‘a brown camel, branded on its head ... and its left ear is cut off’ (28:8) (cf. G *səḥār* ‘brand’ and G *‘āšōm* ‘cut off’)
- ṭāt məṣwīb* ‘one was wounded’ (64:6) (cf. H *həwṣawb* ‘hit’)
- anṣəlāt məğəzzōt* ‘the blade was loosened’ (64:19) (cf. G *ğəz* ‘loosen’)
- nəḥōm nədfēn aməlawtəğ* ‘we should bury those killed’ (64:26) (cf. G *lūtəğ* ‘kill’)¹⁵
- gēd məhmīš mərday* ‘the discarded skin of a kid’ (99:3) (cf. G *rədū* ‘throw’)¹⁶
- rəwēğəd ... məxləttən* ‘the pregnant camels ... were mixed up’ (104:4) (cf. G *xəlūt* ‘mix’)
- ğayg šōga bərəh məwṣayf* ‘a brave man who was already famous’ (76:1) (cf. H *həwṣawf* ‘describe’)

Sometimes it is not so clear whether to classify these forms as passive participles or as lexicalized adjectives. Such is the case with *məwṣayf* ‘famous’, which is clearly derivable from *həwṣawf* ‘describe’, but has a slightly different connotation than the literal past participle. More complicated is the word *məṣḥayr* ‘famous’ (e.g., 64:1; pl. *məṣḥōr*). This is clearly a passive participle in terms of its pattern, but the only related verb from this root is the non-active T2-Stem *əstəḥūr* ‘be famous’. Moreover, *məṣḥayr* is almost certainly an adaptation of the Arabic passive participle *maṣḥūr*. So *məṣḥayr* cannot be a passive participle in the productive sense.

There may be at least one passive participle of a different pattern, in the following passage:

amarāy ḡār asarf ḥayməl təwáy ‘the grass on the right side was eaten’ (23:18)

¹⁵ On the form *aməlawtəğ*, see §2.2.2.

¹⁶ The word *gēd* means ‘skin’, while *məhmīš* means ‘skin of a kid’. The word *məhmīš* is given as a noun in the *ML*, but likely has its origins as a past participle; cf. G *ḥəmūš* ‘skin a kid’.

Here, *təwəy* is likely an adjective with a pattern that corresponds historically to a passive participle (e.g., the Ge'ez pattern *CəCūC* or the Aramaic *CəCīC*). We also find the form *kətib* 'written' (39:5), in what seems to be a set phrase, *hām kətib* 'if it is written (i.e., God willing)'.¹⁷ It is not clear if this is the same passive participle pattern as *təwəy* or another pattern. It may even be an erroneous transcription for the expected passive participle *məktib*, since the preceding word ends in the consonant *m*, though the audio does not seem to support this suggestion (and see n. 17).

In the texts, there are also a number of borrowed Arabic passive participles, such as *məḥamməl* 'loaded' (3:11; Ar. *muḥammal*), *məkaddar* 'decreed' (65:14; Ar. *muqaddar*), *mətarraḥ* 'historic, famous' (88:13; Ar. *muta'arrix*?), *mēsūl* 'responsible' (91:28; Ar. *mas'ūl*), *məḥarrəm* 'forbidden' (94:28; Ar. *muḥarram*).

7.1.9. Compound Tenses

Compound tenses, in which a form of a verb meaning 'to be' is used as an auxiliary, are rather rare. Only a few examples occur in Johnstone's texts, and these are potentially calques of Arabic compound tenses. Some of the compound tenses are formed with a subjunctive form of *wika* 'be(come)' or an imperfect form *yəkūn* 'be' plus a perfect tense (on these two verbs see §13.1.1 and §13.1.2). These are usually future perfects (sometimes better translated with a future conditional in English), but a couple are conditional perfects (or past hypotheticals). Attested examples are:

hō šəṣdəkk əlā yāḳā xəlūs 'I don't believe he would have gotten lost' (23:3)

taḳam lətgəkəm ḥāməy 'have you killed my mother?' (65:13) (or perhaps: 'would you have killed?')

həthamk təh yāḳa šəwṣawb aḡaṭəw 'I suspected he must have caught the implication' (82:4)

akūn rəddək təwōli ḥəbye 'I will have gone back to my parents' (94:17)

aḡayg šəhēwəb tətəh tāḳā bər sīrūt mən ḡār ḥəmoh 'the man thought his wife would have already left the water' (94:20)

¹⁷ This Mehri phrase was recorded by Thomas in the narrative of his journey (1932: 103) and a version of this phrase was recorded by him for Baṭḥari (1937: 274).

mət nakan, tākāy bər təhanš gənyət wə-bər mōlāš azəyawrət ‘when we get back, you should have already ground the sack (of maize) and filled the jars’ (97:7)

A few times we find either a subjunctive of *wīka* or an imperfect of *yākūn* followed by an imperfect, indicating a present progressive:

’ād tākā təbayd ‘might you be lying?’ (34:16)

ḏək təkūn təgətōri kə-gənnawnise ‘it’s just that she is in converse with her jinns’ (65:11)

tōmər šātəyt təwōr w-əšhawd yəkawn ḏə-yəhamam ‘she says (this) three times, and the witnesses are listening’ (100:2)

It is possible that the verbs *təbayd* in 34:16 and *təgətōri* in 65:11, like the verb *yəhamam* in 100:2, have an underlying prefixed *ḏ-*, which is suppressed because of the prefix *t-* (see §7.1.10.1).

And in just one place we find a conditional form of *wīka* followed by an imperfect. This is in the apodosis of a conditional sentence beginning with *lū* (see §13.4.3):

lū əmnēdəm yəḥawsəb ləhān nəkōna təh b-amstaḵbələh, l-’əḥād yākān yəškūf lā ‘if a person were to take account of all that will come to him in the future, nobody would sleep’ (98:10)

In 98:11, this same passage is repeated, though with the unexpected addition of the participle *ḏ-* before the final verb (*ḏ-yəškūf*).

Once we find the subjunctive of *wīka* followed by the verb *ḥōm* ‘want’. In this context, the verb ‘want’ is the complement of the verb *yəš* ‘be afraid’, and as such should be in the subjunctive. Presumably, since the irregular verb *ḥōm* (§7.3) has no subjunctive, the subjunctive of *wīka* is used before it. The passage is:

ḏə-yəššək tīs mən tākā təḥōm tātyōn līn ‘I am afraid she wants to betray us’ (94:39)

And once we find the combination of an imperfect form of *wīka* plus a perfect tense, indicating a past habitual. Strangely, the compound tense in this passage follows a simple imperfect with the same past habitual function.

*ḥaybi wə-ḥaybək mən zəbōn yāfədō mən ḡār ḡīmāh wə-yəwḵō šərō
bərḵ amasyōl* ‘my father and your father long ago would jump
from this (cliff) and would stand [land standing] in the valley
bottom’ (99:22)

The number of examples of these compound tenses is so small that solid conclusions cannot be made.

7.1.10. *The Verbal Prefix ḡ-*

Both perfect and imperfect verbs can be preceded by the particle ḡ-. This is to be distinguished synchronically from the relative pronoun ḡ- (§3.8.1) and the genitive exponent ḡ- (§12.4), though these are all historically the same. The exact meaning of the verbal prefix ḡ- is not always easy to determine, and previous studies have usually been brief.¹⁸ In Stroomer’s edition of Johnstone’s texts, there are a fair number of instances where the verbal prefix ḡ- is transcribed, but not heard on the audio, or where the prefix is heard on the audio, but not transcribed. When such inconsistencies occur, it is hard to know which witness to trust. This complicates an already complicated set of data. Below we will attempt to sort out the uses of this particle as best as possible, given the evidence in Johnstone’s texts.

7.1.10.1. *ḡ- + Imperfect*

Let us first examine the use of ḡ- with the imperfect. Johnstone (AAL, p. 27) claims that ḡ- is prefixed to the imperfect to give a present progressive meaning, citing ḡ-yōmār ‘he is saying’ vs. yōmār ‘he (always) says’. But this is an oversimplification. The combination of ḡ- and the imperfect can indicate a past or present progressive, or a circumstantial clause.

The verbal prefix ḡ- must have its origins in the relative pronoun ḡ-. In fact, there are numerous passages in which it is difficult to determine whether or not ḡ- plus an imperfect verb is functioning as a relative clause or a circumstantial progressive. Consider the following examples:

ḵawla aḡāh ḡə-yəšəwḵūf ‘he left his brother who was sleeping’ or ‘he left his brother sleeping’ (17:3)

¹⁸ Cf. Wagner (1953: 120-21), Simeone-Senelle (2003: 247-50). Pennacchietti (2007) is an important study on the origin of the verbal prefix ḡ-.

nūka ġayg əð-yəsyūr bə-ħayk ‘along came a man who was walking on the shore’ or ‘a man came walking on the shore’ (20:32)

ʾūd fəṭənək hēxər ḏ-ənkayn ḏ-yəbayk ‘do you still remember the old man who came to us who was crying?’ or ‘do you still remember the old man who came to us crying’ (22:73)

hūma šayḥ ḏ-yōmər ‘he heard a voice that was saying...’ or ‘he heard a voice saying...’ (40:5)

šīni bū mēkən ḏ-yəwəkbəm bayt ḏə-tōgər ‘he saw a lot of people who were entering the house of a rich man’ or ‘he saw a lot of people entering the house of a rich man’ (65:6)

From such contexts, relative *ḏ-* plus an imperfect must have been reinterpreted as simply a circumstantial, referring to either the subject or object of the main verb. And indeed, we find many cases of this construction used as a circumstantial, where a relative clause does not work. Thus, indicating circumstantial clauses is one common function of the verbal prefix *ḏ-*. Some examples are:

aġayg rəd təwōli sēkənəh ḏ-iḳətōməh wə-ḏ-ixtyōb ‘the man went back to his community, despairing and disappointed’ (12:14)

sayawr aġiggēn wə-ḥāmēh ḏ-yəbakyəm ‘the boy and his mother went away crying’ (36:14)

ʾəsənihəm ḏ-yəġətəryəm ‘I saw them speaking’ (40:24)

nakam ḥābū ḏ-yabrəkam ‘the people came running’ (47:6)

mayt hamak tay ḏə-ʾōmər ‘when did you hear me singing?’ (52:11)

ksētəh ḏ-yəxawdəm ‘she found him working’ (59:6)

šxəwəlūl ḏ-yəftəkēren ‘he sat down thinking’ (65:2)

hamam təh ḥābū ḏ-yāyētən ‘the people heard him crying out’ (77:2)

Now consider the following example, in which *ḏ-* plus imperfect can be considered a relative clause, a circumstantial, or simply a main verb:

xəṭərāt ġayg ḏ-yəghōm bə-ḥōrəm ‘once there was a man who was walking on the road’ or ‘once, there was a man walking on the road’ or ‘once, a man was walking on the road’ (46:1)

Most likely from contexts like this one (46:1), the prefix *ḏ-* plus imperfect came to indicate simply a progressive action, whether past or present. There are indeed many examples of this in the texts. Some of examples of *ḏ-* plus the imperfect indicating a present progressive are:

ənḥā ḏə-nḥəwrōd ‘we are bringing (animals) to the water’ (10:4)
ḏ-yəbayk, əl šəh wəlēd lā ‘he is crying (because) he has no children’
 (22:33)
b-xayr hē wə-ḏ-yəxawdām ‘he is well and is working’ (57:8)
ḥābū ḏ-yəṭawfləh, wə-ḥəbhē ḏ-yəšəxbīr ‘people are visiting him, and
 his parents are asking’ (65:7)
ḥəbūr ḏ-yəzyūd ‘the cold is increasing’ (84:4)
ʾādəh ḏ-yawdæg ‘is he still breast-feeding?’ (101:14)¹⁹

More common in the texts are examples of *ḏ-* plus the imperfect indicating a past progressive, some of which are:

ğəsōmən, wə-hō ḏ-əsəlōl ‘we set off, and I was (being) carried’ (25:15)
hō ḏ-əbayk, wə-ənkʾay ʾāskəray ‘I was crying, and a constable came
 up to me’ (34:21)
ḥābū ḏ-yəḏḥayk mənəh ‘the people were laughing at him’ (42:49)
nəḥā ḏə-nəsyūr bə-ḥōrəm ‘we were going along the road’ (46:15)
hō ḏ-əghōm bə-ḥarmi ‘I was walking along my way’ (77:6)
hīs əlyək ḏ-yəntawḥən, ḥəwrōd ḥəzḥē ‘while those guys were fight-
 ing, he had taken his goats down to the water’ (61:6)
ḥaybi ḏ-yəbayd būk ‘father was lying to you’ (89:23)
hīs ḏ-yəḥawfər, yəhayw ḏayrəh baṭṭ ‘when he was digging, sand was
 falling on him’ (48:17)

The final example above (48:17) illustrates nicely the difference between an imperfect with and without *ḏ-*. In this sentence, *ḏ-yəḥawfər* is a past progressive ‘was digging’ (i.e., ‘was in the process of digging’), while *yəhayw* is a past continuous or habitual ‘was falling’ (i.e., ‘was falling continuously or repeatedly’).

It is not always clear, however, why the particle *ḏ-* is or is not used. For example, in about a half dozen passages, we find *ḏ-* plus an imperfect used in the apodosis of a conditional sentence, for no obvious reason, as in:

ḥām ʾād ḥəwrədk ḥəməh ḏōməh zōyəd, ḏə-nəwtəgk ‘if you bring
 (them) down to this water again, we will kill you’ (10:9)
ḥām ʾəḥād nəkayh, ḏ-yəwəzməh šəxōf ‘if anyone came to him, he
 would give him milk’ (35:23)

¹⁹ But cf. *ʾādəh yawdæg* ‘he is still breast-feeding’ in 101:15. No audio was found to compare 101:14 and 101:15.

hām ʾəḥād mənḵēm ḵarbay, Ǿ-əlūbədəh ‘if any one of you comes near me, I will shoot him’ (47:11)

In 10:9 and 47:11, we expect a bare imperfect or a participle, since the meaning is a future tense. In 35:23, we expect a bare imperfect, since the meaning is a past habitual.

As mentioned briefly above (§7.1.2), the entire situation is complicated by the fact that the verbal particle Ǿ- does not occur before the prefix *t-*, i.e., before all second person and third feminine forms of the imperfect.²⁰ In reality, this means that what looks like a bare imperfect often indicates a circumstantial, or a present or past progressive. Really these are cases of Ǿ- plus the imperfect, in which the prefix Ǿ- is suppressed. Examples are:

mən hēsən təžhōk ‘what are you laughing at?’ (5:4)
wəlēkən hīs sēn təğətəryən, hənīsən sənnawrət ‘while they were talking, the cat was by them’ (15:7)
kō ʾatēm təḥafərəm ənxāli abayti ‘why are you digging under my house?’ (19:16)
kō hēt təğawlək bay wə-təbayk ‘why are you looking at me and crying?’ (22:25)
sēh təžhōk ‘she was laughing’ (89:9)
nəkōt arēsīt tənḥōk ‘the snake came shouting’ (42:26)
hamak tīk nəḥōr tayt tōmər ‘I heard you one day singing’ (52:10)
sīrūt ḥāğərīt təbayk ‘the slave-girl went off crying’ (85:4)
kəsūt ḥābū Ǿ-yəftərəğən wə-ḥəynīt tənəḥəğən ‘she found the people watching and the women dancing’ (97:13)

It should be mentioned that in at least one passage, Ǿ- is transcribed before *t-*, though the Ǿ- is not audible on the audio (*Ǿə-təḵayn*, 63:13).²¹

As noted in §8.20, it seems that when the pronoun following *xā* ‘as if’ is *hō*, Ǿ- is required before the verb.

²⁰ The particle Ǿ- is apparently not suppressed before *t-* when it is part of the verbal root, though evidence for this is not abundant. Cf. *Ǿə-təlayk* ‘I regret’ (from *tlū* ‘regret’, 53:6).

²¹ The reader does struggle with this passage, and it is certainly possible that the Ǿ- prefix was audible when uttered by the original speaker whose words were transcribed. A similar phrase with the same verb (*təḵayn*) is found in 63:4, without Ǿ- transcribed or heard on the audio. It should also be mentioned that in 63:13, Ǿ- should probably be parsed as a relative.

7.1.10.2. *Ǿ-* + *Perfect*

A single sentence can describe nearly all attested cases of the imperfect with prefixed *Ǿ-*. Unfortunately, no such easy description can be given for the perfect with prefixed *Ǿ-*. In fact, it is not always clear why a perfect has prefixed *Ǿ-*. One use of the perfect with *Ǿ-* is to indicate a circumstantial. While an imperfect with *Ǿ-* can indicate a circumstantial referring to simultaneous action, the perfect with *Ǿ-* indicates a circumstantial referring to an action that has taken place or indicates a circumstantial stative. Sometimes such a circumstantial can be translated with an English perfect participle ('having done X...' or 'having become X...'), even if this is somewhat awkward. This is illustrated in the following examples:

nkōt aǧǧānōt Ǿ-wbsut labs Ǿ-ǧǧǧēn 'the girl came wearing (lit. having put on) boys' clothes' (24:6)

kūsa haybāh Ǿ-aywār 'he found his father blind (lit. having gone blind)' (24:50)

kūsām ḥabrīt Ǿ-ḥōkām Ǿ-rāšnēt b-ǧāndēt 'they found the ruler's daughter tied up (lit. having been tied up) to a tree-trunk' (42:15)

watxāfāk Ǿ-gayak 'I've come home hungry' (63:12)

ḵalak tīs sār abyūt ǧlyēk Ǿ-šāwkfūt 'I left her behind those houses, sleeping (lit. having fallen asleep)' (65:9)

rāddām Ǿ-šānsayr 'they returned victorious (or: having won)' (69:8)

ḥātīm Ǿ-ḥāzīn 'they spent the night being sad' (74:14)

kāsk tīs bārḵ dāḥlīl bār Ǿ-ʾātāmēt 'I found it in a cave already bandaged up (lit. having been bandaged)' (81:3)

sīrūt ǧār ḥāmoh Ǿ-fārḥōt 'she went to the water happy (lit. having become happy)' (94:23)

Statives tend to be expressed in Mehri with *Ǿ-* plus a perfect. So for example, phrases like 'I am/was hungry' and 'I am/was cold' are expressed literally as 'I have/had become hungry' and 'I have/had become cold'. We could say then that the *Ǿ-* prefix indicates what in English would be called a present perfect, at least with stative verbs. Examples are:

hō Ǿ-ǧālḵāk u Ǿ-ḥābārāk 'I had a fever and a chill' (18:2)

Ǿ-ḥtāwēk aw ḥībō 'are you crazy or what?' (20:5)

hēm Ǿ-ḥāzīn 'they were sad' (23:1)

hō ḏa-yəṣṣək mənš ‘I am afraid of you’ (54:19)
hō ḏa-əḥtəmk lā ‘I am not sure’ (57:10)
ḥəmbərawtən ḏa-gayam ‘the boys were hungry’ (84:7)
hō ḏa-handək ‘I am drowsy’ (99:5)
hō ḏa-gayak ‘I am hungry’ (99:10)

Certain other verbs behave in the same way, even though they cannot be called statives. One example is the verb *hānō*, which has the meaning ‘intend’ when used in the perfect with prefixed *ḏ*-. For example:

ḏa-hānō yəftēk ‘he intends to leave’ (57:8)
əl hō ḏa-hānayk əwṭōməh lā ... ’ār ḏa-hanayš hēšən ‘I didn’t intend it like that ... then what did you intend?’ (59:10-11)
ḏa-hānayk əl-syēr ‘I intended to go’ (77:5)

The verb *’aymal* ‘make, do’ sometimes has the meaning ‘think, believe, be of the opinion’ (cf. 28:2; 91:8), but when used in the perfect with prefixed *ḏ*-, it seems to always have this meaning, as in:

kəsk šəṭərayr ... wə-ḏ-’əmələk təh ḏ-ənsay ‘I found a strip of cloth ... and I thought it was a human’s’ (63:9)
ḏa-’əmələk tīs təhaflət mən ḏayri ‘I think she has run away from me’ (94:22)
ḏa-’əmələk tay l-ākā dənyēt ‘I think I might be pregnant’ (101:17)

Other uses of *ḏ*- plus the perfect are more difficult to explain. One of the most commonly occurring verbs in this construction is *ḡərūb* ‘know’, attested in ten or eleven passages in the texts.²² Three of these are probably circumstantial clauses, but the others are not so clear. Some of these are:

hēt ’ār ḏ-ḡərəbk ənḥa wōḡəb līn nəšhōṭ hūk ‘you surely know that we are obliged to slaughter for you’ (31:14)
hō ḏ-ḡərəbk tik ḡār azayga ‘I know you are in the pen’ (64:29)
hō ḏa-ḡərəbk ḥayalla tāṭ ḏ-yənkā bawməh ḥərfōna tīs ‘I know that whoever comes here will move it’ (67:5)
hō ḏ-ḡərəbk amānēh ‘I knew his intention’ (71:2)
hēt ḏa-ḡərəbk təh ‘you know it’ (82:4)

²² In 89:35 we read *ḏa-ḡərəbk*, but the particle *ḏ*- is not heard in the audio version. I presume the printed text is correct, but cannot be sure.

Perhaps this verb is treated as a stative (as it is in some other languages). Or perhaps in the perfect with prefixed *ǝ-*, there is an aspectual nuance indicated, pointing to knowledge at a particular moment, as opposed to general knowledge; cf. the imperfect used as a general present in the phrase *ǝǧōrǝb axayr mǝnk* ‘I know better than you’ (19:20). Or perhaps the fact that an independent pronoun is used in all of these examples is a clue. We might suggest then that *ǝ-* is used along with the pronoun to provide some sort of emphasis. Other examples in which we find an independent pronoun used in conjunction with *ǝ-* + perfect, without a clear function, are:

ǝnhā ǝǧ-šǧzyūmǝn ‘we have run short of milk’ (28:14)

hēt ǝǧ-šāsark hābū ‘you are keen on the people’ (67:5)

Still the exact function of the prefix *ǝ-* in these examples is not so clear. And it is worth noting that independent pronouns are commonly used with stative verbs too (see the examples above). Further investigation is needed on the use of this construction.

7.2. Weak Verbs

By the term “weak verb”, I mean any verb whose conjugation differs from that of the basic paradigm (see Chapter 6) because of the presence of one or more particular root consonants which cause or have caused phonetic changes. Mehri is particularly rich in weak verb types. A complete survey of all weak verb forms will not be given here for three reasons: 1. The data found in the texts alone are insufficient, since many forms are not attested; 2. Johnstone provides about fifty pages of verbal paradigms in his *ML*, covering almost all weak verb types; 3. a complete survey of all weak verb types (assuming we had the data) warrants a significant amount of space. Instead, in this section, I will provide an overview of the major weak verb types and their characteristic features. For convenience, forms of each weak verb type will be compared to the strong verbal forms.

7.2.1. *I-ʾ* and *I-ʿ* Verbs

In the Ga-, H-, T-, and Š-Stems, verbs whose first root letter is ʾ or ʿ are characterized by having a long *ā* in the first syllable. In a few forms, identified below, we find differences depending on whether the root letter was originally ʾ or ʿ. Some representative forms are:

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
Ga strong	<i>rəkūb</i>	<i>yərūkəb</i>	<i>yərkēb</i>
I- ^ʔ / I- ^c	<i>ʾāmūr</i>	<i>yāmōr</i> ²³	<i>yaʾmēr</i> (/ <i>yāmēr</i>)
H strong	<i>həkūb</i>	<i>yəhəkūb</i>	<i>yəhārkəb</i>
I- ^ʔ / I- ^c	<i>hārūs</i>	<i>yəhārūs</i>	<i>yəhērās</i>
Š1 strong	<i>šəkūr</i>	<i>yəšəkūr</i>	<i>yəšākūr</i>
I- ^ʔ / I- ^c	<i>šanūs</i>	<i>yəšanūs</i>	<i>yəšēnās</i> ²⁴
Š2 strong	<i>šənēsəm</i>	<i>yəšnāsmən</i>	<i>yəšnēsəm</i>
I- ^ʔ / I- ^c	<i>šādəl</i>	<i>yəšādələn</i>	<i>yəšādəl</i>
T2 strong	<i>əftəkūr</i>	<i>yəftəkīrən</i>	<i>yəftəkūr</i>
I- ^ʔ / I- ^c	<i>ʾətəlūm</i>	<i>yātəlīmən</i>	<i>yātəlūm</i>

Gb verbs whose first root letter is ʾ or ʿ behave normally in the perfect, with the exception that the vowel *ī* of the perfect shifts to *ay*, in accordance with the rules given in §2.2.2. In the imperfect and subjunctive they show the same characteristic *ā* of Ga-Stems.

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
Gb strong	<i>ʿībər</i>	<i>yəʿbōr</i>	<i>yəʿbōr</i>
I- ^ʔ / I- ^c	<i>ʾayməl</i>	<i>yāmōl</i>	<i>yāmōl</i>

In the D/L-Stem, there is a distinction between I-^ʔ verbs and I-^c verbs. Verbs whose first root letter is historically ʾ replace this consonant with *w* in the D/L-Stem, while verbs whose first root letter is ʿ simply exhibit an initial ʾō-. However, verbs whose verb root letter is ʿ and whose second root letter is *w* or *y* exhibit initial ʾā-, instead (probably also III-w/y verbs; see §6.5.4, n. 19 for an example). Some sample forms are:

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
D/L strong	<i>arōkəb</i>	<i>yarākbən</i>	<i>yarōkəb</i>
I- ^ʔ	<i>awōḏən</i>	<i>yawāḏnən</i>	<i>yawōḏən</i>
I- ^c	<i>ʾōzər</i>	<i>yāzərən</i>	<i>yōzər</i>
I- ^c , II-w/y	<i>ʾāyēt</i>	<i>yāyētən</i> ²⁵	<i>yāyēt</i>

²³ Some verbs have a *w* in the imperfect, e.g., ʾālūm ‘mark’, 3ms imperfect *yawləm*, and ʾādūg ‘suck (at the breast)’, 3ms imperfect *yawdæg*.

²⁴ For I-^c verbs (vs. I-^ʔ) the subjunctive has -šā- or -šē-.

²⁵ This is the form met in the texts, and given in the *ML* entry (p. 38). However, in the *ML* paradigms (p. xxxvii), we find the form *yāʾītən*. Ignoring the ever-present *ī* ~ *ē* variation, it would seem that there is an underlying form *yāʾētən*, realized in speech as *yāyētən*. Other entries in the *ML* also attest to conflicting data; cf. *yāʿīṣən* (p. 38, root ʿyś), but *yāyēbən* (p. 37, root ʿyb).

7.2.2. I-Guttural and I-Glottalic Verbs

Verbs whose initial root letter is a guttural (other than ' or ʕ) or a glottalic are not weak, except for the fact that they are subject to the changes of $\bar{i} > ay$, $\bar{u} > aw$, and $\bar{e} > \bar{a}$. So, we find Gb-Stem perfects like *ḥaylām* 'dream' and *ḵayrāb* 'approach, be near' (cf. strong *tībār* 'break'). These vowel changes are discussed in §2.2.1 and §2.2.2, where a number of other examples are given.

7.2.3. I-w and I-y Verbs

Verbs whose first root letter is *w* are completely regular in the G-, D/L-, H-, and Š-Stems, with the exception of the Ga subjunctive (and hence imperative) forms, which behave as if the verb were of the I-^c type. Compare:

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
Ga strong	<i>rakūb</i>	<i>yārūkāb</i>	<i>yārķēb</i>
I-w	<i>wāzūm</i>	<i>yāwūzām</i>	<i>yāzēm</i>
Gb strong	<i>tībār</i>	<i>yātībōr</i>	<i>yātībōr</i>
I-w	<i>wīṣāl</i>	<i>yāwṣōl</i>	<i>yāwṣōl</i>

I-w verbs seem also to be regular in the T2-Stem, though data are extremely slim in the texts; one attested form is the active participle *māwtākīl* '(I'll) trust' (36:5), which patterns with a strong T2-Stem.

In the T1-Stem, I-w verbs behave as strong verbs in the perfect, but the *w* is lost in the imperfect and subjunctive:²⁶

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
T1 strong	<i>nātfāz</i>	<i>yāntāfūz</i>	<i>yāntīfāz</i>
I-w	<i>wātķāḏ</i>	<i>yātķūḏ</i>	<i>yātīķāḏ</i>

Verbs whose first root letter is *y* are exceedingly rare. Just one occurs in the texts, *yāṣ* 'be afraid'. In the perfect this behaves like any other geminate verb, but its imperfect and subjunctive forms (e.g., 3ms

²⁶ Data are also very slim for T1-Stem I-w verbs, and further study is needed. The active participle *māttūkāḏ* (from *wātķāḏ* 'wake up') in 99:8 is unexpected (assuming its transcription is correct), and suggests other irregularities with I-w verbs.

yāṣōṣ) look as if they are from a Gb-Stem I-³ verb. The *ML* (p. 462) lists an H-Stem of this verb, whose forms look irregular. The *ML* also lists one other I-y verb, *hātūm* ‘be(come) an orphan’ (root *ytm*), which looks identical to the H-Stem of the root ‘*tm*’.

7.2.4. I-l, II-l, and III-l Verbs

Verbs that have *l* as one of their root letters perhaps do not form a separate class of weak verbs, in that they follow the strong verb pattern of conjugation. However, since the consonant *l* is subject to phonetic changes that can obscure the verbal pattern, verbs with *l* can be considered weak. The effects of *l* on verb forms have already been discussed in §2.1.4, where numerous examples can be found.

7.2.5. II-Guttural and II-Glottalic Verbs

Verbs whose second root letter is one of the gutturals *ġ*, *ħ*, or *x* (on ³ and ⁵, see §7.2.6) or one of the glottalic consonants are subject to the sound changes *ū* > *aw*, *ī* > *ay*, and *ē* > *ā*, discussed in §2.2.1 and §2.2.2. For example:

	3ms perfect	3mp perfect	3ms imperfect
H strong	<i>harkūb</i>	<i>harkīb</i>	<i>yaharkūb</i>
II-Glott.	<i>həkṣawm</i>	<i>həkṣaym</i>	<i>yahəkṣawm</i>
II-Gutt.	<i>həbġawż</i>	<i>həbġayż</i>	<i>yahəbġawż</i>
Š1 strong	<i>šəkbūr</i>	<i>šəkbīr</i>	<i>yəšəkbūr</i>
II-Glott.	<i>šəkṣawr</i>	<i>šəkṣayr</i>	<i>yəšəkṣawr</i>
II-Gutt.	<i>šənhawr</i>	<i>šənhayr</i>	<i>yəšənhawr</i>

In the H-, Š-, and T-Stems, these sound changes are the only characteristic features of II-Guttural and II-Glottalic verbs. Surprisingly few II-Guttural or II-Glottalic verbs are attested in the D/L-Stem, but those that are (e.g., *aḵōṣər* ‘shorten’, *fōxər* ‘beautify, dress up’) behave like strong verbs.

For G-Stems, these sound changes *ū* > *aw*, *ī* > *ay*, and *ē* > *ā* are the only notable features of II-Glottalic verbs. However, II-Guttural verbs are distinctive in the G-Stem. All verbs whose second root letter is *ġ*, *ħ*, or *x*, have the pattern *CəCāC* in the perfect, and the imperfect/subjunctive pattern *yəCCōC*, like strong Gb-Stems. Verbs whose second

root letter is *h* are also distinctive in the G-Stem. They look very similar to other II-Guttural verbs, except that their perfect has the pattern *CəCēC*, with *ē* rather than *ā*. Examples are:

	3ms perfect	3ms imperf.	3ms subjunct.
Ga strong	<i>rəkūb</i>	<i>yərūkəb</i>	<i>yərkēb</i>
Gb strong	<i>ṭībər</i>	<i>yəṭbōr</i>	<i>yəṭbōr</i>
II-Gutt.	<i>nəḥāg</i>	<i>yənḥōg</i>	<i>yənḥōg</i>
II-h	<i>gəḥēm</i>	<i>yəghōm</i>	<i>yəghōm</i>

In the first and second persons of the perfect, *ḡ*, *ḥ*, or *x* tend to be followed by *a* where strong verbs have *ə*, e.g., *səḥátḱ* ‘I danced’, *nəḥág(ə)k* ‘I danced’ (cf. strong *rəkábḱ*).

The few II-h verbs that are attested in the D/L-Stem behave as strong verbs (e.g., *fōḥəm* ‘make understand’, *amōḥəl* ‘lighten; stop’), with the exception of *azhīb* ‘dress up a woman in finery’, which conjugates like a II-w/y or geminate verb. II-h verbs are regular in all other stems.

7.2.6. II-^ʾ and II-^ʿ Verbs

Verbs whose second root letter is ^ʾ or ^ʿ form a special class of II-Guttural verbs, different enough to merit separate treatment. In the G-Stem, verbs that are II-^ʿ behave like other II-Guttural verbs in that their forms are based on the pattern *CəCāC* for the perfect, and *yəCCōC* for the imperfect/subjunctive. The difference is that the ^ʿ is lost completely, resulting in a monosyllabic base *CāC* for the perfect and *yəCōC* for the imperfect/subjunctive. Nearly all II-^ʿ verbs follow this pattern in the G-Stem. An exception is the verb *ḡār* ‘fall’, which has a 3ms imperfect *yəḡawr* and subjunctive *yəḡār*.²⁷ As for verbs whose middle root letter is ^ʾ (of which there are very few), they behave like II-^ʿ verbs, except that they have the characteristic pattern *CōC* in the perfect (on the sound changes involved, see further in §2.1.2). Some examples are:

²⁷ Strangely, it is this verb, which goes against the pattern of all other G-Stem II-^ʿ verbs, that Johnstone chose for his paradigms in the *ML* (pp. xxv-xxvi).

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
Ga strong	<i>rəkūb</i>	<i>yərūkəb</i>	<i>yərəkēb</i>
Gb strong	<i>ṭībār</i>	<i>yəṭbōr</i>	<i>yəṭbōr</i>
II-Gutt.	<i>nəḥāg</i>	<i>yənḥōg</i>	<i>yənḥōg</i>
II- ^ʿ	<i>tāb</i>	<i>yətōb</i>	<i>yətōb</i>
II- ^ʿ other	<i>gār</i>	<i>yəgawr</i>	<i>yəgār</i>
II- ^ʾ	<i>šōm</i>	<i>yəšōm</i>	<i>yəšōm</i>

In the H-Stem, II-^ʿ verbs also show the loss of ^ʿ, as well as the shift of *ū* to *aw* found with all II-Gutturals (§2.2.2). So in the perfect, we find $(hə)CawC < *(hə)C^{\prime}awC < *(hə)C^{\prime}ūC$. In the subjunctive, the ^ʿ is simply lost, but there is no reduction of the following vowel, as there is with strong verbs, for example:

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
H strong	<i>hərkūb</i>	<i>yəhərkūb</i>	<i>yəhārkəb</i>
II-Gutt.	<i>həbgawz</i>	<i>yəhəbgāwz</i>	<i>yəhābgəz</i>
II- ^ʿ	<i>həbawr</i>	<i>yəhəbāwr</i>	<i>yəhābar</i>

II-^ʿ verbs in the Š1-Stem behave as in the H-Stem (according to the *ML*), though no such forms are attested in the texts. Only one II-^ʿ verb is attested in the Š2-Stem, namely *šəwēd*. In this case, the sequence $Cē^{\prime}əC$ of the perfect and subjunctive and the sequence $Cá^{\prime}C$ of the imperfect both collapse to $CēC$:

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
Š2 strong	<i>šənēsəm</i>	<i>yəšnāsmən</i>	<i>yəšnēsəm</i>
II- ^ʿ	<i>šəwēd</i>	<i>yəšwēdən</i>	<i>yəšwēd</i>

Only one T-Stem form is attested from a II-^ʿ verb, namely, *ṭətānəm* ‘they stabbed one another’ (4:17). There is also one II-^ʿ quadriliteral verb (Q-Stem) used in the texts, namely, *aḳāləd* ‘roll’ (cf. strong *karbəl*). Here we see the same characteristic *ā* found in the G-Stem. In the imperfect, we find *yəḳəlawd*, with the shift of *ū* to *aw*.

No II-^ʿ verbs are attested in the D/L-Stem, and no II-^ʾ verbs are attested outside of the G-Stem, with the exception of *šītəm* ‘buy’. And

though this verb is historically a T-Stem of the root *śʾm*, it conjugates as if it were a Gb-Stem of the root *śtm*.

7.2.7. II-w and II-y Verbs

Verbs whose second root letter is *y* differ only partially from strong verbs in the G-Stem. Compare the forms of the verb *śayūr* ‘go’, the most common II-y G-Stem:

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
Ga strong	<i>rakūb</i>	<i>yārūkāb</i>	<i>yārķēb</i>
II-y	<i>śayūr</i>	<i>yāsyūr</i>	<i>yāsyēr</i>

The subjunctive base, which looks like the strong pattern, is often realized *yāsēr* or *yāsīr*, and the imperative (made from the subjunctive) is attested in the texts roughly twenty times with the base *sēr* or *sīr*, but just twice with the base *syēr*. In some forms of the perfect, we regularly find the base *sīr-* in place of *śayār-*, when followed by a vocalic suffix, e.g., 3fs *sīrūt* and 3md *sīrō*, but 1cs *śayārķ*.

II-w verbs seem to behave as strong verbs in the Gb-Stem (e.g., *ʾaywār* ‘become blind’, *kīwār* ‘love’), but in the Ga-Stem, they form a separate conjugation type. Like II-ʾ verbs, II-w verbs have a 3ms perfect of the shape *CōC*, but unlike II-ʾ verbs, they have distinct imperfect and subjunctive forms. Compare:

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
Ga strong	<i>rakūb</i>	<i>yārūkāb</i>	<i>yārķēb</i>
II-ʾ	<i>śōm</i>	<i>yāśōm</i>	<i>yāśōm</i>
II-w	<i>mōt</i> ²⁸	<i>yāmūt</i>	<i>yāmēt</i>

In the D/L-Stem, II-w and II-y verbs form a single class. Both *w* and *y* remain present in the forms, but the pattern itself is distinctive. Instead of the perfect/subjunctive pattern (a)*CōCCāb*, II-w/y verbs have the pattern (a)*CCīC*, which appears in the imperfect as well. This is the same pattern as found with geminate verbs (§7.2.10). Examples are:

²⁸ In the paradigms in the *ML* (p. xxix), the verb *mōt* is mistakenly listed as a II-y verb.

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
D/L strong	<i>arōkāb</i>	<i>yarákbən</i>	<i>yarōkāb</i>
II-w	<i>aḳwīn</i>	<i>yaḳwīnən</i>	<i>yaḳwīn</i>
II-y	<i>ašyīḥ</i>	<i>yašyīḥən</i>	<i>yašyīḥ</i>
geminate	<i>abdid</i>	<i>yabdidən</i>	<i>yabdid</i>

At least one II-w/y verb has a different conjugation pattern in the D/L-Stem, namely, the verb *šēwār* ‘consult’. This verb does not occur in the texts, but is listed in the *ML* (pp. xxxv-xxxvi, 388). The verb *šēwār* conjugates like a strong D/L-Stem, except with *ē* in place of *ō* in the first syllable of the perfect and subjunctive:

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
D/L strong	<i>arōkāb</i>	<i>yarákbən</i>	<i>yarōkāb</i>
II-w	<i>aḳwīn</i>	<i>yaḳwīnən</i>	<i>yaḳwīn</i>
II-w other	<i>šēwār</i>	<i>yašáwrən</i>	<i>yašēwār</i>

The initial voiceless consonant is not a factor, since other II-w verbs with voiceless initial consonants behave as expected, e.g., *twīb* ‘repent’ and *xwīš* ‘collect *xawš* for basket-weaving’. Perhaps the consonant *ś* is the problem, since it would be quite difficult to pronounce the initial cluster *św-* of the expected form ***śwīr*.

For the most part, II-w verbs follow strong verbs in the H-, Š-, and T-Stems, for example:

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
H strong	<i>hārkūb</i>	<i>yāhārkūb</i>	<i>yāhārkāb</i>
II-w	<i>hāḡwūš</i>	<i>yāhāḡwūš</i>	<i>yāhāḡwāš</i>
Š1 strong	<i>šākbūr</i>	<i>yāšākbūr</i>	<i>yāšākbār</i>
II-w	<i>šāhwūb</i>	<i>yāšāhwūb</i>	<i>yāšāhwāb</i>
Š2 strong	<i>šānēsām</i>	<i>yāšnāsmən</i>	<i>yāšnēsām</i>
II-w	<i>šānēwāš</i>	<i>yāšnāwšən</i>	<i>yāšānēwāš</i>
T2 strong	<i>āftākūr</i>	<i>yāftākīrən</i>	<i>yāftākūr</i>
II-w	<i>āḥtāwūl</i>	<i>yāḥtāwīlən</i>	<i>yāḥtāwūl</i>

However, sequences of the shape $wəC$ and $əwC$ are usually realized as $ūC$, and so we find forms like 3fs perfect $həḡūṣūt$ (< $*həḡəwṣūt$; cf. strong $hərkəbūt$). This change is also seen in the 3ms perfect of the T1-Stem, e.g., $śatūk$ ‘miss’ (< $*śatwək$):

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
T1 strong	<i>nátfəz</i>	<i>yəntəfūz</i>	<i>yəntifəz</i>
II-w	<i>śatūk</i>	<i>yəštəwūk</i>	<i>yəštīwək</i>

Though less common, II-y verbs are also more or less regular in the H-, Š-, and T-Stems:

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
H strong	<i>hərkūb</i>	<i>yəhərkūb</i>	<i>yəhərkəb</i>
II-y	<i>həzyūd</i>	<i>yəhəzyūd</i>	<i>yəhəzyəd</i>
Š1 strong	<i>śəkbūr</i>	<i>yəśəkbūr</i>	<i>yəśəkbər</i>
II-y	<i>śəzyūk</i>	<i>yəśəzyūk</i>	<i>yəśəzyək</i>
T1 strong	<i>nátfəz</i>	<i>yəntəfūz</i>	<i>yəntifəz</i>
II-y	<i>ḡatyəḏ</i>	<i>yəḡtəyūḏ</i>	<i>yəḡtiḏ</i>

II-y verbs also show a similar realization of $yəC$ and $əyC$ as iC , though not in the 3ms perfect of the T1-Stem (e.g., $ḡatyəḏ$). An example is a form like 2ms perfect $ḡatiḏək$ ‘you got angry’ (90:15) (< $*ḡatyəḏək$; cf. strong $natfəzək$). Note the T1 subjunctive $yəḡtiḏ$ (< $*yəḡtiyəḏ$), with the shift of $iyə > i$.

In at least one II-w root, we see a metathesis of the first two root consonants in the H- and Š1-Stem. This is the root $ṣwb$, from which we find H $həwṣawb$ ‘hit (with a bullet)’ and Š1 $šəwṣawb$ ‘be wounded, be hit (with a bullet)’. These verbs behave as if they were from a root $wṣb$, i.e., they behave as I-w verbs (more accurately, as I-w, II-Glottalic verbs). The original root $ṣwb$ can be seen in the noun $ṣawb$ ‘direction’ and in the passive participle $məṣwīb$ ‘wounded’. Interestingly, Johnstone lists another Š1-Stem in the *ML* (p. 367), $šəṣwūb$ ‘be wounded deliberately’, though this form does not occur in the texts. In the *ML* (p. xlv), there is a footnote to the paradigm of $həwṣawb$ that reads “in many hollow [i.e., II-w/y] verbs of this kind the radicals occur in the order wCC ”. However, both in the texts and in the *ML*, I found no other verbs that undergo metathesis like $həwṣawb$ and

šawšawb. So either Johnstone's footnote is incorrect, or the data in the texts are not telling the whole story. Based on the data we have, it seems that *hawšawb* and *šawšawb* are anomalous.

7.2.8. III-Guttural Verbs (including III-^ʾ and III-^ʿ Verbs)

Verbs whose third root consonant is one of the six gutturals ^ʾ, ^ʿ, ġ, *h*, *ħ*, and *x* are subject to a variety of sound changes, all of which have already been discussed (§2.2.2). It is worth noting here that ^ʾ and *h* pattern with the other guttural letters in this case, whereas when it comes to the second root letter, they do not (see §7.2.5, §7.2.6). The most characteristic feature of this verb type is the sound change *CāCūG* or *āCCūG* > *CūCāG* (where *G* = ^ʾ, ^ʿ, ġ, *h*, *ħ*, or *x*), which affects Ga-Stem perfects, T2-Stem perfects and imperfects, H-Stem imperfects, and passive participles, among other forms (see §2.2.2 for examples). The G-Stem imperfects and subjunctives are normal for III-Guttural verbs, except for verbs whose final root letter is ^ʾ or ^ʿ. In these verbs, the final root consonant is dropped, resulting in a characteristic final *-a* in the imperfect and *-ē* in the subjunctive.²⁹ Examples are:

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
Ga strong	<i>rākūb</i>	<i>yārūkāb</i>	<i>yārķēb</i>
III-ġ/h/ħ/x	<i>sūmāḥ</i>	<i>yāsūmāḥ</i>	<i>yāsmēḥ</i>
III- ^ʾ / ^ʿ	<i>nūka</i>	<i>yānūka</i>	<i>yānkē</i>

III-Guttural verbs also exhibit various peculiarities in other stems. In the H- and Š1-Stems, some III-Guttural verbs have the vowel *ā* in the final syllable, while others have *ē*. The vowel *ē* seems to be found most often, but not exclusively, with verbs whose third root consonant is *x*, e.g., *hāndēx* 'fumigate', *hānfēx* 'blow, breathe', *šāwnēx* 'be rested'. The vowel *ā* (var. *ē*) occurs with verbs whose final root consonant is ^ʿ, e.g., *hāwkā* 'put, put down', *hārbā* 'lift/pull/take up', *hāwrē* 'keep away, hold back (trans.)', *hābtā* 'be late, be delayed', *hākšē* 'dry (trans.)', *šārbā* 'climb (to the top)', *šāktā* 'become despondent, tired (of a situation)', *šāwdē* 'keep safe', *šāwrē* 'back off, stand down'. Other final root consonants vary, e.g., *hāfsēḥ* 'stop doing, leave off', but *hāšbāḥ* 'be/happen in the morning; become'.

²⁹ For the complete conjugation of a III-^ʿ verb in the Ga-Stem, see the *ML* (p. xxvi).

7.2.9. III-w and III-y Verbs

Verbs whose final root letter is historically *w* or *y* are characterized by the loss of the final root consonant in nearly all forms of all stems. Sample forms are:

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
G strong	<i>rəkūb</i>	<i>yərūkəb</i>	<i>yərkēb</i>
III-w/y	<i>bəkū</i> (or <i>bəkō</i>)	<i>yəbayk</i>	<i>yəbkē</i>
D/L strong	<i>arōkəb</i>	<i>yarákbən</i>	<i>yarōkəb</i>
III-w/y	<i>aķōfi</i>	<i>yakafyən</i>	<i>yakōfi</i>
H strong	<i>hərkūb</i>	<i>yəhərkūb</i>	<i>yəhárkəb</i>
III-w/y	<i>həbkū</i> (or <i>həbkō</i>)	<i>yəhəbayk</i>	<i>yəhībək</i>
Š1 strong	<i>šəkbūr</i>	<i>yəšəkbūr</i>	<i>yəšákbər</i>
III-w/y	<i>šəbdū</i> (or <i>šəbdō</i>)	<i>yəšbayd</i>	<i>yəšībəd</i>
T1 strong	<i>nátfəz</i>	<i>yəntəfūz</i>	<i>yəntifəz</i>
III-w/y	<i>ğatri</i>	<i>yəğ(ə)tūri</i>	<i>yəğ(ə)tayr</i>

There is a second type of III-y verb in the G-Stem, that has the shape *CīCi* in the perfect. Only two are attested in the texts and they have different imperfect patterns:

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
III-y (Gb)	<i>šīni</i>	<i>yəšūni</i>	<i>yəšnē</i>
III-y (Gb)	<i>rayzi</i>	<i>yərayz</i>	<i>yərzē</i>

III-y verbs like *šīni* and *rayzi* are Gb-Stems, as their perfect forms suggest. The fact that their imperfect and subjunctive forms are distinct is not problematic, since this is the case also for some other Gb-Stems of weak roots. The imperfect and subjunctive forms of *šīni* look similar to those of III-^c verbs, while those of *rayzi* look like most other III-w/y verbs.

In the G- and D/L-Stem active participle, all III-w/y verbs have *y* as their third root consonant, e.g., G *ķəryōna* ‘will hide (ms)’ and *šənyōna* ‘will see (ms)’ (cf. strong *rəkbōna*), and D/L *məwšəyēta* ‘will advise (fs)’ (cf. strong *markəbēta*).

7.2.10. *Geminate Verbs*

Geminate verbs, i.e., verbs whose second and third root consonants are identical, have a unique conjugation in all stems. In the G-Stem, there is only one geminate conjugation, without the distinction between Ga- and Gb-Stems found with strong verbs. It is characterized by a monosyllabic 3ms perfect of the pattern $C\bar{a}C$. Like II-w and II-y verbs (§7.2.7), the imperfect and subjunctive are distinguished by the vowel alternation $\bar{u} \sim \bar{e}$.

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
Ga strong	<i>rəkūb</i>	<i>yərūkəb</i>	<i>yərkēb</i>
geminate	<i>rəd</i>	<i>yərdūd</i>	<i>yərdēd</i>
II-w/y	<i>səyūr</i>	<i>yəsyūr</i>	<i>yəsyēr</i>

In the D/L-Stem, geminate verbs have the base $(a)CC\bar{t}C$ (var. $(a)CC\bar{e}C$), again patterning with II-w and II-y verbs (§7.2.7).

	3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
D/L strong	<i>arōkəb</i>	<i>yarákbən</i>	<i>yarōkəb</i>
geminate	<i>abdīd</i>	<i>yabdīdən</i>	<i>yabdīd</i>
II-y	<i>ašyīḥ</i>	<i>yāšyīḥən</i>	<i>yāšyīḥ</i>

In the H- and Š1-Stems, geminate verbs behave as strong verbs in any form in which the two identical root consonants are separated by a long vowel. So, for example:

	3ms perf.	3mp perf.	3ms imperf.	3mp imperf.
H strong	<i>hərkūb</i>	<i>hərkīb</i>	<i>yəhərkūb</i>	<i>yəhərkīb</i>
geminate	<i>həglūl</i>	<i>həglīl</i>	<i>yəhəglūl</i>	<i>yəhəglīl</i>
Š1 strong	<i>šəkbūr</i>	<i>šəkbīr</i>	<i>yəšəkbūr</i>	<i>yəšəkbīr</i>
geminate	<i>šərdūd</i>	<i>šərdīd</i>	<i>yəšərdūd</i>	<i>yəšərdīd</i>

But in the perfect, H- and Š1-Stem geminates are subject to the change $C_2\bar{a}C_2V > C_2C_2\bar{a}V$. So from the verb *tmūm*, we have 3fs perfect *təmmūt* < **tməmūt* (cf. strong *təbātūt*), but regular 2ms perfect *tməmk*, since this form does not contain the sequence $C_2\bar{a}C_2V$. In the H- and Š1-Stem imperfect and subjunctive, the sequence $C_1C_2\bar{a}C_2$ becomes $C_1C_1\bar{a}C_2$,

turning the initial root letter into the geminated consonant. In practice, this affects all forms of the subjunctive, but only the dual of the imperfect. Compare:

	3md imperf.	3ms subj.	3mp subjunct.
H strong	<i>yəhərkəbō</i>	<i>yəhárkəb</i>	<i>yəhárkəbəm</i>
geminate	<i>yəhəggəlō</i>	<i>yəhággəl</i>	<i>yəhággələm</i>
geminate	<i>yəhəttəmō</i>	<i>yəháttəm</i>	<i>yəháttəməm</i>
Š1 strong	<i>yəšəkəbərō</i>	<i>yəšákəbər</i>	<i>yəšákəbərəm</i>
geminate	<i>yəšərrədō</i>	<i>yəšárrəd</i>	<i>yəšárrədəm</i>

In the T1-Stem, we find the same shift of $C_1C_2\varrho C_2$ to $C_1C_1\varrho C_2$, e.g., 3ms perfect *kattəl* ‘it spilled’ < **kətləl* (cf. strong *nátfəz*). The imperfect of T1 geminates seem to behave as strong verbs, e.g., *yəktəlül* (cf. *yəntəfūz*). There is not enough data to make conclusive statements about the subjunctive, but it seems to be unique, e.g., *yəktəl* (cf. *yəntifəz*).

There are only a few T2-Stem geminates and the data are inconclusive. It seems that geminates behave as strong verbs in the perfect. With some verbs, the long *ū* between the identical root consonants becomes *aw*, as in *əstəlawl* ‘wander aimlessly’ (cf. strong *əftəkūr*), but this may only happen with geminate liquids (see §2.2.3).³⁰ In the imperfect, it seems all geminate T2-Stems (the few that there are) have *aw* in place of expected *ī*, e.g., *yəstəlawlən* (cf. strong *yəftəkīrən*), but more data are needed to confirm this. The T2-Stem *wəddawd* is irregular, as noted in §6.5.3. No Š2-Stem geminate verbs are attested.

7.2.11. Weak-f Verbs

There is a set of verbs that have the unusual shapes $C\varrho CC$ in the G-Stem perfect and $y\varrho C\varrho CC$ in the imperfect. Their subjunctives have the shape $y\varrho CC\bar{e}C$, like strong verbs. This set includes:

³⁰ As noted already in §2.2.3, n. 13, there is some inconsistency in the *ML* on this issue, since from the root *frr*, it lists in one place the form *əftərūr* (p. lv), and in another, *əftərawr* (p. 97).

3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
<i>fəsh</i>	<i>yəfəsh</i>	<i>yəfsēh</i>
<i>fəsx</i>	<i>yəfəsx</i>	<i>yəfsēx</i>
<i>fəth</i> ³¹	<i>yəfəth</i> ³²	<i>yəftēh</i>
<i>nəfh</i>	<i>yənəfh</i>	<i>yənfēh</i>
<i>nəfh</i>	<i>yənəfh</i>	<i>yənfēh</i>
<i>nəfx</i>	<i>yənəfx</i>	<i>yənfēx</i>
<i>nətx</i>	<i>yənətx</i>	<i>yəntēx</i>
<i>nətk</i>	<i>(yənṭōk)</i>	<i>(yənṭōk)</i>
<i>(fəṭūk)</i>	<i>yəfətk</i>	<i>yəftēk</i>
<i>(rəfūs)</i>	<i>yərəfs</i>	<i>yərfēs</i>

The last three verbs in this list are only a partial fit with the previous seven.³³ The verb *nətk* ‘bite’ has an unusual perfect, but its imperfect and subjunctive (*yənṭōk*) look like a normal Gb-Stem. The verbs *fəṭūk* and *rəfūs* have strong Ga-Stem perfects, but their imperfects belong to this special class.

There are also several D/L-Stem verbs that are of this type, which have unusual forms in the perfect and the subjunctive, but strong imperfects. These include:

3ms perfect	3ms imperfect	3ms subjunct.
<i>fask</i>	<i>yəfaskən</i>	<i>yəfask</i>
<i>fəsx</i>	<i>yəfəsxən</i>	<i>yəfəsx</i>
<i>fəts</i>	<i>yəfətsən</i>	<i>yəfəts</i>
<i>anəfh</i>	<i>yənəfhən</i>	<i>yənəfh</i>
<i>anəfx</i>	<i>yənəfxən</i>	<i>yənəfx</i>

Occasional forms from other stems also belong here. For example, the 3fs imperfect of the Š1-Stem verb *šəftēh* is *təšəfəth* (cf. strong *təšəkḅūr*), and 3ms subjunctive of the Š1-Stem verb *šəwkūf* ‘sleep’ (root *wkf*) is *yəšəkf* (cf. *yəšawgəś*, root *wgś*).

³¹ G *fütəh* also occurs; see §2.2.2.

³² The form *yəftəth*, given in the *ML* (p. 106) is obviously a typographical error.

³³ Mention should also be made of the form *nəḡm* ‘be angry’ (imperfect *yəngōm*), which appears in the *ML* (p. 288). This is clearly a mistake for *nəḡām*. The correct form *nəḡām* appears in the English-Mehri index (p. 484), and in Johnstone’s texts (89:31).

The common element in almost all of these verbs is the presence of *f* as a root consonant. The two exceptions are *nətx* and *nətk* (the latter of which has a strong imperfect). It is unclear why *f* should prove to be a weak root letter. More importantly, the sound changes that have created this small class of verbs are undetermined. To complicate matters, there are many verbs having a root consonant *f* that do not fall into this class, e.g., *fəhēm* ‘understand’, *fītən* ‘remember’, *fīrəh* ‘be happy’, *fəžāh* ‘be embarrassed’, *nūfəg* ‘throw’, and *nəgūf* ‘throw away’. This is an area in which more research needs to be done.

7.2.12. Doubly and Triply Weak Verbs

A significant percentage of Mehri verbs have more than one weak root letter. Here, representative forms of only some of the many possible combinations will be presented.

	Stem	3ms perf.	3ms imperf.	3ms subjunct.
gemin., I- ³	G	ʔəs	yāsōś	yāsēs
gemin., II-Glott.	G	şək	yəşkawķ	yəşkāķ
II-w, III-y	G	təwū	yətayw	yātē ³⁴
I-Glott., II-w	G	şōr	yəşawr	yəşār
I-Glott., III- ^c	G	ķawla	yəķawla	yəķlē
I-Glott., III- ^c	Gb	ḍayma	yəḍōma	yəḍmē
I-l, III-Gutt.	G	lūtəg	yəlūtəg	yəwtēg
II-w, III- ^c	G	gawya	yəgayw	yəgyē
I-w, II-Glott., III- ^c	G	wīķa	yəwōķa	yāķā
I- ^c , II-w/y	D/L	ʔāyēt	yāyētən	yāyēt
I- ³ , III-w/y	H	hānō	yəhayn	yəhēn
I-Glott., II-w	Š1	šəwşawb	yəšəwşawb	yəšawşəb

Most of the time, forms of verbs with multiple weak root letters are predictable, since the rules for the different weak types simply combine. Sometimes, however, combinations of weak letters result in unexpected conjugations. For example, as noted in §7.2.1, verbs whose

³⁴ This subjunctive form should probably be considered anomalous, since other II-w, III-y verbs seem to preserve the *w* here, e.g., 3ms subjunctive *yəḥwē*, from *ḥəwū* ‘crawl’.

first root letter is ʿ usually exhibit an initial ʾō- in the D/L-Stem (e.g., ʾōzər ‘annoy’), but when the second (or possibly also the third) root letter is w or y, they exhibit instead an initial ʾā- (e.g., ʾāyēt ‘cry out’).

7.2.13. Anomalous Verbs

A number of verbs can only be called anomalous, as they exhibit irregularities that make their conjugation unique and unpredictable. One anomalous verb is *tək* ‘drink’, some of whose forms are:³⁵

3ms perf.	3fs perf.	3mp perf.	3ms imperf.	3ms subjunct.
<i>tək</i>	<i>təkyēt</i>	<i>təkəm</i>	<i>yəttəkən</i>	<i>yəttək</i>

This verb is historically from the root *hky* (cf. G *həkū* ‘irrigate; give a drink’ and H *hķū* ‘give water to’). It is hard to place *tək* into a verbal stem, though the doubled *t* of the imperfect and subjunctive, and the final *-ən* throughout the imperfect might suggest a T2-Stem. The final *-ēt* of the 3fs perfect, however, is characteristic only of G passives, D-Stems, Š2-Stems, and Q-Stems. This verb is simply anomalous.

Also anomalous is the pair *fūk* ‘give in marriage’, *šəfūk* ‘get married’ (used with a female subject only), whose root is uncertain. The verb *fūk* is an H-Stem, but its conjugation is unusual. If the root were *hfk*, the perfect *fūk* and its imperfect *yəfūk* could be explained as being from **hfūk* and **yəhfūk* (cf. *flūt*, *yəflūt*), with irregular loss of the initial root consonant *h*. If the root were *fwk*, then these forms could be explained as from **fwūk* and **yəfwūk* (cf. *hwūl*, *yəhwūl*), with reduction of *wū* to *ū*. The subjunctive form *yəhaffək* looks as if it were from a geminate root *fkķ*. The verb *šəfūk* seems in the perfect as if it is a G-Stem of a root *šfk*, but its other forms (e.g., fs active participle *məšfəkāta*) make it clear that this is an Š1-Stem. It would seem to be derived directly from the H-Stem *fūk* by analogy with other stems with an initial voiceless consonant, e.g., *hwūb* ~ *šəhwūb*.

As noted in §6.5.3, several T2-Stem verbs are anomalous due to the irregular assimilation of consonants, including *əttūma* ‘listen’ (< **əhtūma*), *həððūr* (for expected **əhtəðūr*), and *wəddawd* (for expected **əwtədūd*).

On the anomalous verb *šawk*, see §6.3.1, n. 7, and on the seemingly anomalous *həwšawb* and *šəwšawb*, see §7.2.7.

³⁵ A complete conjugation can be found in the *ML* (pp. liii–liv).

It is unclear whether or not to call certain verbs anomalous. For example, the G-Stem of the root *zbt* has a 3ms perfect *zāt* ‘he took’, and 3ms imperfect subjunctive *yəzōt*, neither of which is predictable. However, in synchronic terms, it seems (based on the limited data in Johnstone’s texts) that the verb *zāt* simply behaves like any II-^c verb, and the fact that its root is *zbt* is just a historical curiosity. Another example is the verb *šitām* ‘buy’. As already noted above (§7.2.6), this verb is historically a T-Stem of the root *š²m* (cf. G *šōm* ‘sell’), but it conjugates as if it were a regular Gb-Stem from the root *štm* (cf. the ms active participle *šatmōna*). Both of these verbs are anomalous only if we consider their historical root.

Another anomalous verb is *hōm*, which will be discussed separately in the following section.

7.3. The Irregular Verb *hōm* ‘want’

The verb *hōm* ‘want’ is extremely common, appearing approximately 350 times in Johnstone’s texts.³⁶ The verb conjugates like an imperfect (with both past and present meanings), though it can also be used where context requires a perfect, e.g., after a conditional particle (§13.4) or a temporal conjunction (§13.5.3). Its conjugation is irregular; in addition to containing unexpected vowel patterns, it lacks a prefix in the 1cs and 1cd forms. Its forms are as follows:

	sing.	dual	plural
1c	<i>hōm</i>	<i>hāmō</i>	<i>nəhōm</i>
2m	<i>təhōm</i>	<i>(təhāmō)</i>	<i>təhaym</i>
2f	<i>təhaymi</i>		<i>(təhōmən)</i>
3m	<i>yəhōm</i>	<i>(yəhāmō)</i>	<i>yəhaym</i>
3f	<i>təhōm</i>	<i>(təhāmō)</i>	<i>təhōmən</i>

On the use of *hōm* in a context which requires a subjunctive, see §7.1.9.

There are several uses of this verb, and previous works on Mehri have been deficient, or even misleading, regarding these uses. The basic and most common meaning of the verb is ‘want’, followed by a

³⁶ An abridged version of this section and its sub-sections, with additional comparative linguistic discussion, can be found in Rubin (2009b).

direct object or by a dependent verb. Some examples with a direct object are:

- ḥōm attēti* ‘I want my wife’ (37:23)
hēsān təḥōm ... ḥōm kawzərati trayt ‘what do you want? ... I want two date-baskets’ (98:4)
ḥōm moh ‘I want water’ (99:28)
əl ḥamsən lā ‘I don’t want them’ (89:27)
hədallay b-wōrəm tayt ḏ-əl sē ḥōrəm ḏə-ḥams lā ‘he showed me a way that wasn’t the way that I wanted’ (62:3)

A following dependent verb appears in the subjunctive, as in:

- ḥōm əl-hērəs* ‘I want to get married’ (8:8)
təḥōm tāzəmən ḥəbrək ‘do you want to give us your son?’ (2:3)
təḥaymi təšəffəkay ‘do you want to marry me?’ (24:17)
əl ḥōm əl-hētəm lā ‘I don’t want to stay the night’ (31:4)
yəḥōm yəṭāf layš ‘he wants to visit you’ (38:16)
nəḥōm nəšōfər ‘we wanted to take a trip’ (91:1)
ḥōm l-əḥaḥrək b-ʾāmēlək ‘I want to set fire to your farm’ (91:11)

In all of the above examples, the subject of *ḥōm* is the same as that of the following verb. But in Mehri, as in English, the verb *ḥōm* can be followed by a nominal or pronominal direct object, which in turn can be the subject of a following verb. Consider the following examples:

- təḥaymhəm yāšēsəm* ‘do you want them to rise up?’ (4:15)
ḥamk təsne tēti ‘I want you to see my wife’ (22:41)
təḥaymən lə-ḥō nhaxləf ‘to where do you want us to move?’ (29:8)
ḥaybhəm yəḥamhəm yāḳām sədəḳā ‘their father wanted them to become friends’ (50:1)
nəḥamkəm təfšālən mənwin ‘we want you to arbitrate between us’ (77:9)
ḥōm aḡayti tsələli ‘I want my sister to carry me’ (89:14)
hēsān təḥəmi l-ʾāmōl ‘what do you want me to do?’ (90:14)

If this kind of *ḥōm* construction occurs in the protasis of a conditional sentence, and the dependent verb should be repeated in the apodosis, the verb is used only once, in the subjunctive. Examples of this are:

hām təhamən, nəsləl ‘if you want us to (move), we’ll move’ (30:3)
hām ’ār təhamki, l-āmərō ‘if you want us to (sing), we’ll both sing’
 (52:6)

7.3.1. Independent *hōm* ‘want, will’

Used independently, without any object or dependent verb, *hōm* (in any form) is the equivalent of ‘I want to’, ‘I will’, ‘I do’, or ‘I am willing’. This use (especially when the form is a first person) often comes in response to a question or statement containing *hōm*. Examples are:

’āmawr həh ağəyōg: “təhōm təsōm līn əskayn ḏōməh?” ’āmōr hīhām:
“hōm lā” ‘the men said to him: Do you want to sell us this knife?
 He said to them: I don’t want to’ (4:10)
təhaymi hō əl-ṭāf? wa-ya-hōl, nəhōm ‘do you want *me* to scout?
 Indeed, we do’ (29:13-14)
hām ’ār fəḵawk, hō hōm ‘if he lets you marry (me), I am willing’
 (38:19)
hām əl təhaymi lā, sīrita təwōli aḵaṣṣāb wə-yəṣḥaṭəṣ ‘if you won’t, I
 will go to the butcher and he will slaughter you’ (49:3)
kə-sōbəḥi tərdəydi hām təhaymi ‘come back in the morning if you
 want’ (54:16)
hām təhaym təsyērəm təwōli aṭəma’ ... nəhōm ‘if you want to go to
 the treasure ... we want to’ (88:2-3)
’āmōrən h-anōxəḏēh: “sōm līn ḵawt” ’āmōr: “hōm lā” ‘we said to the
 captain: Sell us some food! He said: I won’t’ (91:14)

7.3.2. Cohortative *hōm*

The first person forms *hōm*, *həmō*, and *nəhōm* can have a cohortative meaning ‘let’s’ or ‘we should’, though these are often mistranslated in Stroemer’s edition of Johnstone’s texts. A dependent verb, most always also first person, is subjunctive, as expected. 1cp cohortatives are by far the most common:

nəhōm nəhaxləf mən amkōn ḏōməh ‘we should move away from
 this place’ (10:12)
ənḥōm nəḵfəl adəkkōn ‘we should close up the shop’ (22:7)
nəhōm nəṣṣān ṭāṭidayən ‘let’s tie each other up’ (24:25)
nəhōm nəghōm ‘we should go’ (94:2)
nəhōm nədfən aməlawtəg ‘we should bury those killed’ (64:26)

nəḥōm nəktīlāt ‘let’s chat’ (74:14)

Only a few dual cohortatives are attested:

ḥāmō l-əsīrō arḥābēt əl-fəlāniyyəh ‘let’s go to such and such a town’ (66:2)

ḥāmō l-əsīrō bəl-xəfē ‘we (both) should go in disguise’ (66:3)

ḥāmō l-əḥwtē tē ḏār aḵōn ḏēk w-əl-šəḥəgyē ḥəlakməh ‘we should flee to that high spur and stand firm there’ (83:2)

A handful of 1cs cohortatives are attested, though all but one of them are mistranslated as ‘will’ or ‘would like’ in Stroomer’s edition:

ḥōm əl-šawgəs ‘I should go’ (38:18)

ḥōm əl-sōfər ‘I should go’ (74:12)

ḏōməh aḡəggēn wəḵōna axayr mənay mət ʾāḵawr, wə-ḥōm l-əwtəḡəh ‘this boy will be better than me when he grows up, so I should kill him’ (76:12)

ḥōm l-əsyēr ḏār ḥāmōh ‘I ought to go to the water’ (94:19)

ḥōm, mət ḥābū šəwgīs, əl-nəkēs l-ʾāḡawz ḏə-mətūt ‘I should, when the people have gone home, dig up the old woman that died’ (65:3)

This last example (65:3) is a nice illustration of how *ḥōm* (cohortative or not) is allowed to be separated from the dependent verb by another clause.³⁷

In a few cases, the 1cp cohortative is followed by a third person verb. Two examples are:

nəḥōm ṭāt yāḱā ḥaywəl wə-ṭroh yəmnēm təh ‘we should one (of us) act crazy and two (of us) restrain him’ (91:6)

nəḥōm aḡāk yəḥērəs bīs ‘we should have your brother marry her’ (97:44)

And in one case, a dependent verb is merely implied:

nəḥōm əwtōməh ‘let’s (do) like that’ (29:11) (Stroomer: ‘we will have it that way’)

³⁷ A non-cohortative example occurs in 45:11: *təḥami hām kəsk sakənək l-ʾāmēr ḥībō* ‘if I find your settlement, what do you want me to say (to them)?’

7.3.3. *Motion Verb ḥōm*

The verb *ḥōm* can also be used as a sort of pseudo-motion verb, best translated as ‘be heading to’. In this meaning, it is most often preceded by a verb of motion (usually *səyūr* ‘go’, *gəhēm* ‘go’, or *sōfər* ‘travel’). Sometimes it is followed by a preposition (*h-* or *təwōli*), other times by a direct object, with no difference in meaning. The form of *ḥōm* is often separated from the motion verb by an adverbial phrase (or phrases). Consider the following examples:

sáfrək mən dəbayy fənəmšē ... ḥōm hə-Landən ‘I traveled from Dubai the day before last ... heading to London’ (18:1)

səyərki hō wə-sədayki bərk arayəl ənxāli akā’ nəḥōm təwōli amkōni
‘a friend and I went in the Underground, heading to my place’
(18:8)

sīrō aḡayg wə-ḥəbrēh, yəḥaym h-abayt ‘the man and his son went off, heading for home’ (22:9)

gəhəmk mən səḥayr ḥōm šəlōt ‘I came from the mountains, heading for Selot’ (38:2)

ḏ-əghōm ḥōm təwōli sékəni ‘I was going towards my community’
(54:4)

gəhēm yəḥōm arḥəbēt ‘he went off towards town’ (65:4)

səfrəm mən akāhəm yəḥaym hə-kā tāt ‘they travelled from their country, headed for a certain place’ (74:1)

kə-sōbəḡ gəhmō, yəḥəmō təwōli ḥaskénihəm ‘in the morning they set out, headed for their communities’ (76:13)

fətök ḥəbrē ḏə-ḥōkəm yəḥōm aməsgīd ‘the ruler’s son went out, headed for the mosque’ (85:17)

This use of *ḥōm* is probably an extension of its use in the following type of sentence, where *ḥōm* is preceded by a verb of motion *and* followed by a dependent verb:

ḡayg gəhēm yəḥōm yəkfēd arḥəbēt ‘a man set out, intending to go down to the town’ (98:1)

sīrūt təbərayn təḥōm təmsé ‘the hyena went off, wanting to go to defecate’ (99:12)

ḡayg sōfər bərk məkēb yəḥōm yəbtōza mən rəḥəbēt tayt ‘a man travelled on a ship, intending to make purchases from a certain town’
(103:1)

And the use of *hōm* to mean ‘be heading to’ following a verb of motion has led to its independent use with this meaning (i.e., without a preceding motion verb). In the half dozen or so attested examples of *hōm* used independently in this way, it is always followed by a preposition. Examples are:

hādālīlī bə-sēkən ḏə-hōm təwēhe ‘they showed me the settlement that I was heading for’ (38:7)

hē məhray yəhōm h-aḳā ḏ-amhəré ‘he was a Mehri heading for the land of the Mehri’ (59:1)

əl šay hātəm lā yəhaym lə-hō ‘I am not sure where they were headed’ (73:1)

’āmōr hīs: “təhaymi əl-hō?” ’āmərōt: “hōm təwōli aḡatke” ‘he said to her: where are you headed? She said: I’m headed to (visit) your sisters’ (85:3)

7.3.4. Other Uses of *hōm*

Another use of *hōm* is in conjunction with the particle *bər* (see §12.5.6), together with which it has a proximative meaning ‘be about to’ or an avertative meaning ‘nearly’. This use is found about ten times in Johnstone’s texts. Some of these attestations are:

bəri hōm l-əwbads ‘I nearly shot her’ (or: ‘I was about to shoot her’) (54:13)

b-xayr u bərs təhōm təhahḳəṭ ‘(the camel) is well and about to give birth’ (63:15)

bərham yəhaym yəšakfəm ‘they were about to go to sleep’ (75:17)

kə-sōbəh bərəh yəhōm yəmīt ‘in the morning, he was nearly dead’ (or: ‘about to die’) (75:18)

kəsk aḡayg ḏə-bərəh yəhōm yəhwē ‘I found the man about to fall down’ (77:6)

ḳəlyīta tē bərəh yəhōm yəsyēr ‘we will leave it until he is about to go’ (91:26)

In two places in the texts, *hōm ... aw* is best translated as ‘whether ... or’. This is an idiomatic use, deriving from the basic meaning ‘want’. These examples are:

yəhōm yəgzēm aw lā, nəḥā səḥēṭa h-axaylən ‘whether he swears or not, we will slaughter (a goat) for our uncle’ (31:11)

əl ʔaym mən hənīn šəxōf yəlliləh, təḥaym təšawgəsəm aw lā ‘you will not taste any milk with us tonight, whether you are leaving or not’ (35:5)

In one passage *ḥōm*, followed by a direct object, has the meaning ‘accept’:

nəḥōm šerʔ ḏōmah ‘we accept this condition’ (24:39)

CHAPTER EIGHT

PREPOSITIONS

The prepositions of Mehri are:

<i>b-</i> ‘in, at; with; for; on’	<i>l-</i> ‘to; for’
<i>bād</i> ‘after’	<i>mən</i> ‘from’
<i>bark</i> ‘in(to), inside; among’	<i>(ʔəm)-mən</i> ‘between’
<i>ǧār</i> ‘on; about’	<i>mən ǧār</i> ‘after’
<i>fənōhən</i> ‘before; in front of; ago’	<i>mən ǧayr</i> ‘without’
<i>ǧayr</i> ‘except’	<i>nəxāli</i> ‘under’
<i>h-</i> ‘to; for’	<i>səbēb</i> ‘because of’
<i>hāl</i> ‘at, by, beside’	<i>sār</i> ‘behind’
<i>hīs</i> ‘like, as’	<i>tē</i> ‘until, up to’
<i>k-</i> ‘with’	<i>təwōli</i> ‘to, towards’

There are also two particles that cannot strictly be called prepositions, but that either behave as such or are translated as such. Therefore, I include them in this chapter. These are:

<i>ʔār</i> ‘except, but’	<i>xā(-hē)</i> ‘like, as ... as’
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Prepositions are of two types. The first type, those consisting of a single consonant, are prefixed to the noun. There are only four of these: *b-*, *h-*, *k-*, and *l-*. When a noun begins with a consonant, these prepositions are usually (but by no means always) transcribed (and pronounced) with the helping vowel *ə*.

<i>k-abqar</i> ‘with the cattle’ (15:5)	<i>kə-ḥarawn</i> ‘with the goats’ (14A:5)
<i>b-ḥōrəm</i> ‘on the road’ (23:17)	<i>bə-ḥōrəm</i> ‘on the road’ (3:1)
<i>h-arḥabēt</i> ‘to the town’ (22:37)	<i>hə-Landən</i> ‘to London’ (18:1)

The second type, which includes all other prepositions, are treated as separate words. Each of the prepositions listed above will be treated in turn below. Additional (and rare) compound prepositions will be treated together in §8.21, while discussion of the combination of prepositions with pronominal suffixes can be found in §8.22.

8.1. *ʾār* ‘except, but’

The particle *ʾār* appears frequently in the texts and with a variety of meanings (see §12.5.4). Very often it functions as a preposition meaning ‘except’ or ‘but’, or at least it is best translated as such in English. Examples are:

ʾəl šay hīkām mashaṭawt lā ʾār tēti ‘I don’t have anything to slaughter for you except my wife’ (4:4)

l-ād ʾəḥād yātəḳaydən biḥām lā, ʾār hīxār ḏə-mən zəbōn hāwəlay ‘no one believes in them anymore, except old people from olden times’ (25:19)

ʾādi əl ʾōmər lā ʾār yəmsī ‘I have never sung except yesterday’ (52:15)
wə-l-ʾəḥād yəsūkən bəh lā ʾār aḳēyōy ‘and nobody lived in it but demons’ (76:11)

hām tərū ḥəroh, əl yəhəḳōša ʾār hənīn ‘if he has a wet head, let him not dry it except with us!’ (96:5)

ḥāməy əl səwmēt ʾəḥād əlā ʾār hō wə-ḡəḡənōt ‘my mother didn’t keep any children except me and a girl’ (34:1)

ʾəl šīs wələd ʾār hē ‘she had no children but him’ (36:3)

ʾādəh l-ʾəḥād yōmər hayni əhəṣawləḥ lā ʾār hēt ‘nobody has ever told me I was good (at it) but you’ (52:17)

In the fourth-to-last example above (96:5), *ʾār* is followed by another preposition (*hənīn*), and in the last three examples, it is followed by an independent pronoun, rather than an object pronoun. These cases make it clear that *ʾār* is not functioning grammatically as a true preposition. One of the basic meanings of *ʾār* is ‘only’, and it is from this meaning that the “prepositional” usage derives (see §12.5.4). In all but two (29:5; 102:19) of the twenty-eight occurrences of *ʾār* with the sense ‘except’, the context is a negative phrase. On the other hand, *ḡayr* ‘except’ occurs only in positive phrases (see §8.7).

8.2. *b-* ‘in, at; with; for; on’

The preposition *b-* has a variety of functions. It can indicate location ‘in’ or ‘at’, or instrument ‘with’ or ‘by’. It can also mean ‘with’ in its comitative sense (with some verbs of motion); ‘for’, in the sense of ‘in exchange for’; and even ‘on’, usually with reference to the human body. The basic meaning ‘in, at’ is illustrated in the following examples:

bə-wōdi kūsa həbēr ‘in a valley he found the camels’ (12:10)
yəsūkən b-arhəbēt ‘he was living in a country’ (20:1)
hē bə-hēnd ‘he is in India’ (40:6)
h-arhəbēt ǝə-bīs tēt ‘to the country in which the woman was’ (22:37)
əwķōna bər bīsən əsxōf ‘maybe they [the camels] have milk’ (29:6)

The instrumental meaning of *b-* is illustrated in the following examples:

əwbəds bə-məndawķ ‘shoot it with the rifle’ (6:10)
səbūt bəh tēt ʔawri ʔroh ‘he struck (his) wife with it two times’ (4:9)
yəlūtəǵ mēkən b-əškayəh ‘he killed many with his sword’ (69:7)
wʔəmēh b-ʔārəfēt ‘he struck him with the palm branch’ (93:5)

Its comitative meaning ‘with’:

səyūr b-abķərēt ‘he went with the cows’ (1:12)
məħamməd nūda b-hārawn ‘Muhammad went out with the goats’ (14A:1)
səyūr bīs ‘he went off with her’ (48:16)
nəħōm nəšōfər bəh ‘we want to travel with him’ (91:8)

The meaning ‘for, in exchange for’:

āmōl xōtəm bə-ʔalf dīnār ‘have a ring made for a thousand dinars’ (22:47)
wəzmōna tik jənbəyyət bə-məndawķək ‘I will give you a dagger for your rifle’ (34:11)
nəħ ʔəzyāya tik bə-ħāmēk ‘we will compensate you for (the loss of) your mother’ (65:14)
bə-kəm šāmōna tīs ‘how much will you sell (it) for?’ (99:50)

And finally, the meaning ‘on’ (see further on this use in §13.3.2):

bəh šəf mēkən ‘he had a lot of hair’ (lit. ‘on him (was) a lot of hair’) (9:8)
ǝəmāh əl bəh fēħəl lā ‘this (man) has no penis’ (lit. ‘on him (there is) no penis’) (24:36)
šəllōt gōdēl ǝə-bəh šīwōt ‘she took a burning stick’ (lit. ‘a stick on which (was) fire’) (36:8)

The preposition *b-* is also used in conjunction with a surprisingly large number of verbs, and it is probably this use of *b-* which is encountered most often. Such verbs are:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <i>ʾaygəb b-</i> ‘love, be in love with’
(vs. <i>ʾaygəb mən</i> ‘be delighted with’) | <i>fīrəh b-</i> ‘be happy with’ |
| <i>ʾātəkawd b-</i> ‘believe in’ | <i>həfsēh b-</i> ‘stop doing s.t.’ |
| <i>ʾaylək b-</i> ‘run short for/of’ | <i>šəgēməl b-</i> ‘take all of s.t.’ |
| <i>ʾayməl b-</i> ‘do to s.o.’ | <i>ġəlūk b-</i> ‘look at’ (vs. <i>ġəlōk mən</i> ‘look for’) |
| <i>hāmōn b-</i> ‘trust s.o.’ | <i>aġwīr b-</i> ‘distract, keep s.o. occupied’ |
| <i>hāmōr b-</i> ‘give an order for s.t.’
(vs. <i>hāmōr l-</i> ‘order s.o.’) | <i>hūma b-</i> ‘hear about’ (vs. <i>hūma</i> ‘hear s.t.’) |
| <i>hārōs b-</i> ‘marry’ (vs. <i>hārōs hāl</i> ‘marry into s.o.’s family’) | <i>həwū b-</i> ‘throw down’ |
| <i>ʾāšawb b-</i> ‘tie to s.t.’ (<i>b-</i> : thing tied to; <i>d.o.</i> : thing tied) | <i>həd b-</i> ‘pull up, pull at’ |
| <i>ʾāṭawf b-</i> ‘take away (animals); make panic (animals)’ | <i>hrūk b-</i> ‘burn s.o. or s.t.’ |
| <i>ʾāwēð b-</i> ‘warn s.o.’ | <i>həððūr b-</i> ‘look out for [=on behalf of], guard’ (vs. <i>həððūr mən</i> ‘look out for, guard against’) |
| <i>ʾāwēg b-</i> ‘delay s.o.’ | <i>həs b-</i> ‘be conscious of’ (vs. <i>həs</i> ‘feel’) |
| <i>ʾāzōm b-</i> ‘invite for’ (<i>b-</i> : thing invited for; <i>d.o.</i> : s.o.) | <i>hyil b-</i> ‘trick’ |
| <i>ʾōzər b-</i> ‘annoy’ | <i>kəlūt b-</i> ‘tell s.t.’ (<i>l-</i> : to s.o.) |
| <i>bədō b-</i> ‘lie to’ (vs. <i>bədō l-</i> ‘tell a lie about s.o.’) | <i>katlət b-</i> ‘talk to one another about, chat about’ (reciprocal) |
| <i>bəhēr b-</i> ‘ask s.o. for help’ | <i>kəs b-</i> ‘expose oneself to s.o.’ |
| <i>abōrək b-</i> ‘bless’ | <i>kawr b-</i> ‘roll down (usually stones)’ (<i>l-</i> ‘to’) |
| <i>həbšūr b-</i> ‘look forward to’ | <i>kəz b-</i> ‘shoot s.o. at close range’ |
| <i>šōda b-</i> ‘curse, insult s.o.’ | <i>əktəlūb b-</i> ‘be worried about’ |
| <i>dəl b-</i> ‘guide, lead s.o.’ | <i>aḳāləd b-</i> ‘roll s.t.’ |
| <i>hədlūl b-</i> ‘show’ (<i>b-</i> : thing shown; <i>d.o.</i> or <i>l-</i> : to s.o.) | <i>aḳōšər b-</i> ‘fall short in generosity with s.o.’ |
| <i>šədarbəs b-</i> ‘call (a camel) by a sound’ | <i>libəs b-</i> ‘put on’ (vs. <i>libəs</i> ‘wear’) |
| <i>ḡəbūr b-</i> ‘nag; apologize to s.o.’ | <i>ləġāz (əwġāz) b-</i> ‘to sneak/slip s.t.’ (<i>d.o.</i> : to s.o.) |
| <i>fāl b-</i> ‘hurt s.o.’ | <i>liṭəf b-</i> ‘be kind to, look after’ |
| <i>əftəkūr b-</i> ‘think about’ | <i>šəmlūk b-</i> ‘be given legal possession of a woman in marriage’ |
| <i>frā b-</i> ‘begin s.t.’ | <i>amarhəb b-</i> ‘greet, welcome’ |
| <i>frūd b-</i> ‘frighten (animals)’ | <i>amōsi b-</i> ‘kiss’ |
| <i>frūk b-</i> ‘frighten’ | |

<i>həndəx b-</i> ‘fumigate; perfume w/ incense’	<i>šūbəh b-</i> ‘suspect s.o.’ (vs. <i>šūbəh l-</i> ‘look like’)
<i>šənḏūr b-</i> ‘vow on’	<i>šūna b-</i> ‘be unkind to s.o., humiliate s.o.’
<i>nūfəḡ b-</i> ‘throw’	<i>šawk b-</i> ‘light s.t. on fire, burn s.t.’
<i>hənfəx b-</i> ‘breathe on’	<i>wīda b-</i> ‘know about’
<i>šənḥawr b-</i> ‘lodge a complaint against’ (<i>hāl:</i> with)	<i>wəfūd b-</i> ‘ask for the hand of s.o. in marriage’ (<i>hāl:</i> the person asked)
<i>hənḥū b-</i> ‘burn s.o. or s.t.’	<i>šəwfū b-</i> ‘be revenged for s.o., avenge s.o.’
<i>nūka b-</i> ‘bring; bear (a child)’ (vs. <i>nūka</i> ‘come (to)’)’	<i>əxtəlūf b-</i> ‘let s.o. down’
<i>nūka b-kəwtēt</i> ‘tell a story’	<i>xayli b-</i> ‘be alone with s.o.’
<i>rədō b-</i> ‘throw s.t.’ (vs. <i>rədō l-</i> ‘throw at’)	<i>xəšawb b-</i> ‘send s.t.’ (<i>l-</i> : to s.o.; vs. <i>xəšawb</i> ‘send s.o.’)
<i>rəšawn b-</i> ‘tie to/with’	<i>xōṭər b-</i> ‘endanger s.o.’
<i>ərtəwūḡ b-</i> ‘plot against’	<i>xəyūn b-</i> ‘betray s.o.’
<i>rayzi b-</i> ‘agree with s.t.’	
<i>sūməḥ b-</i> ‘allow s.t.’ (vs. <i>sūməḥ l-</i> ‘allow s.o., give permission to; forgive’)	

The verb *nūka b-* ‘bring’ warrants further comment. It is clear that it derives from a literal meaning ‘come with’ (i.e., ‘I came with the bread to the house’ → ‘I brought the bread to the house’). What is in English the direct object must be preceded by *b-* in Mehri. Conversely, the English indirect object usually corresponds to the Mehri direct object (which can be independent or suffixed), though in some examples this object is indicated by a preposition *h-*, *təwōli*, or *hāl*, for example:

- wbaysi bə-xəlōwəḡ yədōn nakak tīk bīhəm* ‘put on the new clothes I have bought for you!’ (24:6)
nəkēm tay bə-’ayšē ‘bring me supper!’ (99:2)
nkayh bə-məšərawf ‘he brought him rations’ (8:7)
nkōt həh bə-ḥəmōh ‘she brought him water’ (48:11)
nakam bīhəm təwēlhə ‘they brought them to him’ (48:13)
nūka bīs hāl ḥaybəh wə-ḥāmeh ‘he brought her to his father and mother’ (48:19)

Nūka b- in the meaning of ‘bear’ can have either a male or female subject; if the other partner with whom the subject has a child is mentioned, the partner is preceded by *mən*. Some examples are:

nūka mæns bə-ġiġġen wə-ġaġanōt ‘he got from her a boy and a girl’ (48:1)

ənkōt mənəh b-ġiġġen ‘she had a boy by him’ (75:25)

One occasionally also finds *b-* with other verbs that are not regularly followed by this preposition, for example, *kəfud* ‘go down’ (with *wōdi* ‘valley’, e.g., 63:2), *śatūk* ‘long for’ (14:6; elsewhere *l-*), *śəl* ‘carry s.t.’ (e.g., 22:85; usually with d.o.), *tūba* ‘follow’ (with *śaf/əsƒutən* ‘tracks’, e.g., 32:8), and *həwşawf* ‘describe s.t.’ (only 96:5; elsewhere d.o.). There are a couple of places where *b-* seems to follow an unexpected verb, but is in fact a typographical error (e.g., 42:37 and 89:22; see Appendix). Also note the verbal idiom *taşla aşəfōt b-* ‘carry report of s.o.’ (74:5).

The preposition *b-* is also found in a number of non-verbal idiomatic phrases. Such are:

b-abar(r) ‘ashore’ (lit. ‘upon land’)

b-abarr ‘outside’

b-aḳā ‘on the ground’

b-aʾamḳ ‘halfway’

b-aġərbēt ‘abroad’

b-arāyək (pl. *b-arāyḳəm*) ‘as you wish’

b-ġəzayrət ‘on an island’

bə-ħəgdēka ‘on your feet’

b-ħaḳ ‘justly’

bə-ħəllay ‘at night’

bə-ħənafk ‘by yourself’

b-ħərōhək ‘under your protection’

bə-ħōrəm ‘on the road’

bə-ħayḳ ‘on the shore’

bə-nhōr ‘per day’ (*taşwri trōh*

bə-nhōr ‘twice per day’)

bə-raxəş ‘cheaply’

bə-śawr ‘in consultation’

b-X śxōf ‘X has milk’ (humans or animals) (see §13.3.2)

b-xōṭər ‘down there, downstairs’

bə-xayr ‘well’

dawn- b- ‘take!’ (see §12.5.7)

(*wiḳa*) *hal-halla b-* ‘be careful with’

ya ḥay b- ‘welcome!’ (followed by a noun or pronominal suffix)

Also note the idiomatic expressions *bay ḥassi* ‘I am conscious’ (40:26) and *būk hēśən* ‘what’s (the matter) with you?’ (48:5) (see §13.3.2). As with verbs, there are also cases in which *b-* appears unexpectedly, e.g., *bə-zōyəd* ‘anymore’ (20:12).¹ In 24:8 we find the bizarre phrase *əl hēt*

¹ Or perhaps the preposition *bə-* here is connected with the preceding verb, *əḳawdər*, and the phrase *l-ād əḳawdər bə-zōyəd* should be translated ‘I cannot handle more’ instead of ‘I cannot anymore’. Even if so, *bə-* is nowhere else used with the verb *ḳədūr* ‘be able’.

bə-ğəgənōt əlā ‘you are not a girl’ (24:8), where *b-*, if correct, would possibly mean ‘like’. However, this is very likely a typographical error, as supported by the audio, which has *hēt əl hēt ġəgənōt əlā*.

8.3. *bād* ‘after’

The preposition *bād*, also found in the compound form *mən bād*, means ‘after’. Both *bād* and *mən bād* are quite rare, however, and ‘after’ is normally expressed by *mən ǧār* (see §8.5). Following are all of the examples found in the texts:

hē šəwēd sēkənəh yənkēhəm bād nəhōri trayt ‘he promised his community he would come back to them after two days’ (32:5)
agarbəm tāṭ bād tāṭ ‘they tried one after the other’ (50:3)
u bādīs səddəm ‘and after that they made an agreement’ (104:31)
wə-hēt ham matk, l-ād ʾəḥād yaʾisən tay lā mən bādūk ‘if you die, no one will keep me alive after you (are gone)’ (36:4)
səyūr šəwkūf wə-sē šəwəllūt bādēh ‘he went to sleep, and she stayed after him (after he had left)’ (48:26)
w-aqayzər, mən bādihəm, gərō ləh bəkōr ḥəlakəməh ‘and (as for) the leopard, after they (had left), some young camels passed by him’ (99:4)
hō səddōna bādikən ḥārawn ‘I will take care of the goats after you (are gone)’ (99:37)

Note that in the final four examples above, (*mən*) *bād* has the specific meaning ‘after s.o. is gone’. (The preposition *sār* can also be used in this way; see below, §8.17.) *Bād* is found also in the idiom *bād ġəhəməh* ‘day after tomorrow’, for example:

sīr ġəhəməh wə-rdēd bād ġəhəməh ‘go tomorrow and come back the day after tomorrow’ (56:2)

8.4. *bərk* ‘in(to), inside; among’

The preposition *bərk* is mainly used to indicate location inside or motion into. Examples from the texts are:

ta kūsa fōka bərk dəhləl, əwkūb bərk adəhləl ‘when he found a pool of water in a cave, he went into the cave’ (3:2)

həwǧūs bərk wōdi nōb ‘he took (them) into a big valley’ (13:6)
ašōyǧ bərk adəkkōnəh ‘the goldsmith (was) in his shop’ (22:68)
sē bərk aǧərfēt ǧayk ‘she is in that room’ (22:97)
mōn yəsūkən bərk abayt ǧīməh ‘who lives in this house?’ (38:11)
əl hō sīrōna lā bərk aməwsē ǧīməh ‘I am not going in this rain’ (49:5)
əwbūd bərk həməh ‘he shot into the water’ (95:4)

By extension of its basic meaning ‘inside’, *bərk* can also be used to mean ‘among’, as in:

bərk hərawn ‘among the goats’ (3:7)
bərk həbēr ‘among the camels’ (28:9)
šḳəryō bərk hərōm ‘they hid among the trees’ (35:17)
kərbālē həmbərawtən bərk abḳār ‘the boys crept among the cows’ (35:18)

We also find in the texts the compound prepositions *tē bərk* and *mən bərk*, though each is attested just once:

səyark tē bərk rēkəb ‘I went onto a ledge of a cliff’ (38:6)
naṭṭəbəm ʾāžawž wə-gəlē mən bərk šəts ‘bones and date-stones dropped from (out of) her backside’ (99:12)

The preposition *bərk* is also used in a handful of idioms, including:

<i>bərk amǧərāb</i> ‘in the evening’	<i>bərk šārə</i> ‘on/to/along a street’
<i>bərk həydəh</i> ‘on his wrist’	<i>bərk xadmēt</i> ‘at work, employed’
<i>bərk raḥt</i> ‘happy’ (lit. ‘in happiness’)	<i>kəṭūb bərk</i> ‘write on s.t.’
	(also <i>kəṭūb b-</i>)
<i>bərk səyyārəh</i> (or <i>mawtər</i>) ‘in/by a car’	<i>xəž bərk</i> ‘wade in(to)’

The lone use of *bərk* in an expression of time, *bərk amǧərāb* ‘in the evening’, is attested just once (25:9); the alternative *k-amǧərāb*, also attested just once, is found in the same text (25:14).

8.5. *ḡār* ‘on; about’, *mən ḡār* ‘after’

The preposition *ḡār* has the basic meaning of ‘on, upon’. Before suffixes, it has the base *ḡayr-*. Illustrative examples are:

hē yaślūl tōmār ḡār asarfāh śaymāl w-āyś ḡār asarfāh ḡaymāl ‘it was carrying dates on its left side and rice on its right side’ (23:16)
harkūb aḡath ḡār ṭayt u rēkəb ḡār ṭayt ‘he mounted his sister upon one (horse) and he mounted the other’ (24:11)
śinək tīsən ḡār kərmaym ḡayk ‘I saw them on that mountain’ (28:2)
nəḡōf ḡayrən ḡəbbēt ‘flies came upon us’ (29:4)

As in other languages, this preposition can also mean ‘about’, ‘over’, in the sense of ‘concerning’, though examples are very rare. One example is:

ḡəyōg lattəḡəm bawmāh, w-’əl wadak ḡār hēsən lā ‘men have killed each other here, and I do not know over what!’ (3:19)

One also finds the combinations *mən ḡār* ‘from upon, off of’ and, more rarely, *tē ḡār* (var. *tā ḡār*) ‘up on to’, for example:

rədīw bəh mən ḡār dahk ‘they threw him from a cliff’ (20:53)
ḡəfūd mən ḡār hərəm ‘he got down from the tree’ (70:3)
tənūḡəf mən ḡayrəh abaḡh ‘she was brushing the sand off of him’ (48:17)
sīrōni tā ḡār adahək ḡōmāh ‘let us go up on to this ledge’ (35:10)

In a few cases, usually in conjunction with a verb of running away (like *flūt* or *fər*), *mən ḡār* seems to mean ‘from the presence of’, for example:

fəlatk mən ḡār aḡayg ‘I ran away from the man’ (34:24)
yəṣṣək tīs m-ād təfrēr mən ḡayrən ‘I fear that she will run away from us’ (37:10)

And in a small number of cases, *mən ḡār* seems to be equivalent to simple *ḡār*, in any of its meanings:

śəxəlīl mən ḡār aḡəhwēt ‘they sat over the coffee’ (48:28)

gatəwsəm aḡawhē mən ǫār ɛwɛɾt ‘his brothers quarreled over the inheritance’ (32:11)

Far more often, however, the compound *mən ǫār* has the meaning ‘after’. Sometimes, in expressions of time, this is better translated as ‘in’. Examples are:

mən ǫār warx, mōt aḡayg ‘after a month, the man died’ (2:7)
ħazyən tyabtən mən ǫār hawrət ‘our goats are weak after the drought’ (28:18)
mən ǫār taybər ǫə-kaydōr ‘after the breaking of (his) pots’ (35:23)
mən ǫār waḡt, nūka aḡayg ‘after a while, the man came’ (37:12)
tənakan mən ǫār warx ‘you will come to us in a month’ (38:21)

Interestingly, *mən ǫār* is not attested with suffixes when it means ‘after’. Instead, *bād* (§8.3) or *sār* (§8.17) must be used.

Simple *ǫār* also occurs in a few idioms, several of which involve either water or corpses:

<i>ǫār bayr</i> ‘at a well’	<i>ǫār amāray</i> ‘in the pasture’
<i>ǫār kōbər</i> ‘to/at a grave’	<i>ǫār (ħə)moh</i> ‘at/by/to (the) water’
<i>ǫār məḡəbrēt</i> ‘to/in a graveyard’	<i>ǫār rəḡmēt</i> ‘at/by/to (rain-)water’
<i>ǫār məlawtəḡ</i> ‘to/by (lit. over) dead bodies’	<i>ǫār asarf ǫə-ḡayməl (/ ǫə-ṣayməl)</i> ‘on the right (/ left) side’

On rare occasion, the compounds *mən ǫār* and *tē ǫār* can also occur in these idioms. Two nice examples of the idiomatic usage of *ǫār* can be seen in the following passage:

ħawrūd həbərhe ǫār moh u kūsa bū ǫār ħəməh ‘he took his camels down to water and he found people at the water’ (64:1)

Note also the verbal idioms *ħəftō ǫār* ‘concentrate on’ (e.g., 90:1) and *šəḡbōr ǫār* ‘get help from, collect funds from’ (e.g., 72:2).

8.6. *fənōhən* ‘before; in front of; ago’

The word *fənōhən* is most often met as an adverb meaning ‘before, previously’ or ‘first’ (see §10.3), but it is also found used as a preposition ‘before’, with both temporal and spatial meanings. Its spatial use

is often best translated as 'in front of' or 'ahead of'. Before suffixes, it has the base *fənw-*. Examples are:

- fənōhən aqzē* 'before sunset' (60:1)
syēri fənway 'go in front of me!' (54:17)
fənwikəm məskōt '(just) ahead of you is Muscat' (91:14)
šīni hāləh fənwih 'he saw his shadow in front of him' (95:5)
ʾəśšōt fənway 'she got up before me' (97:43)

As in many other languages (e.g., Arabic, Hebrew, German), the idea of 'X ago' is literally expressed in Mehri as 'before X'. There are just a couple of examples in the texts:

- fənōhən ʾāšrayn sənayn* 'twenty years ago' (2:1)
fənōhən hōba snayn 'seven years ago' (14:1)

8.7. *gayr* 'except', *mən gayr* 'without'

The basic meaning of *gayr* is 'except' or 'besides'. It occurs with this meaning only a half dozen times in Johnstone's texts, and all of these are within positive phrases. This contrasts with *ʾār* (§8.1), which nearly always occurs in a negative context. Some examples of *gayr* are:

- mōn yəkawdər yərdads səhḥayt gayr arḥəmōn* 'who can bring her back alive except God?' (4:8)
garḱəm ḥābū ḏə-bərkiḥ, gayr aḡayg w-aḏānəh 'the people that were on it [the ship] drowned, except for the man and his family' (74:1)
adamməh bərəh k-ʾəḥād gayrən 'probably he is with someone else (lit. someone besides us)' (41:4)
ḏə-syūr yəxəlōf gayrəh 'something else (lit. besides it) will take the place of that which has gone' (97:27)

Much more common, however, is the compound preposition *mən gayr*, which means 'without'. Examples are:

- ʾəs aḡəgēn sōx mən gayr ḥas* 'the bigger lad got up without a sound' (17:3)
hēšən nəkdər nāmōl mən gayr abʾayrən 'what can we do without our camel?' (23:2)

ʾāṣəri t̄roh mən ġayr kawt ‘two nights without food’ (73:2)

In four places, *mən ġayr* is transcribed as *mən ġār*. In three of these passages, the audio clearly has the pronunciation *mən ġayr*, while the fourth has a variant on the audio. The four passages are:

hām kalān t̄sən mən ġār ʾāyd ‘if we leave them without sardines’ (27:16)

an̄kawdər n̄sl̄l̄ lā mən ġār abʾayrən ‘we can’t move without our camel’ (28:12) (audio has *ʾār b-abʾayrən*)

š̄l̄l̄t̄ yūm mən ġār kawt ‘three days without food’ (37:14)

h̄awfi mən ġār ġərōy ‘pay me without (any) talk’ (39:15)

In one case, *mən ġayr* is printed erroneously as *mən xayr*:

mən ġayr ṣayḥ ‘without a sound’ (91:18) (Stroomer: *mən xayr ṣayḥ*)

And in one case we find the compound *bə-ġār*, and the audio confirms this pronunciation:

bə-ġār ʾəḥād ‘without anyone’ (13:1)

Like simple *ġayr*, the compounds *mən ġayr* (or *mən ġār*) and *bə-ġār* only (or at least usually) occur in positive phrases. The one exception is 28:12, but as noted above, the audio attests *ʾār b-* ‘except with’ in this negative context. It is possible that the transcription *mən ġār* is correct, and that the reader on the audio substituted *ʾār*, which is more usual in a negative context.

8.8. *h-* ‘to; for’

The preposition *h-* has the basic meanings of ‘to’ and ‘for’. It has the same general meanings as the preposition *l-*, yet in the great majority of cases the two are not interchangeable. Comparison of the two prepositions will be taken up below, in §8.12. In Johnstone’s texts, the preposition *h-* is most often encountered in the texts marking the indirect object of the verb *ʾāmōr* ‘say’. Multiple examples can be found in practically every text. A few are:

ʾāmārūt hāh: “*kālēt lay*” ‘she said to him: Tell me!’ (5:11)
gēhāmāh ʾāmyēra hayni ‘tomorrow you will say to me’ (33:4)
ʾāmōr hihām gayg ‘a man said to them’ (35:3)
āmawr h-aḡəḡənōt ‘he said to the girl’ (42:40)

The verb *ʾāmōr* is never followed by *l-*. On the other hand, the verb *kālūt* ‘tell, (rarely) talk’, which is very similar in meaning, is nearly always followed by *l-* (see §8.12 for examples). About fourteen times in Johnstone’s texts (five of these in text 22), *kālūt* is followed by *h-*, as in:

əl kawṭona hūk əlā ‘I will not tell you’ (12:7; cf. *l-* in 12:8)
kawṭīta h-aḡay b-āḡēbək ‘I will tell my brother about your love’
 (38:21; cf. *l-* earlier in the same line)
kawṭūt h-abālats ‘she talked to her mistress’ (85:13)

The phrase *ʾāmōr h-* can also be used impersonally to mean ‘be called’, though only a few examples are found in the texts. Two of these are:

nəḥā yāmərəm hīn bət bū zīd əlhilāli ‘we are called (lit. they call us) Bet Bu Zid al-Hilali’ (42:6)
xəṭərāt gayg yāmərəm hāh kādēt ‘once there was a man called Kadet’ (64:1)

Following are examples of *h-* with the meaning ‘for’:

śətmək kəswēt h-ʾāsəri ‘I bought clothes for my friend’ (38:2)
əl šīn qərawš əlā h-anawl ‘we didn’t have money for the fare’ (91:1)
lēzəm l-əshōt hīkəm ‘I must slaughter for you’ (4:6)
ḥəfawr hāh bayr ‘they dug a well for him’ (20:73)
axayr hīkəm tənkeṁ tīn ‘it’s better for you to come to us’ (28:19)

It is a curious feature of Mehri that some of the most common verbs of motion often do not govern a preposition. When they do, the preposition is only rarely *h-* (and even more rarely *l-*). We find *h-* used about two dozen times in the texts following a verb of motion (including, in a few cases, the pseudo-motion verb *ḥōm*; see §7.3.3). In these cases, the object of *h-* is nearly always a place; only once is the object a person (77:5). Some examples of this are:

səyūr h-abātəh ‘he went to his house’ (20:64)
rəddəm h-aḡāhəm ‘they went back to their country’ (40:20)
gəhmō h-arḡəbēt ḏə-bīs aḡəgənōt ‘they went to the town where the girl was’ (75:4)
safərən bərk bədən, nəhōm hə-ṣawr ‘we travelled in a beden-boat, headed for Şur’ (84:1)
ḏə-hānayk əl-syēr h-ʔəḡād ‘I was intending to go to someone’ (77:5)

Also not very common is the use of *h-* to mark an indirect object (other than with the verbs *ʔāmōr* and *kəlūt*, as discussed above). In fact, the use of *h-* to mark an indirect object seems to be mainly lexical. The following verbs govern an object with the preposition *h-*:

<i>dūfa h-</i> ‘pay s.o.’	out’ and <i>ṣəbūr l-</i> ‘give respite to’)
<i>həftō h-</i> ‘give an idea to’ (vs. <i>həftō ḡār</i> ‘concentrate on’)	<i>šnū h-</i> ‘diagnose by a soothsayer’
<i>gəzūm h-</i> ‘swear to’	<i>əxtəyūn h-</i> ‘give an illusion to s.o.’
<i>ḡəz h-</i> ‘wink at’	<i>həzbūr h-</i> ‘feel pleasure at s.o.’s misfortune’ (<i>h-</i> : person being ridiculed)
<i>ṣənḏūr h-</i> ‘vow to s.o.’	
<i>nəṭawḡ h-</i> ‘kiss s.o. in greeting’	
<i>rəḡūz h-</i> ‘sing to/for’	
<i>ṣəbūr h-</i> ‘have patience with s.o.’ (vs. <i>ṣəbūr mən</i> ‘do with-	

In addition to the above verbs, *h-* is found marking an indirect object only about six times, some probably irregularly: two of these (both in 22:60) are governed by the verb *wəzūm* ‘give’, which everywhere else takes a double direct object. Another is *həftō h-* ‘give an idea to’ (90:4). Interestingly, we find *həftō l-* with the same meaning in the very next line (90:5), but this is likely a typographical error; the audio has *h-* in both lines. The fourth (9:3) is with the verb *ḡatəri* ‘speak’, which is normally followed by *k-* ‘with’, and the fifth is with the verb *kəlūb* ‘return’, which is usually followed by *l-*. The sixth is with *gəzūm* ‘swear’ (47:11), which we find in one other passage followed by *l-* (31:5).

The preposition *h-* is also found in a couple of idioms, including *h-aṣayrəb* ‘in the autumn’ and *hayni (hūk, etc.) sēt* ‘I (you, etc.) have been away a long time’. For the rare cases in which *h-* is translated as ‘have’, see §13.3.2.

In summary, *h-* is met most often after the verb *ʾāmōr* ‘say’. It is rare after verbs of motion, even rarer as an indirect object marker ‘to’. It is relatively common with the meaning ‘for’, and, unlike *l-* (see below, §8.12), is used in very few idiomatic phrases. Finally, recall that *h-* is not pronounced, and therefore usually not transcribed, before *h* or *ḥ* (§2.1.3).

8.9. *hāl* ‘at, by, beside’

The basic meaning of *hāl* is roughly that of French *chez*. An appropriate English translation can be ‘at’, ‘by’, ‘beside’, ‘with’, or ‘at the place of’. Before pronominal suffixes the base *hən-* is used. Examples from the texts are:

sənnawrət šərōt hāl ḥərohəh ‘the cat stayed awake by his head’ (15:12)

xədūm hāl tōgər ‘he worked with a merchant’ (24:33)

ʾayšək hənīn ‘have supper with us!’ (lit. ‘your supper is with us’) (22:56)

əklə hənūk ajənbəyyəti ‘I will leave my dagger with you’ (34:15)

hənīs xabz u ɣawt ‘beside her was bread and food’ (42:15)

Mehri *hāl* can also be used after verbs of motion (most often *nūka*), meaning ‘to’, ‘up to’. The object of *hāl* is nearly always a human, or a noun denoting a human collective, like *səkən* ‘community’. Examples are:

nūka bīs hāl ḥaybēh wə-ḥāmēh ‘he brought her to his father and mother’ (48:19)

tē nakam hāl ʾāgawz, ḥašīšəs ‘when they got to the old woman, they (tried to) rouse her’ (65:10)

səyūr hāl ḥōkəm ‘he went to the ruler’ (36:5)

watxəfək hāl səkən ‘I came to a community’ (38:7)

There are also several compound prepositions based on *hāl*. By far the most common of these is *mən hāl* ‘from (the presence of)’. Much less often, one finds *lə-hāl* (var. *əl-hāl*) and *tē hāl* substituting for simple *hāl* after a verb of motion. Examples are:

hō nakak mən hāl habyē ‘I have come from my parents’ (20:70)
hō gəhəmk mən hāl sékni ‘I went from my community’ (38:1)
hēt təšhōl mən hənīn gəzē ‘you deserve a reward from us’ (22:101)
aḳōfi əl-hāl ašōyag ‘go down to the goldsmith’s place’ (22:47)
səyūr tē hāl ’āgawz ‘he went to an old woman’ (48:6)

On the use of *mən hāl* as a relative ‘where(ever)’, see §3.8.4. As for special combinations with verbs, note *wəfūd hāl* ‘ask s.o. for s.o.’s hand in marriage’ (*b-*: the person whose hand is asked for), for example:

wəfūd bīs hāl həbse ‘he asked her parents for her hand in marriage’ (14:2)

We also find *šəwkūf hāl* ‘sleep with’ (e.g., 85:29), *rəmūs hāl* ‘chat (at night) with’ (e.g., 85:35), *wəḳōt hāl* ‘became the wife of’ (74:10) (< *wīka* ‘be(come)’), and *šəmdūd mən hāl* ‘take s.t. from s.o.’ (73:6).

8.10. *hīs* ‘like, as’

The preposition *hīs* ‘like, as’ is nearly always found in the compound form *lə-hīs* (var. *əl-hīs*). This preposition cannot take suffixes directly, and instead the direct object marker *t-* must be appended, e.g., (*lə-*)*hīs tay* ‘like me’, (*lə-*)*hīs tīk* ‘like you’, etc. Note that when pronominal suffixes are used, the element *lə-* is optional. Examples from the texts are:

hō ašényəh lə-hīs haybi ‘I see him as my father’ (18:18)
əl-hīs həbōn ḏə-təgēr ‘like the sons of merchants’ (22:35)
ḳābəm həh fahləh lə-hīs fənōhən ‘they returned to him his penis as before’ (24:32)
həbū əl-hīs abaṭəh mən kəṭēr ‘the people are as numerous as sand’ (lit. ‘the people are like sand because of the large number’) (29:17)
hīs amḥəlīb ‘like a calf’ (41:8)
hah hīs tīkəm ‘he is like you’ (22:93)
’əḥād lə-hīs tay ‘is anyone like me?’ (42:3)
’əl yāgōb ’əḥād yāḳā hīs təh lā ‘he didn’t like anyone to be like him’ (76:11)

This preposition is normally followed by a noun or adverb, as in the examples above, but in a few cases it is followed by a verbal phrase. All such examples from the texts are:

ʾəmələk lə-hīs ʾāmərək hayni ‘I did as you told me’ (20:18)
yəktəwīlən lə-hīs hām tāt xəlūs mən hōrəm ‘he will get panicky like
 if someone has become lost (lit. lost the road)’ (43:1)
yəhyūr wə-yəhsūs lə-hīs šī ǝ-yəgərərəh xōtər ‘he would get dizzy and
 feel like something was pulling him downwards’ (77:1)

On the temporal conjunction *hīs* ‘when’, see §13.5.3.3.

8.11. *k-* ‘with’

The basic meaning of the preposition *k-*, which has the base *š-* before pronominal suffixes, is ‘with’.² Some examples are:

ākā kə-hārawn ‘stay with the goats!’ (33:1)
wəkūb k-ʾāgawz ‘he went in with the old woman’ (75:7)
təsyēr šay ‘you will go with me’ (55:2)
aḡayg šəh šəwəlūl ‘the man (who was) with him stayed’ (68:5)
səbīw aḡayg šihəm ‘they took the man prisoner with them’ (69:2)

It is also usually used with the verb *ḡatri* ‘speak’, just as in English. Only once (9:3) do we find *ḡatri h-*. Examples of *ḡatri k-* are:

hō məḡətayr kə-hāməy ‘I will speak with my mother’ (9:2)
tōli ḡatri šīs ‘then he spoke with her’ (24:17)

Based on the meaning ‘with’, *k-* has come to be used in the possessive construction corresponding to English ‘have’, as in:

šay nəxlīt ‘I have a palm tree’ (lit. ‘with me is a palm tree’) (77:5)
ʾəl šihəm kawt lā ‘they had no food’ (lit. ‘there is not with them food’) (11:2)

This construction is discussed further in §13.3.1. The preposition *k-*, in suffixal forms, is also used in a variety of expressions relating to physical or environmental conditions, for example:

šin həbūr ‘we’re cold’ (lit. ‘cold is with us’) (35:4)
šəh hark ‘he was hot’ (lit. ‘heat is with him’) (32:2)

² A fuller treatment of this preposition, including comparative and etymological discussion, can be found in Rubin (2009a).

šay aǧallēt ‘it was misty’ (lit. ‘with me was mist’) (47:4)

Many more examples, along with discussion, can be found in §13.3.1.2.

The preposition *k-* is also used idiomatically in a few expressions relating to time of day, namely:

kə-sōbəḥ ‘in the morning’ *k-amǧərāb* ‘in the evening’
k-aǧāhr ‘at noon; in the afternoon’ (rare)
k-ʾāšər ‘in the evening’ (rare)

As noted above (§8.4), *k-amǧərāb* (25:14) is attested just once, as is the alternative *bərk amǧərāb* (25:9). The phrase *k-ʾāšər* is also attested only once (81:1), but the *k-* is absent from the audio. This suggests a possible mistake in the text.

The preposition *k-* seems also to be incorporated into the form *kālayn(i)* ‘in the evening’. With *kə-sōbəḥ* ‘in the morning’, the *k-* is really likewise inseparable, despite the hyphenated transcription. Moreover, *kə-sōbəḥ* is often best translated simply as ‘morning’. Compare the following two sentences:

tē kə-sōbəḥ aǧayg šəwkūf ‘then, in the morning, the man fell asleep.’
 (22:65) (*tē* = ‘then’)
hātōm tē kə-sōbəḥ ‘he stayed until the morning’ (9:11) (*tē* = ‘until’)

As for other idioms, we find:

səyūr k- ‘sleep with (sexually)’ (lit. ‘go with’)
səyūr (kə-)ḥənōf- ‘go to the bathroom’ (lit. ‘go (with) oneself’)
wīka rəḥaym k- ‘be nice to’

8.12. *l-* ‘to; for’

The preposition *l-* is usually translated into English as ‘to’ or ‘for’, just like the preposition *h-*. However, as already noted above (§8.8), the two are very rarely interchangeable. One very common use of *l-* is to mark the indirect object of the verb *kəlūt* ‘tell, (rarely) talk’. The verb *kəlūt* is nearly always followed by *l-*, though we find *kəlūt* followed by *h-* about fourteen times in the texts (five of which are in text 22). However, the semantically similar verb *ʾāmōr* (always followed by *h-*) is never found in combination with *l-*. Examples of *kəlūt* with *l-* are:

kəlūt əl-ḥābū ‘he told the people’ (2:5)

kələtk lis b-aḡərōy ḏ-aḡās ‘I told her her brother’s words’ (38:21)

kəlawt ləh ḥābū bīs ‘people told him about her’ (40:14)

tē mənays wə-kəlūt lis ‘then he got hold of her and talked to her’ (40:16)

kəlūtən lihəm b-aḡəssēt kalləs ‘we told them the whole story’ (91:28)

In general, one cannot say that *l-* is regularly used to mark an indirect object. A number of verbs that we would expect to take an indirect object instead take a direct object in Mehri. The most notable example is the verb *wəzūm* ‘give’, which takes a double direct object, as in:³

wəzmōna tiš xəmsin qarš ‘I will give you fifty dollars’ (48:6)

wə-ṣərōmāh əl wəzəmk tīn tihəm lā ‘now you (still) have not given them to us’ (91:30)

Even more surprising is the fact that verbs of motion in Mehri are often followed by a direct object. And when they are followed by a preposition, it is very rarely *l-*. In fact, *l-* (except in the combinations *əl-ḥō* ‘to where?’ and *əw-bō* ‘to here’; see §10.1) is never found after the common motion verbs *səyūr* ‘go’, *nūka* ‘come’, *wiṣəl* ‘arrive’, or *ḡəhēm* ‘go’.⁴ Just six times *l-* follows *rəd* ‘return’ (after which *təwōli* is more common; see below, §8.19), four times *ḡəfud* ‘go down’ (after which a direct object is most common), and a handful of less common verbs only once. It is found regularly only with certain motion verbs, such as *həkbūl* ‘come near’, *ḡərūb* ‘approach’, and *ləḥāf* ‘come close to’ (see the list below). It is also significant that the only two motion verbs that are found used with both *h-* and *l-* are *rəd* ‘return’ and *ḡəfud* ‘go down’.

With the benefactive meaning of ‘for’, *l-* is found about twenty times, less than a third as often as *h-* in this function. And even though there is overlap in meaning, *h-* and *l-* seem to occur in different contexts (i.e., after different verbs and nouns). Some of the examples in which *l-* means ‘for’ are:

³ As discussed in §8.8, *h-* is found before the indirect objects of *wəzūm* in a single passage (22:60).

⁴ The phrase *nūka bawmāh* ‘come here’ is found four times in the texts, compared to *nūka əw-bō*, which is found eight times.

u nəḥārəm ləh yəbīti trayt ‘they slaughtered two camels for him’ (32:9)

yəkūn lūk šak ‘it will be a crime for you’ (33:3)

ḥāmēk hawḳawt lūk šīwōṭ ‘your mother lit a fire for you’ (36:11)

həḳəfūd ləh ḳayd ‘they let down a rope for him’ (48:3)

Although *l-* is relatively rare as a general preposition meaning ‘to’ or ‘for’, it is extremely common as an object marker following certain verbs. Some of these might be considered indirect objects, but the majority must be considered idiomatic. Attested in the texts are:

hāmōr l- ‘order s.o.’ (vs. *hāmōr*

b- ‘give an order for s.t.’)

’āyōb l- ‘cheat s.o., break an oath to’

’ātyōn l- ‘betray’

bədō l- ‘tell a lie about s.o.’ (vs.

bədō b- ‘lie to’)

šadhūk l- ‘look down at’

dək l- ‘spring on, pounce upon’

həḏrō l- ‘let the blood of a goat run over s.o.’

fḳō l- ‘cover’ (*b-*: with)

fəyūz l- ‘overcome, defeat s.o.’

gərō l- ‘pass by s.o.; happen to’

gəzūm l- ‘swear to’

həḡbūr l- ‘give help to s.o.’

ḡatyəḏ l- ‘be(come) angry at’

šəwgawr l- ‘raid’

həḡūm l- ‘attack’

əttūma l- ‘listen to’

ḥəḡ l- ‘refuse s.o. permission to marry’

ḥəzawr l- ‘persuade s.o.’

kbūr l- ‘stay with s.o. to drink milk’

aḳōbəl l- ‘watch, keep an eye on’

həḳbūl l- ‘approach, come towards’

aḳōdəm l- ‘offer s.o. (food)’

ḳawdər l- ‘manage against, get the better of’

ḳəlūb l- (*b-*)*səlōm* ‘send greetings to s.o.; greet s.o.’ (also *ḳəlūb səlōm l-*)

ḳərūb l- ‘get near, approach’

ləḥāfl l- ‘come close to, next to’

ləḥāk l- ‘help’

ləš l- ‘press up against’

məṭhūl l- ‘become easier for’

nəkūs l- ‘exhume’

nəḳawd l- ‘blame, criticize’

rədō l- ‘throw at’ (vs. *rədō b-* ‘throw s.t.’)

rūfa l- ‘climb (a rope); board (a ship)’

ratḳi l- ‘read the Quran over s.o.’

hərxū l- ‘release, untie’

sūməḥ l- ‘allow s.o., give permission to; forgive’ (vs. *sūməḥ b-* ‘allow s.t.’)

šəbūr l- ‘give respite to’ (vs. *šəbūr mən* ‘do w/out’ and *šəbūr h-* ‘have patience with s.o.’)

šəwṣawb l- ‘be wounded in’

šōm l- ‘sell to s.o.’

šōbəh l- ‘look like’ (vs. *šōbəh b-* ‘suspect s.o.’)

<i>śad</i> <i>l-</i> ‘saddle’	into (sexually)’ (vs. <i>wəkūb</i>
<i>śahēd</i> <i>l-</i> ‘bear witness to/	‘enter’)
against’	<i>xəlūt</i> <i>l-</i> ‘stay with s.o.’ (vs. <i>xəlūt</i>
<i>śarawg</i> <i>l-</i> ‘sew up’	‘mix s.t.’)
<i>śatūk</i> <i>l-</i> ‘miss, long for’	<i>xəşawb</i> <i>l-</i> ‘send for; send to s.o.’
<i>ṭāfl</i> ‘visit’	<i>zəhāk</i> <i>l-</i> ‘make fun of’ (vs.
<i>həṭlawk</i> <i>śiwōṭ</i> <i>l-</i> ‘open fire on’	<i>zəhāk mən</i> ‘laugh at’)
(lit. ‘release fire’)	<i>zəl</i> <i>l-</i> ‘attack’ (mistakenly con-
<i>həwhū</i> <i>l-</i> ‘come to help s.o.’	fused with <i>śəl</i> in 26:9)
<i>wəkūb</i> <i>l-</i> ‘go in (to see) s.o.; go	

As with *b-*, one finds *l-* sometimes used with verbs where it is not expected, for example *kəşūf* ‘expose’ (e.g., 24:38; elsewhere with d.o.), *ḵəfud* (e.g., 64:18; usually d.o.), *rəkūb* ‘mount’ (e.g., 102:11; usually with *qār* or d.o.), *səlūb* ‘wait for’ (48:8; elsewhere with d.o.), *xətūl* ‘stalk, creep up on’ (10:14; elsewhere with d.o.), and *xəzū* ‘refuse’ (94:4; elsewhere with *mən*).

The verb *šəxbūr* ‘ask’ is twice found with *l-*, meaning ‘ask about s.o.’ (20:46; 94:14). It is not clear whether this is really distinct from *šəxbūr mən* ‘ask about s.t.’, since in one place *šəxbūr mən* also means ‘ask about s.o.’ (32:6). A number of other verbs with *l-* are attested just once, and it is unclear if they are exceptional or not. Such are *həftō* *l-* ‘give an idea to’ (90:4, probably a typographical error; the audio has *h-* and we find *həftō h-* in the previous line), *ḵəkūm* *l-* ‘force s.o.’ (75:1), *ḵātūg* *l-* ‘need s.o.’ (94:13), *ləb* *l-* ‘be fond of’ (76:15),⁵ *lət* *l-* ‘bandage up’ (75:18), *ləwū* *l-* ‘wrap around’ (49:11), and *rəşawn* *l-* ‘tie to’ (89:9; once also *rəşawn b-*, 42:15, with the same meaning). As noted already in §8.8, we find *gəzūm* *l-* once (31:5) and *gəzūm h-* once (47:11), both meaning ‘swear to’. The phrase *’āmōl l-X gərōy* ‘give s.o. an argument’ (46:13) also seems to be an idiom; elsewhere (including earlier in 46:13) *’āmōl h-* means ‘make for’. Another idiom is *gəzōt lay ḵəyawnm* ‘the sun went down on me’ (80:6).

The preposition *l-* also occurs in a number of non-verbal idioms. Such are:

⁵ The verb *ləb* is not in Johnstone’s *ML*, and it is tempting to think that the form *təlbūb* in 76:15 is a typographical error for *təḵbūb* (though *ḵəb* normally takes a d.o.; cf. 15:10, 67:1). However, the audio clearly has *təlbūb*. Moreover, the *JL* (p. 158) gives the verbs *lōttub* ‘to be likeable’ and *šəlbāb* ‘become friends’.

ḥāšē l- ‘far be it from (s.o.)!’
ḵarayb l- ‘near, close to’⁶
l-ādēd ḏ- ‘each, every’ (see §5.5.3)
l-arawrām ‘along the seashore’
l-arayk ‘before/without breakfast’
l-’āšar ‘at night’ (rare)
l-āyūmān ‘last year’
lā-ḥōlāt ḏīmāh ‘in this condition/way’
əl-ḥōrām ‘on the road’ (more often *b-ḥōrām*)
l-aḵāssēt ḏīmāh ‘in this way’
(səyūr) lā-mrawḵəs ‘(walk) on crutches’
əl-xā ḏ-abayt ‘at the door of the house’
wōgəb l- ‘be proper for; be obliged to’ (see §12.5.16)

Also attested twice is *rēḥək l-* ‘far from’ (99:22; 104:3), though more common is *rēḥək mən*. There are also a number of other idioms having to do with parts of the body. Attested are:

l-ḥərōh ‘on the head’ (28:8)
l-fēm ‘in the foot, on the leg’ (72:4)
l-ḥayd ‘on the hand’ (75:16)
l-’arḵ ḏ-ansēm ‘on the artery’ (75:18)
l-xaffəh ‘on foot’ (78:1)

On the compounds *l-adəfēt ḏ-*, ‘by the side of, beside’, *l-aḵātər* ‘in the direction of’, and *əl-sayb ḏ-* ‘in the direction of’, see §8.21. And for the rare cases in which *l-* is translated as ‘have (time left)’, see §13.3.2.

In short, the use of the preposition *l-* is highly idiomatic. We also find that *l-* and *h-* have very little overlap in function. The verb *ḵəlūt*, normally followed by *l-*, is very occasionally found with *h-*. Both prepositions are found a handful of times after the motion verbs *rəd* and *ḵəfūd*. Very few other verbs are attested with both prepositions with no difference in meaning; among these are *gəzūm* ‘swear’ (31:5; 47:11), *ḡərūf* ‘fetch water’ (both in 68:3), and *ḥəftō* ‘give an idea’ (90:4, 5), though, as noted above and in the Appendix, the use of *l-* with *ḥəftō* in 90:5 is probably a typographical error. And finally, both prepositions can mean ‘for’, though *h-* is far more common in this meaning.

⁶ In one case (77:1), *ḵarayb* is lacking a following preposition, but this is probably a typographical error, since a following *l-* is heard on the audio.

8.13. *mən* 'from'

The preposition *mən* has the basic meaning 'from', in reference to both location and cause. By extension, it is used in partitive constructions ('of'), and in comparative constructions ('than'), and it also has a few less common uses. The following examples illustrate its basic meaning 'from':

- fəṭawk ḥābū mən amsgēd* 'the people came from (out of) the mosque' (4:13)
nūka mən ḥəwōdi 'he came from the valley' (10:1)
ḥəwū mən dahk kənnawn 'he fell from a small ledge' (17:4)
ḥōm mənək ašədk 'I want from you the truth' (22:89)
kərūt mən ḥābū 'she hid (her) from the people' (24:4)
šəmrūz mən faṭx 'he was ill from the head wound' (48:12)
ḡəyābūt mən ayəšayt 'she fainted from fear' (54:11)

Its partitive use:

- təro mən atəgēr* 'two of the merchants' (4:1)
ḏōməḥ mən ātəḳādhəm ḏə-sēḥər 'this is some of their belief about witchcraft' (7:8)
səḥṭōna ṭād mən ḥəbənšə 'I will kill one of your sons' (48:23)
kāl mənīn ḏə-bdō 'whoever of us lied' (24:37)

And its comparative use:

- yəmə əl hē axass əlā mən əmšē* 'today is no worse than yesterday' (26:4)
ʔətēm axayr mənay aw hō axayr mənəkēm '(whether) you are better than me or I am better than you' (42:12)
ḥaybi axayr mənay yōmər 'my father sings better than me' (52:2)

For further discussion of comparatives, see §5.4. In about a dozen passages, *mən* has the meaning 'because of', for example:

- əl təwīw šī-lā yəmə mən aḏəbbēt* 'they have eaten nothing today because of the flies' (26:13)
ḥābū əl-hīs abaṭəḥ mən kəṭēr 'the people are as numerous as sand' (lit. 'the people are like sand because of the large number') (29:17)

ʾāḡawz l-ād ʾankats šənēt əlā mən həbrīs ‘the old woman could not sleep (lit. sleep did not come to her) because of her son’ (36:8)
šinək məkēb hərsō b-agzayrət ʾəḡəmāh mən aḡərbēt ‘I saw a ship anchored by that island because of the storm’ (103:7)

The preposition *mən* is also used idiomatically with a number of verbs, including:

<i>ʾayḡəb mən</i> ‘be delighted with’ (vs. <i>ʾayḡəb b-</i> ‘love’)	<i>šəḡtā mən</i> ‘be tired out or depressed from’
<i>bəkō mən</i> ‘weep for/from’	<i>nūšəḥ mən</i> ‘advise against’
<i>ḡawla mən</i> ‘be crippled in (a body part)’	<i>səd mən</i> ‘be able (or enable) to do without’
<i>ḡəhēr mən</i> ‘be dazzled by’	<i>šəbūr mən</i> ‘do without’ (vs. <i>šəbūr l-</i> ‘give respite to’ and <i>šəbūr h-</i> ‘have patience with s.o.’)
<i>ḡəzūm mən</i> ‘swear against’ (vs. <i>ḡəzūm l-</i> ‘swear to’)	<i>tāb mən</i> ‘be tired of; have trouble with’
<i>ḡəf mən</i> ‘lift s.o. up by’	<i>ṭəyūb mən</i> ‘enjoy s.t.’
<i>ḡəlūk mən</i> ‘look for’ (vs. <i>ḡəlūk b-</i> ‘look at’)	<i>šəxbūr mən</i> ‘ask about s.t./s.o.’
<i>ḡəyžən mən</i> ‘feel sorry for s.o.’	<i>xəlūs mən</i> ‘stray from, get lost; be unable to find’
<i>hattəm mən</i> ‘be sad about’	<i>xəzū mən</i> ‘refuse s.o. or s.t.’
<i>həḏḏūr mən</i> ‘look out for, guard against’ (vs. <i>həḏḏūr b-</i> ‘look out for [=on behalf of], guard’)	<i>yəš mən</i> ‘fear, be afraid of’
<i>həyūr mən</i> ‘get confused about’	<i>zəḡāk mən</i> ‘laugh at’ (vs. <i>zəḡāk l-</i> ‘make fun of’)
<i>šəktūb mən</i> ‘have s.o. write a charm against’	<i>šəzyūk mən</i> ‘be fed up with, tired of’
<i>ḡawṭa mən</i> ‘be tired of’	

The preposition *mən* is also found in a number of other idiomatic expressions. Such are:

<i>ḡəmət mən ḡəmət</i> ‘every Friday’	<i>mən zəbōn həwəlay</i> ‘long ago’
<i>kalləh mənək</i> ‘it’s all your fault’ (lit. ‘it’s all from you’)	<i>məšhayr mən</i> ‘famous for’
<i>mən ʾəḡkīr</i> ‘famous’	<i>məxwīf mən</i> ‘afraid of’
<i>mən ṭawr</i> ‘sometimes’	<i>rəḡək mən</i> ‘far from’ (also, less often, <i>rəḡək l-</i>)
<i>mən ṭōdi</i> ‘at the breast’ (said of a baby)	<i>tōḡər mən</i> ‘rich in’
<i>mən xawr</i> ‘after a little while’	<i>xələ</i> mən ‘empty of’

In two passages, *mən* means ‘according to’, though this use is clearly an extension of the meaning ‘from’. These are:

w-ʾād l-ʾəḥād yəsanyəh lā ... mən aḳawl ḏ-aḡəyōg ‘nobody had seen it ... according to the report of the men’ (41:10)
mən ḥābū ḏ-yəškəlītəh, ʾādəh šəḥ ‘according to the people who had heard the tale from him, he was still alive’ (92:6)

In two passages (both from text 22), *mən* means ‘approximately, about’:

ʾāzēm xəddōmət mən ʾāsərēt dīnār ‘give the workers about ten dinars’ (22:48)
mən myīt u mən mītayn dīnār ‘about a hundred or two hundred dinars’ (22:50)

In one passage, *mən* is best translated by ‘ago’:

abʿayri ḏə-ḥəḡšōbən təh mən ʾaysər yūm ‘my camel that we lost ten days ago’ (28:6)

Finally, we also find *mən* used in a handful of cases with a temporal meaning ‘since’ or ‘for’ (in the sense of ‘since ... ago’). In the latter meaning, *mən* is usually used in a negative phrase in conjunction with the particle *l-ʾād* (§13.2.2). All of the attested examples are:

ʾādi əl šīnək tīhəm lā mən warx ‘I have not seen them for a month’ (20:41)
mən sənayn əlyōməh l-ʾād ʾəḥād yātəḳaydən bīhəm lā ‘since those years nobody believes in them’ (25:19)
mən warxi troh l-ʾād xəṣawb b-ši-lā ‘for two months he has not sent anything’ (57:7)
mən mayt? mən wəḳōna ʾaysər yūm ‘since when? since about ten days (ago)’ (101:12-13)

On the temporal conjunction *mən hīs* ‘since’, see §13.5.3.3.

8.14. (ʾəm)-*mən* ‘between’

The preposition (ʾəm)-*mən* occurs most often in the simple form *mən*, making it homophonous with the preposition *mən* ‘from’. That it is a different preposition is clear from the fact that its suffixed forms are

made from the base *mənw-* (cf. the two *’et* prepositions of Biblical Hebrew). The form *’əm-mən* derives from *’əm-bən*, as shown by the Yemeni Mehri form *beyn* or *bīn*, Ḥarsusi *bēn*, and Soqotri *əm-bīn*.⁷ The shift of *b > m* is due not to the preceding *m*, but rather to the following *n*. On the sound change *bVn > mVn*, see §2.1.7. Examples from the texts are:

hē šawkūf ’əm-mən trō ‘he was sleeping between two (men)’ (69:3)
təšawkūf mənwāh u mən tētəh ‘she would sleep between him and his wife’ (46:7)
ləhān fəšawl mənwin hō kəbələk ‘whatever they decide between us, I will accept’ (77:4)
hadyəm adabh mənwayhi ‘they divided the honey between the two of them’ (77:10)
mənway u mənwūk šért ‘(there was) between me and you (one) condition’ (99:53)

In one passage (*’əm*)-*mən* means ‘among’, and is preceded by *mən* ‘from’:

gār aməlawtəg mən mənwiham ‘men were killed from among them’
 (lit. ‘dead men fell from among them’) (104:29)

It is worth mentioning that Johnstone’s text 77 contains four distinct suffixed forms of (*’əm*)-*mən*, which is overall rather rare in the texts.

8.15. *nəxāli* ‘under’

The preposition *nəxāli* ‘under’ usually appears in the texts as either *ənxāli* or, especially when preceded by a word ending in a vowel, as *nxāli*. Examples from the texts are:

wəšələm nəxāli abayt də-šérə ‘they arrived below the judge’s house’
 (19:14)
kəfūdən b-abar ənxāli dəhək sōx ‘we came ashore under a big cliff’
 (60:10)
ağayg šəkrō nxāli həddūt ‘the man hid under the cradle’ (63:8)

⁷ Yemeni Mehri *beyn* is found in Jahn (1905: 125) and Bittner (1914a: 12), while *bīn* is found in Sima (2009). The Ḥarsusi and Soqotri forms are given in *HL* (p. 22), and the latter is also found in Leslau (1938: 85).

kūsa nxāli hāruhs sāṭayt hārawf ‘he found under her head three (gold) coins’ (97:41)

w-əlḥān kask nxāse hē ḏ-hō ‘and whatever I find under it is mine’ (67:8)

One also finds the compound preposition *mān nxāli*, which can mean ‘from under’ or simply ‘under’. All of the attested examples of this compound are:

gōrāk mān nxāli ḥāṣan ‘I passed under a castle’ (22:28)

ḥawla mān nxāse gērtan ‘he put slave-girls under her’ (24:45)

ṣāḳ mān nxāli ḥāṣan ‘he called out from under the castle (wall)’ (48:3)

Twice we find the combination *tē nxāli* ‘down to, to under’:

ḥawū šērā ta nxāli ḥāṣan ‘the judge fell down to beneath the castle (walls)’ (48:5)

ṣayūr biḥam tē nxāli ḥāṣan ḏa-ḥōkam ‘he took them to below the ruler’s castle’ (48:13)

Note also the idiom *mān nxāli šahawd* ‘before witnesses’ (39:5).

8.16. *ṣabēb* ‘because of’

The preposition *ṣabēb* ‘because of’ only occurs four times in Johnstone’s texts, and in three of these cases it is part of a compound. Strangely, the make-up of the compound is different in all three cases; we find *ṣabēb ḏa-*, *ṣabēb mān*, and *aw-ṣabēb* (< *al-ṣabēb* < *l-ṣabēb*). More often this meaning is conveyed by the preposition *mān* (see above, §8.13), and perhaps *ṣabēb* should be seen as an Arabism. Following are all attested cases of *ṣabēb* as a preposition:

ʾāyb alikam tantawḥam ṣabēb ḏa-ḥamoh ‘it’s a disgrace for you to quarrel because of water’ (10:6)

wā-yākūn ṣabēb mānk ‘and it will be because of you’ (22:94)

l-ʾaḥād yaḥōm yaḥlēṭ līn lā aw-ṣabēbah ‘no one wants to stay with us because of him’ (89:32)

wā-šawkif wā-aśšam ṣabēb aṣawt ḏa-bārḥoh ‘they kept falling asleep and waking up because of the voice of Berhoh’ (104:23)

Səbēb also occurs as a noun meaning ‘reason, cause’ (43:3; 48:17; 86:6).

8.17. *sār* ‘behind’

The preposition *sār* has the basic meaning of ‘behind’. When suffixes are added, the base is usually the compound form *mən sər-*; the simple base *sər-* is used in contexts in which the prepositional phrase is used in a relative clause (which need not be preceded by *ðə-*) and after certain verbs (e.g., *bəḳawz* ‘run’). Some examples are:

tabam sār əsfütən ðə-həbēr ‘they followed after the tracks of the camels’ (12:11)

tabatəh sənnawrət mən sərīh ‘the cat followed after him’ (15:9)

šəwkəfō sār hərōm ‘they went to sleep behind a tree’ (17:2)

həwōdi sərīn ‘the valley behind us’ (30:2) (but *həwōdi ðə-sərīn* in 80:4)

nəkēs mən sərīs u mənē tīdaysē ‘come at her from behind and take hold of her breasts’ (40:15)

ʾāmərək hīs “syēri fənway!”, *u hō səyərək mən sərīs* ‘I said to her: “Go in front of me!”’, and I went behind her’ (54:17)

As illustrated in the first two examples above, the verb *tūba* ‘follow’ can be followed by *sār*. However, it is far more often followed by a direct object (e.g., 22:11; 94:18). This verb can also be, and usually is, followed by *b-* if the object is *śaf* (pl. *əsfütən*) ‘track(s)’. Additional verbal idioms are *bəkō sār* ‘cry over’ and *bəḳawz sār* ‘run after’, as in:

bəkō aḡayg sār tētəh ‘the man cried over his wife’ (19:5)

hēt təbēki sār kabś ‘you are crying over a lamb’ (75:23)

bəḳawz sərīs həbrē ðə-hōkəm ‘the Sultan’s son ran after her’ (97:15)

In just two cases, *sār* has the temporal meaning ‘after’, though the second of these could legitimately be translated as ‘behind’:

həbray yəmēt sərīs ‘my son will die after she is gone (lit. after her)’ (37:10)

ʾəd yənke mawsəm mən sərīh ‘will another monsoon boat be coming after it?’ (45:16)

8.18. *tē* ‘until, up to’

The particle *tē* (variants *tā*, *ta*) is most commonly used as a temporal conjunction meaning either ‘until’ or ‘when’ (see §13.5.3.2). However, in conjunction with nouns or adverbs, it functions as a simple preposition with either a temporal meaning ‘until’ or a spatial meaning ‘up to’. Examples are:

- səlōb tē bə-ħəllay* ‘wait until night-time’ (22:36)
nəħōm nəšlēl tā ħəwōdi sərīn ‘we ought to move into the valley behind us’ (30:2)
wəzmōna tīhəm anawlhəm mən zāfōr tē bawmāh ‘I will give them their fare from Dhofar to here’ (91:32)
safərən bərk mawtər mən məskōt tē dəbay ‘we travelled by car from Muscat to Dubai’ (91:33)
səyawr tē ħərōz amšəğərēt ‘they went on until the next acacia tree’ (99:15)

As discussed in several sections above, *tē* also occurs in combination with a number of other prepositions. One finds *tē b-* ‘up on to’, *tē bərk* ‘up on to’, *tē ǧār* ‘up on to’, *tē hāl* ‘to (s.o.)’, and *tē nxāli* ‘down to’, though all of these are quite rare. The most common of these is *tē ǧār*, which is found about nine times in the texts, while *tē b-* and *tē bərk* each occur just once.

8.19. *təwōli* ‘to, towards’

The preposition *təwōli* ‘to, towards’ is very common, more common than *h-* to indicate motion towards. The majority of its occurrences are following a form of the verb *səyūr* ‘go’, though it is also found with a number of other verbs of motion. Only rarely does it follow a non-motion verb (e.g., *kəṭūb* ‘write’, *ʾāyēt* ‘cry out’). Most notable is that the object of *təwōli* is nearly always a person or group of people (or animals); when it is not, it is usually a noun denoting a human collective, like *səkən* ‘community’. Examples are:

- səyawr təwōli šar* ‘they went to a judge’ (24:38)
hō sīrōna təwōli ħaybi ‘I am going to my father’ (24:49)
səyūr təwōli səkənəh ‘he went to his community’ (31:15)
nūka ħəynīt təwōli kəlōn ‘the women came to the bride’ (9:7)
šəlləm təh təwōli səkən ‘they carried him to the community’ (17:9)

hah rəd tawōli abətəh ‘he went back to his house’ (18:9)
rəd tawōli sēkən ‘he went back to the community’ (30:8)
’āyēt tawōli ḥābū ‘he cried out to the folk’ (17:6)
gəhōm tawōli sēknək ‘go to your community!’ (38:21)
kətūb tawōli ašōyag xaṭ ‘he wrote a letter to the goldsmith’ (22:83)
xəṣawb bīs tawōli ḥōkəm ‘he sent it to the ruler’ (48:14)

It is a curious feature of Mehri that if the object following most verbs of motion is a place, there is usually no preposition involved. The distinction between human and non-human objects is illustrated very nicely by the following example in which the verb *səyūr* has two objects:

wə-səyark wə-syūr arḥabēt tawōli ’āsər ḏə-ḥaybi ‘I set off and went to town to a friend of my father’ (34:15)

In one case, before a verb, *tawōli* is translated as ‘until’ (in place of expected *tē*) in the printed edition:

šallīs tawōli ḳayṭa ‘he carried her until he was tired’ (46:3)

However, the audio has *tōli* ‘then’, and so we should correct this and translate this passage instead as ‘he carried her, then he got tired’. (The opposite mistake, the transcription of *tōli* in place of *tawōli*, is found in 85:5.)

It should also be mentioned that there is a noun *tawōli* which means ‘end part of the night’ (e.g., 42:25; 103:2).

8.20. *xā(-hē)* ‘like, as ... as’

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, it is not certain that *xā* should be classified as a preposition, but it is included for convenience because of its English translational value. In context, *xā* is often best translated into English as ‘like’ or ‘as ... as’. Literally, it means something more like ‘as if’. It is always followed by an independent personal pronoun, most often *hē*, though this is sometimes obscured by an alternative transcription *xā-hē*. Observe the following examples:

aḡīgēn rəḥaym, xā-hē rīt ‘the boy was as beautiful as a moon’ (22:1)
xawr ḳāṣəm xā-hē falg ‘the lagoon was as cold as ice’ (36:1)

əwbōn xā-hē šxōf wə-xəfayf xā-hē bōrək ‘as white as milk and as fast as lightning’ (41:8) (Stroomer: *xā-hē* for both)
aḡiggēn, ʾāmawr, xā-hē šār ‘the boy, they say, was like a gazelle’ (83:3) (Stroomer: *xā-hē*)

Literally, these examples translate as ‘beautiful as if he were a moon’, ‘cold as if it were ice’, etc., but it is unclear whether or not *xā-hē* has been grammaticalized and is considered (natively) as a true preposition. In all other occurrences of *xā* in the texts, however, *xā* cannot be considered a preposition. In these cases, the meaning of *xā* is more transparent as ‘as if’. Following are all additional attestations of *xā*:

məkā xā-sēh nkath arḥəmēt ḏīməh ‘(it is) as if this (last) rainfall never came there’ (26:15)
əl xā-hō ḏ-əḡūzəm lūk əlā ‘let’s say I took no oath for you’ (lit. ‘as if I did not take an oath for you’) (31:6)
məkā xā-hō ḏ-ənūfa šē hənēkəm ‘(it is) as if I were of no use to you in anything!’ (33:2)
əsōni ḥābū xā-hēm bərk ḥəmōh ‘I saw people as if they were in water’ (40:23)
wə-lā məkā xā-hēm xələkəm ‘(it is) as if they had never been born’ (90:8)

It seems that when the pronoun is *hō*, *ḏ-* is required before the verb.

8.21. Additional Prepositions

There are a handful of phrases which might be considered compound prepositions, all of which occur just once or twice in the texts. With one possible exception (*l-sayb ḏ-*), these can be analyzed as simple prepositions plus nouns. These are:

l-adəfēt ḏ- ‘by the side of, beside’ (cf. *dəfēt* ‘body, side’)
b-aḏōbəl ḏ- ‘beside’ (cf. *ḏōbəl* ‘side, edge’)⁸
l-aḱātər ḏ- ‘in the direction of’ (cf. *ḱātər* ‘direction’)
ḱəyōs ḏ- ‘like’ (cf. *ḱəyōs* ‘proportion; good fit, proper measure’)
l-sayb ḏ- ‘in the direction of’ (*sayb* ‘direction?’ is not attested)
b-aṭərēf ḏ- ‘beside’ (cf. *ṭərēf* ‘side’)
mən aṭərēf ḏ- ‘from among’

⁸ For a literal example of *b-aḏōbəl ḏ-* ‘at the side of’, see 37:20.

The attested contexts are:

wġāz bəh aġayg ðə-l-adəfətəh ‘he slipped it to the man by his side’ (73:6)

tē b-aḏabəli həwḳayh w-aḳōfi ‘then when (it was) beside me, he put it down and went away’ (92:2)

gəhōm l-aḳātr ð-həyawm ‘go in the direction of (towards) the sun’ (37:16)

sīrūt l-aḳātarəs ‘she went on her way (lit. in her direction)’ (48:27)

nkōt bə-kəwtēt ð-ḳəyōs ð-kəwtēt ðīməh ‘she told a story that was like this story’ (48:31)

səyərək əl-sayb ðə-šiwōt ‘I went in the direction of the fire’ (47:3)

u hīs bərsən b-aṭərəf ð-aḏayga ‘and when they [the goats] were beside the pen’ (31:12)

yəhwafyəm faḳḳi ðə-ḏəmmēt ðīməh mən aṭərəf ð-amōl ðə-hənīn bə-šəyər ‘they pay half of this debt from the herd that we have in the mountains’ (58:8)

The phrase *mən aṭərəf ð-* also occurs in text 75 (three times) in conjunction with the particle *ʾamma*, and seems to have little meaning; see further in §12.5.3.

One other compound preposition, *l-aḡərē* (ð-) ‘for the sake of, on behalf of’, is attested twice. It does not fit in with the above compounds, since it is not a recognizable combination of a preposition and a noun. More often, *l-aḡərē* is used as a subordinating conjunction indicating purpose (see §13.5.2). Its prepositional attestations are:

šxəbərətəh ... l-aḡərē ð-aġayg yəhəmə ‘she questioned him ... on behalf of the man who was listening’ (63:13)

təhōm təsōm aʾāmərk l-aḡərē təmbōku ‘do you want to sell your life for the sake of tobacco?’ (94:36)

Mention should also be made of the preposition *bəla* ‘without’, which occurs just one time in the texts, in the phrase *bəla šak* ‘without a doubt’ (7:5). This is simply an Arabism, as is the related word *bəlāš* ‘for nothing, gratis’ (22:48). The preposition *ʾawēz* ‘instead of, in place of’ also occurs just one time (17:15). Its status in Mehri is unclear, though it is certainly related to the Arabic preposition *ʿiwaḍa*, which has the same meaning.

8.22. The Suffixed Forms of Prepositions

The prepositions can be divided into groups on the basis of the suffixed forms. The monoconsonantal prepositions *b-*, *h-*, *k-*, and *l-* (as well as the direct object marker *t-*; see §3.3) form one group. These four are declined as follows (here and in the rest of this section, unattested forms are given in parentheses):

	<i>k-</i>	<i>b-</i>	<i>h-</i>	<i>l-</i>
1cs	<i>šay</i>	<i>bay</i>	<i>háyni</i>	<i>lay</i>
2ms	<i>šūk</i>	<i>būk</i>	<i>hūk</i>	<i>lūk</i>
2fs	<i>šayš</i>	<i>bayš</i>	<i>hayš</i>	<i>layš</i>
3ms	<i>šəh</i>	<i>bəh</i>	<i>həh</i>	<i>ləh</i>
3fs	<i>šīs</i>	<i>bīs</i>	<i>hīs</i>	<i>līs</i>
1cd	<i>(šəki)</i>	<i>(bəki)</i>	<i>(həki)</i>	<i>(ləki)</i>
2cd				
3cd	<i>šəhi</i>	<i>(bəhi)</i>	<i>(həhi)</i>	<i>ləhi</i>
1cp	<i>šin</i>	<i>bīn</i>	<i>hīn</i>	<i>līn</i>
2mp	<i>šikəm</i>	<i>bikəm</i>	<i>hikəm</i>	<i>likəm</i>
2fp	<i>šikən</i>	<i>bikən</i>	<i>hikən</i>	<i>(likən)</i>
3mp	<i>šihəm</i>	<i>bihəm</i>	<i>hihəm</i>	<i>lihəm</i>
3fp	<i>šisən</i>	<i>bisən</i>	<i>hisən</i>	<i>lisən</i>

The one exceptional form among these four prepositions is the 1cs form *háyni*. In addition, we can point out the following:

- The 1cs forms *bay* and *lay* have the variant transcriptions *bəy* and *ləy*.
- One time (17:8) the 3ms form *bəh* is transcribed *bīh*, which should be corrected for the sake of consistency.

Another group consists of *bād*, *bərk*, *hāl*, *fənōhən*, *(ʔəm-)mən* (between), and *sār*. These forms are:

	<i>bād</i>	<i>bərk</i>	<i>fənōhən</i>	<i>hāl</i>	<i>(ʔəm-)mən</i>	<i>sār</i>
1cs	<i>(bādáy)</i>	<i>(bərkáy)</i>	<i>fənwáy</i>	<i>hənáy</i>	<i>mənwáy</i>	<i>səráy</i>
2ms	<i>bādūk</i>	<i>(bərkūk)</i>	<i>(fənwūk)</i>	<i>hənūk</i>	<i>mən(w)ūk</i>	<i>(səruk)</i>
2fs	<i>(bādáyš)</i>	<i>(bərkáyš)</i>	<i>(fənwáyš)</i>	<i>hənáyš</i>	<i>(mənwáyš)</i>	<i>(səráyš)</i>
3ms	<i>bādēh</i>	<i>bərkīh</i>	<i>fən(ə)wīh</i>	<i>hənēh</i>	<i>mənwəh</i>	<i>sərih</i>
3fs	<i>bādīs</i>	<i>bərkīs</i>	<i>(fənwīs)</i>	<i>hənīs</i>	<i>(mənwīs)</i>	<i>səris</i>

1cd	(<i>bādāki</i>)?	(<i>bārāki</i>)?	(<i>fānwāki</i>)?	(<i>hānāki</i>)?	(<i>mānwāyki</i>)	(<i>sārāki</i>)?
2cd						
3cd	(<i>bādāhi</i>)?	(<i>bārāhi</i>)?	(<i>fānwāhi</i>)?	(<i>hānāhi</i>)?	<i>mānwāyhi</i>	(<i>sārāhi</i>)?
1cp	(<i>bādīn</i>)	(<i>bārīn</i>)	(<i>fānwīn</i>)	<i>hānīn</i>	<i>mānwīn</i>	<i>sārīn</i>
2mp	(<i>bādīkām</i>)	(<i>bārīkām</i>)	<i>fānwīkām</i>	<i>hānīkām</i>	<i>mānwīkām</i>	(<i>sārīkām</i>)
2fp	<i>bādīkən</i>	(<i>bārīkən</i>)	(<i>fānwīkən</i>)	<i>hānīkən</i>	(<i>mānwīkən</i>)	(<i>sārīkən</i>)
3mp	<i>bādīhām</i>	<i>bārīhām</i>	<i>fānwīhām</i>	<i>hānīhām</i>	<i>mānwīhām</i>	<i>sārīhām</i>
3fp	(<i>bādīsən</i>)	<i>bārīsən</i>	(<i>fānwīsən</i>)	<i>hānīsən</i>	(<i>mānwīsən</i>)	<i>sārīsən</i>

Notes:

- Only *mānwīkən* (77:8) is attested for the 2mp of (*əm-*)*mən*, but this is a typographical error. The audio clearly has *mānwīkām*. We also find erroneous 2mp *fānwīkən* (91:14) and 3mp *hānīhən* (38:10); in both cases the audio has final *-m*.
- The only attested dual form in this group is the 3cd *mānwāyhi*. In his *ML* (p. xviii), Johnstone gives the forms *fānwāki*, *fānwāhi* as representative of this group. If this is correct, then it is very unclear whether the others pattern with *fānwāhi* or the attested *mānwāyhi*. Therefore, I mark the unattested dual forms given above with a question mark.

Another set includes *ḡār* and *ḡayr*:

	<i>ḡār</i>	<i>ḡayr</i>
1cs	<i>ḡayri</i>	(<i>ḡayri</i>)
2ms	<i>ḡayrək</i>	(<i>ḡayrək</i>)
2fs	(<i>ḡayrəš</i>)	(<i>ḡayrəš</i>)
3ms	<i>ḡayrəh</i>	<i>ḡayrəh</i>
3fs	<i>ḡayrəs</i>	(<i>ḡayrəs</i>)
1cd	(ḡayrki)	(ḡayrki)
2cd		
3cd	(ḡayrki)	(ḡayrki)
1cp	<i>ḡayrən</i>	<i>ḡayrən</i>
2mp	(ḡayrkām)	(ḡayrkām)
2fp	(ḡayrkən)	(ḡayrkən)
3mp	<i>ḡayrhām</i>	(ḡayrhām)
3fp	<i>ḡayrsən</i>	(ḡayrsən)

The prepositions *tawōli* and *nəxāli* are unusual, in that they take the suffixes of the plural noun. This is due to the final *-i* of their bases, which was reinterpreted as part of the suffix in the plural forms. For example, the 3mp form *nəxālihəm* is etymologically made up of the base *nəxāli* plus the 3mp suffix *-həm*, i.e., *nəxāli-həm*. This was reinterpreted as a base *nəxāl* plus the suffix *-ihəm* that is found attached to plural nouns, i.e., *nəxāl-ihəm*, and subsequently the entire paradigm shifted to this pattern. The forms are:

	<i>tawōli</i>	<i>nəxāli</i>
1cs	<i>tawēlye</i>	<i>(nəxālye)</i>
2ms	<i>tawēke</i>	<i>(nəxāke)</i>
2fs	<i>(tawēše)</i>	<i>(nəxāše)</i>
3ms	<i>tawēhe</i>	<i>nəxāhe</i>
3fs	<i>tawēse</i>	<i>nəxāse</i>
1cd	<i>(tawāliki)</i>	<i>(nəxāliki)</i>
2cd		
3md	<i>(tawālihi)</i>	<i>(nəxālihi)</i>
1cp	<i>(tawāliyən)</i>	<i>(nəxāliyən)</i>
2mp	<i>tawālikəm</i>	<i>(nəxālikəm)</i>
2fp	<i>(tawālikən)</i>	<i>(nəxālikən)</i>
3mp	<i>tawālihəm</i>	<i>nəxālihəm</i>
3fp	<i>(tawālisən)</i>	<i>(nəxālisən)</i>

Notes:

- 1cs *tawēlye* and 2ms *tawēke* are attested in the texts only as *tawālya* and *tawēka*, which are just variant transcriptions.
- The *l* of the reinterpreted bases *nəxāl-* and *tawōl-* is lost before suffixes beginning with a consonant other than *y*, i.e., all 2s and 3s forms. On the loss of *l* in general, see §2.1.4.
- In the paradigm found in Johnstone's *ML* (p. xviii), the 1cs and all dual and plural forms of *nəxāli* all have *á* in place of *ā*. This is just a variant transcription, attested in the texts only with the 3ms form.

Finally, the preposition *mən* is unique. Its suffixed forms are:

	singular	dual	plural
1c	<i>mənáy</i>	<i>mənkáy</i>	<i>mənīn</i>
2m	<i>mənk</i>		<i>mənkēm</i>
2f	<i>mənš</i>		(<i>mənkēn</i>)
3m	<i>mən(ə)h</i>	(mənháy)	<i>mənhēm</i>
3f	<i>məns</i>		<i>mənsēn</i>

Notes:

- The 1cs forms *mənáy* is found transcribed rarely as *mənáy* (or *əmnáy*) and once as *məni* (34:10).
- The 1cp form *mənīn* is also found transcribed as *mənayn* and *mənēn*.

The words *’ār*, *tā*, and *xā(-hē)* cannot take suffixes. *Səbēb* takes suffixes as any ordinary noun, though only 3ms *səbēbəh* is attested in the texts (89:32).

CHAPTER NINE

NUMERALS

9.1. Cardinals

9.1.1. Numerals 1-10

Following are the numerals 1-10 that are attested in Johnstone's texts, including variant forms:

	Masculine	Feminine
1	<i>ṭād / ṭāṭ</i>	<i>ṭayt</i>
2	<i>ṭroh / ṭ(ə)rō</i>	<i>ṭrayt</i>
3	<i>ṣāṭayt</i>	<i>ṣhəlīt</i>
4	<i>(ə)rbōt / rəbōt</i>	<i>ārba</i>
5	<i>xəmmōh</i>	<i>xáyməh</i>
6	<i>yəṭēt</i>	<i>hət</i>
7	<i>yəbayt</i>	<i>hōba</i>
8	<i>ṭəmənyēt / ṭəm(ə)nēt / ṭəmənit</i>	<i>ṭəməni</i>
9	<i>sa'áyt (?)</i>	(not attested)
10	<i>'āśərēt / 'āśərīt</i>	<i>'ōśər</i>

The numeral *ṭād / ṭayt* (which often can have the sense of 'a certain') normally follows the noun, but in a couple of examples precedes it. The numeral *ṭroh / ṭrayt* usually follows a dual form of the noun (see §4.2), but can also precede, in which case the accompanying noun appears in the plural. Unlike 'one' and 'two', the numerals from three to ten normally precede the noun, though in a few examples they follow instead. The numeral 'nine' is attested only once in Johnstone's texts, in the form *sa'áyt* (104:29). This is quite different from the forms *sāt* (m.) and *sē* (f.) given in *ML* (p. 338) and *AAL* (p. 23); it seems to be a Ḥarsusi form, which is not surprising given that text 104 is about the Ḥarasis, and is the Mehri version of a Ḥarsusi original.¹

¹ A Ḥarsusi version of text 104 was recorded by Johnstone, and appears as text 3 in the published edition of Ḥarsusi texts (Stroomer 2004). In the Ḥarsusi version (3:29), the number 'nine' appears as *sə'ayt*.

The noun accompanying any numeral appears in its indefinite form, even when a definite meaning is intended (cf. 97:16, '7f' below). Following are some examples of numerals in context:

- 1m *giggēn tād* 'one boy' (35:8), *kā tāt* 'a certain place' (25:1), *tāt dāllōl* 'one guide' (60:8)
- 1f *nəhōr tayt* 'one day' (24:5), *fāməs tayt* 'one of its legs' (6:14), *wōdi tayt* 'a certain valley' (44:12)
- 2m *warxi troh* 'two months' (17:11), *gīgēni tārō* 'two boys' (35:1), *troh gayw* 'two brothers' (40:1), *tawri troh* 'two times, twice' (37:11), *troh ḏə-nhā* 'two of ours' (89:4), *troh śəhawd* 'two witnesses' (9:4), *troh mən tagēr* 'two of the merchants' (4:1) (see also §4.2)
- 2f *tēti trayt* 'two women' (2:1), *gərayti trayt* 'two slave girls' (97:31), *fərhayni trayt* 'two horses' (24:11) (see also §4.2)
- 3m *śātayt gəyōg* 'three men' (60:4; but *gəyōg śātayt*, 64:33), *śātāyt mahré* 'three Mehris' (88:1), *śātayt əmbərawtən* 'three boys' (91:1; but possibly *śātayt həmbərawtən* in 84:1. See discussion in §4.4), *nəhā śātayt* 'we are three' (42:24)
- 3f *śəlīt sənayn* 'three years' (14:3), *śəlīt sa'āt* 'three hours' (18:10), *śəlīt gəggōtən* 'three girls' (37:3), *śəlīt aǧathe* 'his three sisters' (37:6)
- 4m *ərbōt gəyōg* 'four men' (88:7), *ərbōt 'āṣawr* 'four nights' (92:1), *ərbōt mənīn* 'four of us' (83:7)
- 4f *arba riǧād* 'four pregnant camels' (12:10)
- 5m *xəmmōh tawōr* 'five times' (20:42), *xəmmōh wōrəx* 'five months' (10:10)
- 5f *xayməh sənayn* 'five years' (14:5), *xayməh rikōb* 'five camel (-loads)' (65:15)
- 6m *yətēt bū* 'six people' (71A:1), *yətēt wəzāh* 'six times per day' (93:3)
- 6f *hət yūm* 'six days' (27:22) (see §9.2)
- 7m *həbanhe yəbayt* '(his) seven sons' (50:1), *yəbayt zəyawrət* 'seven buckets' (97:7), *hēm yəbayt* 'they were seven' (70:3)
- 7f *hōba yənīt* 'the seven women' (97:16), *hōba snayn* 'seven years' (14:1)
- 8m *təmənyēt ḏərē* 'eight lengths' (98:11)
- 8f *təməni snayn* 'eight years' (8:1)
- 9m *sa'ayt mən adəraw* 'nine of the Duru' (104:29)

- 10m ᵐāšārēt ġəyōg ‘ten men’ (104:6), ᵐāšārēt dīnār ‘ten dinars’ (22:40)
 10f ᵐōšər rawn ‘ten goats’ (70:5), ᵐōšər mən ḥazyē ‘ten of my goats’ (81:4)

Interestingly, the numeral *tād* / *ṭayt* comes between a noun and its attributive adjective. In these cases (of which only a handful are attested) *tād* / *ṭayt* is usually best translated with an indefinite article:

- ġəgənōt ṭayt ərhaymāt ‘a beautiful girl’ (97:19)
 rəzḵ ṭāṭ yədīn ‘a new fortune’ (98:9)
 šawr ṭāṭ yədīn ‘a new opinion’ (98:9)

Numerals do not seem to occur with pronominal suffixes, or at least no such forms are attested. Instead, we find a construction with the partitive, as in *ərbōt mənīn* ‘four of us’ (83:7). We do, however, find a suffix (dual, of course) on the noun *kəlayt* ‘both’: *kəlāṭhi* ‘both of them’ (20:25).²

9.1.2. Numerals 11-19

It seems that the numerals 11 to 19 were originally made simply by saying ‘ten and one’, ‘ten and two’, etc., with both elements agreeing in gender with the noun. However, in the texts, we find more often that these forms are replaced by numerals borrowed from Arabic. The following are all of the forms of the teens attested in the texts:

Native forms:

- 11 ᵐāšārēt wə-ṭāṭ ġəyōg ‘eleven men’ (104:10)
 15 ᵐōšər wə-xaymāh ‘fifteen (dollars)’ (39:3)³

Arabic forms:

- 11 ḥəd‘āšar ġəyōg ‘eleven men’ (104:25)
 14 arbātāšər zayr ‘fourteen buckets’ (97:21)
 15 xamstāšər yūm ‘fifteen days’ (97:31)
 16 anḥōr ḏə-səttāšər ‘the sixteenth day’ (97:32) (see below, §9.3)

² *Kəlayt* is the feminine form of ‘both’. The masculine counterpart is *kəlō*.

³ In the context of 39:3, *ᵐōšər wə-xaymāh* could also be translated ‘ten and five’.

The noun following a number 11 to 19 can either be singular (as *zayr* above) or plural (as *yūm* above), though the plural seems to be more common.

9.1.3. Tens

The forms of the tens in Mehri have been borrowed from Arabic. Those attested in the texts are *ʔāšrayn* ‘20’, *šəlāṭayn* ‘30’, *ʔərbəʿayn* (var. *arbaʿīn*) ‘40’, and *xəmsayn* (var. *xəmsīn*) ‘50’. The pattern of *šəlāṭayn* ‘30’ is Arabic, but the initial *š* is Mehri; the form is thus a hybrid. For numbers such as 21, 22, 23, etc., the digit follows the ten and is usually preceded by *wə-*, e.g., *ʔāšrayn wə-ṭāt* ‘21’. As with the teens, nouns following numerals twenty and above can be either singular or plural. Examples from the texts are:

- 20 *ʔāšrayn sənayn* ‘20 years’ (2:1), *ʔāšrayn kərawš* ‘20 dollars’ (25:8), *ʔāšrayn bər* ‘20 camels’ (32:10), *ʔāšrayn rawn* ‘20 goats’ (39:2)
- 21 *ʔāšrayn wə-ṭāt* ‘21 (men)’ (104:21)
- 23 *ʔāšrayn šāṭayt manāšīr* ‘23 Manasir (tribesmen)’ (104:24)
- 25 *xams wə-ʔāšrayn ġayg* ‘25 men’ (104:10), *xams wə-ʔāšrayn nəfār* ‘25 persons’ (104:8)
- 30 *šəlāṭayn ʔalf* ‘30,000’ (65:15)
- 40 *ərbəʿayn ġayg* ‘40 men’ (104:27), *ərbəʿayn yawm* ‘40 days’ (8:6), *arbaʿīn kərawš* ‘40 dollars’ (77:3)
- 50 *xəmsayn rawn* ‘50 goats’ (20:32; but *xəmsīn rawn* in 20:60), *xəmsayn karš* ‘50 dollars’ (72:3; but *xəmsīn karš* in 48:6)

9.1.4. Hundreds

The numeral ‘100’ is *myīt* (var. *əmyīt*). The numeral ‘200’ is the dual *myīti ṭrayt* (vars. *mīti* / *əmyēti ṭrayt*). For all other multiples of ‘100’, however, ‘hundred’ is *mī*, preceded by a feminine digit. Accompanying nouns are usually in the singular. In a few cases, the genitive exponent *ḏ-* is placed between the numeral and the noun.

- 100 *əmyīt karš* ‘100 dollars’ (85:3), *myət bū* ‘100 people’ (22:32), *myīt dīnār* ‘100 dinars’ (22:50), *əmyīt kilo ḏ-ʔāys* ‘100 kilos of rice’ (66:4), *myīt əḏ-karš* ‘100 dollars’ (85:5), *myīt gənēh* ‘100 sovereigns’ (85:12)

- 200 *əmyēti trayt ḏə-ḱarš* ‘200 dollars’ (64:11), *myīti trayt* ‘200’ (85:8), *mīti trayt* ‘200’ (104:27)
 300 *šəliṭ mī* (69:5)
 500 *xayməh mī* (9:3)
 700 *hōba mī* (60:5)

Note also the unusual *mīʔət ḏə-ḱarš* ‘100 dollars’ (75:6), and the Arabic dual form in *mītayn dīnār* ‘200 dinars’ (22:50).

9.1.5. Thousands and Above

The numeral ‘1000’ is *ʔalf* (var. *ēf*). Multiples up to ‘10,000’ are made with a masculine numeral plus the plural *yəlēf* ‘thousands’. Higher multiples use the singular form *ʔalf*. Accompanying nouns are usually singular. All of the attestations from the texts are:

- 1000 *ʔalf dīnār* ‘1000 dinars’ (22:47), *ēf ḱərawš* ‘1000 dollars’ (20:32)
 4000 *ərbōt yəlēf* ‘4000’ (22:48)
 10,000 *ʔāšərēt yəlēf* ‘10,000’ (22:49)
 20,000 *ʔāšrayn ʔalf ḱarš* ‘20,000 dollars’ (4:1), *aʔāšrayn ʔalf* ‘the 20,000’ (4:10)
 30,000 *šəlāṭayn ʔalf* ‘30,000’ (65:15)
 40,000 *ʔərbəʔayn ʔalf* ‘40,000’ (22:53)

‘Million’ is *məlyōn* (pl. *m(ə)lēyīn*). This is a borrowing from Arabic, as evidenced by the shared broken plural pattern.

- 1,000,000 *məlyōn ḱarš* ‘1,000,000 dollars’ (36:2), *bū mlēyīn* ‘millions of people’ (74:4)

9.2. Special Forms Used With ‘Days’

A peculiar feature of the numeral system of Mehri (though not unknown from some other Semitic languages) is the existence of a special set of numerals used for counting three or more days. These are as follows (numbers in parentheses are not attested in Johnstone’s published texts, but are taken from AAL, p. 23):

<i>nəhōr ʔayt</i> ‘one day’	(<i>šīdəʔt yūm</i>) ‘six days’
<i>nəhōri ʔrayt</i> ‘two days’	(<i>šība yūm</i>) ‘seven days’
<i>šēləʔt / šīləʔt yūm</i> ‘three days’	(<i>tīmən yūm</i>) ‘eight days’
<i>rība yūm</i> ‘four days’	(<i>tīsa yūm</i>) ‘nine days’
<i>xəmhēt yūm</i> ‘five days’	<i>ʔayśər yūm</i> ‘ten days’

There seems to be some inconsistency in their usage, as there are several examples from the texts of a feminine cardinal number being used instead of one of these special forms, e.g., *xayməh yūm* ‘five days’ (84:1) and *hət yūm* ‘six days’ (27:22). It is also worth pointing out that in order for one of the special forms to be used, the word *yūm* need not follow if it has been previously mentioned; cf. *nəhōri ʔrayt aw šēləʔt* ‘two or three days’ (99:52).

9.3. Ordinals

Following are the forms of the ordinals 1-10, with unattested forms in parentheses (taken from *ML* and *AAL*):

	masculine	feminine
1st	<i>ḥāwəlay</i>	<i>ḥāwəlīt</i>
2nd	<i>məšēgər</i>	<i>məšəg(ə)rīt</i>
3rd	<i>šōləʔt</i>	<i>šəwʔīt</i>
4th	<i>arōbəʔ / arōbaʔ</i>	<i>r(ə)bāyt</i>
5th	(<i>xōməs</i>)	<i>xəmhīt</i>
6th	(<i>sōdəs</i>)	<i>šədtīt</i>
7th	(<i>sōbaʔ</i>)	(<i>səbayt</i>)
8th	(<i>tōmən</i>)	(<i>təmnīt</i>)
9th	(<i>tōsaʔ</i>)	(<i>təsayt</i>)
10th	(<i>ʔayśər</i>)	(<i>ʔāśərīt</i>)

As evident from the above list, the ordinals for 3 through 9 are all built on the same pattern: *CōCəC* for masculine and *CəCCīt* for feminine. Although the feminine forms are in a few cases transcribed in the texts with the suffix *-ēt* (and always so in *ML* and *AAL*), I assume that *-īt* is the underlying suffix, since we find *-ayt* in forms where the suffix was historically preceded by a guttural consonant. This shift of *ī* to *ay* is in accordance with the rule given in §2.2.2.

For ‘second’, there are two other words besides *məšēgər* attested in the texts. The first is *tōni* (48:23, 24), a form based on the expected

ordinal pattern CōCəC. This is the Yemeni Mehri form.⁴ The second is *mətalli* (64:19; fp *mətalyōt* in 30:13). This is based on the same root as the word *tōli* ‘then’, and the basic meaning must be something like ‘another, a following’, meanings given in the *ML* (p. 401). The adjective *məšēgər* can also mean ‘other’, and the adjective *hāwəlay* can also mean ‘former’ or ‘previous’, as will be seen below. Some examples of the ordinals in context are:

- 1m *aḡayg hāwəlay* ‘the first man’ (73:9), *əwbōd hāwəlay* ‘he shot the first one’ (64:19), *aḡaygəs hāwəlay* ‘her first husband’ (22:77), *zəbōn hāwəlay* ‘former times’ (25:19)⁵
- 1f *tētəh hāwəlīt* ‘his first wife’ (22:102)
- 2m *ṭawr amšēgər* ‘the second time’ (65:12), *kāl ṭāt yəhōm yəxbēr məšēgər* ‘each one wanted to test the other’ (73:10)
- 2f *aḡatəh amšəgrēt* ‘his second sister’ (37:19), *həwōdi amšəgərēt* ‘the second valley’ (92:4), *fēməs aməšəgərēt* ‘its other leg’ (81:4)
- 3m *šōlət ḏ-’āšáwr* ‘the third (one) of the nights’ (22:68), *’āšər šōlət* ‘the third night’ (37:20), *līlət ḏə-šōlət* ‘the third night’ (48:24)
- 3f *anhōr šəwṭīt* ‘the third day’ (22:49), *nəhōr ḏə-šəwṭīt* ‘the third day’ (88:5), *nəhōr šəwṭīt* ‘the third day’ (91:27), *aḡatəh šəwṭīt* ‘his third sister’ (37:20)
- 4m *arōba’ ḏ-’āšáwr* ‘the fourth night’ (37:16), *arōba’* ‘the fourth (man)’ (73:8)
- 4f *anhōr ḏə-rəbayt* ‘the fourth day’ (24:20), *nəhōr ḏə-rbayt* ‘the fourth day’ (48:25)
- 5f *xəmhēt* ‘the fifth (day)’ (32:5)
- 6f *’āšər ḏə-šədtēt* ‘the evening of the sixth (day)’ (92:3)
- 16 *anhōr ḏə-səttāšər* ‘the sixteenth day’ (97:32)

⁴ Text 48 is an Omani Mehri “translation” of a Yemeni Mehri text published in Jahn (1902: 7-14). It is not surprising, therefore, that Johnstone’s text contains this form, as well as several other Yemeni Mehri words (e.g., *hərmēt* ‘wife’, *dawlāt* ‘ruler’, and *məkahōyət* ‘coffee shop’). Although, in the passage in Jahn (p. 12) corresponding to Johnstone’s 48:23, we find *līlət ṭaniyət*, with the feminine ordinal! On the adverb *ṭanyən* ‘secondly’, see §10.5.

⁵ We also find the word *hāwīl* in 42:25. This is glossed in the *ML* (p. 194) as ‘first’, but based on the context would seem to be a noun meaning ‘first part’. It is in the phrase *hāwīl ḏə-’āšər* ‘the first part of the night’, in parallel with *fəkh ḏə-’āšər* ‘the middle part of the night’, and *təwōli ḏə-’āšər* ‘the last part of the night’, in the same sentence.

As seen in the above examples, there are many cases in which the ordinal immediately follows the noun (e.g., *aḡayg ḥāwəlay* ‘the first man’, 73:9; *nəhōr šəwtīt* ‘the third day’, 91:27), but we also find some examples in which the genitive exponent *ǝ-* comes between the noun and the ordinal (e.g., *nəhōr ǝ-šəwtīt* ‘the third day’, 88:5). There are also examples of the ordinal preceding a plural noun, with the genitive exponent *ǝ-* between them, but in these cases the ordinal is acting as a substantive (e.g., *šōlāt ǝ-’āšáwr* ‘the third night’, lit. ‘the third (one) of the nights’, 22:68). The construction of the type *nəhōr ǝ-šəwtīt* is met only when referring to days or times of the day, and so this is probably idiomatic. That each of these are not true ordinal adjectives is evidenced by the one occurrence of *’āšər ǝ-šədtēt* (92:3). If *šədtēt* here were simply an attributive ordinal, we would expect the masculine form, since *’āšər* is masculine. So *šədtēt* must be a substantivized form, feminine because it refers to an implied feminine noun *nəhōr* ‘day’, and the phrase should be translated ‘the night of the sixth day’, rather than ‘the sixth night’. The phrase *nəhōr ǝ-šəwtīt* would then be literally ‘the daytime of the third day’, though a simple translation as ‘the third day’ is preferable.

In the context of a past tense narrative, the idea of ‘next’ (i.e., ‘the following’) is expressed with *xayləf* (f. *xəwfit*), as in *’āšər xayləf* ‘the next night’ (69:3) and *anhōr* (or *nəhōr*) *xəwfit* ‘the next day’ (30:8, 69:5).⁶ Alternatively, *məšēgər* can mean ‘next’ (i.e., ‘the second’), as in *nəhōr amšəgərēt* ‘the next day’ (89:31). In a future context, ‘next’ (i.e., ‘the coming’) is expressed with *məhakbəl*, as in *aḡayḏ amhakbəl* ‘next summer’ (39:16). The idea of ‘last’ is expressed by the verb *gərō* in a relative clause, as in *nəhōr ǝ-gəmət ǝ-gərōt* ‘last Friday’ (lit. ‘Friday that passed’) (53:1).

The ordinals for three and above can also be used as adverbs, while *fənōhən* seems to be used for ‘first(ly)’ and *məgōrən* for ‘second(ly)’. Evidence is slim, but we find a nice sequence of *fənōhən* ‘first(ly)’, *məgōrən* ‘second(ly)’, and *šōlāt* ‘third(ly)’ in 90:15.

9.4. Fractions

The following fractions are attested in the texts:

⁶ On *anhōr* vs. *nəhōr*, see §4.4, n. 17.

- 1/2 *fakḥ* (dual/plural *fakḥi*), as in *fakḥ ḏa-sēt* ‘half an hour’ (53:6),
fakḥ ḏa-ḥōz ‘half of the goat’ (25:15), *fakḥ ḏa-warx* ‘half a
month’ (72:6), *fakḥ ḏa-habēr* ‘half of the camels’ (69:8)
1/3 *śalēt*, as in *śalēt ḏ-’āṣar* ‘a third of the night’ (42:33)
3/4 *śhalīt rəbōyē* ‘three-quarters’ (66:9)

All three occurrences of the fraction *śalēt* are in text 42. Two of these are incorrectly transcribed as *śhalīt* (42:24 and 42:30), but the audio confirms that *śalēt* is correct in both places.

9.5. Days of the Week

The Mehri words for days of the week that are attested in Johnstone’s texts are *l-ətnayn* ‘Monday’ and *gəmət* ‘Friday’, both of which are clearly borrowed from Arabic. In the texts, these are always used in combination with either *nəhōr* ‘day’ or ‘*āṣar*’ ‘evening’, with one exception. All attested examples with *gəmət* ‘Friday’ are:

- nəhōr ḏa-gəmət* ‘Friday’ (48:3; 85:7) (vars. *anhōr ḏ-agəmət*, 4:13;
anhōr ḏ-gəmət, 85:4)
nəhōr ḏa-gəmət ḏa-gərōt ‘last Friday’ (53:1)
‘*āṣar ḏ-agəmət* ‘Friday night’ (7:7) (but see below)
gəmət mən gəmət ‘Friday after Friday (i.e., every Friday)’ (48:2)

The word *gəmət* can also mean week, as in *wəḵōna gəmət* ‘about a week’ (91:13) and *śəwəlūl gəmət* ‘he stayed a week’ (93:7).

There is some complication with the word *l-ətnayn* ‘Monday’. It is attested only once in the texts, in the phrase ‘*āṣar ḏa-l-ətnayn* (37:2). In Stroomer’s edition, as in the *ML* (p. 418), this is translated as ‘Sunday night’. This would mean that to a Mehri speaker, each day starts at sundown of the previous day. If this is correct, then ‘*āṣar ḏ-agəmət* (7:7) should be translated as ‘Thursday night’, rather than ‘Friday night’.

Once in the texts we find ‘Thursday’, and once we find ‘Wednesday’, but each of these reflects an erroneous translation. The passages (with their translations in Stroomer’s edition) are:

- nəhōr ḏa-rbayt* ‘Thursday’ (22:53) (correct to: ‘the fourth day’)
‘*āṣar ḏa-rbayt* ‘Wednesday (evening)’ (69:5) (correct to: ‘the fourth night’)

These can both be proven incorrect on several levels. First, *rbayt* is the feminine ordinal ‘fourth’, and the fourth day of the Mehri (and Arab) week is Wednesday. So *nəhōr ḏə-rbayt* (22:53) would have to be ‘Wednesday’, not ‘Thursday’. In fact, *nəhōr ḏə-rbayt* is listed in the *ML* as ‘Wednesday’ (p. 312). The other passage *’āṣər ḏə-rbayt* could be ‘Wednesday night’, but if *’āṣər ḏə-l-əṭṭnayn* (37:2) is ‘Sunday night’, and not ‘Monday night’, as discussed above, then *’āṣər ḏə-rbayt* should really be ‘Tuesday night’! However, this is irrelevant, since there is no reason to think that either passage (22:53 and 69:5) is referring to a weekday at all. Instead, *rbayt* should be translated as a simple ordinal, i.e., ‘the fourth (day)’. In text 22, we find *nəhōr xəwfit* ‘the next day’ (22:48), *anhōr šəwṭīt* ‘the third day’ (22:49), and so *nəhōr ḏə-rbayt* (22:53) is clearly ‘the fourth day’, in the context of the narrative. In text 69, there is nothing to suggest that a day of the week is being referred to, and a translation as ‘the fourth night’ actually makes better sense in the context. The real word for ‘Wednesday’ is probably *rəbū*, as given in the *ML* (p. 313) and elsewhere (e.g., Nakano 1986: 144).

CHAPTER TEN

ADVERBS

As in many other Semitic languages, there is no productive means for creating adverbs in Mehri. In some places where we find an adverb in English, Mehri uses a prepositional phrase, for example:

- ərʂani bə-ħays* ‘tie me up tightly’ (lit. ‘with force’) (24:28)
ǧ-yəšōm bə-raxəʃ ‘it was selling (them) cheaply’ (lit. ‘with cheapness’) (45:15)
anyatəh bə-ħyatəh yəħkēm ħābū bə-ṭəyōb wə-mēd ‘his aim in life was to rule the people well and wisely’ (lit. ‘with goodness and wisdom’) (67:1)
təħawkəm bə-ħak ‘you rule justly’ (lit. ‘with right’) (74:20)
kawṭa bə-ħays ‘he cut (too) forcefully’ (lit. ‘with force’) (75:17)
ṭād hərgūf b-abēdi ‘one falsely shivered with fever’ (lit. ‘with a lie’) (84:4)

Such examples are relatively uncommon. Even less common is the use of a modified cognate accusative as an adverbial expression, as in:

- ǧəlōk b-aǧəggēn ǧaylək kəway* ‘he looked at the boy intensely’ (lit. ‘looked a strong look’) (22:8)
kaṭays mən kaṭāt kənnət ‘he cut her lightly’ (lit. ‘he cut her a little cut’) (75:18)¹

However, there are a significant number of lexical adverbs, organized below according to type.

10.1. *Demonstrative Adverbs*

The words for ‘here’ and ‘there’ pattern with the demonstratives, in that there are forms with and without the element *-məh* (see §3.4). The longer forms (i.e., those with the element *-məh*) are far more common overall, though in combination with *l-* ‘to’, only the shorter form of

¹ The translation found in Stroemer’s edition, ‘he gave her a little cut’, is an equally good, if not better, translation.

‘here’ is found. Following are the forms, along with some sentences illustrating their use:

Here:	<i>bō</i> (rare)	There:	<i>həlawk</i> (rare)
	<i>báwməh</i>		<i>həlák(ə)məh</i>

To here:	<i>əw-bō</i> (< <i>əl-bō</i>)	To there:	(not attested)
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From here:	<i>əm-bō, əm-báwməh,</i>	From there:	<i>mən həlák(ə)məh</i>
	<i>mən báwməh</i>		

kō hēt bawməh ‘why are you here?’ (3:10)
səkyēna bawməh ‘they will live here’ (74:5)
aʔəsēš bō ‘your dinner is here’ (42:27)
ənkē əw-bō ‘come here!’ (1:4)
əl yənakam bawməh lā ‘they don’t come here’ (94:33)²
nakak əm-bō ‘I’ve come from here’ (80:2)
səyərək ... əm-bawməh ‘I went ... from here’ (53:1)
fətōk mən bawməh ‘he got out from here’ (3:3)
l-ʔəhād yəšānūs yənkē həlakməh lā ‘nobody dared to go there’ (95:1)
həkšawm həlakəməh ‘he spent the day there’ (99:39)
həlawk tōmər ‘there are dates there’ (5:8)
səyawr mən həlakməh ‘they went from there’ (68:2)

10.2. Adverbs of Place

<i>abar(r)</i> ‘ashore’ (directional)	<i>əl-hək</i> ‘inside’ (locational)
<i>b-abar(r)</i> ‘ashore’ (locational)	<i>mən hək</i> ‘from inside’
<i>abarr</i> ‘outside’ (directional)	<i>əw-mšā</i> ‘downstream’
<i>b-abarr</i> ‘outside’ (locational)	<i>xōtər</i> ‘down, downward,
<i>ağawf</i> ‘up, upwards, upstairs, uphill’	downstairs’ (directional)
(directional) ³	<i>b-xōtər</i> ‘down there, down-
<i>b-ağərbēt</i> ‘abroad’ (locational)	stairs’ (locational)
<i>bə-kāl əmkōn</i> ‘everywhere’	

² Note that the verb *nūka* ‘come’, which usually takes a direct object, can be followed either by directional *əw-bō* or by locational *bawməh*.

³ In addition to six attestations of directional *ağawf*, we find in one passage (88:9) *h-ağawf*. But it is possible that this is mistaken; the *h-* is not audible on the audio. We also find three cases of locational *ağawf*, all in the phrase *mən ağawf* ‘from above’.

The adverb *əw-mṣā* ‘downstream’ (< *lə-mṣā*’), which occurs four times in the texts, is transcribed variously as *əwmṣā*’ (29:9), *əṣṣā*’ (38:3), *w-əṣṣā* (54:6), and *əṣṣa*’ (63:13). These should all be transcribed *əw-mṣā*’; the *w* missing from two of these and the ’ missing from two of these are present on the audio for all four.

In 42:28, we find the phrase *mən ṣadḳəs əwxayw hə-ṣadḳəs ’ālēw*, translated as ‘across its jaw from top to bottom’. The word *ṣadḳ* is translated in the *ML* (p. 373) as ‘inside of the cheek’ (likewise in the *HL*, p. 118, and *JL*, p. 246) and *’ālēw* is translated in the *ML* (p. 23) as ‘at the top’. I did not find the word *əwxayw* in any of Johnstone’s lexicons, but presumably it must mean something like ‘at the bottom’. It is unclear if *’ālēw* is locational or directional. The entry in the *ML* suggests that it is locational, and it fits as such in the context of 42:28, which could be literally translated as ‘from the inside of its cheek at the bottom (?) to inside of its cheek at the top’.

10.3. Adverbs of Time

<i>bād gēhaməh</i> ‘day after tomorrow’	<i>məḡōrən</i> ‘later; second(ly)’
<i>bə-ḥəllay</i> ‘at night’	<i>mən ṭawr</i> ‘sometimes’
<i>fōnəh</i> (less common var. of <i>fənōhən</i>)	<i>nəhōrən</i> ‘(at) midday’
<i>fənōhən</i> ‘first(ly); previously, formerly’	<i>sētən</i> ‘a while ago’
<i>mən fənōhən</i> ‘before(hand)’ ⁴	<i>sōbər</i> ‘always’
<i>fənəmšē</i> ‘day before yesterday’	<i>səwānōt</i> ‘(for/in) a little
<i>gēhaməh</i> ‘tomorrow; the next day	while’ (see §4.5)
(in narrative); tonight (rarely)’	<i>ṣərōməh</i> ‘now’
<i>ḡasrāwwən</i> ‘(in) the early evening’	<i>tē</i> (+ adverb) ‘then’ (see
<i>ḥāwəlay</i> ‘previously, before’ (see §9.3)	§13.5.3.2)
<i>ḥəyūm w-’āṣawr</i> ‘day and night’	<i>tōli</i> ‘then’
<i>k-’āṣər</i> ‘in the evening’ (rare) ⁵	<i>xəṭərāt</i> ‘once’ (lit. ‘time’)
<i>k-aḏahr</i> ‘at noon; in the afternoon’	<i>yəllō</i> ‘last night’
<i>kālayn(i)</i> ‘in the evening’	<i>yəlliləh</i> ‘tonight’
<i>kə-sōbəḥ</i> ‘in the morning’	<i>yəmo</i> ‘today’
<i>k-amḡərāb</i> ‘in the evening’ (rare)	<i>yəməšē</i> (vars. <i>yəməši</i> , <i>əməšē</i>)
<i>l-āyūmən</i> ‘last year’ (rare)	‘yesterday’

⁴ The adverb *fənōhən* can also mean ‘before(hand)’ if preceded by a preposition other than *mən*. Cf. *lə-his fənōhən* ‘as before’ (24:32).

⁵ As noted in §8.11, *k-’āṣər* is attested just once (81:1), and the *k-* is absent from the audio version.

10.4. Adverbs of Manner

fīsā(?) ‘quickly’

fáxrəh ‘together’

hē ‘so, thus’ (rare; see §11.9)

ḵəráyb ‘nearly’ (see below)

taw ‘well’ (see below)

əl-xārxawr ‘slowly, gently’

(l-)əwṭakəməh ‘thus, like that, in that way’ (see below)

wəṭōməh ‘thus, like this, in this way’ (see below)

The word *ḵərayb* is an adjective meaning ‘near’, but in one place is found used adverbially:

mət ḵərayb təxəřufən ‘when they [the date-palms] were nearly ripe...’ (37:1)

The word *taw* is found only once in the texts as an adverb, but the same word serves as the base of the particle *taww-* ‘must, ought to’ (§12.5.15) and as part of the exclamatory phrase *həs-taw* ‘very good! ok!’ (§12.2). The adverbial example is:

əḥhād ḏ-yəḥwēk taw əlā ‘no one will understand you very well’ (80:19)

The forms *wəṭōməh* ‘thus, like this, in this way’ and *(l-)əwṭakəməh* ‘thus, like that, in that way’ clearly have the same suffixes as the near and far demonstratives, e.g., *bawməh* ‘here’, *ḥəlakməh* ‘there’ (§10.1), *ḏōməh* ‘this’, and *ḏákəməh* ‘that’ (§3.4). The phrases *lə-ḥōlāt ḏīməh* ‘in this manner’ (24:15, 25) and *l-aḵəssēt ḏəkəməh* ‘in that way’ (84:10) are uncommon, but have a meaning similar to *wəṭōməh* and *(l-)əwṭakəməh*.

10.5. Other Adverbs

adamməh ‘probably’ (see §12.5.2)

tanyən ‘secondly’ (see below)

wəḵōna (var. *əwḵōna*) ‘perhaps; about, approximately’ (see below)

wīyən ‘very (much); well’ (see below)

xāš, xāštən ‘especially’

The adverb *tanyən* ‘secondly’ occurs only once in Johnstone’s texts (58:9). It is from the same base as the Yemeni Mehri ordinal *tōni*, discussed in §9.3.

The form *wəḵōna* ‘perhaps; about, approximately’ is obviously the participle of the verb *wīka* ‘to be, become’, but its two adverbial uses are relatively common. In the meaning ‘about, approximately’, *wəḵōna* is, as expected, most often followed by a number or time word like ‘year’ or ‘month’. When it means ‘perhaps’, it can be used either with a nominal or verbal phrase, or it can be used independently, as in 26:7. The following examples illustrate these adverbial uses of *wəḵōna*:

ʿadāmōt əwḵōna myət bū ‘she executed about a hundred people’
(22:32)

šxəwəlīl wəḵōna faḵḥ ǰə-warx ‘they stayed about half a month’
(72:6)

šxəwəlīl wəḵōna ʿayśər yūm ‘he stayed about ten days’ (74:3)

əwḵōna bər bīsən əśxōf ‘perhaps they [the camels] have milk in them’ (29:6)

hēt wəḵōna meśk wəlā ǰəḥāk ‘perhaps you defecated or urinated’
(99:53)

The adverb *wīyən* is quite rare in the texts, occurring just six times in Johnstone’s texts. It occurs once modifying an adjective (23:2), and five times modifying a verb. Its basic meaning seems to be ‘very much’, as in:

fōnəḥ gīd wīyən ‘before (it was) very good’ (23:2)

ǰatyǰəḍəm lūk wīyən ‘they are very angry at you’ (37:18)

ḥābū tābəm wīyən ‘the people became very weary’ (61:1)

hē yəḥəbōb ḥābū wīyən ‘he loved the people very much’ (67:1)

In two places, *wīyən* is better translated as ‘well’ or ‘very well’, though the original meaning ‘very much’ can be seen:

hō əl əǰōrəb ḥōrəm wīyən lā ‘I didn’t know the road well’ (47:2)

wəlākən aribēy əl yəḥəbšawr wīyən lā ‘but my companion did not see very well’ (82:2) (*ḥəbšawr* = ‘to see well’)

CHAPTER ELEVEN

INTERROGATIVES

The Mehri interrogatives are as follows:¹

<i>Mehri</i>	<i>Primary Meaning</i>	<i>Secondary Meanings</i>
<i>mōn</i>	who?	
<i>hēśān</i>	what?	why? what for?
<i>hēśān mən</i>	which? what kind of?	
<i>hō</i>	where?	
<i>kō</i>	why?	how? (how about?)
<i>hībō</i>	how?	what? why? (what kind of?) (how about?)
<i>mayt</i>	when?	
<i>kəm</i>	how many? how much?	

Each of these interrogatives will be treated in turn below. Note also that Arabic *kēf* ‘how?’ occurs three times in Johnstone’s text 23.² On the interrogative particle *wālē*, see §12.5.17.

11.1. *mōn* ‘who?’

The interrogative *mōn* ‘who?’ is fairly straightforward. The following sample passages from Johnstone’s texts illustrate its use in Mehri:

mōn ‘who?’ (97:34)

hēt mōn ‘who are you?’ (20:68)

mōn mən kēm tǎfōna ‘who among you will scout?’ (29:12)

mōn ’āmōr hūk ‘who told you?’ (36:27)

hēt bār mōn ‘whose son are you?’ (lit. ‘you are the son of whom?’)
(20:44)

¹ Much of the information in this chapter appeared in Rubin (2008b), which also included comparative and historical discussion of the interrogatives.

² These are in lines 10, 15, and 16. The verb *ēmāk* following *kēf* in 23:15 is probably also an Arabic form, since the *ML* does not list a G-Stem of this verb, and since we would not expect initial *ʿ* in a Mehri verb. This text (23) has additional Arabisms, including *ma* (23:3) and *bəḏḏabṭ* (23:15). See further in Chapter 14.

atēm bāt mōn ‘what is your (tribal) affiliation?’ (lit. ‘you are of the house of whom?’) (42:5)

mōn yāsūkən bārək abayt dīmāh ‘who lives in that house?’ (38:11)

mōn mənkekēm yəḥōm... ‘who among you wants...?’ (95:2)

mōn ḏ-yəlūtəḡ arēšīt ‘who is the one who killed the serpent?’ (42:40)

mōn ḏ-yəḥōm yəwtaḡəh ‘who is the one who wants to kill him?’ (83:4)

mōn mənkekēm ḏ-yəḡawdər yəṭbēr... ‘who among you can break...?’ (lit. ‘who is among you that can break’) (50:2)

In the final three examples, in all of which *mōn* is used as the subject of a verb, *mōn* appears in conjunction with the relative pronoun *ḏ-* (see §3.8.1). In the final example, *mōn* is part of a complex subject, but in the first two of these (42:40 and 83:4) *mōn* alone is the subject. It is evident that the use of the relative *ḏ-* is not obligatory, since there are many parallel sentences in which *mōn* is used alone (e.g., the examples from 38:11 and 95:2 above).

11.2. *hēsən* ‘what?’

In Johnstone’s texts, *hēsən* nearly always means ‘what?’. It is strange, then, that Johnstone glosses this word as ‘why?’ in his grammatical sketch (*AAL*, p. 27), since only very rarely is it best translated as such. In his *ML* (p. 150), he translates *hēsən* as ‘what?; why?’. What complicates the picture in Mehri, and what also makes it interesting, is that while *hēsən* does indeed nearly always mean ‘what?’, it is not the only Mehri interrogative used in this way; often *hībō* can correspond to English ‘what?’. Because of this overlap in meaning, we will examine carefully the different functions of *hēsən*. The word *hēsən* can be used as the subject of a verbal or non-verbal sentence:

hēsən ḡarō ‘what has happened?’ (65:13)

būk hēsən ‘what is (the matter) with you?’ (48:5)

hēsən šikəm ‘what is (the matter) with you?’ (104:17)

šayš hēsən ‘what do you have?’ (lit. ‘what is with you?’) (94:45)

hēsən mərtayk ‘what is (this word) *mərtayk*’ (71:4)

hēsən nakak ‘what is (this word) *nakak*?’ (20:20)

hēsən ḡalatəh ‘what is its description?’ (28:7)

It can also be used as a direct or indirect object:

- hēsən təhōm* ‘what do you want?’ (10:5)
təhōm hēsən ‘what do you want?’ (70:6)
hēsən šinək ‘what did you see?’ (95:6)
hēsən tōmər ‘what is she saying?’ (99:44)
hēsən l-’āmōl ‘what should I do?’ (101:11)
hēsən əḳawdər l-’āmōl ‘what can I do?’ (67:2)
hēsən təhəmi l-’āmōl ‘what do you want me to do?’ (90:14)
hēsən ’əmələš bə-dənyē ‘what have you done on earth?’ (68:6)
hēsən ġatərikəm ‘what did you talk about?’ (74:21)
bə-hēsən katəwṭki ‘what did you (two) talk about?’ (74:22)
mən hēsən təžhōk ‘what are you laughing at?’ (5:4)
mən hēsən faṭx ‘what is the cut from?’ (48:12)

It can be used as an independent interrogative:

- hēsən* ‘what?’ (82:4; 89:16)

It can be used in indirect questions, functioning as either subject or object:

- kəlēt lay hēsən ’əmələk* ‘tell me what you did!’ (20:17)
šənēya ġəhəməh hēsən yāḳā ‘we’ll see tomorrow what happens’
 (75:11)
wadak hēsən l-’āmōl ‘do you know what I should do?’ (101:9)
hamaš ayəğrayb hēsən ḏ-yōmər ‘did you hear what the crow was
 saying?’ (5:4)
əl-wadak ḡār hēsən lā ‘I do not know over what [they killed each
 other]’ (3:19)

As noted above, in some contexts it seems to mean ‘why?’ or ‘what for?’:

- hēsən* ‘why?’ (27:2; 42:7)
təšəxbūr mənsən hēsən ‘why were you asking about them?’ (28:5)

hēsān l-āzāmāh ‘why should I give him (it)?’ (89:32)³

təḥāmāh hēsān ‘what do you want it for?’ (97:38)

hēsān nakak ‘for what are you going?’ (99:36)

In one case *hēsān* seems to have this meaning in combination with the preposition *k-* (no audio was available to check this):

hēt k-hēsān bawmāh ‘why are you here?’ (99:49)

Interrogative *hēsān* can also be used as an indefinite pronoun ‘whatever’, though examples are rare:

hēsān təḥaymi ... hō wəzmōna tīš ‘whatever you want ... I’ll give it to you’ (99:31)

11.3. *hēsān mən* ‘which? what kind of?’

The interrogative *hēsān* is combined with the preposition *mən* ‘from’ to express ‘which?’ or ‘what kind of?’, a meaning also often carried by English ‘what?’. The position of *mən* is not fixed, and so a pronoun (personal or demonstrative) can intervene between *hēsān* and *mən*. Examples are:

hēsān mən ḥaylāt ‘what kind of scheme?’ (75:11)

hēsān mən zəyaft dīmāh ‘what wedding feast is this?’ (75:5)

hēsān mən gīgēn dōmāh ‘what kind of lad is this?’ (91:7)

hēsān mən sawr ‘what kind of plan?’ (35:9)

hēsān mən bēdi ‘what kind of trick?’ (72:1)

hēt hēsān mən gayg ‘what man are you?’ (i.e., ‘who are you?’) (42:50; 74:7)

hēsān hēt mən gayg ‘what man are you?’ (i.e., ‘who are you?’) (63:4)

hēsān hēt mən tēt ‘what kind of woman are you?’ (6:11)

hēsān hēt mən mənēdām ‘what kind of person are you?’ (20:34)

hēsān dōmāh mən gārōy šūk ‘what are you talking about?’ (lit. ‘what kind of words are with you?’) (20:13)

³ The translation in Stroomer’s edition reads ‘why should I give it (to him)?’. The verb *wəzūm* ‘give’ takes a double direct object (see §8.12), and so an object suffix on the verb can in theory refer to either the patient (English d.o.) or recipient (English i.o.). However, in this passage the suffix must refer to ‘him’, since the object being given is a female camel (*yəbīt*). The verb ‘I should give it (f.)’ would be *l-āzāmās*.

An example in an indirect question is:

əl wīda hēśən mən məhnēt yāmōl lā ‘he didn’t know what kind of work he might do’ (65:2)

11.4. *hō* ‘where?’

The interrogative *hō* means ‘where?’ in both direct and indirect questions:

wə-tōmər w-a’əśēye hō ‘and where are the dates and my supper?’ (42:26)

hō a’əśēye ‘where is my supper?’ (42:34)

a’ayśē hō ‘where is the supper?’ (91:17)

tēti hō ‘where is my wife?’ (37:12)

həbrəts hō ‘where is your daughter?’ (48:8)

hō sē ‘where is she?’ (65:9)

hātəmk hō yəllō ‘where did you spend last night?’ (80:2)

wadak tīsən hō ‘do you know where they are?’ (lit. ‘do you know them where (they are)?’) (28:4)

The interrogative can be combined with *l-* ‘to’ (realized as *əl-hō* or *lə-hō*) and *mən* ‘from’ when used with verbs of motion (or where motion is implied):

lə-hō təsyawr ‘where are you going?’ (72:2)

lə-hō təghēm ‘where are you going?’ (72:5)

əl-hō sirōna yəmō ‘where are you going today?’ (44:1)

mən hō nakak ‘where have you come from?’ (80:1)

hēt mən hō nakak ‘where do you come from?’ (80:20)

təhaymi əl-hō ‘where are you headed?’ (85:3)

It is interesting to note that *hō* often appears in phrase-final position, a trait not found with the other interrogatives. This is a tendency, but certainly not a rule, as evident from the examples above.

11.5. *kō* ‘why?’

The basic meaning of Mehri *kō* is ‘why?’, and this is the meaning which it nearly always carries. Examples are:

wə-kō ‘why?’ (36:26; 57:9; 97:3)

ḥaybi wə-kō əl hārəsk lā ‘Father, why haven’t you gotten married?’ (97:2)

kō hēt bawmāh ‘why are you here?’ (3:10)

kō ətēm bawmāh ‘why are you (pl.) here?’ (82:4) (Stroomer: ‘what are you here for?’)

wə-kō əl səyərš lā ‘why didn’t you go?’ (97:22)

kō hēt təbayk ‘why are you (m.) crying?’ (5:10)

kō hēt təbēki ‘why are you (f.) crying?’ (85:4)

kō tēm təbakyəm ‘why are you (pl.) crying?’ (36:15)

kō ətēm ʔəfədkəm ‘why have you come?’ (74:19)

kō hēt tabak tīn ‘why did you follow us?’ (22:11)

Very rarely *kō* seems to mean ‘how?’, as in:

wə-kō ʔəḥād yəʔawdər yəḡbēr ḥəbhə ʔə-bər mōtəm ‘how can anyone meet his parents who have already died?’ (20:36)

wə-kō ḡərəbk tay ʔōmər ‘how do you know I (can) sing?’ (52:7)

In at least one example, *kō* is found used with the relative *ʔə-* (§3.8.1), as we saw with *mōn* above (§11.1):

kō ʔə-ḡərəbk ‘how do you know?’ (or: ‘how is it that you know?’) (27:4)

In the last two examples, both of which contain a form of the verb *ḡərōb* ‘know’, it is not so clear that *kō* really means ‘how?’. It might be perfectly acceptable to translate as ‘why do you know?’, with ‘why’ meaning not ‘what is the purpose of your knowing?’ but rather ‘by what reason have you come to know?’. Only in the example preceding these two (from 20:36) is *kō* more clearly used to mean ‘how?’.

One final example, in which *kō* means ‘how about?, what about?’, is unique and possibly erroneous:

wə-kō ḥəbērəkəm ‘and how about your camels?’ (27:21)

It should be pointed out that Bittner (1914a: 30), following Jahn before him (1902: 235), gives the word for ‘why?’ as *wukô* (= *wə-kō*). Wagner (1953: 60) follows suit. Johnstone (*ML*, p. 200) also notes that *kō* appears more often as *wə-kō*. As can be seen from the above examples,

kō is indeed often preceded by *wə-*. In many cases, it is not quite appropriate to translate *wə-* as a conjunction, as with the first couple of examples above (36:26; 97:2). For this reason, the *wə-* can indeed be interpreted as simply a part of the interrogative.

11.6. *hībō* 'how? what?'

One cannot provide a simple English translation for Mehri *hībō*, as it has a variety of translations in different contexts. It has already been noted above that there is an overlap in the use of *hībō* and *hēsən*. Many times it corresponds to English 'how?', which is most likely its basic meaning:

hībō təṭwahi 'how will she come?' (75:6)

hībō tēṭk 'how is your wife?' (97:50) (Stroomer: 'what is your wife like?')

hībō ʾəmələš wəṭōmāh 'how have you done this?' (97:51)

hībō əl kalam tayš (tə)šakfi 'how did they not let you sleep?' (74:17)

hībō 'how so?' (80:13) (Stroomer: 'what (do you mean)?')

hībō ḥayr ḥayrək 'how is the donkey your donkey?' (46:12)

hībō təkūsa ḥənaḥk 'how do you find yourself?' (i.e., 'how do you feel?') (84:8)

In other cases it translates as 'what?':

hībō śawr 'what is the plan?' (6:6)

hībō ʾāmərək 'what did you say?' (80:9)

tōmər hībō 'what do you say?' (93:3)

ʾətēm tāmərəm hībō 'what do you say?' (80:16)

hībō ʾāmlōna 'what'll we do?' (98:9)

wəlākən hībō 'but what [do they say]?' (42:3)

hībō l-āmōl 'what should I do?' (37:15)

hībō ʾəmələm 'what did they do?' (74:20)

hībō ḏ-yōmər 'what was it saying?' (5:4)

hībō yāmərən ḥābū 'what would the people say?' (98:12)

hībō śinəs 'what do you see?' (98:13)

ḏ-əḥtəwēk aw hībō 'are you crazy or what?' (20:5)

As can be seen from the above examples, most of the cases in which *hībō* means 'what?' involve a form of the verbs *ʾāmōr* 'say', *ʾayməl* 'do',

or, in one case, *šini* ‘see’. This may suggest that we are dealing with an idiomatic use of ‘how?’ in Mehri. That is to say, in some cases where in English one would use ‘what?’, Mehri speakers prefer to use ‘how?’. So, ‘what should I do?’ can be literally rendered in Mehri as ‘how should I do?’. However, such an idiomatic use is not fixed, since *hēsən* can also be used with the verbs *āmōr*, *aymāl*, and *šini*, as can be seen from the examples given above (§11.2). This means that *hībō* and *hēsən* are simply synonymous in some environments. We even find both used identically in the same text, in the mouth of the same speaker. For example, we find *hībō ʾəmələm* ‘what did they do?’ (74:20), followed shortly thereafter by *hēsən ʾəmələkəm* ‘what did you do?’ (74:21).

In indirect questions, we also find *hībō* meaning either ‘how’ or ‘what, as in:

l-ʾād wida hībō yāmōl lā ‘he did not know at all what to do’ (76:3)
wādākəm ḥābū hībō sənēt ḏiməh ‘do you know how the people are
 this year?’ (45:1)

In at least one case, *hībō* is best translated by English ‘what kind of?’:

hībō aḡərōy ḏōməh ‘what kind of talk is this?’ (20:5)

In a couple of cases, *hībō* means ‘why?’ or ‘how come?’:

hībō ‘how come?’ (27:15)
hībō əl-kəfəd mən ḡayr ḥayri ‘why should I get off my donkey?’
 (46:11)

Finally, there is at least one more use of *hībō*, which does not fit with any of the above examples:

hībō ḥām ‘how about the dream?’ (19:21)

11.7. *mayt* ‘when?’

Mehri *mayt* presents no problems in terms of meaning. It is used to mean ‘when?’ in both direct and indirect questions:

mayt hamak tay ḏə-ʾōmər ‘when did you hear me singing?’ (52:11)
mayt tərḏəd ləy ‘when will you come back to me?’ (56:5)

wadan lā mayt yānkē ‘we don’t know when it is coming’ (45:17)
wadak mayt əl-ttəkkəh ‘do you know when I should drink it?’
 (101:7)
mən mayt ‘since when?’ (101:12)

On the temporal particle *mət*, which is derived from *mayt*, see §13.5.3.1.

11.8. *kəm* ‘how many? how much?’

Mehri *kəm* is used for the question ‘how many?’ or ‘how much?’. The question ‘(for) how much?’, when used with regards to money, is *bə-kəm*. Among the few examples in Johnstone’s texts are:

kəm yūm tšābərən mən hāmoh ‘how many days can they go without water?’ (27:21)
hāmawlat bə-kəm ‘how much is a camel-load?’ (27:11)
bə-kəm thōm təšōm lay aməndawkək ‘for how much do you want to sell me your rifle?’ (39:1)
bə-kəm šamōna tīs ‘how much will you sell it for?’ (99:50)

On the use of the preposition *b-* as ‘for, in exchange for’, see §8.2.

11.9. *əl hē lā* ‘isn’t that so?’

In one passage, we find the interrogative phrase *əl hē lā*, which acts as a tag question, equivalent to English ‘isn’t that so?’ or ‘no?’ (French *n’est-ce pas*). The passage is:

hēt sirōna gēhəməh, əl hē lā ‘you’ll go tomorrow, no?’ (56:1)

It is unclear if this *hē* is to be connected with the third person pronoun *hē*.⁴ The transcription of this passage in 56:1 should more accurately be *əl hē lā* since in the *ML* (p. 150), we find the transcription *əl hā lā*, with a nasalized vowel; the audio recording of this passage suggests a nasalized vowel; in one handwritten version of this text, Johnstone transcribed a nasalized vowel;⁵ and in Jibbali we find *ʔəl hē lə*.⁶

⁴ In 72:3, it seems that we also have an attestation of *hē* in its simple meaning ‘so, thus’. However, the audio has instead the pronoun *hē* ‘it’, which fits the context better.

⁵ I thank A. Lonnet for kindly allowing me to see this handwritten copy of text 56.

⁶ Cf. *JL*, p. 93.

CHAPTER TWELVE

PARTICLES

12.1. Coordinating Conjunctions

Following is a list of the basic Mehri coordinating conjunctions:

- w(ə)-* (var. *u*) ‘and’
- wəlākən* ‘but’
- aw* ‘or’
- wəlā* ‘or; or else’

Each of these will be discussed in turn below. For subordinating conjunctions, see §13.4 and §13.5, and on the use of *ʔār* (*wə-*) as a subordinating conjunction, see below, §12.5.4.

12.1.1 *w(ə)-* ‘and’

The most common conjunction in Mehri is the coordinating particle *w(ə)-*, which has the free variant *u-* (< **əw*). This particle is used to join two elements within a clause, or to join two clauses. Examples of the former are:

- ʔāgawz wə-ḥəbantse* ‘the woman and her daughters’ (15:4)
- səyərki hō wə-hah* ‘he and I went’ (18:8)
- tōmər w-āyś* ‘dates and rice’ (23:15)
- aməndawki gədət wə-rxayṣət* ‘my rifle is good and cheap’ (39:4)
- aḡiggēn kəway wə-xəfayf* ‘the boy was strong and quick’ (42:2)
- təšəwkūf mən wəh u mən tētəh* ‘she would sleep between him and his wife’ (lit. ‘between him and between his wife’) (46:7)
- sē wə-ḥaybəṣ w-aḡās w-aḡaygəs* ‘she and her father and her brother and her husband’ (48:33)
- šay məwsē wə-ḥəbūr* ‘it was raining and I was cold’ (lit. ‘with me were rain and cold’) (53:6)
- hō wə-šōx manan təh* ‘the old(er one) and I held him back’ (91:7)
- xams wə-ʔāšrayn ḡayg* ‘twenty-five men’ (lit. ‘five and twenty’) (104:10)

And some examples of *w(ə)-* used to join two clauses are:

hēt kənnawn w-ādk 'əl hēt məhārəs lā 'you are a child and you cannot get married yet' (8:8)

šōr u ġəlōk b-aġaggēn 'he stood and looked at the boy' (22:8)

đōmāh amfātēh wə-sē bərk aġərfēt đayk 'this is the key, and she is in that room' (22:97)

yəġərabay wə-yabrāka təwalye 'he recognized me and ran to me' (34:27)

'agbək bīs wə-sē 'agəbōt bay 'I fell in love with her, and she fell in love with me' (38:19)

šxəwəlīl wə-šəmrūz 'they stayed and he became ill' (48:6)

šxəwallūt bərk alang w-aġayg kəfūd wə-wkūb əl-ħōkəm wə-sītəm ləhān šəh 'she stayed in the launch, and the man got out and went to the ruler's house) and bought all that he had' (74:12)

In a very few sentences, *wə-* is used following a subordinate clause, with no real function, for example:

tē đār bayr, wə-ħərbā moh 'then (when they were) at the well, they drew water' (97:10)

On the sequence *əl ... w-əl* 'neither ... nor', see §13.2.1.

12.1.2. *wəlākən* 'but'

The particle *wəlākən*, clearly borrowed from Arabic, corresponds to English 'but'. Examples of its use are:

hərōm đə-bəh ħfūl, wəlākən đayrəh idəbōr mēkən '(we found) a tree that had ripe figs, but there were many hornets on it' (25:3)

ħābū yātəkaydən bīhəm, wəlākən mən sənayn əlyōməh l-ād 'əħād yātəkaydən bīhəm lā 'people used to believe in them, but since those years nobody believes in them anymore' (25:19)

hō 'ār kənnawn, wəlākən hamak 'I am just a young person, but I've heard' (48:30)

šxəbīri, wəlākən hō əl əkawdər l-aġətayr əngəlīziyət 'ār xawr 'they questioned me, but I could speak English only a little' (62:7)

bəġawdəh, wəlākən l-ād ləħākəm təh lā 'they pursued him, but they didn't catch up to him at all' (69:5)

wəlākən his šīni ġəyōg həkbił ləh, kərū aḳatəh ‘but when he saw the men coming towards him, he hid his food’ (73:3)

In one passage (52:16), we find the form *lākən*, but this is most likely just an error in transcription. The audio has *wəlākən*.

12.1.3 *aw* ‘or’

As a simple coordinating conjunction, *aw* means ‘or’. It seems to be restricted to simple ‘X or Y’ contexts. Examples are:

mən ǧār sənēt aw zōyəd ‘after a year or more’ (16:1)
ǧ-əḥtəwēk aw hībō ‘have you gone mad or what?’ (20:5)
’ətēm axayr mənay aw hō axayr mənḳēm ‘you are better than me or I am better than you’ (42:12)
ərbōt aw yətēt bū ‘four or six people’ (71A:1)
hāl ’əḥād aw wəḥśūk ‘with someone or by yourself?’ (80:5)
wəḳēya b-amkōnkəm aw śalyēla ‘will you stay at your place or will you move?’ (96:4)
hamak tay aw lā ‘did you hear me or not?’ (96:7)
šadḳ aw bēdi ‘the truth or a lie’ (99:1)

In some passages, *aw* functions as a subordinating conjunction ‘unless’, as in:

əl hō kəwṭōna hūk ’əlā aw bər ġərəbk tīk ‘I won’t tell you unless I know you’ (12:7)
ḥəggūt ləh tētəh m-ād yəḥērəs aw yəḥōm yəxōli ‘his wife stopped him from marrying (again) unless he would get divorced’ (32:28)
ftəkōna lā aw təštōm hayni jənbəyyət ‘I won’t go unless you buy me a dagger’ (34:33)

One wonders if *aw* in such contexts derives from *’ār u* (see §12.5.4).

12.1.4. *wəlā* ‘or; or else’

The conjunction *wəlā* (vars. *wəlē*, *wəla*, *wəlā*, *wə-lā*, *wə-la*, *wəlla*) is occasionally used, like *aw*, to indicate simple ‘X or Y’, as in:

hāmēh wəla aḡatəh wəla aḡāh ‘his mother or his sister or his brother’ (54:3)

hām šərūt lay wəla rəddūt lay ‘if she stops or comes back at me’ (54:18)

ələtməs b-ʾārəfēt wəlā bə-rəyē ‘I strike it with a palm branch or with a lung’ (93:2)

nəhā wəkēya b-amkōnən tē gēhəmāh wəlā bād gēhəmāh ‘we will be at our place until tomorrow or the day after tomorrow’ (96:5)

But more often, *wəlā* has the meaning ‘or else’, in which case it normally follows an imperative and precedes a future tense (imperfect or active participle):

kələti lay b-ašədk wə-lā wtḡōna hənōfi ‘tell me the truth, or I’ll kill myself’ (37:13)

ʾāzēmi hənəfš, wəlā səhṭōna ṭād mən həbənšə ‘give yourself to me, or else I will kill one of your sons!’ (48:23)

ʾōbəl, wəlā yəxliṭək ḡəyōḡ ḏ-axayr mənək ‘try, or else men better than you will replace you!’ (76:5)

āzēmən xəṭawrkīyən, wəlā məšənḥərūtən bīkəm ‘give us our sticks, or else we will lodge a complaint against you!’ (91:24)

ʾāmayli hayni ḥaylat wəlā mətōna šərōmāh ‘make a solution for me, or else I will die now!’ (99:29)

On the interrogative particle *wəlē*, which can also have the meaning ‘perhaps’, see §12.5.17. This particle is certainly related to the conjunction *wəlā* historically, but the fact that the former is normally transcribed with *ē*, and the latter with *ā*, makes it difficult to determine if they should be considered the same in synchronic terms.

12.2. Exclamations

There are numerous exclamatory particles in Mehri. Examples of these are:

<i>ʿabdan</i> ‘never! no!’	<i>lawb</i> ‘indeed!’
<i>ahā</i> (var. <i>εhē</i>) ‘yes! uh-huh!’ (see also §2.2)	<i>l-azīz</i> X ‘oh woe for X’ (rare)
<i>ʿōhi</i> ‘oh!’ (rare)	<i>mayxālāf</i> ‘nevermind!’
<i>barr</i> ‘never! not at all!’ (rare)	<i>astəhōl</i> ‘good fortune!’
<i>bas(s)</i> ‘enough! that’s all’	<i>wə-hīh</i> ‘indeed! oh!’ (rare)
<i>bas(s) mən</i> X ‘enough of X!’	<i>wə-lū</i> ‘even so!’ (§13.4.4)
<i>bə-haw</i> ‘not at all!’	<i>xaybən</i> ‘all right! well...’
<i>ḏē</i> ‘well now...’ (rare)	<i>yā ḥay b-</i> ‘welcome!’ (followed by suffix or noun)
<i>ḡdēwwən</i> ‘let’s go!’	<i>yā-ḥōl</i> (var. <i>yā-ḥawl</i>) ‘yes! in- deed!’
<i>ḥəs-taw</i> ‘very good! ok!’	<i>yā-rayt</i> (+ subj.) ‘would that! I wish!’ (rare) (see §7.1.3)
<i>ḥāk</i> ‘here you are!’ (rare)	<i>yē-yē</i> ‘ok! yes!’
<i>ḥāšē l-</i> ‘far be it from (s.o.)!’	<i>yəx</i> ‘ugh!’
<i>ḥāyyə būk</i> ‘greetings to you!’	
<i>lā</i> ‘no!’	

12.3. Vocatives

The vocative particle in Mehri is *ā* (var. *a*), for example:

ḥəḏḏōr, ā ḥəbray ‘look out, my son!’ (22:44)
a ḥaybi, hō kəsk sī ‘Father, I have found something’ (37:22)
ḥəmēm a ḥəbənyē ‘listen, my sons!’ (50:4)
a ḡḡgēn, wəlē təkayr ‘O young man, can you read?’ (71:2)
ā kəlōb ‘O you dogs!’ (91:20)

In several texts, we find the vocative particle *yā* (var. *ya*), which is presumably an Arabism:

ya bā nəwās, kələ mənək amzēh ‘O Abu Nuwas, leave off joking’
(36:31)
ya ḥāməy ‘O my mother!’ (65:13)
yā āzīz ‘O Aziz!’ (75:23)
ya ḥaybi ‘O my father!’ (97:42)

There are also a number of cases where no vocative particle is used at all, for example:

ḥaybi, aḡayg əl fəsō lā ‘Father, the man has not had lunch’ (22:14)
aḡayti, fāš bay ‘Sister, you have hurt me’ (24:27)
aḡay, amarkəḥ ‘Brother, drink up’ (59:8)

The vocative word in each of these last three examples is a familial term with a 1cs possessive suffix (‘my father’, ‘my sister’, ‘my brother’). The option to omit a vocative particle is presumably restricted to such cases, though more data are needed to confirm this.

12.4. Genitive Exponent *ḏ-* (‘of’)

The genitive exponent in Mehri is *ḏ-*, corresponding to English ‘of’.¹ This particle, like the prepositions *b-*, *h-*, *k-*, and *l-* (see §8.1), is prefixed to the noun and often has the helping vowel *ə*. With the exception of the possessive pronominal suffixes (see §3.2.1), the particle *ḏ-* is, for nearly all nouns, the only way to express a genitive relationship. Examples are:

ḥəbrīt ḏə-ḥōkəm ‘the daughter of the ruler’ or ‘the ruler’s daughter’ (48:6)
brīt ḏə-tōgər ‘a daughter of a merchant’ or ‘a merchant’s daughter’ (75:1)
ḥəbrē ḏ-aḡah ‘the son of his brother’ (76:1)
xā ḏ-abayt ‘the door of the house’ (75:8)
bə-rḥəbēt ḏə-ḥaybəs ‘in her father’s country’ (48:33)
aḏāy ḏ-ənsay ‘the smell of a human’ (63:8)
aḡayg ḏ-aḡəgənōt ‘the girl’s husband’ (75:10)
tēt ḏə-ḥəbrē ḏə-ḥōkəm ‘the wife of the ruler’s son’ (85:28)
aḏōrə ḏ-aḥōbə ‘the blood of his sister’s finger’ (48:18)

As evident from the first two examples above, the noun preceding the genitive exponent can be definite or indefinite. And as evident from the last two examples, a string of multiple genitives is possible.

Like English ‘of’ and similar particles in other languages, Mehri *ḏ-* can also be used to indicate the materials from which something is made, to describe the contents of something, or to specify the particular type of something. Examples are:

¹ Watson (2009) is an important study of the genitive exponent *ḏ-* and other genitive constructions in Yemeni Mehri.

- xəṭōwəm* ḏə-ḏəhēb ‘gold rings’ (88:5)
ḥərawf ḏə-ḏəhēb ‘gold coins’ (97:43)
fiḡōn ḏə-moh ‘a cup of water’ (37:24)
gənyət ḏə-’āyś ‘a sack of rice’ (98:4)
tōgər ḏə-’āyś ‘the rice merchant’ (66:2)
məstōn ḏə-nēxəl ḏə-tōmər ‘a row of date-palms’ (37:1)
abayr ḏə-ḥəmoh ‘the well of water’ (48:2)
ḥəlēb ḏə-ḥārawn ‘the milking of the goats’ (47:2)

As discussed in §5.1, an adjective modifying the first member of a genitive phrase will follow the entire phrase. Whether an adjective in such a position modifies the first or second member of the phrase, if not clear from gender/number agreement, must be gleaned from context. Examples are:

- ḥəbrīt* ḏə-aṣəyyōd *ḥənōb* ‘the old(er) daughter of the fisherman’ (97:33)
ḥəbrē ḏə-ḥōkəm *aḡənnawn* ‘the small (younger) son of the ruler’ (97:46)
ḥayb ḏə-aḡiggēn *amərayz* ‘the father of the sick boy’ (65:8)

In the first example above, the adjective *ḥənōb* is feminine and so must modify *ḥəbrīt*. But in the other two examples, the adjective agrees in gender and number with either noun. If context allowed it, these last two sentences could be translated instead as ‘the son of the young ruler’ and ‘the sick father of the boy’.

As already noted (§4.6), the genitive exponent is sometimes absent in partitive constructions. On the use of the genitive exponent ḏ- following certain numbers, see §9.1.4 and §9.3.

12.5. Miscellaneous Particles

12.5.1. ’ād

The temporal particle ’ād has a variety of meanings, including ‘still’, ‘while’, ‘yet’, ‘again’, and ‘before’, though ‘still’ is the most common of these. When ’ād means ‘still’, it is most often followed by a pronominal suffix. Some examples with the meaning ‘still’ are:

ʾād fəṭənək hēxər ḏ-ənkayn ‘do you still remember the old man who came to us?’ (22:73)
ənwōka ʾādən b-amkōnən ‘we’ll still be in our place’ (29:10)
ādəh līsən faḳḥi ḏə-warx ‘they still had half a month (left)’ (30:9)
bər hē xəmhēt, ʾādəh əl šīni sēkənəh lā ‘it was already the fifth (day), and he still had not seen his community’ (32:5)
hēt ʾādək kənnawn ‘you are still a child’ (34:8)
ʾādsən šīn wəḳōna ʾašrayn rawn ‘we still have about twenty goats’ (39:14)
ādi ḏə-təlayk tīs ‘I still regret it’ (53:6)
ʾādi bay aṟəṣayt ‘I still had the fear in me’ (54:15)
bər dəxaləm, hīs ʾādhəm faxrəh, l-ʾəḥād mənḥēm yəbayd ‘they had vowed, when they were still together, that neither of them would lie’ (74:2)

In about seventeen passages in the texts, *ʾād* (always followed by a suffix) is used in a dependent clause, where it has the meaning ‘while’ or ‘while still’. In a dozen of these cases, we simply find the set phrase *ʾād*- (+ suffix) *lə-wṭakəməh*, meaning something like ‘while like this’ or ‘while doing this’ (*lə-wṭakəməh* ‘thus, in that way’). Examples are:

w-ādəh šxəwəlūl, nūka aməwsē ‘while he was sitting down, the rain came’ (3:2)
ʾādhəm lə-wṭakəməh, nakam aḡəyōg ‘while they were like this, along came the men’ (24:36)
aḳōfi bə-ḥnaḟk, ʾādək ḥəsaym ‘go away, while you are still respectable!’ (37:23)
ʾādəh l-əwṭakəməh, šīni šīwōṭ ḏ-aḳēyōy ‘while he was at this, he saw the fire of (some) demons’ (76:9)
ḥōm əl-gəḥōm ʾādəh šay aḳāšəm ‘I want to go while it’s still cool out’ (94:35)
ʾādəs təḡətōri šəh, šāḳawt līs ḥəbrəts ‘while she was talking to him, her daughter called to her’ (99:45)

In just one passage (35:13), *ʾād*, without a suffix, is best translated as ‘yet’. In a second passage (31:2), *ʾād* probably has this meaning, though it is not completely clear from context:

ʾād wəzyēma tīn šxōf šī ‘are you going to give us any milk yet?’ (35:13)

ʾād ʾəḥād šini ḥazyən ‘has anyone seen our goats?’ (31:2)

In just two passages, *ʾād* has the meaning ‘again’, a meaning that *ʾād* very often has in a negative sentence (see §13.2.2). In one of these two examples, *ʾād* is used in combination with *zōyād*, as it often is in a negative sentence (§13.2.5):

hām ʾād həwrədk ḥəməh ḏōməh zōyād, ḏə-nəwtəgk ‘if you bring (them) down to this water again, we will kill you’ (10:9)

ʾād tākāy dənyēt ‘might you be pregnant again?’ (101:16)

In a related use, *ʾād* can mean ‘another’, in the sense of ‘additional’ or ‘one more’, though examples are few:

xəṭarkəm ʾād yənké mawsəm mən səriḥ ‘do you think another monsoon boat will be coming after it?’ (45:16)

ʾāmawr ʾād lang təṭ məhaḵbəl ‘they said another launch was coming’ (45:17)

In one passage (82:2), *ʾād* clearly means ‘before’:

nəḥōm nəwbadəh, ʾādəh əṣḥarīn ‘we should shoot him, before he bewitches us’ (82:2)

This meaning is also found in a couple of negative sentences, where the sense ‘before’ derives from the literal meaning ‘when not yet’ (see §13.2.2). There are also about three or four passages in which *ʾād* has no clear function. On negative *l-ʾād*, see further in §13.2.2.

12.5.2. *adamməh*

The particle *adamməh* is attested only once in Johnstone’s texts, meaning ‘probably’. The context is:

adamməh bərəh k-ʾəḥād ḡayrən ‘he is probably with somebody else’ (41:4)

12.5.3. *ʾamma*

The particle *ʾamma* has the meaning ‘as for’ or ‘but’, used to stress a contrasting subject. It occurs in more than two dozen places in Johnstone’s texts. Examples are:

ʾamma bāl hārawn hīs ʾalyēk ḏ-yəntawhən, həwrōd hazhe ‘as for the goat herder, while those guys were fighting, he took his goats down to the water’ (61:6)

w-ʾamma gəyōg šātayt ... fəlēt ‘as for the three men ... they fled’ (64:33)

ʾamma tēt šxəwəllūt bərk alang, w-aḡayg kəfūd ‘as for the woman, she stayed in the launch, and the man disembarked’ (74:12)

In about half of the attested passages, *ʾamma* appears twice (*ʾamma ... w-ʾamma*), contrasting two explicit subjects, as in:

ʾamma tayt, šərūt, w-amma tayt, wəkəbūt bərk amkōn ‘one stood (outside), while the other went into the place’ (2:3)

ʾamma ašōyāḡ šəwkūf ... w-amma aḡayg aḡayf šxəwəlūl ‘the goldsmith fell asleep ... but the guest stayed (as he was)’ (22:62)

ʾamma hārawn wə-həbēr təkūnən bīsən šəxōf lā ... w-ʾamma əbqār təkūnən bīsən šəxōf ‘the goats and camels, they have no milk ... but the cows do have milk’ (58:2)²

ʾamma troh rəkəbō bərk hawri, w-ʾamma tāt rəkəb bərk alang ‘two got into the canoe, and one got into the launch’ (60:6)

In three texts (1, 4, 71A), *ʾamma* serves to indicate more generally the beginning of a story, in which cases a decent translation is ‘now’, for example:

w-amma kəwtēt ḏə-bā nəwās ‘and now a story of Abu Nuwas’ (1:1)

ʾamma anəhāḡ ḏə-bdūn ‘and now (about) the game *bedun*’ (71A:1)

In text 75, *ʾamma* occurs three times in conjunction with the phrase *mən aṭərēf ḏ-*. The phrase *mən aṭərēf ḏ-* (cf. *ṭərēf* ‘side’) is attested once

² The verb 3fp imperfect *təkūnən* agrees with *hārawn wə-həbēr* ‘the goats and camels’ in the first instance, and *əbqār* ‘cows’ in the second. This is unexpected, since the grammatical subject of both clauses is *šəxōf* ‘milk’. Moreover, a verb is not normally used in this type of ‘have’ construction; see §13.3.2.

meaning ‘from among’ (see §8.21), but all together, *w-’amma mən aṭərēf* ḏ- just means ‘and now about’:

w-’amma mən aṭərēf ḏ-*aḡayg* ‘and now about the man’ (75:10, 12, 14)

12.5.4. ’ār

The particle ’ār is extremely common, but its exact meaning is hard to pin down. It appears twice in the *ML*, under the root $\sqrt{r}$ (p. 26), where it is glossed as ‘but; just, only; except; indeed’, and under the root $\sqrt{gyr}$ (p. 147), where it is glossed as ‘except, only, just; certainly’. It seems to have all of these meanings, as well as the meanings ‘unless’ and ‘in fact’. There are also cases in which ’ār seems to have little or no meaning at all. The basic, or at least the most common, meaning of ’ār is ‘only, just’, for example:

šay ’ār *hah* ‘I have only him’ (2:4)
hō ’ār *ṭāt* ‘I am only one (person)’ (20:12)
nūka ’ār *bə-ḥiṭār* ‘they gave birth only to female kids’ (30:11)
kūsa ’ār *kabś* ‘he found only a lamb’ (37:13)
məhawf tay ’ār *mən ḡār* ’as ‘you will pay me only after difficulty’ (39:13)
hō ’ār *ḡənnawn* ‘I am only a child’ (48:30)
ḡayrhəm ’ār *šəbōyāḡ* ‘they wore only indigo-dyed robes’ (104:32)

On the combination *ḡak* ’ār, see §12.5.8. Often, ’ār meaning ‘only’ is used in conjunction with the negative element *əl* or *əl ... lā* (cf. French *ne ... que*). The meaning is no different from when ’ār is used in a positive phrase. Examples are:

’əl šihəm ’ār *hēt* ‘they have only you’ (18:18)
hō *əl* *šay* ’ār *ḡōməh* ‘I have only this’ (73:5)
hō *əl* *əḡawdər l-əḡəṭayr əḡəliziyət əlā* ’ār *xawr* ‘I could speak English only a little’ (62:7)
hō *’əl* *šay* ’ār *ḡōṭəri troh* ‘I have only two female kids’ (89:8)
həṭōk adəšdāštəh bərhoh w-əl həbḡō ’ār *awzārəh* ‘Berhoh took off his dishdashah and left on only his waistcloth’ (104:18)

From this use of *ʿār* meaning ‘only’ in a negative phrase, *ʿār* has developed into a pseudo-preposition meaning ‘except’ or ‘but’ in a negative sentence. For example, the above sentence from 18:18 translates as ‘they have only you’, but this is semantically the same as ‘they do not have (anyone) except you’. We find that *ʿār* really does mean ‘except’ or ‘but’ in many cases; for example, a sentence like *ʿəl šīs wālēd ʿār hē* (36:3) really means ‘she had no children but him’, not the more literal ‘she had no children, only him’. However, that *ʿār* is grammatically not a preposition is proven by the fact that it can be followed by an independent pronoun or by another preposition. For further examples on the use of *ʿār* as a pseudo-preposition ‘except’, see §8.1.

The particle *ʿār* can also function as a subordinator meaning ‘unless’, in which case it is usually followed by the conjunction *wə-* (var. *u*). There are about a dozen examples in the texts. It is unclear if the conjunction is required, since there is some uncertainty about the transcription. In two cases, the transcription does not include the conjunction, but it is audible in the audio version (32:15, 65:11). In a third case (102:7), the conjunction is missing, but no audio version was available for comparison. In one case (75:24), we have the conjunction in the transcription, but not on the audio! Therefore, it remains uncertain whether or not *ʿār* is required to be the combination *ʿār wə-* in order to mean ‘unless’, though the available evidence suggests this to be the case. Some of the attested examples are:

məšfəḳāta lā ʿār kāl ḏ-iḥōm yāzémi šahzi ‘I will not marry unless whoever wants to, will give me my frankincense trees’ (32:15) (audio: *ʿār u kāl*)

ḏ-əlūbədəh, ʿār u təḥaym tarabam tay ‘I will shoot him, unless you give me safe-conduct’ (47:11)

əl təḥawrūd lā ʿār wə-təḥōm bə-ḳəwwēt ‘don’t bring (them) down to the water, unless you want (to do it) by force’ (64:3)

tāšōs lā, ʿār səbṭāt bə-xəṭrāk ṭawr əṭroḥ ‘she won’t get up, unless she is hit twice with a stick’ (65:11) (audio: *ʿār wə-səbṭāt*)

ʿabdan, ʿār wə-təḳalbəm āziz šəḥ ‘not at all, unless you return Aziz to life’ (75:24) (but *ʿār wə-* missing in audio!)

šāmīta təḥ layš lā, ʿār wə-təḥaymi təšəḳfi hāl aḡaygi ‘I won’t sell it to you unless you sleep with my husband’ (85:29)

əl ḳədərḳ l-əsyər lā ʿār u məzzək ‘I can’t go on unless I smoke’ (94:26)

There are a couple of cases where Johnstone (or Stroomer) translated 'ār as 'unless', and even though this works, 'ār is really being used as a pseudo-preposition 'except'. For example:

šīwōt al tənūfa lā 'ār hām sē nxali ḥāmōh 'fire is of no use, except if it is under the water' (Johnstone: 'fire is of no use unless it is under the water') (36:29)

ākā hayni lə-hīs ḥaybi 'ār bə-rzəwē 'be like my father to me [forbidden to me as a husband] except with a peace-offering' (Johnstone: 'unless there is a peace-offering') (102:19)

As already mentioned above, the particle 'ār can also mean 'certainly', 'really', or 'indeed'. There are about twenty such examples in the texts, some of which are:

nəḥā 'ār ənhōm 'we really want to' (28:14)

hēt al tənūfa lā. lawb hō 'ār ənūfa '(Mother:) you are of no use. (Son:) yes, I am of use!' (33:1-2)

hō 'ār məhawf tīk 'I will indeed pay you' (39:12)

təšhōl 'ār gəzē 'you deserve retribution indeed' (73:11)

ḏōməh 'ār ḏə-hō 'this is really mine' (77:3)

səlōmət yəmō 'ār gəlyət lūk 'safety today will be expensive for you indeed' (83:6)

hēt 'ār məzzək yəmō. wəlā məzzōna təmbōku wəlā b-əršōš 'you will certainly smoke today. You will smoke either tobacco or bullets' (94:26)

In five passages, 'ār follows the particle *hām* 'if' and is best translated as 'in fact' or 'really':

hām 'ār fəḳawk, hō ḥōm 'if in fact he lets you marry me, I am willing' (38:19)

hām 'ār mathənək məhawf tīk 'if in fact you are upset, I will pay you' (39:14)

hām 'ār ḳalam tay xəlye ... ənkōna tīkəm 'if in fact my uncles let me ... I will come to you' (44:6)

hām 'ār təḥamki, l-āmərō 'if you want us to (sing), we'll both sing' (52:6)

hām 'ār ašadḳək, xṭark, tāfēd 'if in fact you are telling the truth, go on and jump!' (99:18)

There are about ten cases in which *ʾār* is found at the beginning of an interrogative phrase and is translatable as ‘well (then)’ or ‘but’. Some examples are:

ʾār kō hēt təḡawlək bay ‘well then, why are you looking at me?’ (22:25)

ʾār tēṭi hō ‘well, where is my wife?’ (37:12)

ʾār ḏə-hanayš hēšən ‘well, what did you intend?’ (59:11)

ʾār hēšən mən bəhlit baxaš ḏə-rōh ‘but what kind of word is *baxaš* of the head?’ (80:15)

Finally, as with *ʾād* (§12.5.1), there are about three or four cases in which *ʾār* just has no clear function.

12.5.5. *əbōb(ən)*

The particle *əbōb(ən)* occurs just three times in Johnstone’s texts, in three different forms: *əbōb*, *əbōbən*, and *əbōbnə*. It means something like ‘I beg you!’, in an exclamatory sense, and can be followed by a subject pronoun for emphasis.

əbōbən ətēm həgnəm azayga ‘I beg you, warm the pen’ (26:9)

əbōb həbray šāmāni ‘I beg you, my son, fall in with my wishes!’ (90:11)³

əbōbnə ətēm, təḡlēm təh bawmāh lā ‘I beg you, do not leave him here!’ (91:9)

12.5.6. *bər*

The particle *bər* (vars. *bər*, *bar*) is extremely common, appearing roughly one hundred and sixty times in Johnstone’s texts. It occurs on its own, as well as with pronominal suffixes. It does not have a single, well-defined meaning, but instead has several uses. In conjunction with a verb (nearly always a perfect), or in a non-verbal sentence, *bər* can mean ‘already’. If the sentence is non-verbal, *bər* is used with a

³ Johnstone’s text has a 2ms imperfect or subjunctive form *təšāmāni* (with 1cs object suffix), which, if correct, warrants a translation “I beg you, my son, that you’ll fall in with my wishes”. I suggest instead the imperative *šāmāni*, which is confirmed by the audio. It is true that the form *təšāmāni* could be pronounced *šāmāni*, without the initial *t-* (see §2.1.5), but the initial *t-* is audible in 90:8, where the form *təšāmāni* is certainly a 2ms imperfect or subjunctive.

pronominal suffix, while if the sentence is verbal, there is usually no suffix. Examples with the meaning ‘already’ are:

- ber ʔayəbk mənšēn* ‘I’ve already had my fill of them’ (20:16)
hō bər ʔāmārk hūk mən fənōhən ‘I already told you before’ (24:53)
aḡāk bər mōt u bər ʔabēr ‘your brother has already died and been buried’ (40:10)
aḡəḡənōt bərs bə-bayt ‘the girl is already in the house’ (48:9)
bər amārḡḡək ‘have you drunk (the coffee) already?’ (59:9)
hō bər šabak ‘I’ve already had enough’ (73:6)
mət awōḡḡən fēḡər, tāḡāy bərš əl-xā ʔə-abayt ‘when he calls the dawn prayer, you should already be at the door of the house’ (75:8)
hēt bərḡ šəb šərōmāh ‘you’re a big boy already now’ (89:15)

Sometimes the word ‘already’ is superfluous in English, and the Mehri phrase containing *bər* is best translated with a simple perfect or pluperfect, as in:

- ḡāḡōr bər ʔərū moh* ‘the slave had hidden water’ (5:2)
hənḡūr ʔə-sē fəwtōt u ber zāḡōt amōlāh kallāh ‘he realized she had run away and had taken all his wealth’ (22:70)
wə-bar ʔəwbēh kabš ‘and they have turned him into a lamb’ (40:7)
bər hayni sēt mənḡēm ‘I have been (away) a long time from them’ (44:2)

A second very common use of *bər*, and one that seems to be an extension of the previous meaning, is its use in temporal clauses (following *hīs*, *mət*, *tē*, or *tē hīs*; on temporal clauses, see §13.5.3 and its subsections). If a temporal clause is non-verbal and has a pronominal subject, then *bər* (with a suffix) is required as a placeholder for the subject. But we find *bər* used in verbal temporal clauses as well, usually indicating a perfect or pluperfect. Some examples are:

- hīs bəri bərḡ amārḡēb, dəfēti tēt ḡəlayḡət* ‘when I was in the boat, a fat woman slapped me’ (40:25)
wə-əbḡār bār hīs ber ḡəlawbəsən ‘and the cows went away when they had milked them’ (35:7)
mət bərsən bərḡ ḡəmōh, šələl xəlawḡīsən ‘when they are in the water, take their clothes’ (37:3)
mət bər təwū, šāḡəh ‘when he has eaten, call him’ (22:88)

tē bārham śīyax, hamam b-ḥōkəm ḏ-agzayrət ‘when they were grown, they heard about the ruler of the island’ (74:8)

tē ’āṣər bər ḥābū šəwkif, tawū gayg yəšəwkūf ‘when, one night, the people had gone to sleep (or: were asleep), they [witches] ate a man who was sleeping’ (2:2)

sīrō tē bārhi bə-ḱā ṭāṭ ‘they went off until they were in a certain place’ (72:3)

tē hīs bārham bə-ḥōrəm, kūšəm gayg ’āwēr ‘when they were on the way, they found a blind man’ (46:9)

Further examples of *bər* in temporal clauses, along with additional discussion, can be found in §13.5.3 and its subsections.

In a very few cases, *bər* serves as a placeholder after other particles or expressions:

adamməh bərəh k-’əḥād gayrən ‘he is probably with somebody else’ (41:4)

l-əkīrən bəri hāl ḥāmōy ‘I wish I were with my mother’ (42:23)

wə-šafi bəri bərk ’āmḱ ḏ-abḱār ‘and there I was in the middle of the cows’ (47:5)

A third use of *bər* is in conjunction with the verb *ḥōm* (see §7.3.4), together with which it means ‘be about to’ or ‘nearly’. *Bər* is found used this way only about eight times in Johnstone’s texts. Some of these attestations are:

bəri ḥōm l-əwbads ‘I nearly shot her’ (or: ‘I was about to shoot her’) (54:13)

b-xayr u bərs təḥōm təhahḱəṭ ‘(the camel) is well and about to give birth’ (63:15)

tē kə-sōbəḥ bərəh yəḥōm yəmīt ‘then in the morning he was nearly dead’ (or: ‘about to die’) (75:18)

kəšk aḡayg ḏə-bərəh yəḥōm yəhwē ‘I found the man about to fall down’ (77:6)

ḱəlyīta tē bərəh yəḥōm yəsyēr ‘we will leave it until he is about to go’ (91:26)

Finally, in a few passages, *bər* seems to mark something like a perfect progressive:

hō bəri sātōkək əl-ḥəbyē ‘I have been missing my parents’ (20:63)
hah bər kərmūk əwṭōmāh ‘he has been acting so generously to you’
 (22:52)
bəri ḏ-əmtanyən tīkəm ‘I have been hoping for you (to come)’ (42:6)

There are perhaps a dozen occurrences of *bər* that do not fit in with one of the above uses, and in which *bər* does not seem to have a discernible function.

12.5.7. *dawn-*

The particle *dawn-* is used only with a second person suffixed pronoun, and is translated either as an imperative ‘take!’ or as a slightly more polite ‘you may have’. The preposition *b-* is required before the object. Following are all of the examples in the texts:

dawnək bīhəm ‘take them!’ (20:50)
dawnək hēt b-əḥkawmət ‘you take (over) the government’ (20:78)
dawnək bə-ḥəkəmti ‘you may have my government’ (42:51)

The example from 20:50 comes in response to someone who used the command *ndō* ‘give!’ (see below, §12.5.13).

12.5.8. *ḏək*

The particle *ḏək*, which is a reduced form of the far demonstrative *ḏēk* (§3.4), can be used as an introductory particle, equivalent to English ‘it’s (just) that...’ or ‘it’s because...’. It occurs seven times in the texts with this meaning, all but once in combination with the particle *’ār* ‘only’ (see §12.5.4). Examples are:

ḏək ’ār ’əḥād mənkekēm ḡəb ənxāhe ‘it’s because one of you excreted under it’ (3:16)
ḏək ’ār nəḥagkən ‘it’s just that you’ve been amusing yourselves’ (26:16)
ḏək ’ār hēt təḥəḏnayni ‘you are just imagining (things)’ (lit. ‘it’s just that you are imagining’) (64:17)
ḏək təkūn təḡətōri kə-gənnawnise ‘it’s just that she is in converse with her jinns’ (65:11)
ḏək ’ār yəṣṣək ‘it’s just that you’re afraid’ (91:19)

There is an eighth occurrence of *ðak*, which seems to mean something like ‘as’. It is not clear if it should be interpreted as the same particle *ðak* discussed above:

lawb, tōmār hēt ðak haybək yōmār ‘indeed, you sing as your father does’ (52:1)

12.5.9. *ġadewwān*

The particle *ġadewwān* has the meaning ‘let’s go!’ or ‘come on!’ and can be followed by a prepositional phrase. It does not decline in any way. Some examples of its use are:

ʾāmōr hīhām: ġadewwān ‘he said to them: let’s go!’ (19:13)

ʾāmawr: ġadewwān tawōli šērāʾ. ʾāmōr: ġadewwān ‘they said: let’s go to the judge! He said: let’s go!’ (23:11)

ġadewwān hāl həkawmāt ‘let’s go to the authorities!’ (46:14)

ġadewwān mähēsān tīk ‘come on, I’ll show you!’ (65:8)

ġadewwān tawōli hābū ‘let’s go to the people!’ (77:4)

ġadewwān tawēhē ‘let’s go to him!’ (94:47)

In a couple of places, *ġadewwān* is followed by a 1cp subjunctive verb, in which case it can be translated as above, or sometimes better ‘let’s go and...!’:

ġadewwān nāsñē hārōm ‘let’s go and see the tree’ (3:16)

ġadewwān nātbēs ‘come on, let’s follow her!’ (94:22)

It should be mentioned that Johnstone lists a shorter form *ġadew* ‘go!’ in his *ML* (p. 132), but this does not occur in the texts.

12.5.10. *lēzām*

The indeclinable particle *lēzām* (var. *lāzām*), undoubtedly borrowed from Arabic *lāzim*, has the meaning of ‘must’, ‘have to’, or ‘it is necessary that’. It is followed by a subjunctive or, to indicate an explicit future tense, a participle. It can also be used without a following verb, in which case the verb ‘be’ is implied. Some examples from the texts are:

lēzəm l-əshōt hikəm ‘I must slaughter for you’ (4:6)
lēzəm ərdēh bəh rawrəm ‘I must throw him into the sea’ (20:27)
lāzəm ’ayšēk hənīn ‘you must have supper with us’ (lit. ‘your supper must (be) with us’) (22:57)
lāzəm nəftēk ‘we have to leave’ (34:31)
lāzəm əftəkōna ‘you will have to leave’ (34:32)
lēzəm əfšēkəm hənay ‘you must have lunch with me’ (lit. ‘your lunch must (be) with me’) (36:19)
lēzəm ḏəkyēre həybətək ‘they will have to mention your camel’ (63:6)
lāzəm yəkawn tāmōm ‘they must be an even number’ (71A:1)
lēzəm tərtayk hayni awərḳāt ḏīməh ‘you must read this note for me’ (85:18)

12.5.11. *mākənnay*

The particle *mākənnáy* occurs just four times in Johnstone’s texts. Johnstone glosses this particle as ‘as for’ in his *ML* (p. 264; cf. the much more common particle *’amma*, §12.5.3), but it really only has this meaning in one passage:

wə-ətēm əntəkayl. mākənnay hō wḳōna k-həbēr ‘you choose. As for me, I will stay with the camels’ (102:1)

It has a similar contrastive meaning in one other passage:

wə-mākənnay hām ’əḥād hārōs bə-gəggēt... ‘but if someone marries a (previously unmarried) girl...’ (100:7)

Twice, *mākənnay* occurs in conjunction with *xəṭərāt* (*ṭayt*) ‘once’, and only seems to serve to mark the beginning of a story. The phrase can be translated as ‘now once...’. These passages are:

u mākənnay xəṭərāt kəlūt līn ḡayg... ‘now once, a man told us (the following)...’ (81:3)
mākənnay xəṭərāt ṭayt ḏ-əwxafn b-aṣayga ḏəkəməh ‘now once we were staying in that cave...’ (89:1)

However, *xəṭərāt* ‘once’ is much more often used alone at the beginning of a story, with no difference in meaning (e.g., 49:1; 74:1).

12.5.12. *mō*

The very rare particle *mō* is glossed in Johnstone's *ML* (p. 260) as 'well; indeed'. Its exact meaning is unclear from the two attestations in the texts. These are, with Johnstone's exact translations:

fəṭōn mō 'do please remember!' (57:13)
mō nḥā šxəwlūlən 'we stayed indeed' (60:13)

In the first example, *mō* follows an imperative. Based on the context of the story it seems to add urgency to the imperative, or possibly means 'please' (as Johnstone translated). In the second example, *mō* is translated in the texts as 'indeed', but the same passage is translated in the *ML* (p. 260) as 'well, we stayed'.⁴ Based on the context, the latter makes more sense. Overall, it seems that *mō* has little semantic value. On a very likely third attestation of *mō* in 52:3, see §3.2.3, n. 2. In this third case, *mō* also seems to add urgency to an imperative.

12.5.13. *ndō*

The particle *ndō* (variously transcribed *əndō*, *əndoh*, *ndōh*, and *ndoh*) seems to be a frozen imperative form. When followed by a noun or pronominal suffix, it has the meaning 'give here!' or 'give me!', but when followed by a subjunctive verb, it has the meaning 'let me!'. Unlike a regular imperative, however, it does not decline for gender or number. The attestations of this particle are the following:

ndōh mənš ašayḡət 'hand over your jewelry!' (lit. 'give from you the jewelry') (3:5)
əndō aməndawḵ 'give me your rifle!' (20:49)
əndōhəm 'give them to me!' (24:7)
əndoh f'əmka 'give me your feet!' (24:28)
ndoh əl-ḵṭa'aš 'let me cut you!' (75:18)
ndoh əl-šnē xaṭ 'let me see the letter!' (75:21)

⁴ The audio has *wə-nḥā* rather than *mō nḥā*, but given that this passage appears in the *ML* (p. 260) with *mō*, I will assume that the text is correct and the reader on the audio was mistaken.

12.5.14. *śaf*

The particle *śaf*, which occurs roughly twenty times in Johnstone's texts, has the meaning 'it happened/turned out that' or 'as it happened/turned out'. The bare form *śaf* is used when it is followed by a nominal subject, but it takes a pronominal suffix when the subject precedes or is otherwise unexpressed. Following are some examples from the texts:

wə-ḥəynīṭ śafsən səwēḥər 'and the women, as it turned out, were witches' (15:4)

ḏōmāh ba nəwās, śafəh šəḥ 'that is Abu Nuwas, it turns out that he is alive' (20:56)

śafhəm gənnawni 'it turned out they were jinns' (37:7)

śaf zāṭəḥ səwēḥər 'it turned out that witches got hold of him' (40:2)

śaf tēt ḏə-hātəmūt aḳōbər ḏ-aḡās 'as it happened, a woman was spending the night by the grave of her brother' (54:9)

śaf tēt hīs śənyati ḡəyābūt mən ayəsayt 'it turned out that the woman, when she saw me, had fainted from fear' (54:11)

In one example it has the meaning 'probably':

śafk təḡōrəb hō əṣṭawṭ agawfi 'you probably know that I have a pain in my chest' (101:9)

This particle *śaf* is to be distinguished from the noun *śaf* (pl. *əsfūtən*) 'track, footprint' (e.g., 64:12).

12.5.15. *taww-*

The particle *tāww-* (var. *tāww-*) occurs only with pronominal suffixes, and is followed by a verb in the subjunctive. It has the meaning of 'must', 'ought to', 'have to', or 'it's necessary that'.

tāwwəkəm təsmēḥəm tay 'you must (ought to) excuse me' (24:41)

tawwək tšəbər lay 'you'll have to be patient with me' (39:12)

tawwək tāməl hayni mārawf 'you must do me a favor' (46:2)

tawwəš təkḡēdi mən ḏayri 'you have to get down off me!' (46:5)

tawwək təsēmi 'you ought to spare me!' (83:5)

In one case *tāww-* is used independently, with the verb implied:

ʿāmārūt tētāh: “*ḏā-yəṣṣək...*” *ʿāmōr aḡayg*: “*tawwəṣ lā*” ‘his wife said: I am afraid... The man said: You shouldn’t be’ (94:39-40)

The particle *taww-* is to be connected with the adverb *taw* ‘well’ (§10.4).

12.5.16. *wōgəb*

The particle *wōgəb* (< Arabic *wājib*) is followed by a subjunctive verb and has the meaning ‘it is proper that’, ‘ought to’, or ‘should’. Person is indicated either with a suffixed pronoun attached directly to *wōgəb* (which has the base *awag(ə)b-* before suffixes) or with the preposition *l-* plus a suffixed pronoun. In the examples from the texts, the former is used exclusively in negative statements and the latter exclusively in positive statements. Examples are:

hēt ʿār ḏ-ḡərəbk ənḥa wōgəb līn nəṣḥōṭ hūk ‘you surely know that we are obliged to slaughter for you’ (31:14)

əl awagəbkəm lā təwtēḡəm məkəṇayw mən tōdi ‘you ought not kill a child at the breast’ (64:25)

əl awagəbkəm təsīrəm wə-tkəlām aməlawtəḡ wəṭōməh lā ‘you ought not go and leave the dead like this’ (64:26)

wōgəb līn nəkbēr aməlawtəḡ ‘we ought to bury the dead’ (64:28)

əl awagəbkəm lā tāṭāfəm lay bə-ḥazyən ‘you ought not frighten our goats’ (70:2)

awagbək təslēbi lā wə-təfasli bərək ḥābū ‘you ought not disarm me and embarrass me in front of the people’ (76:17)

It will be noticed in the above examples that a clause with *wōgəb* can be negated in more than one way. In 76:17, *əl* is omitted. In 64:25 and 70:2, *lā* immediately follows the suffixed form of *wōgəb*. In 64:26 and 76:17, *lā* comes at the end of the negative clause.

12.5.17. *wəlē*

The particle *wəlē* (var. *wəla*) has no simple translation in English. It comes at the beginning of a sentence and can be used as an interrogative particle, similar in use to Biblical Hebrew *hā-* or Arabic *ʿa-*. It is rather rare, however. Among the dozen or so examples in Johnstone’s texts are:

wəlē kaskəm mətwē-sī ‘did you find any grazing?’ (26:14; 29:3)
wəlē sī ‘āyd ‘are there any sardines?’ (27:9)
wəlē ‘əḥād ənkaykəm ‘has anyone come to you?’ (45:5)
wəlē nūka mawsəm yəllō ‘has the monsoon boat come last night?’
 (45:14)
a ḡiggēn, wəlē təkayr ... wəlē tərtōki xaṭ ‘O young man, can you read/
 hide? ... Can you read a letter?’ (71:2)⁵

Far more often, however, a declarative is made into an interrogative simply by intonation of voice, with no special particle necessary, as in:

hēt əḥtawēk ‘have you gone mad?’ (40:10)
wīka lūk sī ‘has something happened to you?’ (42:7)
bass ‘is that all?’ (42:53)
təḥaymi tāzēmi ‘do you intend to give (yourself) to me?’ (48:24)
hamak ‘əḥād ‘āmōr ftəkōna ‘did you hear someone say he is leav-
 ing?’ (57:9)
kaskən ḥābū ‘did you find the people?’ (99:41)

In a few passages *wəlē* seems to mean ‘perhaps’. The three clearest examples are:

wəlē ‘əḥḥōk amawsəm ‘maybe I will meet the monsoon boat’ (45:12)
wəlē arabbak yəsēmən tay u nə’āyōs ‘perhaps your Lord will pre-
 serve me and we will survive’ (36:3)
wəlē əkūsa ‘əḥād yəməzūz ‘perhaps I will find someone who smokes’
 (94:25)

In one example, *wəlē* is translated as ‘perhaps’ within a question:

wəlē sīnək ḥəbrəy ‘did you perhaps see my son?’ (57:5)

The use of *wəlē* as ‘perhaps’ is undoubtedly to be connected with (and is probably the source of) the interrogative particle *wəlē*. One can see, for example, how the question in 57:5, above, could be interpreted as simply ‘have you seen my son?’.

That *wəlē* ‘perhaps’ and interrogative *wəlē* are both normally transcribed with final *ē*, while the conjunction *wəlā* (§12.1.4) is more often

⁵ The verb *təkayr* is translated as ‘read/hide’ because the point of the story from which this line comes is that the verb *təkayr* (3ms perfect *kəru*) is ambiguous.

transcribed with *ā* or *a* makes one wonder if we are dealing with one or two particles in synchronic terms. Presumably they are historically the same.

12.5.18. *wātō-*

The particle *wātō-* is attested only once in Johnstone's texts. It is used in conjunction with a pronominal suffix and a following subjunctive verb. It means 'must' or 'should', and thus would seem to overlap in meaning with *lēzəm* (§12.5.10) and *wōgəb* (§12.5.16). The attested passage is:

wātōkəm 'ār tsəmīḥəm lay 'you really should allow me!' (64:2)

12.5.19. *yāmkən*

The particle *yāmkən* (< Arabic *yumkin*) means 'perhaps' or 'maybe', and is followed by a subjunctive or, when indicating a simple past, a perfect. Examples are:

yāmkən hārēk 'perhaps it was stolen' (23:4)

yāmkən tāgrēb aḡərōyāh 'maybe you know his language' (34:26)

yāmkən yānkē 'perhaps he will come' (41:4)

yāmkən xəlawš mənīn 'maybe they missed us' (64:15)

yāmkən l-ānkē hāh b-ʾəḥād yədbēhāh 'perhaps I would have brought someone to it to collect the honey' (77:4)

yāmkən yəsyēr wə-yānkē hāh b-ʾəḥād yədbēhāh hāh 'perhaps he would have gone and brought somebody to it to collect the honey for him' (77:8)

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SOME SYNTACTIC FEATURES

13.1. Copular (Non-Verbal) Sentences

Mehri, like many other Semitic languages, does not make use of a verb 'be' in the present tense. Instead, subject and predicate are simply juxtaposed. Examples are:

hō ḡayg fəḵayr 'I am a poor man' (91:3)

hēt ḥaywəl 'you are crazy' (94:36)

ḏōmāh amfətēḥ wə-sē bərk aḡərfēt ḏayk 'this is the key, and she is in that room' (22:97)

ḏīmāh tēṭi 'this is my wife' (46:16)

'alyōmāh ḥəbānyə 'these are my sons' (74:23)

bawmāh kāl-sīən ḡōli 'here everything is expensive' (18:15)

aḡīggēn kəway wə-xəfayf 'the boy was strong and quick' (42:2)

tēt ḏə-kəlātk lūk bīs ḥəbrīt ḏə-ḥōkəm, w-aḡaygəs ṣōyag tōgər 'the woman that I told you about is the daughter of the ruler, and her husband is a rich jeweler' (22:31)

ḥəbkə bərk aḡənnēt 'your parents are in Paradise' (20:70)

l-'ād 'āḏər lā '(there) is no excuse at all' (44:5)

kō hēt bawmāh 'why are you here?' (3:10)

hībō śawr 'what is the plan?' (6:6)

hēsən ḥəlatəh 'what is its description?' (28:7)

ḥō a'əsēy 'where is my supper?' (42:34)

In copular sentences, an interrogative can come in either the subject position, as in the last four examples above, or in the predicate, as in the following four examples:

hēt mōn 'who are you?' (20:68)

tēṭi ḥō 'where is my wife?' (37:12)

tōmər hībō 'what do you say?' (93:3)

šayš hēsən 'what do you have?' (94:45)

Occasionally, in place of a copula, we find a personal pronoun placed between the subject and predicate. This happens when the subject is an independent relative clause, when the predicate is modified by a relative clause, when an adverb separates the subject and predicate, or when the whole clause is negated, as in:

w-əlhān kask nxāse hē ḏ-hō ‘and whatever I find under it is mine’
(67:8)

ḏōmāh hah aṣōyāḡ ḏə-wkūb ‘this is the goldsmith who has entered’
(22:87)

ḏōmāh hē aḡīgēn ḏ-žāṭ ətēṭk ‘this is my son who took your wife’
(22:89)

ḥazikām yəllō sēn bə-ḥəwōdi ḏī ‘your goats were in this valley last night’ (31:3)

ḏōmāh əl hah šaḡli lā ‘this is not my thing’ (22:22)

aḡəlēt əl hē mənay la ‘the fault is not mine (lit. from me)’ (36:30)

The copula is normally missing from past tense contexts as well, for example:

ḥāḡōr bōyər ‘the slave was cunning’ (5:12)

aḡīgēn rəḥaym ‘the boy was handsome’ (22:1)

ḥaybi fəḳayr ‘my father was poor’ (34:4)

aḡay sōx bə-ḳəṭar ‘my big (older) brother was in Qatar’ (34:20)

arḥəbēt bīs xawr, wə-xawr kāṣəm xā-hē falg ‘the town, in it was a lagoon, and the lagoon was as cold as ice’ (36:1)

aḡayg məhray ‘the man was a Mehri’ (69:2)

ḥələts əl sē ḡədət lā ‘its condition was not good’ (83:1)

For examples of the lack of a present or past copula in ‘have’ sentences, see below, §13.3.1.

13.1.1. *The Verb wīka*

The verb *wīka* can mean ‘be’, however it is rarely used as a copula. Much more often, it means ‘stay’, ‘become’, or ‘happen, take place’, for example:

wīka kə-ḥārawn ‘he stayed with the goats’ (14A:5)
ətēm wəkēya b-amkōnkəm aw śalyēla? nəḥā wəkēya b-amkōnən tē
gēhaməh ‘will you stay at your place or will you move? We will
 stay at our place until tomorrow’ (96:4-5)
wīka rəḥaym k-ḥābū mən ḡār taybər ḡə-ḡaydōr ‘he became nice to
 people after the breaking of his pots’ (35:23)
waḡak bə-xayr ‘I became well’ (25:16)
waḡam ‘ayśōr ‘they became friends’ (61:9)
wīka lūk śī ‘has something happened to you?’ (42:7)
ktēbəm hayni kāl-śīən ḡə-wīka ‘write (down) for me everything that
 happens’ (66:1)
hīs wəḡōt həgmēt ‘when the attack took place’ (69:8)

In a past existential phrase (‘there was/were’), the presence or absence of the verb *wīka* is semantically predictable. For a true existential, when the phrase ‘there was/were’ can be replaced with ‘there existed’, no verb is needed:

xəṭərāt ḡayg ‘once there was a man’ (15:1)
xəṭərāt ḥōkəm b-ərḥəbēt ‘once there was a ruler in a town’ (36:1)

When an existential ‘there was/were’ can be replaced with ‘there happened/took place’, then *wīka* is used:

tā ‘āśər ṭāt *wīka* śarḥ *b-arḥəbēt* ‘then one night there was a party in
 the town’ (37:9)
sənēt tayt wəḡōt hawrət ‘one year there was a draught’ (61:1)
əl wīka ḥarḥ śī-lā ‘there has been no war’ (104:28)

The verb *wīka* is really only used as a copula in two environments. The first is when a subjunctive is required because of meaning (i.e., ‘should be’ or ‘might be’, as in the first three examples below) or syntax (i.e., functioning as a dependent verb, as in the last three examples below):

şərōməh hēt tāḡā ḡə-wəbədḡ ṭāt ‘now you should (pretend to) be one
 who has shot someone’ (72:4)
mət awōḡən fēḡər, tāḡāy bərs əl-xā ḡə-abayt ‘when they call the dawn
 prayer, you should already be at the door of the house’ (75:8)
’ād tāḡāy dənyēt ‘might you be pregnant again?’ (101:16)

əl yāgōb ʾəḥād lā yākā his təh lā ‘he didn’t like anyone to be like him’ (76:11)

nəḥōm ṭāṭ yākā ḥaywəl wə-ṭroh təmnēm təh ‘we should one (of us) act crazy and two (of us) restrain him’ (91:6)

həthəmk təh yākā mən xəšəmyən ‘I suspect he is one of our enemies’ (94:42)

The second environment in which *wīka* is used as a copula is in the protasis or apodosis of a conditional sentence, for example:

hām abēli yəḥōm, əwḵōna šəh rəḥaym ‘if God wills it, I will be good to him’ (18:17)

hām aḡərōyəs wīka šadḵ, aḵēʾyōt aməšəḡərēt wəḵōna aḡərōyəs šadḵ ‘if her words are true, (then) the second spirit-woman, her words will be true (too)’ (68:13)

However, we can also find examples of a missing copula in a conditional sentence, such as:

wə-lū əl hē ḥaywəl lā, əl yəšḥayṭən ḥəybəth lā ‘and if he were not crazy, he would not have slaughtered his camel’ (55:7)

The verb *wīka* is also attested with a few other idiomatic meanings. In one place, followed by a dependent (subjunctive) verb, it means ‘begin’:

wīka hē yənšarxəf ‘he began to slip away’ (69:4)

In one place we find the idiom *wīka hāl* ‘to become a wife to’:

wəḵōt hāl ḡayg ‘she became the wife of a (certain) man’ (74:10)

And in about five passages (three of them within text 99), *wīka* means something like ‘reach’, ‘happen/come upon’, or ‘wind up (in/at/on)’. A few of these passages are:

ḏ-admēmən bə-ḥaydi, tē waḵak ḡār āḡərəzəh ‘I was groping around with my hands until I happened upon his testicles’ (91:16)

fər akayzər wə-wīka ḡār ašāwər ‘the leopard jumped and reached the (other) rock’ (99:20; cf. also 99:19)

w-ʾāfōd aḳayzər ... u wīḳa bərḳ aməsyōl ‘the leopard jumped and wound up in the valley bottom’ (99:24)
wīḳa lihəm həzayz ‘a strong wind came upon them’ (103:1)

On the use of *wīḳa* in compound verb tenses, see §7.1.9.

13.1.2. The Verb *yəkūn*

The verb *yəkūn*, like *hōm* (see §7.3), only occurs in the imperfect. It is used as a copula meaning ‘be’ in places where a habitual aspect or general present meaning is intended. It is also found in the apodosis of conditional sentences. It seems almost to function as a suppletive to *wīḳa* in its use as a copula. That is, we find *wīḳa* used as a copula in places where we need a subjunctive or participle, and *yəkūn* in places where we need an imperfect. It is not problematic that both *yəkūn* and *wīḳa* are found in the apodosis of conditional sentences, since in this position we regularly find either imperfects or participles, used interchangeably (see §13.4.1).

In the *ML* (p. 218), *yəkūn* is glossed as ‘to be constantly, be all the time; be acceptable’, but this is somewhat imprecise. It is not that the verb means ‘be constantly, be all the time’, but rather that the verb is often used in contexts where the imperfect is used to indicate a habitual. Since the habitual aspect is indicated by the verbal form (the imperfect), it need not be part of the semantics of the verbal root itself. Some examples of *yəkūn* are:

yəkūn lūk šak hām gātəryək k-hədaydək ‘it would be a crime if you talk to your uncle (like that)’ (33:3)
nkūn k-hāməy bərḳ hārawn wə-həbēr ‘we used to be with my mother among the goats and camels’ (34:6)¹
yāmərəm šērək yəkūn k-səwēhər ‘they say that the *šērək* is (habitually) with sorcerers’ (41:1)
əḏə hē səḥāt ḥəybəth, hē yəkūn ḥəywəl. w-əḏə hē əl səḥāt ḥəybəth lā, hō əkūn ḳəhbēt ‘if he slaughtered his camel, then he is crazy; if he didn’t kill his camel, then I am a whore’ (55:9)

¹ The audio for the passage is actually: *təkūn hāməy...* ‘my mother used to be...’, but whether or not this reflects the original story more accurately is irrelevant here. Both this and the printed version show the same habitual use of the verb *yəkūn*.

In one place *yākūn* is translated simply as ‘will be’, in an independent clause, for no clear reason:

ḥabrē ḏadsūs yākūn dasūs ‘the son of a snake will be a snake’ (64:26)

Either the verb *yākūn* has the meaning ‘become’ here (as *wīka* can), or the translation should reflect a habitual or general present, i.e., ‘the son of a snake is (always) a snake’.

And in one passage we find *yākūn* following *lēzəm* (var. *lāzəm*):

lāzəm yākawn tēmōm ‘they must be an even number’ (71A:1)

The particle *lēzəm* is normally followed by a subjunctive or, less often, an active participle (see §12.5.10). Assuming *yākūn* behaves like other verbs whose middle root letter is *w* (e.g., *yāmūt*), then *yākawn* can only be a 3mp imperfect (cf. *yāmawt*); the expected 3mp subjunctive would be *yākēnəm* (cf. *yāmētəm*). The imperfect *yākawn* is apparently substituting for the subjunctive here, since, as noted above, this verb only has imperfect forms.

Finally, Johnstone’s gloss of ‘be acceptable’ is appropriate only in one passage, for the phrase *ḏōmah yākūn lā* ‘this is not acceptable’ (94:5), an idiom also found in Sima’s texts (cf. Sima 2009: 424, text 73:13).

13.2. Negation

This section will cover a variety of negative particles in Mehri. The negative indefinite pronouns *l-ʾəḥād* ‘no one’ and *šī-lā* ‘nothing’ have been treated elsewhere (§3.5.1 and §3.5.2, respectively).

13.2.1. *əl* and *lā*

Verbal and non-verbal sentences are negated by the elements *əl* ... *lā*. Note that *əl* can sometimes be transcribed in the texts with a preceding glottal stop (ʾəl), and *lā* can sometimes be transcribed with a preceding epenthetic vowel (*əlā*). Before *ʾəḥād* and *ʾād*, *əl* is transcribed *l-*. Most often, both elements are used in tandem (cf. French *ne ... pas*), though there is some variation with the exact placement of these elements within the sentence.

In non-verbal sentences with a pronominal subject (including *ʾəḥād* and *šī*, but not demonstratives), the element *əl* precedes the entire phrase to be negated (including the subject), while the element *lā* fol-

lows the entire phrase. With pronouns (especially 2sg), there also is a tendency to add a fronted pronoun. When the subject is a noun or a demonstrative pronoun, *əl* follows the subject, but is then followed by a resumptive pronoun. The result is that the nominal subject is essentially fronted. Examples of negated non-verbal sentences are:

- əl hō hērək lā* ‘I am not a thief’ (47:8)
’əl hō sənnawrət lā ‘I am not a cat’ (6:11) (audio *hō ’əl hō*; cf. 15:18)
hēt, əl hēt hōkəm lā ‘you, you are not the ruler’ (91:29)
əl hēm xəşawm lā ‘they are not enemies’ (64:15)
hēt əl hēt axayr mənīn lā ‘you, you are not better than us’ (61:4)
’əl ’ətēm fihōr lā ‘you are not pure’ (4:11)
əl sē sənnawrət lā ‘she was not a cat’ (6:2)
əl šihəm kawt əlā ‘they had no food’ (30:1)
đōmāh əl hah şagli lā ‘this is not my thing’ (22:22)
đōmāh əl bəh fēhəl lā ‘this (man) has no penis’ (24:36)
đōmāh əl hē sawr gīd lā ‘this is not good advice’ (90:6)
ağələt əl hē mənay lā ‘the fault is not mine (lit. from me)’ (36:30)
amhəşawl əl hē gīd əlā ‘the earning was not good’ (57:4)
kəwwēt əl sē kəwwēt đə-tēt lā ‘(her) strength is not the strength of a woman’ (75:15)
tēt əl sē mən akəbaylāt đə-xəşəmhe lā ‘the woman was not from the tribe of his enemies’ (94:33)

In verbal sentences *əl* usually comes directly before the verb (so, after the subject), and *lā* still follows the entire sentence. There are three qualifications to this rule. First, sentences with an active participle behave like non-verbal sentences, and so *əl* usually precedes an expressed subject. Second, *əl* precedes the subject if it is an indefinite pronoun (like *šī* ‘something’ or *’əhād* ‘someone’; see §3.5.1 and §3.5.2 for additional examples). Third, if the verb has the verbal prefix *đ-* (see §7.1.10; but not relative *đ-*), then the element *əl* will also precede an expressed pronoun. Examples of negated verbal sentences are:

- əl ərđiw būk hāgərōn bərk arawrəm lā* ‘didn’t the slaves throw you into the sea?’ (20:59)
hēt əl matk əlā ‘you didn’t die?’ (20:69)
haybən əl nūka lā ‘our father hasn’t come back’ (20:74)
hē əl təwīyāh lā ‘he hadn’t eaten it’ (24:22)
əl hōm əl-hētəm lā ‘I don’t want to spend the night’ (31:4)

- əl tāšōš lā* ‘don’t be afraid!’ (34:25)
hō əl kəsk yənīt lā ‘I didn’t find women’ (22:100)
abkār əl tšābərən mən ’āyd əlā ‘the cows can’t do without sardines’
 (27:15)
əl təkawdər lā ‘you cannot’ (76:1)
əl hō sīrōna lā ‘I will not go’ (49:5)
əl sēn wərdūtən əlā ‘they are not going down (to water)’ (27:3)
əl šī yədūm lā ‘nothing lasts’ (98:15)
l-’əḥād ḥərfōna tīs lā ‘no one will move it’ (67:5)
əl hō ḏ-əḥtəwēk lā ‘I have not gone crazy’ (20:6)
əl hō ḏə-hānayk əwṭōməh lā ‘I didn’t intend it that way’ (59:10)

It is not rare to find the element *lā* used without *əl* (cf. French *pas*), in both verbal and non-verbal sentences. Some examples are:

- šinək təh lā* ‘I have not seen it’ (23:9)
tāšōš lā ‘don’t be afraid!’ (67:2)
šay kawt lā ‘I have no food’ (73:4)
kūsəm təhi lā ‘they didn’t find them’ (35:17)
kəwtōna hūk əlā ‘I won’t tell you’ (20:37)
ḥōm lā ‘I don’t want to’ (4:10)
ənḳawdər nəsləl lā ‘we can’t move’ (28:12)
ḥārawn bīsən əsxōf mēkən lā ‘the goats did not have much milk’
 (30:13)

In seven passages we find *lā* before a verb, but most of these seem not to be genuine. Four of the seven attestations are negative commands. The six passages are:

- l-agərē lā təhērəs lā* ‘so that he will not marry’ (6:13) (probably correct to *l-’ād təhērəs*)
lā təḥfēr zōyəd lā ‘dig no more’ (19:25) (probably correct to *l-’ād təḥfēr*)
lā šatḳələm ḥənfəykəm lā ‘don’t think yourselves a burden’ (28:15)
lā təbkē lā ‘don’t cry (anymore)!’ (40:7) (correct to *l-’ād təbkē lā*, as on audio)
lā šīnən tīḥəm zōyəd lā ‘we never saw them again’ (60:8) (correct to *l-’ād šīnən*, as on audio)
əgzēmi lā tədōr mənwēhəm ‘swear (that) you will not come between them’ (94:6) (probably correct to *l-’ād tədōr*)

lā tənkei lā ‘don’t come back to me!’ (98:4) (probably correct to *l-ʾād tənkei*)

The first *lā* of 6:13 is likely a typographical error for *l-ʾād* (§13.2.2), since the passage is identical to an earlier passage that does have *l-ʾād ... lā* (6:5). Unfortunately, the relevant part of 6:13 is missing from the audio. It is also likely that the first *lā* of 19:25 should be *l-ʾād*, which is what we expect with a following *zōyād* (cf. 60:8, and see §13.2.5). Unfortunately, and strangely, the audio is missing for this line as well. The audio for 40:7 and 60:8 was consulted, and both have *l-ʾād* in place of the first *lā*, as noted above. I did not find any audio for 94:6 or 98:4 either, but *l-ʾād* fits in both contexts. Only for 28:15 do we have audio confirmation of *lā ... lā*. So, six of the seven examples of *lā ... (lā)* are, or are very likely, mistakes for *l-ʾād ... lā*. And in 28:15, we could probably read the first *lā* as an interjection, and translate ‘no, don’t think yourselves a burden!’.

There are also some cases in which *əl* is used without *lā*, though these are far more infrequent than cases of *lā* used alone; in fact, examples are quite few. In all but a handful of these cases, the particle *ʾār* ‘only’ is used (see §12.5.4). There are also plenty of examples where we also find *əl ... lā* used with the particle *ʾār* (e.g., 36:3; 84:1). Examples of *əl* used without *lā* are:

ʾəl šihəm ʾār hēt ‘they have only you’ (18:18)
wə-kō hēt əl təkawla həbrək yāsīr šūk hə-sawḵ ‘why don’t you let your son go with you to the market’ (22:2)
hō əl šay ʾār ḏōmāh ‘I have only this’ (73:5)
hēm gəzawm əl izayt bəh kəzayyət ‘they swore (that) they would not take any compensation for it’ (89:5)
hō əl šay ʾār hōṭəri tṛoh ‘I only have two kids’ (89:8)
əl həbḵō ʾār awzārəh ‘he left on only his waistcloth’ (104:18)

The sequence *əl ... w-əl* can also be used as the equivalent of English ‘neither ... nor’, in which case the sentence itself can also be negated with *əl*, as in:

əl tēt šəh w-əl həybəth šəh ‘he had neither the woman nor his camel’ (55:16)
əl (tə)ṭōm əl moh w-əl ḵawt ‘she tasted neither water nor food’ (75:22)

əl šihəm əl šiwōṭ w-əl moh w-əl ǧērōb ‘they had neither fire, nor water, nor wood’ (76:11)

Finally, *lā* can be used as an interjection ‘no!’ (e.g., 35:14) and it can be used independently, substituting for an entire phrase, as in *hamak tay aw lā* ‘did you hear me or not?’ (96:7).

13.2.2. *l-ʾād*

The form *l-ʾād* (often transcribed as *l-ād*) is simply a combination of the negative *əl* plus the particle *ʾād*, which was treated in §12.5.1. When pronominal suffixes are attached to *l-ʾād*, the negative element *əl* follows *ʾād* (*ʾādi əl*, *ʾād(ə)k əl*, etc.). The combination *l-ʾād* has two basic meanings. Since the most common meaning of *ʾād* is ‘still’, it is no surprise that one basic meaning of *l-ʾād* ... *lā* is ‘still not’ or ‘not yet’, as in:

hēt ǧənnawn w-ād k ʾəl hēt məhārəs lā ‘you are a child and you cannot get married yet’ (8:8)
tōli həzayz l-ād ǧəlayn əlā nəṭōbəḵ abarr ‘then the wind still didn’t let us go ashore’ (60:7)
kādēt l-ād yəšānōs yəḵfēd arḥəbēt lā ‘Kadet didn’t yet dare to go down to the town’ (64:8)
hō l-ād əḵawfəd lā mən ǧayrək ‘I am not getting down off you yet’ (46:4)
tōli l-ād šəwrēm əlā ‘then they still didn’t back off’ (70:3)
ʾāmōr ǧēk ǧ-ʾādəh əl ātōši lā ‘the one who had not yet had supper said’ (84:9)

Sometimes this use of *l-ʾād* is best translated as ‘never’, meaning ‘not yet (still not) up until this point in time’. In these cases, the accompanying verb is always the imperfect, for example:

mən hīs xələḵək ʾādi əl əhōrək lā ‘since I was born, I have never stolen’ (47:9)
ʾādi əl ʾōmər lā ʾār yəmsī ‘I have never sung except yesterday’ (52:15)
ʾādəh l-ʾəḥād yōmər hayni əhəşawləḥ lā ‘nobody has ever told me I was good (at it)’ (52:17)
ʾādəh əl yəsyūr təwalihəm lā ‘he had never gone to them before’ (59:1)

šinān šī ḏə-ʾādān əl ənsényəh lā ‘we saw something that we have never seen’ (82:4)

In a couple of passages, this use of *l-ʾād* behaves like a temporal conjunction, requiring a literal translation ‘when still not’. ‘Before’ is a smoother translation, however. Two attested examples are:

ʾādəh əl tāmūm lā ġarbēh haybəh ḥōkəm ‘before he finished (his story), his father the ruler recognized him’ (lit. ‘when he still hadn’t finished’) (74:23)

ʾāmēr həh yətəxfən ġēhəməh, ʾādəs əl ġəzōt həyawm ‘tell him he should come tonight, before the sun has gone down’ (96:1)

The second, and more common, basic use of *l-ʾād ... lā* is to mean ‘not anymore’, ‘not any longer’, ‘not again’, or ‘never (again)’. In this use, *l-ʾād* is not used with pronominal suffixes. Examples are:

ənkathi aġəllēt wə-l-ād əbšəro ḥōrəm lā ‘a mist came upon them and they couldn’t see the road anymore’ (17:2)

l-ād rəddōna līn əlā ‘you will never come back to us’ (20:72)

l-ād təhētəməm lā ‘don’t stay here any longer!’ (35:3)

hō ʾāgawz ḏə-l-ād wəšələk əlā l-əsyēr, wə-l-ād həbšərk lā ‘I am an old woman who cannot manage to walk anymore, and I cannot see well anymore’ (46:2)

l-ād ʾəḥād ǧəlūm ʾəḥād lā ‘no one was unfair to anyone ever again’ (66:10)

hō l-ʾād šay ġəmaylət lā ‘I don’t have the strength (to endure) any longer’ (83:4)

l-ʾād səbṭōna tīš lā ‘I won’t hit you anymore’ (89:18)

l-ād ḥəmhəm šay lā ‘I don’t want them with me anymore’ (91:32)

l-ʾād šīnək hərbātiye lā ‘I never saw my companions again’ (103:1)

While *l-ʾād ... lā* can mean ‘not anymore’, ‘not again’, etc., this negative construction is sometimes strengthened by another word. The most common is *zōyəd* ‘more’ (see further in §13.2.5), but once we also find *ʾabdan* ‘never’ (see §13.2.6). These words do not alter the meaning.

We have already seen that *l-ʾād* can mean ‘never’ both in the sense of ‘never up until this point in time’ and ‘never again in the future’. In

a few passages, it can also have a general meaning ‘never’. The clearest examples of this are:

l-ʾād kawla amōl yattāk moh əlā ‘they never let (other) animals drink water’ (27:5)
nəğōrəb aḳā l-ʾād nəšdəlūl ‘we know the land, we never need directions’ (79:9)

In at least a dozen cases, *l-ʾād ... lā* seems to mean ‘not at all’, or perhaps is acting as a simple substitute for *əl ... lā*. Some examples of this are:

l-ʾād šərūt lā ‘she didn’t stop at all’ (54:20)
l-ʾād ʾəššōt lā ‘she didn’t get up at all’ (65:10)
bəğawdəh, wəlākən l-ʾād ləḥāḳəm təh lā ‘they pursued him, but they didn’t catch up to him at all’ (69:5)
mūna ḥādəthe wə-l-ʾād kədūr yəḥtīrək lā ‘he held his hands, and he couldn’t move at all’ (75:10)
ağəggēn l-ʾād wīda hībō yāmōl lā ‘the boy did not know at all what to do’ (76:3)
ağayg l-ʾād šāmūn tətəh lā ‘the man didn’t agree with his wife at all’ (94:26)

In three passages, *l-ʾād* (without *lā*) is followed by the particle *ʾār*, and while *ʾār* has a clear meaning (‘except’ or ‘only’), the function of *l-ʾād* in these passages is not totally clear. It is noteworthy that there are also two places (45:18; 57:11) in which positive *ʾād* is followed by *ʾār*, and in both cases *ʾād* is also of uncertain function. The three passages with *l-ʾād ʾār* are:

gōna ḥəyawm l-ʾād ar əsfēk ‘the sun has gone down, except for the last rays’ (21:1)
bərəh təmūm ağəggōtən ǧ-arḥəbēt l-ʾād ʾār hō ‘he has gone through (all) the girls of the town except for me’ (42:19)
l-ʾād ʾār hō, tēt ‘there is only me, a woman’ (64:27/29)

Perhaps *l-ʾād* in these sentences is negating an understood existential ‘there is’.

Finally, it should be mentioned that in one place the negative element *l-* occurs not immediately before *ʾād*, but before the element *ʾəḥād* ‘someone’:

ʾād l-ʾəḥād yəśanyəḥ lā ‘nobody has ever seen it’ (41:10)

Compare this to *l-ād ʾəḥād* in 66:10 (cited above). It seems this is just a variant. Or, it is possible the text in 41:10 is a mistake for *ʾādəḥ l-ʾəḥād* (cf. 52:17), in which case we would expect the negative element to follow the suffixed form of *ʾād*. However, the audio seems to confirm *ʾād l-ʾəḥād*.

13.2.3. *m-ʾād*

The particle *m-ʾād* (most often transcribed as *m-ād*) occurs just a dozen times in Johnstone’s texts. Its basic meaning is ‘lest’ or ‘so that not’, and it is not used in conjunction with any other negative particle. Some examples are:

haḥəwtəm bə-ḥənḥaykəm, m-ād yənkē agənnay wə-yətēḥkəm ‘save yourselves, lest the jinnee come and eat you’ (42:19)

aḡayg dəfōna hīn m-ād nāṭəḥ ‘the man will pay us so that we don’t delay him’ (91:26)

təḥōm taḡwīr b-aḡayg m-ʾād yətbē tēt ‘she wanted to distract the man so that he didn’t follow the woman’ (94:18)

āzēmi aṣayḡat ... m-ād yəzayṭəs ‘give me the jewelry ... lest they take it’ (99:44)

ḥəḏḏūr mən tərḱōb lə-ʾəlīg yəḥūrəd, m-ʾād yəḥanḱəbək ‘look out that you don’t get on a (two-year old) camel that panics, lest it throw you off’ (102:11)

When following the verb *yəṣ* ‘be afraid’ (+ d.o.) and preceding a dependent verb, *m-ʾād* is best translated simply as ‘that’, with the sense of ‘that something (bad) will happen’. There are three examples from the texts, two with a subjunctive following *m-ʾād* and one with an imperfect (20:37):

yəṣṣək tīk m-ād təlōmi l-əḱlēk bərk šəṭṭēti ‘I am afraid that you will expect me to let you into my basket’ (20:37)

yəşşək tīs m-ād təfrēr mən ǧayrən ‘I am afraid that she will run away from us’ (37:10)

yəşşəm aǧaygəs m-ād yəhtəwül ‘they were afraid her husband might go crazy’ (37:12)

On the verb *yəş*, see further in §13.5.1 and §13.5.1.1.

13.2.4. *məḳā*

The negative particle *məḳā* occurs just four times in Johnstone’s texts, and its exact meaning is difficult to pin down. In the *ML* (p. 427, root $\sqrt{wk}$), it is defined as ‘that not, not (a neg. particle, occurring us. in oaths)’. However, as can be seen from the four examples below, this definition really only covers one of the attested passages (47:11). In the remaining three, *məḳā* means something like ‘(it is) as if not’. No other negative particle is used in conjunction with *məḳā*. The four attestations are:

məḳā xā-sēh nkath arḥəmēt ǧīməh ‘(it is) as if this (last) rainfall never came there’ (26:15)

məḳā xā-hō ǧ-ənūfa šē hənēkəm ‘it’s as if I were of no use to you in anything’ (33:2)

hō gəzmōna hīkəm məḳā hō hērək ‘I swear to you that I am not a thief’ (47:11)

wələ məḳā xā-hēm xələkəm ‘it’s as if they had never been born’ (90:8)²

13.2.5. *zōyəd*

The word *zōyəd* (once transcribed *zuyd*) can be a comparative ‘more’, as in:

mən ǧār sənēt aw zōyəd ‘after a year or more’ (16:1)

warx u zōyəd ‘a month or more’ (42:10)

əwtawǧ mənḥēm zōyəd əl-faḳḥ ‘they killed more than half of them’ (69:6)

² The function of *wələ* (cf. §12.1.4) in this example is unclear.

Zōyād is also attested twice as a noun meaning ‘surplus’ (66:7; 66:8), and the corresponding verb *zəyūd* ‘be(come) more; increase (intrans.)’ is also attested twice (66:8; 84:4).

Most frequently—about twenty times in the texts—*zōyād* is met in conjunction with a negative particle (or particles), together with which it has the meaning ‘not anymore, never again’. The negative particle is usually *l-ʾād* ... (*lā*), but twice *zōyād* occurs with the simpler *əl* ... *lā*.³ Examples are:

- ʾəl əḵawdər l-ʾattāk zōyād lā* ‘I can’t drink anymore’ (49:10)
l-ād əḵawdər bə-zōyād əlā. hō ʾār tāt, l-ād əḵawdər l-ənke zōyād əlā
 ‘I can’t manage anymore. I’m just one (person), I can’t “bring”
 anymore’ (20:12)
l-ād nəfōna tīkəm zuyd lā ‘I won’t be of use to you anymore’ (33:6)
dəxlōtən l-ād ənnūka nāxalka zōyād ‘we promise we’ll never come
 to your palm trees again’ (37:5)
l-ād šīnən tīhəm zōyād lā ‘we never saw them again’ (60:8)
l-ād ədōbəh zōyād, tē l-əmēt ‘I will never collect honey again, until I
 die’ (77:2)
ḥarmək l-ād əḏawbər būk zōyād tē l-əmēt ‘I swear I won’t nag you
 anymore until I die’ (98:15)

Two similar passages from 56:9-10 show that the negatives *əl* ... *zōyād lā* and *l-ʾād zōyād lā* mean essentially the same thing:

- l-ād hō səwbōna tīk zōyād lā* ‘I will not wait for you anymore’ (56:9)
wə-kō əl səwbōna tay zōyād lā ‘why won’t you wait for me any-
 more?’ (56:10)

In just one passage in the texts, *zōyād* is used in a positive context, in conjunction with *ʾād*, to mean ‘again, anymore’:

- hām ʾād həwrədk ḥəmóh ḏōməh zōyād, ḏə-nəwtəgk* ‘if you bring
 (them) down to the water again, we will kill you’ (10:9)

³ In 19:25, we find *lā* ... *zōyād lā*, but as noted above (§13.2.1) and in the Appendix, this is probably a mistaken transcription for *l-ʾād* ... *zōyād lā*. Unfortunately, no audio was found to confirm this, but a similar mistake in 60:8 was confirmed by the audio. In 56:14, we find *hō məšēmən tīk zōyād lā* ‘I won’t trust you anymore’, with only the final *lā* as a negative marker. But, as noted in the Appendix, this should be corrected to *l-ʾād hō məšēmən tīk zōyād lā*, as heard on the audio.

13.2.6. *ʾabdan*

The word *ʾabdan*, clearly a borrowing of Arabic *ʾabadan*, is most often met in the texts as an exclamation, meaning ‘never!’ or ‘not at all!’, e.g., 64:3. However, in a few cases, it is used in conjunction with a verb (as it also is in Arabic).

ʾabdan ʔl ʔrdūd lā ‘I shall never go back’ (37:19)

*arəzḳ ʔl yəktōṭa lā ʾabdan ... wəlākən əššaraf, hām təm, l-ʾād yəxlōf
lā ʾabdan* ‘(our) daily bread will never be cut off ... but honor, if
it comes to an end, will never again be replaced’ (98:8)

In the first passage above (37:19), *ʾabdan* precedes a negated verb, mirroring Arabic usage. In the second passage, *ʾabdan* twice follows a negated verb, once following *ʔl ... lā* (giving a generic sense ‘never’, or perhaps ‘never at all’) and once following *l-ʾād ... lā* (giving the sense ‘never again’). It is worth noting that the passage from 98:8 contains two Arabic loanwords, *rəzḳ* ‘daily bread’ (Arabic *rizq*) and *əš-šaraf* ‘honor’ (with the Arabic definite article). So while the word *ʾabdan* is common as an exclamation, its use in verbal phrases might be considered an Arabism.

13.2.7. *əktēr*

The comparative adjective *əktēr* ‘more’ (§5.4) is attested only twice in the texts, in both cases in the same negative context, *l-ʾād k-X əktēr lā*, meaning ‘have no more (energy)’. It is unclear if *əktēr* is used outside of this idiom to mean either ‘more’ or ‘no more’. The two attested passages are:

l-ʾād šay əktēr lā mən aḏawma ‘I have no more (energy) because of
thirst’ (99:28)

səbhək tē təwōli ḏ-aʾāšər. l-ʾād šay əktēr lā ‘I swam until the end of
the night. I had no more (energy)’ (103:2)

13.3. *Expressing ‘have’*

As in most other Semitic languages, there is no verb ‘have’ in Mehri. Instead, the concept is expressed with a periphrastic construction. Most often the preposition *k-* is used, but the prepositions *b-*, *h-*, and

l- can also mean ‘have’ in certain contexts. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

13.3.1. *The Preposition k-*

The basic meaning of the preposition *k-* is ‘with’, as described in §8.11. With pronominal suffixes (using the base *š-*; see §8.22 for a complete list of forms), it can express the concept ‘have’. If the possessor is a noun, a pronominal suffix still must be used with *k-*.

šay naxlīt ‘I have a palm tree’ (77:5)

šəh gīgēn u gəgənōt ‘he had a boy and a girl’ (22:1)

šīs wōz ‘she had a goat’ (49:1)

xəṭərāt gayg šəh rikēb ‘once a man had a riding-camel’ (12:1)

ʾəl šihəm kawt lā ‘they had no food’ (11:2)

ʾəl šin qərawš lā ‘we had no money’ (91:2)

ḥāməy šīs amōl mēkən ‘my mother had a lot of property’ (34:4)

šekəni ʾəl šihəm məšrawf lā ‘my community has no provisions’ (or:
‘my community, they have no provisions’ (18:14)

hō šay sawr ‘I have a plan’ (35:8)

hō əl šay ʾār ḏəməh ‘I have only this’ (73:5)

As the last two examples show, an independent pronoun can be added for emphasis. Several of the examples above also show that an explicit past tense marker is normally absent from this construction, and must be gleaned from context. This agrees with what was said about copular sentences above (§13.1). There is just one example in the texts where the verb *wīka* ‘be, become’ makes the past tense explicit:

abōki wīka šīsən arḥəmēt ‘the rest (of the goats) had fodder’ (17:15)

In contexts where a subjunctive is required, the verb *wīka* is also used, though there are just two examples in the texts:

tākā šūk maws ‘you should have a razor’ (75:11)⁴

⁴ In a previous work (Rubin 2009a: 223), I described *tākā* as an imperfect of *wīka*, used here to indicate a simple future tense ‘you will have’, the translation which is found in Stroemer’s edition of the texts. More correctly, the form *tākā* is a subjunctive (ML, p. 426), though the subjunctive forms of this verb are possibly sometimes used in place of the imperfect forms. After noticing *yākā* in 98:10, which is undoubtedly

lāzəm əmnēdəm yākā šəh əfkrayyət də-ḥənaḥəh ‘a person must have some thought for himself’ (98:10)

13.3.1.1. *Familial Possession*

There is an additional feature of the possessive use of Mehri *k-* that merits closer attention. Within the ‘have’ construction, a noun indicating a close family member (father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, wife, brother-in-law) will appear with a redundant possessive suffix:

- šay ḥəbrayti* ‘I have a daughter’ (lit. ‘I have my daughter’) (48:7)
šəh ḥayməh ‘he had a brother-in-law’ (lit. ‘he had his brother-in-law’) (64:10)
šəh tētəh rəḥaymət ‘he has a beautiful wife’ (19:1)
šay ḥāməy ’āgawz ‘I have an old mother’ (65:7)
šəh ḥəbanhə yəbayt ‘he had seven sons’ (50:1)
šəh šəlīt aḡathə ‘he had three sisters’ (37:6)
šəh aḡāh w-aḡāh šəh ḥəbrətəh ‘he had a brother and his brother had a daughter’ (85:1)

Note also the phrase *nūka bə-ḥəbanhə* ‘he begat sons’ (lit. ‘he begat his sons’) (12:16). The special treatment of familial terms in connection with possession is well known from elsewhere, for example, from Italian, where one typically says, e.g., *la mia faccia* ‘my face’, *la mia vicina* ‘my neighbor’, but *mia mamma* ‘my mother’. The difference in the case of Mehri is that we are dealing not with a possessive phrase of the type ‘my mother’, ‘your brother’, but rather with a pseudo-verbal ‘have’ construction.

13.3.1.2. *Physical and Environmental Conditions*

The suffixed forms of the preposition *k-* are also used in a variety of expressions relating to physical or environmental conditions. From the former category, we find:

- šin ḥəbūr* ‘we’re cold’ (lit. ‘cold is with us’) (35:4)
šəh ḥark ‘he was hot’ (lit. ‘heat is with him’) (32:2)

subjunctive (following *lāzəm*; see §12.5.10), I reconsidered the passage in 75:11. If *tākā* here is an independent subjunctive, then the phrase should be translated ‘you should have’ or simply ‘have!’ (i.e., a third-person imperative).

Many more examples fall into the category of environmental conditions. This type of expression is rather more unusual cross-linguistically. For example, the expression ‘it is raining’ will vary depending on context; specifically, its expression depends on who is experiencing the rain. If relating one’s own experience, one would say *šay mawsē* ‘it’s raining (for me)’ (e.g., 62:1). But if relating a story in the third person plural, one would say *šihəm mawsē* ‘it’s raining (for them)’ (e.g., 35:1). Following are several other examples to illustrate this use of *k-*:

- šay aǧəllēt* ‘it was misty’ (lit. ‘with me was mist’) (47:4)
šay mawsē wə-ḥəbūr ‘it was raining and I was cold’ (lit. ‘with me were rain and cold’) (53:6)
šin ḥārīt ‘there was a moon’ (81:1)
šay əktīw ‘it was dark’ (91:16)
šəh awakt ‘he was hot (at night)’ (91:19)
šisən ariḥ ‘there is a hot wind’ (27:22)
šay aḱāšəm ‘it’s cool’ (94:35)
šəh aǧəllēt w-amawsē ‘it was misty and rainy’ (98:1)
šin amawsē ‘it’s been rainy’ (98:3)
šin ḥəbūr u mawsē ‘we’re cold and it’s raining’ (35:4)

It should be mentioned that there are sometimes other ways to express environmental conditions. For example, there is a G-Stem verb from the root *lsw* ‘rain’, the same root of the word *mawsē* ‘rain’. This verb is used twice in the texts, both times impersonally in the feminine singular, *əwsūt* ‘it rained’ (10:16; 96:7).⁵ We also find twice the verb *šərḥawm* ‘it rained’, both times in the 3mp form (30:14; 44:14). However, in Johnstone’s texts, the constructions with *k-* are more common than the verbs.

These expressions of condition, like the ‘have’ construction discussed above (§13.3.1), lack any explicit reference to tense, which must be gathered from the context. So, just as *šəh ḱawt* can mean ‘he has food’ or ‘he had food’, likewise *šəh ḥarḱ* can mean ‘he is hot’ or ‘he was hot’.

⁵ Other verbs denoting environmental phenomena are attested impersonally in the 3fs form, namely *həddūt* ‘it thundered’ (10:16) and *bərḱawt* ‘it was lightning’ (10:16).

13.3.2. Other Prepositions

The preposition *b-* can be used to express certain kinds of inalienable possession, in particular those involving parts of the body or bodily conditions (e.g., ‘have hair’, ‘have milk’), states of mind (e.g., ‘have patience’), or parts of plants (e.g., ‘have leaves’). Literally, *b-* is being used in these cases like English ‘on’ or ‘in’ (see §8.2), but in translation the verb ‘have’ usually works best. Following are some examples:

bəh šəf mēkən ‘he had a lot of hair’ (lit. ‘on him (was) a lot of hair’) (9:8)

ḏōmāh əl bəh fēhəl lā ‘this (man) has no penis’ (24:36)

kūsən hərəm ḏə-bəh hful ‘we found a tree that had ripe figs’ (25:3)

hārawn bīsən šəxōf ‘the goats have milk’ (lit. ‘in them (is) milk’) (31:10)

šəllōt gōdēl ḏə-bəh šīwōt ‘she took a burning stick’ (lit. ‘a stick on which (was) fire’) (36:8)

əl bay kətfōf lā ‘I don’t have wings’ (56:8)

bəh kōni troh ‘it had two horns’ (88:7)

aḡayg ḏōmāh əl bəh hāšmēt lā ‘this man has no respect (for others)’ (91:14)

In this same category, we can place the idiom *bay ḡassi* ‘I was conscious’ (40:26), literally ‘in me (was) consciousness’, and possibly also the idiom *būk hēšən* ‘what’s (the matter) with you?’ (48:5; 80:7).

The preposition *h-* ‘to, for’ (§8.8) is translated by ‘have’ in a few places in the texts. In each case, *h-* really means ‘for’, but ‘have’ or ‘get’ makes for a smoother translation. The relevant passages are:

šərōmāh əl hūk šī-lā ‘now you have (or: get) nothing’ (32:22; 36:11)

hām həšbəh šəh, həh malyōn karš ‘if he is alive in the morning, he shall have (or: get) a million dollars’ (lit. ‘for him (is) a million dollars’) (36:2)

Finally, in conjunction with *’ād* ‘still’, *l-* can be used to express ‘have’, with regards to amount of time remaining. The two attested examples of this are:

ādəh līsən faḡh ḏə-warx ‘they still had half a month (left)’ (30:9)

’ādəh lūk məsayr šīləṭ yūm ‘you still have a journey of three days’ (37:16)

13.4. Conditionals

There are three conditional particles in Mehri: *hām*, *əḏə*, and *lū*. These correspond in use superficially to Arabic *ʾin*, *ʾiḏa*, and *law*, in that the first two normally indicate real conditionals, while the third normally indicates an unreal conditional. However, the difference in usage between *hām* and *əḏə* does not parallel that of Arabic *ʾin* and *ʾiḏa*. Each of these particles will be discussed in turn.

13.4.1. *hām*

Hām is the particle normally used to introduce a real conditional. It is by far the most common Mehri word for ‘if’, occurring over 170 times in Johnstone’s texts. If *hām* introduces a verbal clause, the verb or verbs in this clause are nearly always in the perfect; there are about a dozen exceptions, which are discussed below. If the apodosis of a conditional *hām*-clause is a verbal clause (which it is in all but about eight cases), then the verb in the apodosis can be an imperfect (most commonly), a participle, an imperative, or (rarely) a subjunctive. The *hām*-clause can precede or follow the main clause, and in a few cases it is even found embedded within the main clause. Some examples of conditionals with *hām* are:

hām rəʒawt, əxtyəna tik ‘if she agrees, we will circumcize you’ (8:2)
hām səyərək, l-ād rəddōna līn əlā ‘if you go, you’ll never come back to us again’ (20:72)

fənōhən ... hām tāt gēlāw, yəsyūr hāl əmsənyūtən ‘formerly ... if someone had a fever, he would go to soothsayers’ (25:17)

hām šīsən ariḥ, tšābərən rība yūm ‘if there is a hot wind, they can do without (water) for four days’ (27:22)

hām hārawn nūka ʾār bə-ḥiṭār, w-əl nūka b-ʾārōḏ əlā, səḥayt ḥiṭār ‘if the goats bear only female kids, and they bear no male kids, slaughter a female kid’ (30:12)

hām əl səḥāṭən həh lā, yənəkdam līn hābū ‘if we don’t slaughter for him, people will criticize us’ (31:11)

hām həšbəḥ šəḥ, həh məlyōn kərš ‘if he is alive in the morning, he shall have (or: get) a million dollars’ (lit. ‘for him (is) a million dollars’) (36:2)

šīwōt, hām səh rēḥək, tənūfa ‘fire, if it’s far away, is useful’ (36:28)

yəktəlīt bay aḳəbōyəl, hām fəlatk wə-ḳalak tik ‘the tribes will talk about me, if I run away and leave you’ (83:2)

hām əl nakak tīk şərōmāh lā, əl təšēzi lā ‘if I don’t come to you right away, don’t worry about me’ (94:17)

hām hādagəš təh wə-hēt dənyēt, yəmut ‘if you suckle him and you are pregnant, he will die’ (101:18)

There are seven cases in which *hām* is directly followed by an imperfect, instead of by a perfect, for no apparent reason.⁶ Likewise, there are five cases in which *hām* is followed by a participle.⁷ When the *hām*-clause has an imperfect, the apodosis can have an imperative, non-verbal clause, imperfect, or subjunctive. When the *hām*-clause has a participle, the apodosis usually has a participle or, in one case (37:23), an imperative. Some of the relevant passages are:

hām ʔetēm wəzyēma tay tēti əlā, şayti ‘if you won’t give me my wife, kill me!’ (37:23)

hō šəmōna lūk hām hēt məhawf tay həzyé h-aşayrəb ‘I will sell it to you if you pay me my goats in autumn’ (39:4)

hām əl hēt sīrōna lā, sīrita təwōli həddōd ‘if you won’t go, I’ll go to a blacksmith’ (49:5)

hām təhāmay, kəfēd līn əw-boh ‘if you hear me, come down to us here’ (64:29)

hām təgətōri kə-gənnawnise tāšōs lā ‘if she is speaking with her jinns, she won’t get up’ (65:11)

hām təhaməy, hō arībēk ‘if you can hear me, I am your friend’ (76:12)

As already noted in §7.3, if *hōm*, followed by a direct object, occurs in the protasis of a conditional sentence, and the dependent verb should be repeated in the apodosis, the verb is used only once, in the subjunctive. Examples of this are:

hām təhamən, nəslēl ‘if you want us to (move), we’ll move’ (30:3)

hām ʔār təhamki, l-āmərō ‘if you want us to (sing), we’ll both sing’ (52:6)

Besides this special construction with *hōm*, and not counting a subjunctive that makes up a negative imperative (see the example from

⁶ These are found in 21:12, 64:29, 65:7, 65:11, 75:3, 76:12, and 92:2.

⁷ These are found in 34:9, 37:23, 39:4, 49:5, and 56:11.

94:17, above), there are just six other cases in which we find a subjunctive in the apodosis of a conditional sentence. Three of these have a real subjunctive meaning, best translated with English ‘should’:

hībō l-āmōl hām hāmərək lay ‘what should I do if you order me?’
(20:23)

hām ʾəḥād yəḡōrəb šī, yədawyəḥ ‘if anyone knows something, he should cure him’ (65:7)

hām əl kəsk təh lā, hībō l-āmōl ‘if I don’t find him, what should I do?’ (96:2)

In two others, a subjunctive is used as part of an oath or promise:

hām ʃərūt wəla rəddūt lay, l-əwbads ‘if she stops or comes back at me, I should shoot her’ (54:18) (but audio clearly has imperfect *ələbdəs* ‘I will shoot her’)⁸

hām nəkōt ḡəllət ... əl-ḥaḏḥəb nəḥər ḏōrə ‘if a mist comes ... I will fill a wadi with blood’ (99:34)

And in the sixth additional case of a subjunctive in the apodosis, the only explanation is that the context is poetry. In fact, this passage also contains the only example in which a subjunctive occurs in the protasis, following *hām*.

hām hayš əl-kəlēt l-ənkēs awrēk ‘if I were to talk to you, I would destroy the papers’ (21:11)

Finally, it should be pointed out that there are a few examples where a conditional particle is missing. Each of these are before a form of the verb *ḥōm*, and each of these are in text 86 (lines 1, 2, 6), which lists conditionals out of context. There are nearly thirty examples where we do find the expected *hām* before a form of *ḥōm* (e.g., 4:10; 100:1). These examples from text 86 may in their original contexts be parts of contrasting conditionals, in which case the lack of a conditional particle is expected (see the end of the next section).

⁸ It is impossible to know whether the transcription *l-əwbads* (1cs subjunctive) is an error, or whether the reader on the audio mistakenly read *ələbdəs* (1cs imperfect).

13.4.2. *əðə*

The particle *əðə* (var. *əð*), presumably a borrowing of Arabic *ʾiḏa*, occurs eleven times in Johnstone's texts. Like *hām*, *əðə* normally indicates real conditions. However, the evidence suggests that *əðə* is used only to indicate two contrasting conditionals. As with *hām*, if *əðə* precedes a verbal clause, the verb will be in the perfect. Following are all the occurrences of *əðə* in the texts:

əð hah šāmūn hō ʔnkōna tīkəm ... w-əð hah xəzū, šaxbərəh mən aḳašdəh 'if he agrees, I will come to you ... but if he refuses, ask him about his intentions' (22:17-18)

əð hah ḳaybəl, hah hīs tīkəm ... w-əð hah lūtəḡ ʔtēt u ḥāḡərīt, hah ḡayḡfērə 'if he accepts, he is (a dog) like you ... but if he kills the woman and the slave, he is a brave man' (22:93-94)

əðə hē bəh lə-hīs aḡəyōḡ, ʔtēm təšhayt; w-əðə hē əl bəh fēḥəl lā, hē yəšhōt 'if he is like (other) men, you shall be killed; but if he has no penis, he shall be killed' (24:39)

əðə hē səḥāṯ ḥəybəth, hē yəkūn ḥaywəl. w-əðə hē əl səḥāṯ ḥəybəth lā, hō ʔkūn ḳəḥbēt 'if he slaughtered his camel, then he is crazy; if he didn't kill his camel, then I am a whore' (55:9)

əðə hē səyūr šay, hē śanyōna təh 'if he had been (lit. gone) with me (sexually), he would have seen it' (55:10)

əðə sē ḳəwṭūt layš, śəlēli ḳəmkēməš mən ḡār ḥəruhš ... wə-sē ḡəḥədatš əl təḥayrək ḳəmkēməš lā 'if she tells you, lift your headcloth off your head ... but (if) she denies you (any knowledge), don't touch your headcloth' (94:42-43)

In this last example, the expected *əðə* is missing from the second conditional. Perhaps this is a mistake or typographical error (no audio was available). Regardless, the first *əðə* still occurs in a context in which there are two contrasting conditionals.

Interestingly, when there are two contrasting conditionals, both of which have the verb *ḥōm* in the protasis, then the conditional particle is omitted. There are four sets of examples of this in the texts. In all of the examples, the apodosis has either a form of the imperative *əntəḳōl* 'choose!' or a form of the exclamation *b-arāyək* 'as you wish! go ahead!'. Two of the examples are:

ṣərōmāh təḥaym thaḥnəṭəm təh, b-araykəm; wə-təḥaym təkəlām təh, b-araykəm ‘now if you want to make him break his oath, go ahead; if you want to leave him be, go ahead!’ (31:10)
təḥōm təxōlī, əntəkōl. wə-təḥōm tšxawwəl, əntəkōl ‘if you want to divorce, choose (to do so); if you want to stay, choose (to do so)’ (32:25)

As mentioned at the end of the last section (§13.4.1), it is possible that the conditionals in 86:1, 86:2, and 86:6 are contrasting conditionals taken out of context, since we find *ḥōm* in the protasis of these phrases, with no preceding conditional particle.

13.4.3. *lū*

The particle *lū* introduces an unreal conditional. As with *hām* and *əḏə*, if *lū* is followed by a verbal clause, the verb will normally appear in the perfect. If the apodosis contains a verb, that verb will be in the conditional tense (§7.1.4). In fact, this is the only environment in which the conditional tense occurs. The examples found in Johnstone’s texts are:

wə-lū əl hē ḥaywəl lā, əl yəṣḥayṭən ḥəybəth lā ‘and if he were not crazy, he would not have slaughtered his camel’ (55:7)
lū ṣəbūrən, axayr hīn ‘if we had had some patience, it would have been better for us’ (61:7)
lū əl bər lūtəḡ ərbōt mənīn lā, əl nəwtēḡən təh lā ‘if he had not killed four of us, we would not have killed him’ (83:7)
lū hō kōrək aḳawt ... wə-nakak bāwməh wə-matk, hībō yāmērən ḥābū? ‘āmyēra: ‘gayḡ bəxayl wə-kawb!’ ‘if I had hidden the food ... and had come here and died, what would the people say? They would say: A mean man and a dog!’ (98:12)

This last example is interesting, because besides the expected conditional form (*yāmērən*), we find the participle ‘āmyēra. Though technically not part of the apodosis, it could be considered the equivalent.

In just one place in the texts, *lū* introduces an unreal non-past conditional and is followed by an imperfect. The apodosis still contains a conditional tense, though it is a compound tense made up of a conditional form of *wīka* ‘be(come)’ plus an imperfect:

lū əmnēdəm yəḥawsəb ləhān nəkōna təh b-amstaḳbələh, l-ʾəḥād yāḳān yəškūf lā ‘if a person were to take account of all that will come in the future, nobody would sleep’ (98:10)

In 98:11, this same passage is repeated, though with the addition of the participle *ḏ-* before the final verb (*ḏ-yəškūf*). We also find in 98:11 the phrase *lū wadaš lā* ‘don’t you know?’ It seems likely that *lū* here is a typographical error for the basic negative element *əl*. The particle *lū* occurs in both 98:10 and 98:12, so it is easy to see how a typographical error could have crept in to 98:11. Unfortunately, I found no audio for this passage.

13.4.4. *tē wə-lū*

The phrase *tē wə-lū* (vars. *tā wə-lū, ta wə-lū*) means ‘even if’. It occurs just ten times in the texts. Of the seven times it is followed by a verbal clause, six times the verb is in the perfect; in three of these six cases the perfect is preceded by the verbal particle *ḏ-* (§7.1.10.2). The one time that *tē wə-lū* is followed by an imperfect (37:19) is in an explicitly future context. Some examples of *tē wə-lū* are:

ʾabdan əl ərdūd lā, tē wə-lū əmūt ‘I shall never go back, even if I should die’ (37:19)

tā wə-lū fōnəḥ farəʾ, ḏ-yəḥəṣawbəlḥ nōḏəl, ta wə-lū əl hē nōḏəl lā ‘even if he was brave before, he turns into a coward, even if he wasn’t a coward (before)’ (43:2)

əl nḥā ʾāmyēla bəḥ šī-lā, tā wə-lū ḏə-rīkəb ḏār təbərayn ‘we shall not do anything to him, even if he was riding a hyena’ (82:3)

kāl ʾəḥād yəḥātūm hāl xašməḥ, tē wə-lū ḏ-əwtūḡ ḥaybəḥ wə-ḥəbrēḥ ‘everyone spends the night with his enemy, even if he has killed his father and his son’ (104:39)

In one case, *wə-lū* (without *tē*) is used on its own as an exclamation ‘even so!’ (89:33).

13.5. Subordination

13.5.1. Complement Clauses

The term ‘complement clause’ is fairly broad and covers a variety of sentence types. For the present purposes, we will distinguish three

types of complement clauses, illustrated by the following English sentences:

- (a1) I want to speak Mehri.
- (a2) I want you to speak Mehri.
- (b) I know (that) you speak Mehri.

Types (a1) and (a2), containing an infinitive in English, correspond in Mehri to constructions involving a dependent subjunctive verb, as in the following examples:

- yəhōm yəṭāf layš* ‘he wants to visit you’ (38:16)
əl əḡōrəb l-əḡətayr ʾārəbayyət əlā ‘I didn’t know how to speak Arabic’ (34:18)
ḥamk təśnē tēṭi ‘I want you to see my wife’ (22:41)
ṭələbk tīk təklēt lay ‘I ask you to tell me’ (20:38)
šəwēdək tīn tāzēmən xəṭawrkīyən ‘you promised to give us our sticks’ (91:30)

These types have been treated already in §7.1.3 and §7.3. Sometimes these subjunctive constructions can be translated with an English type (b) complement clause, instead of with an infinitive. For example, the last two sentences above could be translated ‘I ask that you tell me’ and ‘you promised us (that) you would give us our sticks’. And, in fact, there are a few places where a subjunctive construction is best translated, or can *only* be translated, with an English type (b) complement clause. Such cases nearly always involve verbs of thinking, like (ḏ-) *ʾayməl* ‘think’,⁹ *həḡūs* ‘think’, *həṭhūm* ‘think, suspect’, *šəhēwəb* ‘think, imagine’, and *šəṣdūk* ‘believe’. One can sometimes translate with an infinitive, though usually this is awkward. Some examples are:

- ḏə-ʾəmələk tay l-ākā dənyēt* ‘I think I might be pregnant’ (or: ‘I think myself to be pregnant’) (101:17)
ʾəmələk tīsən təhəḡyāḡən ‘I think (that) they will give birth’ (28:18)
əl nəhəḡsəh yəsyēr lā ‘we didn’t think he would go’ (89:35)

⁹ As noted in §7.1.10.2, the verb *ʾayməl* ‘make, do’ sometimes has the meaning ‘think, believe, be of the opinion’ (cf. 28:2; 91:8), but when used in the perfect with prefixed ḏ-, it seems to always have this meaning. Conversely, when it means ‘think’, it usually has the prefix ḏ-.

hō šəşdəkk əlā yāḳā xəlūs ‘I don’t believe he would have gotten lost’ (23:3)

aḡayg šəhēwəb tətəh tāḳā bər sīrūt mən ḡār ḥəməh ‘the man thought his wife would have already left the water’ (94:20)

həthəmk təh yāḳā mən xəšəmyən ‘I suspect (that) he is one of our enemies’ (or: ‘I suspect him to be...’) (94:42)

However, on occasion these verbs of thinking can also be followed by a perfect, rather than a subjunctive, as will be discussed in §13.5.1.1.

Similarly, the verb *yəş* ‘be afraid’ is normally followed by a subjunctive, though this construction can only be translated with an English type (b) complement clause. However, the verb *yəş* uses the preposition *mən* before the subordinate clause (see §7.1.3 for other such verbs). As noted in §8.13, *yəş* normally takes *mən* before an object (e.g., 47:5; 54:17). Examples are:

yəşşək mən ʾəḥād yāyēnəh ‘I am afraid (that) someone will give him the evil eye’ (22:3)

yəşşək tik mən təḥtəwūl ‘I am afraid (that) you will go crazy’ (22:26)

ḡ-yəşşək mən yəzləl līsən kawb yəmə ‘I am afraid (that) a wolf may attack them today’ (26:9)

ḡə-yəşşək tis mən təḥəflət mən ḡayri ‘I am afraid (that) she may run away from me’ (94:16)

Note that *yəş* is often, but not always, followed by an anticipatory pronominal direct object, as in 22:26 and 94:16, above. It is strange that *yəş* in this case takes a direct object, since when not in a complement construction, a pronominal object of *yəş* requires *mən* (e.g., 54:17). For more on *yəş* (*mən*), see also the next section and §13.2.3.

13.5.1.1. Complementizer ḡ-

Complement clause type (b) involves, in English, an optional complementizer ‘that’. In Mehri, the particle ḡ- serves as an optional complementizer, but it is not clear if there are rigid rules governing its use. The following verbs are attested only with the complementizer ḡ-: *ʾayləm* ‘learn, know’,¹⁰ *ḥətūm* ‘be sure’, *šəkrūr* ‘confess’, *šəḥəd* ‘witness’, and *šəşfū* ‘find out’. However, it must be stressed that the evidence is

¹⁰ This G-Stem verb, found only once in Johnstone’s texts, is probably an Arabism, as I have suggested above (§11, n. 2; see also §14).

so slight (essentially just one example per verb in the texts) that it cannot be taken as proof that these verbs must be followed by the complementizer *ǝ*-. Some of these examples are:

kēf ‘*ēmāk ǝǝ-hē ǝǝyrāh tōmār* ‘how did you learn that it had dates on it?’ (23:15)

hō ǝǝ-ḥātāmk ǝǝ-hē ḡayg ǝǝ-rikāb ǝǝr tǝbārāyn ‘I thought that it was a man who was riding on a hyena’ (82:2)¹¹

ǝṣḡārārk bǝ-ḥānōfi ǝǝ-hō ǝǝlāmk ‘I confess of myself that I have acted unjustly’ (19:24)

tǝṣḡīd ǝǝ-hē hārōs bǝ-fālāna ... tǝṣḡīd ǝǝ-hē kǝfaylās awkālāy... ‘do you bear witness that he has married so-and-so? ... Do you bear witness that he, her guardian, has entrusted me...?’ (100:4-5)

ṣǝṣfū amkwayrās ǝǝ-sē, amkǝwrātāh, ṣǝṣḡawt ‘he found out that she, his beloved, was engaged’ (75:2)

The following verbs are never attested with the complementizer *ǝ*-.: *dǝxāl* ‘promise’, *ḡǝzūm* ‘swear’, *ḥālūm* ‘dream’, *ḥōrām* ‘swear’, and *ḥās* ‘feel’. Again, the evidence is so slim (one to three examples per verb in the texts) that more data are needed to prove that these verbs cannot ever be followed by the complementizer *ǝ*-. Some of these examples are:

ḥēmāk yǝllō xǝznēt ǝ-ḥaybi nxāli abātk ‘I dreamt last night (that) my father’s treasure was under your house’ (19:17)

dǝxlōtān l-ād ǝnnūka nǝxǝlka zōyād ‘we promise (that) we will never come to your palm trees again’ (37:5)¹²

ḥǝssāk tǝwyay bǝ-ḥāllay ‘I felt (that) they came to me in the night’ (40:22)

hē ḥōrām ǝl yǝdōbāh ‘he swore (that) he would not collect honey’ (77:8)

hēm ḡǝzawm ǝl izayt bāh kǝṣayyāt ‘they swore (that) they would not take any compensation for it’ (89:5)

¹¹ The printed text has *aḡayg* here (with the definite article *a*-), but this does not fit with the following relative clause. Indeed, the audio confirms indefinite *ḡayg*.

¹² We might expect *dǝxāl* ‘promise’ to take a following subjunctive, as does *ṣǝwēd* ‘promise’ in 32:5 (cited in §7.1.3) and 91:30 (cited in §13.5.1). Perhaps *dǝxāl* is followed by the imperfect here (and in 68:16) because of the particles *l-ād ... zōyād*?

If we compare those passages above in which a complementizer is used and those passages in which it is not, we notice that the complementizer *ǝ-* is always followed by an independent pronoun, in all but one case (19:24) a third person pronoun. In the examples in which *ǝ-* is absent, there is never an independent pronoun beginning the complement clause. If we are to derive a rule from this, are we to say that *ǝ-* occurs because of the following third person pronoun, or that the pronoun is used because of the complementizer *ǝ-*?

A handful of verbs are attested both with and without a following complementizer. Among these verbs are: *ʾāmōr* 'say', *ǧārūb* 'know', and *hānkūr* 'realize, think'. For *ǧārūb* and *hānkūr*, the data follow a similar pattern to what was already observed: the complementizer is normally used when the complement clause begins with a third person independent pronoun, but it is normally absent if the subject of the complement clause is a first or second person pronoun, or if no pronoun is present. Some examples of *ǧārūb* and *hānkūr* with the complementizer are:

ǧārawb ʾāskēr ǝǝ-hē ʾāwēr baydi 'the soldiers knew that the blind man was a liar' (46:20)

ǧārōb ǝǝ-hē zārūk ʾār azēmāl 'he knew that he had only stabbed the camel-gear' (76:12)

ǧārawb ǝǝ-hē, mət tāt yəš, yəšōni kāl-šīan fənwīh 'they knew that, when someone is afraid, he might see anything in front of him' (95:11)

hānkark ǝǝ-hē ʾəḥād ǝǝ-mōt ənhōr ǝəkməh 'I realized that it was someone who had died that day' (54:13)

Some examples of *ǧārūb* and *hānkūr* without the complementizer are:

hō əǧōrəb həmbərawtən yəbadyəm lā 'I know (that) the boys don't lie' (74:20)

hē ǝǝ-ǧārōb əl šīhəm əl šīwōt w-əl moh w-əl ǧērōb 'he knew (that) they had neither fire, nor water, nor wood' (76:11)

ǝǝ-ǧārəbk təh təftarhən bə-fəndēl 'I knew (that) he was happy about sweet potatoes' (89:35)

hō ʾār bər hānkark məhawf tay ʾār mən ǧār ʾas 'I think (that) you will pay me only after difficulty' (39:13)

In the examples from 74:20, 76:11, and 89:35, in which the subordinate clauses all have third person subjects, we might wonder why we do not find *ǝ-* plus a third person pronoun. It seems that *ǝ-* plus a third person pronoun is used most often when the subordinate clause is non-verbal (as in 46:20 above), when the subordinate clause contains a relative clause (as in 54:13 above), or when the subordinate clause has an embedded subordinate clause (as in 95:11 above). But more examples are needed to prove that any of these conditions is relevant.

Other questions still remain. For example, when the complementizer *ǝ-* is used, why is it that sometimes the verb in the main clause has a direct object anticipating the subject of the subordinate clause, but sometimes does not? Compare the following:

- ǝrǝbk tǝh ǝǝ-hah sǝdayki* 'I knew that he was my friend' (lit. 'I knew him that...') (18:17)
tǝt ǝ-ǝǝyǝ ǝarǝǝts ǝǝ-sǝ sadkǝt 'the man's wife knew that she was a friend' (94:46)
ǝrǝb ǝǝyǝ ǝǝ-hǝ bǝrkǝh ǝǝyǝr 'the man knew that in it there was poison' (24:48)
ǝarawb ǝǝkǝr ǝǝ-hǝ ǝǝwǝr baydi 'the soldiers knew that the blind man was a liar' (46:20)

It seems that an anticipatory direct object is used when the complementizer *ǝ-* immediately follows the verb (as in 18:17 and 94:46), but if the main verb is followed by a nominal subject (as in 24:48 and 46:20), then no direct object is used. More examples are needed to test this rule.

Also when the complementizer is absent, and when the subordinate clause begins with a first or second person pronoun, the preceding verb sometimes has a redundant direct object. Compare the following:

- ǝarǝbǝk hǝt bǝyǝr* 'I know that you are a liar' (lit. 'I know you, you are a liar') (99:26)
ǝǝfk tǝǝrǝb hǝ ǝǝtǝwǝ ǝǝawfi 'you probably know that I have a pain in my chest' (101:9)

Why does the verb in 99:26 have a suffix, but not in 101:9? The pronoun immediately follows the verb in both cases. Perhaps an object suffix is simply optional, or perhaps it has to do with first vs. second person pronouns. More data are needed.

The verbs of thinking discussed above (§13.5.1) normally take a subjunctive if the subordinate clause has a present, future, or past conditional meaning. But if the subordinate clause is a simple past tense, then we find either a simple perfect or a non-verbal clause. In these cases, we sometimes find the complementizer *ǝ-*, the appearance of which seems roughly to follow the rules for *ǵarūb* ‘know’, outlined above. That is, we get *ǝ-* before a third person pronoun. Following are some examples:

- amalak tǝh bǝr ǵahēm* ‘I think (that) he has already gone’ (94:42)
hābū šǝṣḏīk ǝǝ-hē šērǝk ṣǝḏk ‘the people believed that it was a real
šērǝk’ (41:9)
yǝhōǵǝs mǝǵfēz ǝǝ-ḳawt ‘he thought (that) it was a package of food’
 (91:20)
ǝhǵsǝš mǝn aṣǝḏḳǝš hǝzǝrš ǝlay ‘I thought (that) you were genuinely
 persuading me’ (94:8)

Now whereas we can postulate rules that predict the use of the complementizer *ǝ-* with *ǵarūb* and *hǝnkūr*, and probably also for the verbs of thinking, the verb *’āmōr* ‘say’ is more problematic, since no clear rules govern the use of a following complementizer. All we can say is that it is more often absent than present. Compare the following:

- mōn ’āmōr hūk ǝ-hō ’ōmǝr* ‘who told you that I sing?’ (52:9)
’āmawr hē bǝ-xayr ‘they said (that) he is well’ (57:6)
’āmawr yǝstōm kāl-šīǝn ‘they said (that) he buys everything’ (74:11)
yāmǝrǝm ǝǝ-sǝwēhǝr tāmōlǝn tǝbǝrēn xǝtōwǝm ‘they say that witches
 put rings on hyenas’ (81:2)
’āmawr hǝǵūm ǝl-sēkǝn ǝǝ-hē sǝrīn ‘they say (that) it attacked the
 community that is behind us’ (102:4)

In a few rare cases, involving the verbs *šǝnǝūr* ‘vow, promise’ and *yǝṣ* (*mǝn*) ‘be afraid’ we find a complementizer *ǝ-* used in conjunction with a subjunctive, as in:

- šǝnǝǝrk ǝǝ-ǝl-ḳǝlāk tǝhǝṣṣǝm mǝn hāl tǝhōm* ‘I promise that I will let
 you spend the day wherever you want’ (33:3)
šǝnǝǝrk ǝǝ-ǝl-hǝwfǝk ‘I vow that I will pay you’ (39:16)
yǝṣṣǝk mǝn aḳǝnyawn ǝ-yǝǵšǝbǝm tay tǝh ‘I am afraid that the children
 will take it away from me’ (37:22)

An example of *šəndūr* followed by a subjunctive without the complementizer can be seen in 3:3. Examples of *yəš* followed by a subjunctive without the complementizer can be found in §13.5.1; see also §13.2.3, on the use of *yəš* with the particle *m-ʔād*.

13.5.1.2. Complementizer *ǝ-* vs. Circumstantial or Relative *ǝ-*

In §7.1.10.1 and §7.1.10.2 we saw a number of examples of the verbs *hūma* ‘hear’, *kūsa* ‘find’, and *šīni* ‘see’ followed by a circumstantial-marking *ǝ-*. A representative example is:

ʔəsənihəm ǝ-yəǵətəryəm ‘I saw them speaking’ (40:24)

Could this not be a complement clause, literally meaning ‘I saw (them) that they were speaking’? Perhaps, but we saw in §13.5.1.1 that the complementizer *ǝ-* is normally followed by a third person pronoun (or, with *ʔāmōr*, by a pronoun or noun). Other examples with these verbs show more clearly that *ǝ-* in such passages is not a complementizer, for example:

kəsk tīs bərk dəhlīl bər ǝ-ʔātəmēt ‘I found it in a cave already bandaged up (lit. having been bandaged)’ (81:3)

In this passage, if *ǝ-* were a complementizer, rather than a marker of a circumstantial verb, we would expect it to occur earlier in the phrase, or at least before *bər*. But it is safe to say that the various uses of the particle *ǝ-* (relative, complementizing, and circumstantial) are not always totally distinct.

The verbs *hūma* ‘hear’ and *šīni* ‘see’ regularly take a circumstantial phrase (in which a verb may or may not have the marker *ǝ-*) in contexts where English has a complement clause. Following are some examples, where a circumstantial phrase in Mehri is best translated with a complement clause in English:

məkōn tāt hamak hābū kāl ǝ-nūka ‘a certain place I heard (that) everyone came to’ (53:1)

hamam bəh məhaḳbəl lihəm ‘they heard (that) he was coming to them’ (lit. ‘they heard about him coming to them’) (32:6)

šinək tīn ǝ-gayan ‘you saw (that) we were hungry’ (73:11)

əsōni ʔāfōr ʔawla mən arawrəm ‘I see (that) a cloud has come up from the sea’ (96:7)

Nevertheless, there are rare examples with a complementizer *ǝ*-, followed by a third person pronoun:

hamak ǝǝ-hēm tǝgēr ǝǝ-bīs ǝǝlawm ḥābū ‘I heard that the merchants who are in it treat the people unjustly’ (66:2)

The verb *hǝgūs* ‘think’ is also sometimes followed by a circumstantial, in place of a subjunctive or complement clause. A circumstantial is not always easily distinguished from a complement clause, however. Two such examples are:

yǝhūgǝs aǝǝggēn ǝǝ-šǝwkūf ‘he thought that the boy was sleeping’ (or: ‘he thought the boy (to be) asleep’) (76:12)

ǝhǝgsǝh ǝǝ-rikǝb ǝǝr tǝbǝrayn ‘I thought that he was riding on a hyena’ (or: ‘I thought him (to be) riding...’) (82:1)

13.5.2. Purpose Clauses

Purpose clauses in Mehri can be either marked or unmarked, though unmarked are more common. An unmarked purpose clause simply includes a subjunctive verb. Some examples are:

wǝzǝmīh moh yǝttǝk ‘he gave him water to drink’ (13:9)

ǝǝrtǝwōg būk tǝtēyǝn tīk ‘they made a plot against you to eat you’ (15:17)

kāl tǝyǝt tǝntǝkōl ḡayg tǝšǝfkǝh ‘each one must choose a man to marry’ (15:21)

nkē ǝw-boh l-ǝrǝshank ‘come here so I can tie you up’ (24:26)

sǝyūr yǝśné ǝšfōri ‘he went to look at the pots’ (36:24)

ḥōm l-ǝrfǝ ǝǝawf ǝl-śnē ‘I wanted to climb up to see’ (53:3)

w-ǝnkayn bǝ-fǝndēl ǝntōm fǝndēl ‘and he brought us sweet potatoes, so we could taste sweet potatoes’ (89:11)

ǝzēmi ǝšayǝat l-ǝdǝfēns mǝn ǝkǝwm ‘give me the jewelry so I can hide it from the raiding party’ (99:44)¹³

¹³ Stroomer translates *l-ǝdǝfēns* as ‘to pay’, as if from the verb *dūfa* ‘pay’. Were this correct, there would be no way to explain the *n* in the form, and the following preposition *mǝn* would be unexpected. The form must be from the verb *dǝfūn* ‘bury’, a verb used again in 99:48. A form of the verb *dūfa* ‘pay’ does show up in 99:59.

A purpose clause can also be introduced by *tē* (cf. Arabic *hattā*), which is followed by a subjunctive verb in a non-past context or a perfect verb in a past tense context. Examples are:

əl hah ġəggēt əlā tē tāšōš ləh ‘he is not a girl so that you should be afraid for him’ (22:4)

ʾāmyēla həh wōrəm tē nəmnēh ‘we will make a plan to catch him’ (24:19)

rədyōni aḳaydōr əð-bərkiḥəm ašxōf tē yəṭəbīr ‘we will pelt the pots that the milk is in, so that they break’ (35:10)

šəbəri lay tē l-ḥaftək abərawḳa əlyōməh ‘give me time to take away these veils’ (42:31)

əl bay ḳətfōf lā tē l-əfrēr ‘I don’t have wings to fly (with)’ (56:8)

əl hō ḥəgawrək lā, tē l-ədbēh hūk ‘I am not your slave to collect honey for you’ (77:4)

həwrōd ḥəzhe tē hərwū ‘he took his goats to the water to give them drink’ (61:6)

The particle *l-agərē* (ð-), which before a noun means ‘for the sake of, on behalf of’ (see §8.21), can also introduce a purpose clause. There is no clear difference between *l-agərē* (ð-) and *tē* in this function. As expected, the verb of the purpose clause will be in the subjunctive. There are just nine such examples with *l-agərē* (ð-) in the texts, including:

nəhōm nətbēr abḳārhe tē nəḳlēh fəḳayr l-agərē l-ʾād yəhērəs lā ‘we should break (the bones of) his cows to leave him poor, so that he will never marry’ (6:5)

səḥayṭ ḥiṭār l-agərē ḥābū yəšadərəkəm mən ḡār agwē ‘slaughter a female kid, so that the people can survive the famine’ (30:12)

ftēhī xaš l-agərē ḡə-l-ākēb ‘open your mouth so that I can go in’ (42:27)

bəʿēli həbēr wə-ḥārəwn yəhabyəm lə-bəʿēli əbḳār l-agərē ḡ-yəšxayf ‘the camel- and goat-herds come to the cowherds to drink milk’ (58:4)

hē əl šəh šī-lā l-agərē ḡ-yəštōm məšrawf ‘he did not have anything (with which) to buy supplies’ (65:1)

nūka ḳəʿəyēti ṭrayt l-agərē tərházən ‘two female spirits came to wash in the well’ (68:6)

tē nāhōr amšəgərēt ənəkōt hāməy l-agərē təzāti ‘then the next day, my mother came to take me’ (89:31)

Of the nine examples of *l-agərē* in a purpose clause, only two have the particle *ǝ-* following *l-agərē* (42:27 and 65:1). However, in three of the nine cases (68:6, 89:31, and 90:15), the immediately following verb has the prefix *tə-*, before which the particle *ǝ-* is usually suppressed (see §7.1.10.1). Therefore, it is not really clear whether *l-agərē* or *l-agərē ǝ-* is more common in a purpose clause.

13.5.3. Temporal Clauses

There are three main markers of temporal subordination in Mehri, *mət*, *hīs*, and *tē*. Each of these can be translated by English ‘when’, though each has its own special functions. That is, the three are usually not interchangeable. These three particles will be treated in turn.

13.5.3.1. *mət*

The particle *mət*, which is a reduced form of the interrogative *mayt* ‘when?’ (§11.7), has two basic functions as a marker of temporal subordination.¹⁴ It can refer to an event that has not yet happened (i.e., a future or relative future), or, rather less commonly, it can refer to a habitual action. In either usage, *mət* is followed by either a verb in the perfect tense (remembering that the imperfect of the verb *hōm* can also function as its perfect; see §7.3) or by a non-verbal clause. Some examples of *mət* referring to an event that has not happened yet are:

mət nūka akayǝ, həwfi ‘when summer comes, pay me’ (39:15)

mət gəzōt həyawm, yəšəwgiš hābū kāl ʾəhād lə-səkənəh ‘when the sun goes down, the people all go home’ (54:3)

ǝōməh aǝggēn wəkōna axayr mənay mət ʾākawr ‘this boy will be better than me when he grows up’ (76:12)

wəzmōna tīkəm fəndēl mət nakakəm ‘I’ll give you sweet potatoes when you come back’ (89:12)

mət səhək ǝōməh, əwəzmək məšəgər ‘when you finish this, I will give you something else’ (55:5)

¹⁴ For *mət* as the reduced (unstressed) form of *mayt*, we can compare *bət*, the preserved construct form of *bayt* ‘house’ (§4.6).

mæt təhaymi təftēki, səkēbi aḡayrōrāt ḏə-dārēhām bərk amədōrāt
 ‘when you want to leave, pour out the bag of money onto the
 floor’ (97:24)

In five cases in the texts (out of the fifty or so times *mæt* is attested referring to a future event), a verb in the *mæt*-clause is preceded by *bər* (see §12.5.6), which has its basic meaning ‘already’. Two examples of this are:

mæt bər qəbawr, yaṣḥayt bēr wəla rawn ‘when they have (already)
 buried him, they slaughter camels or goats’ (54:2)
mæt bər śəhēdām śəhawd, yaḥəmlūk śērə’ aḡayg ‘when the witnesses
 have (already) testified, the judge gives the man conjugal posses-
 sion’ (100:6)

As also discussed in §12.5.6, if the temporal clause is non-verbal and has a pronominal subject, then the particle *bər*, which carries no meaning, is required to hold the subject. Examples are:

mæt bərsən bərk ḥəmōh, śəlēl xəlawqīsən ‘when they are in the water,
 take their clothes’ (37:3)
mæt bərk qərayb əl-ḥāṣən, ənfēg bə-śfēt sərūk ‘when you are near the
 castle, throw a hair behind you’ (86:9)

Once we find *bər* in the main clause, indicating a time prior to the temporal *mæt*-clause, i.e., a future perfect (on the compound future perfect tense, see §7.1.9):

mæt nakan, tākāy bər təḥanš gənyət wə-bər mōləš azəyawrāt ‘when
 we get back, you should have already ground the sack (of maize)
 and filled the jars’ (97:7)

As already mentioned, the second basic use of *mæt* is to refer to a habitual action, whether past or present. In these cases, *mæt* can be translated as ‘when’ or ‘whenever’. There are less than a dozen such passages in the texts, some of which are:

mæt ḥābū śīnəm tīs yāṣawš ‘when(ever) people see it, they get afraid’
 (16:2)

mət gawya, yətayw mən amāray ‘when(ever) he was hungry, he would eat of the pasturage’ (74:3)

mət həynīt fəlōk hītār, əhōrək amaws ḏə-haybi w-əshōt hītār ‘when(ever) the women let the (goat) kids out, I would steal my father’s razor and slaughter kids’ (89:3)

mət tāt yəs, yəsōni kāl-šān fənwīh wə-yəfrōk bəh ‘when someone is afraid, he sees anything in front of him and it frightens him’ (95:11)

In addition to these two basic uses of *mət*, there are four cases in which we find *mət* used in the context of a past narrative. Two of these cases contain the phrase *mət səwānōt* ‘after a little while’, which seems to be idiomatic. The four examples are:

mət kayrəb təxərūfən, təhəşabən ḏə-xərēt ‘when they (the date-palms) were close to being ripe, one morning they were stripped of their fruit’ (37:1)

mət səwānōt yəhəftūk tāt ‘after a little while, he took one (veil) off’ (42:32)

mət bərəh rəwāhāk yəšlabdən ‘when he was a little ways away, he fired (his gun)’ (83:3)

mət səwānōt yəwōka ḏār tāt mən əl-manāšir ‘after a little while, he came upon one of the Manasir’ (104:19)

In three passages we find *mət* + *ḏ*-. In one of these (40:17), the particle *ḏ*- comes between *mət* and a nominal subject. This is most likely a mistake, and the *ḏ*- is not heard on the audio. In the other two cases (37:25; 46:7), the particle *ḏ*- comes between *mət* and a verb. Here, the particle *ḏ*- (confirmed by the audio) should be parsed as the verbal prefix *ḏ*- (§7.1.10), indicating a continuous or habitual aspect. The passages are:

taṭ yākēb bərk aḡayg mət ḏ-šərbā kərmaym u taṭ yākēb bərkīh
mət təwō abāyōr ‘one (jinn) would go inside the man when he climbed the mountain and one would go inside him when he ate the camels’ (37:25)¹⁵

¹⁵ Presumably, the verb *təwō* would also be preceded here by *ḏ*-, were it not for the fact that the verbal prefix *ḏ*- is normally suppressed before verbs beginning with *t*- (see §7.1.10.1).

mæt ḏ-*yəḥōm* *yəšakf* *hāl tētəh*, *təšəwkūf* *mənwəh* *u* *mən tētəh*
 ‘when(ever) he wanted to sleep with his wife, she would sleep
 between him and his wife’ (46:7)

In text 15:8, we find the form *məth*, which would appear to be *mæt* plus a 3ms pronominal suffix. However, this form is undoubtedly just a typographical error for *mæt*. We also find a typographical error in 99:13, where *mæt həlākəməh* should be read *mən həlākəməh* ‘from there’ (as it is translated by Johnstone); otherwise we would expect *mæt bərən həlākəməh* ‘when we are there’.

On the combination *tē mæt* ‘until’, which is found once (97:12), see the next section.

13.5.3.2. *tē*

The very common particle *tē* (vars. *tā*, *ta*) has a variety of functions and meanings. It can be used as a preposition ‘until’ (see §8.18) and a purpose-marking subordinating conjunction ‘so that’ (§13.5.2), but it is most frequently encountered as a marker of temporal subordination. It is used as such in narration of past events, and carries a nuance of sequential action. That is, it has the meaning of ‘then when’, though a translation ‘when’ is normally sufficient and sometimes even preferable. Because it has this nuance of ‘then’, a temporal ‘when’-clause with *tē* always precedes the main clause. The temporal conjunction *tē* can be followed by a verb in the perfect or by a non-verbal phrase. Examples from the texts are abundant. Some are:

tē wəṣələm kūsəm həməh ‘then when they arrived, they found the water’ (5:5)

tē gəzōt həyawm kərū təwyəh bərk dəhlil ‘then when the sun went down, he hid his meat in a hole’ (13:7)

nūka hēxər ... tē wīṣəl hāl aḡayg wə-həbrēh šōr u ḡəlōk b-aḡəggēn ‘an old man came along ... then when he got to the man and his son, he stood and looked at the boy’ (22:8)

tē kālayni nūka abayt, ksīs xəlayyət ‘then when he came home in the evening, he found it empty’ (22:69)

tē šəwkūf, šəllūt xəlawkəh ‘then when he was asleep, she took off his clothes’ (48:26)

tōli kəfdō təwōli hōkəm. tē nkō, ’āmōr hōkəm, “kō ’ətēm kəfədkəm?”
 ‘then they went down to the ruler. When they came (to him), the ruler said: Why have you come down?’ (74:19)

tē nakak, kask aḡayg ḏa-bərəh yaḥōm yaḥwē ‘then when I came, I found the man about to fall down’ (77:6)

tōli zəḥkūt tēt ... tōli ḡəhmō ... tē qarəbō la-səkən ḏa-xəšəmhē, ’āmōr h-tētəh... ‘then the wife laughed ... then they went off ... then when they got to a community of his enemies, he said to his wife...’ (94:24)

tē ka-sōbəḥ kəlōb ḥas, šxəbīrəh ḥābū ‘then in the morning when (his) consciousness returned, the people questioned him’ (95:6)

If the subordinate clause is unusually long, then the main clause may be preceded by *tōli* ‘then’, as in:

tē kəfūdən b-abar ənḡālī dēhəḳ sōx u həkəfūdən əlhān bərk alang mən ḥāməl, tōli ’āmōr ḥaywəl... ‘then when we came ashore under a big cliff and brought down all the luggage that was in the launch, (then) the crazy one said...’ (60:10)

A pronominal subject is rarely expressed after *tē*. Both *mət* (§13.5.3.1) and *hīs* (§13.5.3.3) can express a following pronominal subject with the help of the particle *bər*, but *tē* must be followed by *hīs bər*. There are just a few examples of this, including:

tē hīs bərḥəm bə-ḥōrəm, kūšəm ḡayg ’āwēr ‘when they were on the road, they found a blind man’ (46:9)

tē hīs bəri bə-’āmḳ ḏa-ḥōrəm, nəkōt məwsē ‘when I was half-way along, the rain came’ (47:2)

That *tē* cannot be followed directly by *bər* is shown by two other examples, one where *bər* is being used with the verb *ḥōm* to mean ‘be about to’ (see §7.3.4), and one where *bər* is being used with the subordinator to give the clear sense of ‘after’ (see §13.5.3.3):

tē hīs bərḥəm yaḥaym yašəkfəm, aḡayg kəlōn ḥəftōk amaws ‘then when they were about to go to sleep, the bridegroom took the razor’ (75:17)

tē hīs bər ašəlyəm, šīnəm ḥābū awrkāt ‘then after they had prayed, the people saw the note’ (85:17)

In rare cases, *tē* is combined with *hīs* for no apparent reason, as in:

tē hīs wəşələn bawməh, ʾāmōr... ‘when we arrived here, he said...’
(46:16)¹⁶

In addition to having the meaning ‘(then) when’, the conjunction *tē* is also often found with the meaning ‘until’, a meaning it also has as a preposition (see §8.18). In this case, the subordinate clause follows the main clause, and the verb following *tē* is a perfect if the reference is to the past, but subjunctive if the reference is to the future. Examples are:

hābū ǧəlawk mənhēm tē kaṭam ‘the people looked for them until they got tired’ (35:17)

tē ǧəzōt həyawm, səyūr aǧiggēn tē wīşəl xawr ‘then when the sun went down, the boy went until he got to the lagoon’ (36:6)

wə-səyərək tē wəşlək abayt ‘and I went on until I got to the house’ (62:4)

dawnək hēt b-əhkawmāt tē nənkēk ‘you take (over) the government until we come (back) to you’ (20:78)

harmək l-ʾād əḏawbər būk zōyəd tē l-əmēt ‘I swear I won’t nag you anymore until I die’ (98:15)

ʾā hāməy, mənēi ayṭayl tē l-ənkēs ‘Mother, hold the fox until I come to you!’ (99:43)

In rare cases, it can be unclear whether *tē* is functioning as ‘until’ or ‘then when’. For example, in 62:4 (preceding the passage cited above), we find the sentence *tōli səyərək tē wəşlək hōrəm ṭayt, kəsk ǧayg ṭāt wə-şxəbārək təh*. Depending on punctuation (in writing) or sentence stress (in speech), this could be translated either ‘then I went on until I got to a certain road, (and) I found a certain man and asked him’ or ‘then I went on, (and) then when I got to a certain road, I found a man and asked him’. The single punctuation mark in Stroomer’s edition (the comma after *ṭayt*) does not remove the ambiguity.

In one place (97:12) we find the unique combination *tē mət* ‘until when’, in the phrase *nḥāgi tē mət kənaş wə-təḥaymi təftēki, səkēbi...* ‘dance until when you get tired and want to leave, pour out...’. That this is not a mistake seems to be confirmed by the fact that we find an expected perfect following *mət*. The same line is repeated near verbatim in 97:24, though with the *tē mət* separated into two clauses: *nḥāgi*

¹⁶ Cf. 46:15, where we find simply *tē wəşələm...* ‘when they arrived...’.

tē təkənēi wə-mət təhaymi təftēki, səkēbi ‘dance until you are tired, and when you want to leave, pour out...’.

In many passages, *tē* functions not as a conjunction, but as a simple adverb ‘then’, in which case it is always followed by another adverb or adverbial phrase. Such adverbs or adverbial phrases are nearly always temporal in nature, like *kə-sōbəh* ‘in the morning’, *bə-ħəllay* ‘at night’, *kālayni* ‘in the evening’, *nəhōr ʔayt* ‘one day’, etc. Some examples are:

tē mən ǧār sənēt, səyūr tawōli haybəs ‘then after a year, he went to her father’ (9:1)

tē bə-ħəllay, həbawr aǧayg abkarhe ‘then at night, the man took out his cattle’ (15:9) (Stroomer: ‘when the man took his cattle out at night...’)

tē nəhōr ʔayt nakam təh sāʔayt šəbōb u wfawd hənīh ‘then one day three young men came to him and asked him for their hands (in marriage)’ (37:7)

tē nəhōr ʔayt kālayni, kəʔōt abōkər u kəlays u šəwgūs. tā bərk amǧərāb šīni hərawn ‘then one day in the evening, the camel got tired, and he left it and went on. Then in the evening, he saw goats’ (37:17)

tē mǧōrən, hīs yəħōm yəbār, mǧāʔ u wīka hē yənšərxəf ‘then later, when he wanted to make off, he stretched himself and began to slip away’ (69:4)

tē kə-sōbəh, hīs bēšər abšār, kəfdō həmbərawtən ‘then in the morning, when the dawn had come, the boys disembarked’ (74:17)

tē kə-sōbəh, wətkəǧawt təbərayn ‘then in the morning, the hyena woke up’ (99:9)

tē bə-ǧərdīs, həwḵawt šīwōʔ ‘then (when she was) in the desert plain, she lit a fire’ (36:9)

ǧəhēməm, tē b-ʔāmḵ ǧ-ħōrəm, kūšəm ǧayg ǧ-yəsyūr ‘they set off, and then half-way along, they found a man who was traveling’ (70:7)

tē ǧār bayr, wə-ħərbā moh ‘then (when they were) at the well, they drew water’ (97:10)

The last three examples show that the adverbial phrase need not be temporal, though such examples are uncommon.

In a few passages in which *tē* is followed by a verb, it is translated with a simple ‘then’ in Stroomer’s edition. In fact, these are best parsed as subordinators, as in:¹⁷

tē nūka aḡay, yaḡarabay wə-yabrāka tawalye ‘then when my brother came, he recognized me and ran to me’ (34:27) (Stroomer: ‘Then my brother came. He recognized me and ran towards me’)

tē nūka b-arḥabēt ḏ-amhārē’ wə-wəkūb bərk bayt, kūsa tēt ‘then when he got to the country of the Mehri and entered a house, he found a woman’ (59:2) (Stroomer: ‘then he got to the country of the Mehra and went into a house. (There) he found a woman’)

The adverbial *tē* differs from its near synonym *tōli*, in that *tōli* cannot be directly followed by another adverb. Instead, the conjunction *hīs* must intervene, as in:

tōli hīs bə-ḥəllay hawḳā šēf šəh bərk šiwōt ‘then, when (it was) at night, he put the hairs he had in the fire’ (37:25)

Interestingly, in one place it appears that the adverb *tōli* ‘then’ is functioning as a temporal subordinator:

tōli aḡayg šəwēhəb tətəh tākā bər sīrūt mən ḡār ḥəməh, ’āmōr...
‘then when the man thought his wife would have already left the water, he said...’ (94:20)

This is either just a mistake on the part of the speaker, or *tōli* is taking on this function here on analogy with *tē*, which can function as both an adverb and a subordinating conjunction.

13.5.3.3. *hīs*

The particle *hīs* can function as a preposition meaning ‘like’, in which case it is usually found in the compound *lə-hīs* (see §8.10). It is encountered most often, however, as a marker of temporal subordination ‘when’. Of the three such markers—*mət*, *tē*, and *hīs*—*hīs* is the one that appears most frequently in Johnstone’s texts. Unlike *mət*, but like *tē*,

¹⁷ The opposite mistake is also found. In the example from 15:9, cited above, Stroomer translates ‘when the man took his cattle out at night...’, without a main clause.

hīs is used in the context of a past narrative, and a following verb appears in the perfect. But while the *tē*-clause (when it means ‘when’) must precede the main clause, the *hīs*-clause can precede, follow, or be embedded within the main clause. And while *tē* carries a sequential nuance ‘then when’, *hīs* is simply ‘when’. This is not to say that *hīs* cannot be used in a context where ‘then when’ is appropriate; it can, and in such cases it is optionally preceded by the adverb *tōli* ‘then’. *Hīs* also has other meanings not found with *tē*, as will be outlined below. Following are some examples of *hīs* meaning ‘when’:

’aš aḡayg hīs hōma aṣawt ḏa-həybīt ‘the man arose when he heard the sound of the camel’ (13:3)

ṣərōmāh hīs hēm kāl tāṭ wəḥśih waḡam sīhōl ‘now, when they are each by themselves, they have become easy (to break)’ (50:4)

aḡayg, hīs šəwkūf, ’ādōl abīrakha ‘the man, when he had lain down, had raised his knees’ (69:4)

tōli aḡāh, hīs hūma aḡərōyāh, ḡərbēh ‘then his brother, when he heard his story, recognized who he was’ (74:16)

tōli hīs nūka, həftōk xəlōwəḡ aḏ-ḏayrāh ‘then when he arrived, he took off the clothes that were on him’ (75:7)

hīs hamak tīs ḡətəryōt əwtākəməh, rōdək b-abərayḡ ‘when I heard her talking this way, I threw down the jug’ (89:24)

hīs sīnīn ḡāḡōr, yəṣ ‘when the slave saw us, he became afraid’ (91:3)

hīs əlḡāḡən təh, bəkō. hīs bəkō, ḡāznək mənəh ‘when we caught up with him, he started crying. When he started crying, I felt compassion for him’ (91:5)

As with the other temporal conjunctions, a pronoun subject in a non-verbal *hīs*-clause is nearly always expressed as a suffix on the particle *bər*, as in:

hīs bərham ḡār həməh, nūka aḡawm ‘when they were at the water, the raiding-party came’ (10:8)

hīs bərəh bə-həwōdi, həḡūm ləh kawb ‘when he was in the valley, a wolf attacked him’ (14A:2)

hīs bəri bər ’ōšər sənayn, ’āmərk ḡaybi... ‘when I was ten years old, I said to my father...’ (34:7)

hīs bərən b-āmḡ, ḡəbōrən ḡōr ‘when we were half-way, we met a slave’ (91:2)

hīs bərəh rēḡəḡ, kəš bīn šətəh ‘when he was already far away, he exposed his behind to us’ (91:4)

However, there are a few examples of *hīs* followed by an independent pronoun, as in:

hīs hēm faxrəh, əl kədarkəm lihəm lā ‘when they were together, you could not overpower them’ (50:4)
’adi əl ’ōmər lā ’ār yəmšī hīs hō wəhśəy ‘I have never sung except yesterday when I was alone’ (52:15)

In many, if not most, passages in which *hīs* means ‘when’, it can also be translated as ‘after’. But to make the sense of ‘after’ more explicit, the particle *bər* precedes the verb of the *hīs*-clause. Only very rarely does *bər* take a pronominal suffix in this usage. Some examples are:

hīs bər fəsū, šəwkūf ‘after he (had) had lunch, he slept’ (12:4)
hīs bər təwīw, amma aḡayg aḏəray’ gəhēm ‘after they ate (or: had eaten), the stranger went off’ (13:11)
əbkār bār hīs bər ḥəlawbəsən ‘the cows went home after they had milked them’ (35:7)
hīs bərḥəm šəwəlīl, šākōt tēt aḡās ‘after they had sat down, the woman called her brother’ (64:29)
hīs bər təmūm u bər kəfūd xōṭər, ’āmōr aḡayg ḏə-ksēh fənōhən... ‘after he had finished (collecting honey) and come down, the man who had found it first said...’ (77:3)
w-aḡayg mōt hīs bər təmūm kəwṭatəh ‘the man died after he finished his story’ (92:6)

The combination *mən hīs* has the meaning ‘since’, in the sense of ‘from the time when’. Examples are:

mən hīs ḥəbye mōtəm, bər šīnək tīhəm xəmmoh təwōr ‘since my parents died, I have seen them five times’ (20:42)
’adi əl šīnək ḥəbye lā mən hīs mōtəm ‘I have not seen my parents since they died’ (20:43)
mən hīs xələkək, ’adi əl kəsk ’əḥād lə-hīs tīhəm lā ‘since I was born, I have never met (lit. found) anyone like them’ (62:13)

In a few places, *hīs* has the meaning ‘since’ (causal) or ‘because’:

kalləh mənək, hīs ḳalak təh yəsīr mən hənay ‘it’s all your fault (lit. from you), because you let him go away from me’ (17:7)

hīs hēt həbrē ḏə-fəlān, ƙalōna tīk tāsīr ‘because you are the son of so-and-so, I will let you go’ (20:47)
hīs bər bəhərš bay, məšēmən tīš ‘since you have asked me for help, I will comply’ (90:12)
šərōmah hīs əl wīka ƙarb šī-lā... ‘now since there has been no war...’ (104:28)¹⁸

In one passage, we twice find *hīs* followed by an imperfect, indicating a past progressive. *Hīs* can be translated here as ‘when’ or ‘while’ (on the use of *ʾād* + suffix to express ‘while’, see §12.5.1):

hīs sēn təgətəryən hənīsən sənnawrət, wə-hamatsən hīs təgətəryən
 ‘when (or: while) they were talking the cat was with them, and it heard them when (or: while) they were talking’ (15:7)

And in a few places, nearly all in text 99, *hīs* functions as a relative ‘when’, ‘at the time when’:

kəwtēt mən azbōn hāwəlay, hīs səfrəm ayṭayl wə-kawb, wə-ƙayžər wə-təbərayn, wə-yəğrayb w-ərxəmūt ‘a story from long ago, when the fox, the wolf, the leopard, the hyena, the crow, and the vulture traveled’ (99:1)
kəwtōna b-abšōrət ḏ-ayṭayl ... hīs ʾādəs adənyē təgətōri ‘I will tell about the cleverness of the fox ... (at the time) when the (whole) world still spoke’ (99:2)
kəwtōna bə-kəwtēt ḏ-əl-ƙarāsīs mən zəbōn hāwəlay, fənōhən šarəkah, hīs ʾādəs əl ənkōt əlā ‘I will tell the story of the Ɯarasis (from) long ago, before the Company, when it still had not arrived’ (104:1)
mən hīs šəxtīn, yāfədəm mən ḏār ašāwər ḏayk ‘at the time when they were circumcised (i.e., long ago), they jumped from that rock’ (99:17)

In this final example, *mən* is functioning the same way as in the idiom *mən zəbōn hāwəlay* ‘long ago’ in 104:1.

¹⁸ This sentence is not complete, so the ‘since’ here could, in theory, be either temporal or causal. However, the surrounding context suggests a causal ‘since’.

The compound *lā-hīs*, usually met as a preposition meaning 'like, as' (see §8.10) also functions as a subordinator in a few places, for example:

ʾāmalāk lā-hīs ʾāmārk hayni 'I did as you told me' (20:18)

āl-hīs bār āmalōt b-aḡaygās ḥāwəlay, āmalīta būk əwṭākəməh 'as she dealt with her previous husband, thus will she deal with you' (22:77)

yəḥsūs lā-hīs šī ḏ-yəḡərərəh xōṭər 'he felt like something was pulling him down' (77:1)

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

ON ARABIC FORMS

Mehri-speaking territory has long been surrounded by speakers of Arabic, and Arabic has only become more pervasive with the growth of infrastructure in Oman and Yemen over the last forty years. Nearly all speakers of Mehri are bilingual speakers of Arabic. It is not surprising then that Arabic has had tremendous influence on Mehri, especially in terms of vocabulary. Interestingly, Arabic has not affected Mehri as much in the realm of phonology. For example, Mehri has retained the Semitic lateral and glottalic consonants whose pronunciations were altered in Arabic many centuries ago. Mehri has, for the most part, lost the voiced pharyngeal fricative ʕ, though this is very much in use in Arabic. In one place we find an interesting case of possible Arabic interference in pronunciation, namely *gənōbi* in place of *jənōbi* ‘daggers’ (104:36), assuming the transcription is correct here.¹

Even a cursory glance at Johnstone’s *ML* makes it apparent that Mehri is beholden to Arabic for a large number of vocabulary items. Many borrowings are fairly obvious, such as the form of the ‘tens’ (§9.1.3), days of the week (§9.5), nouns of the pattern *CəCCōC* or *CəCCāC* indicating occupations (§2.1.6), and particles like *ʾamma* (§12.5.3), *lēzəm* (§12.5.10), and *yā* (§12.3). Many Arabic loans are well adapted into the morphological system of Mehri, in particular, borrowings of verbal roots.

Here is not the place for a study of the Arabic influence on Mehri. This is an area for fruitful research, and it is hoped that someone else will make a study of this subject.² In this chapter I only want to briefly discuss the actual Arabic forms and other Arabisms that occur in Johnstone’s texts.

In a few places in Johnstone’s texts, we find complete phrases or sentences in Arabic. Examples can be found in 19:19, 19:22, and 22:84, where the Arabic phrases are set in italics. Scattered throughout the texts are numerous Arabic nouns, verbs, adverbs, particles, etc. It is

¹ The phoneme *j* is pronounced [g] in some Omani Arabic dialects, especially in the north.

² Some discussion can be found in Lonnet (2009).

important to at least recognize that these are not Mehri. Some of these are:

- bəla šak* ‘without a doubt’ (7:5)
bəḏḏabt ‘exactly’ (22:29; 23:15)
təaggəb ‘he was delighted with’ (22:40) (the root *gb* exists in Mehri, but this is an Arabic tD [Form V, *tafa*^{‘ala}] 3ms perfect)
bəlāš ‘for nothing, gratis’ (22:48)
mītayn ‘200’ (22:50) (the Arabic numeral; see §9.1.4 for the Mehri equivalent)
ṭayyab ‘fine!’ (22:75)
kēf ‘how?’ (23:10, 15, 16)
‘ēmək ‘you learned’ (23:15) (see §11, n. 2)
dār ma dār ‘around’ (48:13)
wə-lḥamdu lillāh (60:9, 13)
b-əl-xəfē ‘secretly, in disguise’ (66:3)
ḥōgət ‘something’ (70:6; 94:8) (see §3.5.5)
algənūbi ‘(the) southern’ (71:1)
‘āzzēt ənnafs ‘honor, nobility’ (73:2) (on audio: *‘āzzət ənnafs*)
kaḏālik ‘also, likewise’ (74:2)
ḥad əl-fəlāni ‘such and such a place’ (74:4; 75:7)
emēnyayn ‘honest’ (74:13) (with the Arabic dual suffix; Mehri adjectives have no dual forms; see §5.1)
b-əl-ḥagīga ‘in the right, correct’ (82:3)
yā ‘azzətayn ‘how sorry I am!’ (85:24) (with the Arabic dual suffix)
yē-yəlḥakəh yē-llē ‘either you’ll catch him or not’ (96:3) (the verb here is Mehri, but the particles *yē* ... *yē-llē* are Arabic)
əššaraf ‘(the) honor’ (98:8) (better transcribed *əš-šaraf*)
məšabbōt ‘satisfied’ (99:56) (with the Arabic fp suffix)
əl-‘əša ‘supper’ (104:11/22)

Compare also the many occurrences of the Arabic definite article with tribal names, especially in text 104, e.g., *əl-‘əfār w-əl-ḥarāsīs* ‘the Ifar and the Ḥarasis’ (104:16).

Most nouns and adjectives are more difficult to categorize as Arabisms (as opposed to borrowings), without features like the Arabic definite article (like *əš-šaraf*, above) or an Arabic inflectional morpheme (like *emēnyayn*, above). So, for example, it is unclear whether adjectives like *dayyən* ‘religious’ (74:2) and *məxləš* ‘loyal,

sincere' (18:17) are Arabisms or borrowings that have been integrated into the language. The same can be said about Arabic participial forms like *məḥarrəm* 'forbidden' (94:28), which clearly reflect original Arabic morphological patterns, but which may be integrated into the language (other examples can be found in §7.1.8). We might call nouns like *sā'əh* '(wrist)watch' (91:2; suffixed *sā'ətəh* 'his watch', 91:3) and *səyyārəh* 'car' (62:12) Arabisms, since they have Arabic feminine suffixes.

Some Arabisms include syntactic particles, as in:

yāšəš mən əswēḥər lanhən (tə)tawyən akənyayn 'they are afraid of witches, that they will eat the children' (7:3) (*lanhən* < Arabic *li-'anna-hunna*, dialectal *li-'anhin*)

ma amhōrət ḏ-ab'ayr 'how clever the camel was!' (23:3) (*ma* < Arabic *mā*)

hō ḡəznək mən xəlawti, l-ənha tšawbər mənək lā 'I feel sorry for my stepmother, because she can't do without you' (34:31) (*l-ənha* < Arabic *li-'anna-hā*, dialectal *li-'anha*)

al takam lətḡəkəm ḥāməy 'have you killed my mother?' (65:13) (*al* < Arabic *hal*)

la-bād ḥaybəs malək 'her father must be an angel' (97:44) (*la-bād* < *lā budda*, dialectal *lā budd*)

It is possible that certain peculiarities of syntax should also be considered Arabisms. For example, in Mehri an attributive demonstrative normally follows its head noun, as in *aḡayḡ ḏōməh* 'this man' (65:9). But in a few places in the texts, as briefly described in §3.4, an attributive demonstrative precedes the noun, e.g., *ḏōməh aḡəggēn* 'this boy' (76:12), *ḏīməh aḡawḥərət* 'this jewel' (22:54), and *ḏəkməh awaḡt* 'that time' (104:35). It seems likely that this is due to the influence of Arabic; cf. Omani Arabic *ḏa l-bēt* 'this house'.

The influence of Arabic on Mehri can only increase, as the growth of infrastructure and increase in education (through the medium of Arabic) expand in the Omani Dhofar (and in Al-Mahra in Yemen). We can only hope that Mehri can stave off its total replacement by Arabic, as it is not only a captivating and rich language, but is also at present the most vibrant representative of an ancient branch of the Semitic language family.

APPENDIX

CORRECTIONS TO STROOMER'S EDITION OF JOHNSTONE'S TEXTS

The following corrections are collected mainly from my own observations, but some were first pointed out in the reviews of Stroomer's edition of Johnstone's texts by Wagner (2001), Sima (2003), and Lonnet (2003-5). Consult these excellent reviews for additional suggestions on variant readings, and discussion of the text edition in general. The review of Smith (2002) is also very worthwhile.

As discussed in the Introduction (§1.7), the quality of the audio recordings of Johnstone's texts is inferior. The reading is extremely unnatural, and the reader sometimes reads things differently than they appear in transcription. Therefore, if a word in Johnstone's texts is suspect or problematic, it is only possible, not certain, that a more acceptable reading on the audio reflects the original transcription. In the list below, I only make reference to the audio in cases where the correction is not simply a matter of transcription, or is not an obvious typographical error.

I do not include here typographical errors in the English translation of Johnstone's texts, nor do I attempt to correct the many mistranslations. (My own translations can be found throughout the present volume.) I also do not include (for the most part) the countless inconsistencies in transcription. The only issue of transcription that I routinely correct is the use of hyphen, with the result that: 1. clitics, like the conjunction *w(ə)-* (§12.1.1), the prepositions *b-*, *h-*, *k-*, and *l-* (§8), the particle *ǫ-* (§3.8.1; §7.1.10; §12.4), the first person subjunctive prefix *l-* (§7.1.3), the particle *xā-* (§8.20), and the Arabic definite article *al-* (in Arabic words and names), are always followed by a hyphen; 2. the negative particle *əl* (§13.2.1) is *not* connected to the following word with a hyphen, but is written as a separate word, except in the compounds *l-ʔəḥād* 'no one' (§3.5.1) and *l-ʔād* (§13.2.2).

The purpose of this Appendix is not to criticize the work of Johnstone or Stroomer, but to arrive at a better understanding of the Mehri texts on which they worked. The corrections below include not only typographical errors in the edition of Stroomer, but, as far as I

can tell, also errors in Johnstone's transcription. There are undoubtedly cases where it is my correction that is mistaken, and there are likely additional mistakes that I have missed.

<i>Text #</i>	<i>Printed</i>	<i>Correct Reading</i>	<i>Note</i>
1, n. 5	<i>kś</i>	<i>ks'</i>	
2:5	<i>əl hābū</i>	<i>əl-hābū</i>	
2:7	<i>tasyūr</i>	<i>səyūr</i>	Wagner (p. 343) suggests <i>ǰə-səyūr</i> , but the audio has <i>səyūr</i> .
3:16	<i>wəśələm</i>	<i>wəşələm</i>	
3:19	<i>lāttagəm</i>	<i>lāttagəm</i>	Probably. See §6.5.2, n. 16.
5:14	<i>ənká-w-bō</i>	<i>ənká əw-bō</i>	
5:15	<i>ləhīs</i>	<i>lə-hīs</i>	
5:16	<i>ləhīs</i>	<i>lə-hīs</i>	
6:1	<i>báyli</i>	<i>bə'ēli</i>	Audio supports this.
6:1	<i>ḵəniw</i>	<i>ḵəniw</i>	
6:2	<i>wə-sēh</i>	<i>əl sē</i>	Audio supports this.
6:13	<i>lā təhērəs</i>	<i>l-ʾād təhērəs</i>	Probably. Cf. 6:5. See §13.2.1.
10:1	<i>ḵəṭāt</i>	<i>ḵəṭāt</i>	Possibly. ¹
10:3	<i>gəhēmən</i>	<i>gəhēməm</i>	
10:4	<i>wə-əl-nḥōm</i>	<i>w-əl nḥōm</i>	
10:6	<i>ʾəlikəm</i>	<i>əlikəm</i>	
12:1	<i>ǰ-əl ḥarāsīs</i>	<i>ǰ-əl-ḥarāsīs</i>	
12:15	<i>əl-zəgdək</i>	<i>əl zəgdək</i>	
13:7	<i>ḥāl</i>	<i>hāl</i>	
13:7	<i>ʾəḥād</i>	<i>l-ʾəḥād</i>	Probably. Audio unclear.
14A:2	<i>şəl</i>	<i>śəl</i>	Probably. Audio unclear.
15:8	<i>máth</i>	<i>mát</i>	See §13.5.3.1, end.
15:18	<i>ʾəl-hō</i>	<i>ʾəl hō</i>	
15:21	<i>kāl-śī</i>	<i>kāl-śīən</i>	Audio supports this. See §3.5.4.
17:8	<i>bīh</i>	<i>bəh</i>	See §8.22.
17:10	<i>lə sēkən</i>	<i>lə-sēkən</i>	

¹ The *ML* lists *ḵəṭāt* 'covered ledge' (p. 243) and *ḵəṭāt* 'piece' (p. 244), and presumably it is the latter being used here in the sense of 'some'.

Text #	Printed	Correct Reading	Note
17:15	ḏ- <i>yəmōt</i>	ḏə- <i>mōt</i>	Discussed in Wagner, p. 344. ² Audio supports this.
18:8	<i>wə-səḏáyḵ</i>	<i>wə-səḏáyḵi</i>	Audio supports this.
18:10	<i>əśnē</i>	<i>l-əśnē</i>	Audio supports this. See §7.1.3, n. 3.
18:10	<i>śəwārəʾ</i>	<i>śəwārəʾ</i>	Audio supports this. ³
18:13	<i>aşəḏáyḵi</i>	<i>səḏáyḵi</i>	Audio supports this. Cf. 18:8. ⁴
18:15	<i>ʾəl-hō</i>	<i>ʾəl hō</i>	
18:17	<i>ḏə háh</i>	<i>ḏə-háh</i>	Better <i>ḏə-hē</i> .
18:17	<i>aşəḏáyḵi</i>	<i>səḏáyḵi</i>	Audio supports this. See 18:13.
18:18	<i>ləhīs</i>	<i>lə-hīs</i>	Two times in this line.
19:22	<i>il-ḥilm miš ʿilm</i>	(italicize in text)	Quote is in Arabic. Cf. 19:19.
19:25	<i>lā təḥfēr</i>	<i>l-ʾād təḥfēr</i>	Probably. See §13.2.1.
20:4	<i>hīkəm ... šīkəm</i>	<i>hīkən ... šīkən</i>	Audio supports this. Cf. 20:18, 25.
20:14	<i>l-āmərək</i>	<i>əl ʾāmərək</i>	
20:37	<i>əḵlēk</i>	<i>l-əḵlēk</i>	Audio supports this. See §7.1.3, n. 3.
20:40	<i>tāxōfi</i>	<i>təxōfi</i>	If this is a D/L subj. of <i>√xlf</i> .
20:41	<i>ʾādi šīnək</i>	<i>ʾādi əl šīnək</i>	Audio supports this.
20:43	<i>ḥəbyē</i>	<i>ḥəbyē lā</i>	Audio supports this.
20:48	<i>ʾəláy</i>	<i>láy</i>	Audio supports this.
20:55	<i>b-āməndáwḵ</i>	<i>b-aməndáwḵ</i>	
20:59	<i>l-ərdīw</i>	<i>əl ərdīw</i>	
22:2	<i>šīk</i>	<i>šūk</i>	Audio supports this.

² I have seen a typescript version of this text—used as a B.A. examination for Johnstone’s students!—that has *ḏə-mōt*, proof that Wagner’s suggested reading is correct. My thanks to A. Lonnet, who is in possession of this version and kindly shared it with me.

³ The ML (p. 382) does list *šārəʾ* ‘street’, but the plural form clearly has an initial *š* in the audio version, and the singular *šārəʾ* is used later in the same sentence. The word is an obvious Arabic loan.

⁴ The roots *şdk* and *sdk* alternate, as noted in §5.4, n. 12, but here the *s* is confirmed by the lack of the definite article in the audio. We would expect the article *a-* before the glottalic *ş*.

<i>Text #</i>	<i>Printed</i>	<i>Correct Reading</i>	<i>Note</i>
22:2	<i>həbōn ətēgər</i>	<i>həbōn ǝ-ətēgər</i>	Possibly, cf. 22:35. Audio unclear.
22:6	<i>yəftərēgəm</i>	<i>ǝ-yəftərēgən</i>	Audio supports this. ⁵
22:8	<i>gayg</i>	<i>aǵayg</i>	Audio supports this.
22:11	<i>tábák</i>	<i>tábak</i>	
22:15	<i>aḳāfi</i>	<i>aḳōfi</i>	Audio supports this.
22:24	<i>hah</i>	<i>əl hah</i>	Audio supports this. Better <i>əl hē</i> .
22:24	<i>ǝ-ǵáwləḳ</i>	<i>ǝ-yəǵáwləḳ</i>	Audio supports this. ⁶
22:45	<i>əl-śnēs?</i>	<i>əl-śnēs.</i>	This phrase is not a question.
22:47	<i>yətəmməh</i>	<i>təmməh</i>	Audio supports this.
22:48	<i>yətəmməh</i>	<i>təmməh</i>	Audio supports this.
22:70	<i>sē</i>	<i>ǝə-sē</i>	Audio supports this.
22:77	<i>l-ənōtəḳ</i>	<i>əl ənōtəḳ</i>	
22:78	<i>l-illōm</i>	<i>əl yəlḥōm</i>	
22:80	<i>l-əḳálas</i>	<i>əl əḳálas</i>	
22:85	<i>ǝ-śəlül</i>	<i>ǝ-yəśəlül</i>	Audio supports this.
22:97	<i>ǵərfēt</i>	<i>aǵərfēt</i>	Audio supports this.
23:3	<i>šəṣdēḳḳ</i>	<i>šəṣdāḳḳ</i>	Audio supports this.
23:5	<i>ləwṭākəməh</i>	<i>l-əwṭākəməh</i>	
23:6	<i>əṭǵāḳkəm</i>	<i>təǵāḳəm</i>	Audio supports this. Discussed in Wagner, p. 344.
23:19	<i>amzárhəh</i>	<i>amzárḥəh</i>	
23:20	<i>həbyēs</i>	<i>həbyēsa</i>	Audio supports this.
24:6	<i>ǵəggənōt</i>	<i>aǵəggənōt</i>	Audio supports this. Cf. 24:7.
24:8	<i>əl hēt</i> <i>bə-ǵəggənōt</i>	<i>hēt əl hēt ǵəggənōt</i>	Audio supports this. See §8.2, end.
24:15	<i>hē</i>	<i>hēm</i>	Audio supports this. Cf. 24:25.

⁵ If this form is a 3mp imperfect, functioning as a circumstantial, the ǝ- (heard on the audio) is needed. The translation in context should be '(the people came) looking'. If the translation '(the people came) to look' is correct (as in Stroemer's edition), we would need a 3mp subjunctive *yəftərēg*. In neither scenario could the final *-m* be correct.

⁶ The form *ǵáwləḳ* does not exist.

Text #	Printed	Correct Reading	Note
24:22	<i>əl-təwīyāh</i>	<i>əl təwīyāh</i>	
24:32	<i>ləhīs</i>	<i>lə-hīs</i>	
24:39	<i>ləhīs</i>	<i>lə-hīs</i>	
24:39	<i>wə-ăḏə</i>	<i>w-ăḏə</i>	
24:54	<i>aḡīgən</i>	<i>aḡīgēn</i>	
25:4	<i>wə- bākk</i>	<i>wə-bākk</i>	
25:8	<i>kəráwš</i>	<i>ḵəráwš</i>	
25:9	<i>amhēśən</i>	<i>amhēśən</i>	
25, n. 6	Not in ML...	ML <i>trḵz</i> (p. 403).	
25:15	<i>ḵəbērən</i>	<i>ḵəbērəm</i>	Audio supports this.
26:4	<i>əl-hē</i>	<i>əl hē</i>	
26:4	<i>axašš</i>	<i>axass</i>	See §5.4.
26:9	<i>yəšlēl</i>	<i>yəzlēl</i>	Audio supports this.
26:13	<i>əl-šīnən</i>	<i>əl šīnən</i>	
28:2	<i>tərḥōkən</i>	<i>tərḥōkən</i>	
28:6	<i>kəsk mən</i>	<i>kəsk mənəh</i>	Audio supports this.
28:8	<i>əl ḥəróhəh</i>	<i>əl-ḥəróhəh</i>	
28:9	<i>riḡād</i>	<i>riḡād</i>	
28:12	<i>əl-ḵálak</i>	<i>əl ḵálak</i>	
28:18	<i>təḡyīgən</i>	<i>təḡyīgəḡən</i>	Audio supports this. ⁷
28:21	<i>ḏ-isəbēṭ</i>	<i>ḏə-səbēṭ</i>	Discussed in Wagner, pp. 344-45.
29:5	<i>ḏa-mōn</i>	<i>ḏē mōn</i>	
29:6	<i>ənkām</i>	<i>yənkām</i>	Audio supports this.
29:9	<i>əwmṣāʾ</i>	<i>əw-mṣāʾ</i>	See §10.2.
29:10	<i>əl-kūsa</i>	<i>əl kūsa</i>	
30:2	<i>təḡīgən</i>	<i>təḡīgəḡən</i>	Audio supports this. Cf. also 30:9; <i>ML</i> , p. xlv; and Wagner, p. 345.
30:7	<i>ʾāyni lā.</i>	<i>ʾāyniʾ lā.</i>	
30:8	<i>ašāwr</i>	<i>ašāwər</i>	
30:9	<i>təḡīgən</i>	<i>təḡīgəḡən</i>	Audio supports this.
31:3	<i>ḏī</i>	<i>ḏī</i>	
31:4	<i>əl-ḥōm</i>	<i>əl ḥōm</i>	

⁷ We expect a 3fp subjunctive here after *ʾaymāl* (see §13.5.1), and *təḡyīgəḡən* is the 3fp subjunctive given in Johnstone's paradigm (*ML*, p. xlv). The audio actually has *təḡyīgəḡən* (cf. 30:9), but this is due to the pronunciation of the sequence *yə* as *ī* (see §2.2).

<i>Text #</i>	<i>Printed</i>	<i>Correct Reading</i>	<i>Note</i>
31:6	<i>xā hō</i>	<i>xā-hō</i>	
31:6	<i>ʾəḥād</i>	<i>l-ʾəḥād</i>	Audio supports this.
31:10	<i>śəxof</i>	<i>śəxōf</i>	
31:12	<i>bə-ṭərēf</i>	<i>b-aṭərēf</i>	Audio supports this.
31:12	<i>ažáyga</i>	<i>ḏ-ažáyga</i>	Audio supports this.
31:13	<i>ḏə hō</i>	<i>ḏē hō</i>	Probably. Audio supports this.
32:5	<i>nəhōri ṭrayt</i>	<i>nəhōri ṭrayt</i>	Audio supports this.
32:5	<i>ʾādəh šīni</i>	<i>ʾādəh əl šīni</i>	Audio supports this.
32:6	<i>šazáywə</i>	<i>šazáywəh</i>	
32:8	<i>tábām</i>	<i>tábam</i>	
32:12	<i>l-əšfōk</i>	<i>əl əšfōk</i>	
32:15	<i>ʾār kāl</i>	<i>ʾār u kāl</i>	Audio supports this. See §12.5.4.
32:15	<i>ḏ ber</i>	<i>ḏ-ber</i>	
32:20	<i>ḏékəmə</i>	<i>ḏékəməh</i>	
32:26	<i>əl-ḥōm</i>	<i>əl ḥōm</i>	
32:27	<i>sənēt ṭrayt</i>	<i>sənēti ṭrayt</i>	Audio supports this.
32:27	<i>əl-xōli</i>	<i>əl xōli</i>	
33:1	<i>ʾham...yəsbátk.</i>	<i>ʾham...yəsbátk.</i>	This is an indirect quote.
33:1	<i>əl-wakak</i>	<i>əl wakak</i>	
33:3	<i>ḏ-əl kəlāk</i>	<i>ḏə-l-əklāk</i>	
33:4	<i>ʾāmēra</i>	<i>ʾamyēra</i>	Audio supports this.
33:6	<i>kalākəmə</i>	<i>əl kalākəmə</i>	Audio supports this.
33:6	<i>haqšəmə</i>	<i>əl-haqšəmə</i>	Audio supports this.
33:6	<i>tikən</i>	<i>tikəmə</i>	Audio supports this.
34:13	<i>ʾāmərūt:</i>	<i>ʾāmərūt ḥāməy:</i>	Audio supports this.
	<i>“yəməy, šándəmə</i>	<i>“šándəmə</i>	
34:20	<i>wə-kəsk</i>	<i>w-əl kəsk</i>	Audio supports this.
34:20	<i>ašōx</i>	<i>šōx</i>	Audio supports this.
34:25	<i>təšōš</i>	<i>tāšōš</i>	Audio supports this.
34:27	<i>ağáy.</i>	<i>ağáy,</i>	See §13.5.3.2.
34:33	<i>wəl</i>	<i>aw</i>	Audio supports this.
35:1	<i>əl bəʾēli</i>	<i>əl-bəʾēli</i>	
35:4	<i>l-əngörəb</i>	<i>əl nəgörəb</i>	
35, n. 5	<i>*tətwēyan?</i>	<i>tətwēyan.</i>	Discussed in Lonnet, p. 160.
36:28	<i>səh</i>	<i>sēh</i>	

Text #	Printed	Correct Reading	Note
36:35	ð <i>bēr</i>	ð- <i>bēr</i>	
37:1	<i>təhəʒábħən</i>	<i>təhəʒábħən</i>	
37:3	<i>rəhawztən</i>	<i>rəhʒawtən</i>	Audio supports this.
37, n. 5	ML <i>srr</i>	ML <i>str</i>	
37:9	<i>l-ənōhəg</i>	<i>əl ənōhəg</i>	
37:11	<i>hīlām</i>	<i>hyīlām</i>	Audio supports this.
37:18	<i>yətēm</i>	<i>yətēyām</i>	Audio supports this.
37:19	<i>l-ərdūd</i>	<i>əl ərdūd</i>	
37:20	<i>bə-ðōbəl</i>	<i>b-aðōbəl</i>	Audio supports this.
37:22	<i>wəlú</i>	<i>wə-lū</i>	
38:3	<i>əmṣā</i>	<i>əw-mṣāʾ</i>	Audio supports this. See §10.2.
38:5	<i>wə-kəsk</i>	<i>kəsk</i>	Audio supports this.
38:9	<i>l-əğərbəs</i>	<i>əl əğərbəs</i>	Audio supports this.
38:10	<i>hənīhən</i>	<i>hənīhəm</i>	Audio supports this.
38:21	<i>tənākən</i>	<i>tənákan</i>	Probably. ⁸
39:3	<i>šəğəlayk</i>	<i>šəğəlayk</i>	Probably from <i>šəğlū</i> . ⁹
39:4	<i>wa-rxáyṣət</i>	<i>wə-rxáyṣət</i>	Audio supports this.
40:4	<i>amítáyn</i>	<i>amaytáyn</i>	Audio supports this. Cf. also <i>ML</i> , p. 275.
40:7	<i>lā</i>	<i>l-ʾād</i>	Audio supports this. See §13.2.1.
40:17	<i>mət ð-ħārawn</i>	<i>mət ħārawn</i>	Audio supports this. See §13.5.3.1.
40:23	<i>xā hēm</i>	<i>xā-hēm</i>	
40:24	<i>l'əhāmahəm</i>	<i>əl əhāmahəm</i>	
40:26	<i>ħəssi</i>	<i>ħassi</i>	Audio supports this.
40:26	<i>l-əḳawdər</i>	<i>əl əḳawdər</i>	
41:2	<i>ð-səyawr</i>	<i>ð-yəsyawr</i>	Audio supports this.

⁸ The form *tənākən*, which is a 2ms imperfect + 1cp object suffix, is better transcribed *tənákan* (cf. *ənákak*, 37:19). However, this form is not heard in the audio version, which instead has a simple ms imperative *nkē*. Both forms fit the context well enough, and it is not clear which is original to the story.

⁹ Johnstone lists in the *ML* (p. 136) a verb *šəğālək* 'buy s.t. expensive', the 1cs perfect of which would be *šəğākək* (< **šəğāləkək*). The form *šəğəlayk* in the text looks much more like an error for *šəğəlayk*, which is the expected 1cs perfect of *šəğlū* 'buy at a high price' (*ML*, p. 137). It is likely that the verb *šəğālək*, though listed in Johnstone's *ML*, does not really exist, as the meaning 'buy s.t. expensive' is unexpected for the root *√glk*. In contrast, *šəğlū* 'buy s.t. at a high price' has a meaning which fits well with other forms of the root *√gly*, e.g., *ğōli* 'expensive'.

<i>Text #</i>	<i>Printed</i>	<i>Correct Reading</i>	<i>Note</i>
41:5	<i>wə-ðə-hámam</i>	<i>wə-ðə-yəhámam</i>	Audio supports this.
41:8	<i>l-ənḵawdər</i>	<i>əl ənḵawdər</i>	
41:8	<i>xā-he</i>	<i>xā-hē</i>	Twice in this line. See §8.20.
41:10	<i>w-ʾād əl ʾəḥād</i>	<i>w-ʾād l-ʾəḥād</i>	See also §13.2.2, end.
42:1	<i>wə-l-yəśányəm</i>	<i>w-əl yəśányəm</i>	
42:10	<i>l-ʾəḵawdər</i>	<i>əl əḵawdər</i>	
42:11	<i>kall</i>	<i>kāl</i>	
42:18	<i>əl-wəzēm</i>	<i>əl wəzēm</i>	
42:19	<i>lād</i>	<i>l-ʾād</i>	
42:19	<i>mād</i>	<i>m-ād</i>	
42:20	<i>l-ağəggənōt</i>	<i>l-ağəggənōt</i>	
42:24	<i>yəžəṭ</i>	<i>yəžáwṭ</i>	Audio supports this.
42:24	<i>šhəlīt</i>	<i>šəlēt</i>	Audio supports this. See §9.4.
42:27	<i>aʾəśēš</i>	<i>aʾəśēš</i>	
42:30	<i>šhəlīt</i>	<i>šəlēt</i>	Audio supports this. See §9.4.
42:35	<i>aʾəśēš</i>	<i>aʾəśēš</i>	
42:36	<i>ağəggənōt</i>	<i>ağəggənōt</i>	
42:36	<i>w-ağəggənōt</i>	<i>w-ağəggənōt</i>	
42:37	<i>h-ağəggənōt</i>	<i>h-ağəggənōt</i>	
42:37	<i>həwḵā bīs</i>	<i>həwkəbīs</i>	Audio supports this.
42:39	<i>w-ağəggənōt</i>	<i>w-ağəggənōt</i>	
42:40	<i>h-ağəggənōt</i>	<i>h-ağəggənōt</i>	
42:42	<i>šīən</i>	<i>šī</i>	Audio supports this. See §3.5.2.
42:52	<i>l-əśōm</i>	<i>əl əśōm</i>	
42:52	<i>yəḥáwṣələh</i>	<i>yəḥáwṣələh</i>	
43:2	<i>fárə</i>	<i>fárəʾ</i>	
43:3	<i>ðə ḵáṣdi</i>	<i>ðə-ḵáṣdi</i>	
44:9	<i>əl-(t)səyūr</i>	<i>əl (tə)syūr</i>	
44:10	<i>məmtəḥnōtən</i>	<i>məmtəḥnōtən</i>	Audio supports this.
44, n. 1	not in the ML	ML <i>mḥn</i>	
45:5	<i>ḥād</i>	<i>ʾəḥād</i>	See §3.5.1.
46:2	<i>əl səyərək</i>	<i>l-əsyēr</i>	Audio supports this, as does the ML (p. 431, s.v. $\sqrt{w\dot{s}l}$).

<i>Text #</i>	<i>Printed</i>	<i>Correct Reading</i>	<i>Note</i>
46:3	<i>təwōli</i>	<i>tōli</i>	Audio supports this. See §8.19.
46:18	<i>wə-ttámam</i>	<i>wə-támam</i>	Possibly. ¹⁰
47:2	<i>l-əğōrəb</i>	<i>əl əğōrəb</i>	
47:4	<i>ǵ-əwṭmāk</i>	<i>ǵ-əwṭəmūk</i>	Audio supports this.
47:7	<i>wə- 'āyēṭəm</i>	<i>wə-'āyēṭəm</i>	
47:9	<i>əl-ḥōrək</i>	<i>əl əḥōrək</i>	
48:2	<i>hīs</i>	<i>hīsən</i>	Audio supports this.
48:3	<i>həkfid</i>	<i>həkfūd</i>	Audio supports this.
48:4	<i>ləḥəkōt</i>	<i>ləḥəkōt</i>	
48:7	<i>əl-tənákay</i>	<i>əl tənákay</i>	
48:11	<i>hə-báts</i>	<i>h-abáts</i>	Audio supports this. Cf. 20:64.
48:13	<i>əl ḥāṣən</i>	<i>əl-ḥāṣən</i>	
48:18	<i>ǵə-šōbə'</i>	<i>ǵ-ašōbə'</i>	
48:25	<i>ásōləṭ</i>	<i>šōləṭ</i>	Audio supports this.
48:26	<i>ǵə-yašakfəm</i>	<i>yašakfəm</i>	Audio supports this. ¹¹
48:26	<i>ḥasələbhē</i>	<i>hasələbhē</i>	Possibly. See §4.4.
48:27	<i>hənəh</i>	<i>hənēh</i>	Audio supports this. Cf. 9:1.
48:28	<i>nūka ḡaygəs</i>	<i>nūka aḡaygəs</i>	Audio supports this.
48:29	<i>hayya</i>	<i>ḡayya</i>	Audio supports this, as does <i>ML</i> , p. 196.
48:29	<i>nkē</i>	<i>yaṇkē</i>	Audio supports this.
48:30	<i>ḡənáwn</i>	<i>ḡənnáwn</i>	Audio supports this.
48:31	<i>ǵə-ḡiyōs</i>	<i>ǵə-ḡayōs</i>	
48:31	<i>ḡəssēt</i>	<i>aḡəssēt</i>	Audio supports this.
48:32	<i>ḡəṣṣ</i>	<i>ḡəṣ</i>	
49:7	<i>ǵ-yaḡṣām</i>	<i>yaḡṣām</i>	Audio supports this.
49:10	<i>'əttək</i>	<i>l-'əttək</i>	Audio supports this.
51:5	<i>šəḡwu</i>	<i>šəḡwū</i>	
52:3	<i>məḡáḡfələn</i>	<i>mō ḡáḡfələn</i>	Audio supports this. See §3.2.3, n. 2.

¹⁰ According to the *ML* (p. lvi), the 3mp perfect of the anomalous verb *əttūma* has the form *támam*, while *ttámam* is the mp imperative (cf. 46:17). However, perhaps the 3mp perfect *támam* has the form *ttámam* when preceded by a particle like *wə-*. On the audio, the imperative in 46:17 and the perfect in 46:18 do sound identical.

¹¹ The form needs to be a subjunctive here after *tē* 'until' (§13.5.3.2), which should not be preceded by the verbal prefix *ǵ-*.

<i>Text #</i>	<i>Printed</i>	<i>Correct Reading</i>	<i>Note</i>
52:6	<i>təhamk,</i>	<i>təhamki,</i>	Audio supports this.
52:15	<i>l-ʾōmər</i>	<i>əl ʾōmər</i>	
52:16	<i>lākən</i>	<i>wəlākən</i>	Audio supports this. See §12.1.2.
53, n.1	ML <i>tlv</i>	root <i>tlv</i> (ML <i>tl̥t</i>)	The ML (p. 401) has a typo.
54:1	<i>wə-ḥəynīṭ</i>	<i>wə-yənīṭ</i>	Audio supports this.
54:6	<i>w-əmṣā</i>	<i>əw-mṣāʾ</i>	Audio supports this. See §10.2.
54:13	<i>əḥōm</i>	<i>ḥōm</i>	Audio supports this.
54:15	<i>ləhīs</i>	<i>lə-hīs</i>	
54:16	<i>yəhātum</i>	<i>yəhātūm</i>	
54:18	<i>l-əwbads</i>	<i>əlābdəs</i>	Possibly. Audio supports this. See §13.4.1, n. 8.
55:6	<i>ḥābū</i>	<i>əl-ḥābū</i>	Audio supports this.
55:7	<i>l-yəshayṭən</i>	<i>əl yəshayṭən</i>	
56:1	<i>hē</i>	<i>hē</i>	See §11.9.
56:4	<i>əl-əḳawdər</i>	<i>əl əḳawdər</i>	
56:12	<i>l-əğörəb</i>	<i>əl əğörəb</i>	
56:14	<i>hō məšēmən</i>	<i>l-ʾād hō məšēmən</i>	Audio supports this.
57:6	<i>ʾār</i>	<i>ʾād əl</i>	Audio supports this.
57:6	<i>ʾəlyikəm</i>	<i>əlīkəm</i>	Audio supports this.
57:7	<i>ʾād</i>	<i>l-ʾād</i>	Audio supports this.
57:7	<i>šāzayn</i>	<i>ð-šāzayn</i>	Probably. Audio supports this.
57:8	<i>šēžəm</i>	<i>təšēžəm</i>	Preferable transcription. See §7.1.5.
57:14	<i>ð-əl</i>	<i>ðək əl</i>	Audio supports this.
58:3	<i>yəgáməm</i>	<i>wə-yəgáməm</i>	Audio supports this.
58:7	<i>wə-hēm</i>	<i>hēm</i>	Audio supports this.
58:8	<i>mən tərēf</i>	<i>mən aṭərēf</i>	Audio supports this.
58:8	<i>ðə-mōl</i>	<i>ð-amōl</i>	Audio supports this.
59:1	<i>l-yəsyūr</i>	<i>əl səyūr</i>	
59:5	<i>kəláys</i>	<i>ḳəláys</i>	
59:6	<i>ðē-kō</i>	<i>ðē kō</i>	
60:5	<i>təḥaym</i>	<i>təḥaymən</i>	Audio supports this.
60:6	<i>ʾamma ṭāṭ</i>	<i>w-ʾamma ṭāṭ</i>	Audio supports this.
60:8	<i>lā šīnən</i>	<i>l-ād šīnən</i>	Audio supports this. See §13.2.1.

Text #	Printed	Correct Reading	Note
60:10	<i>əl-təšxáwwələm</i>	<i>əl təšxáwwələm</i>	
60:10	<i>məkārūtən</i>	<i>u məkārūtən</i>	Audio supports this.
60:11	<i>yəhəgēmən</i>	<i>yəhəgēməm</i>	Audio supports this.
61:1	<i>tābam</i>	<i>tābəm</i>	Audio (and the context) support this.
62:1	<i>l-əğōrəb</i>	<i>əl əğōrəb</i>	
62:3	<i>b-ḥōrəm ṭayt</i>	<i>b-wōrəm ṭayt</i>	Possibly. Audio supports this. ¹²
62:3	<i>l-yəğōrəb</i>	<i>əl yəğōrəb</i>	
62:7	<i>əl-ḵáwdər</i>	<i>əl əḵawdər</i>	
62:13	<i>lə</i>	<i>əl</i>	
63:6	<i>ḥābū</i>	<i>l-ḥābū</i>	Audio supports this.
63:8	<i>šəḵro</i>	<i>šəḵrō</i>	
63:8	<i>ḏay</i>	<i>aḏay</i>	Audio supports this.
63:13	<i>əmšaʾ</i>	<i>əw-mšaʾ</i>	Audio supports this. See §10.2.
64:6	<i>tərwēn</i>	<i>ráywi</i>	Possibly. Audio supports this. ¹³
64:7	<i>l-yəğárbəm</i>	<i>əl yəğárbəm</i>	
64:9	<i>bārawd</i>	<i>bārawt</i>	Audio supports this. Cf. <i>ML</i> , p. 40.
64:12	<i>yəxáwtəl</i>	<i>ḏ-yəxáwtəl</i>	Probably. Audio supports this.
64:17	<i>əlyōmäh-əlā</i>	<i>əlyōmäh lā</i>	
64:18	<i>ləwṭākəmäh</i>	<i>l-əwṭākəmäh</i>	
64:25	<i>əl-awágəbkəm</i>	<i>əl awágəbkəm</i>	
64:26	<i>əl-awágəbkəm</i>	<i>əl awágəbkəm</i>	
65:7	<i>ḥəbrē</i>	<i>ḥəbrē</i>	
65:9	<i>əlēk</i>	<i>əlyēk</i>	
65:9	<i>gōr ṭro</i>	<i>gōri ṭro</i>	Audio supports this.

¹² We do expect the indefinite form *wōrəm* before the numeral *ṭayt* ‘one’, but definite forms with initial *h-* sometimes replace the indefinite. In 62:4, we again find *ḥōrəm ṭayt*, and in this case the audio agrees with the transcription. See the discussion in §4.4.

¹³ If *tərwēn* (3fp subjunctive) is correct, then *tē* here serves to indicate a purpose clause, ‘in order to drink their fill’. But if *raywi* (3fp perfect) is correct, then *tē* means ‘until’, and the clause should be translated ‘until they had drunk their fill’. Both possibilities fit the context and are grammatically correct. On these uses of *tē*, see §13.5.2 and §13.5.3.2.

<i>Text #</i>	<i>Printed</i>	<i>Correct Reading</i>	<i>Note</i>
65:11	ʾār səbṭāt	ʾār wə-səbṭāt	Audio supports this. See §12.5.4.
66:2	əḏ hēm	əḏ-hēm	
66:4	xass mən	mən	Possibly. Audio supports this. See §5.4.
66:5	əḏ ʔənnáwn	əḏ-ʔənnáwn	
66:5	ləhīs	lə-hīs	
66:10	kəlē	ʔəlē	
66:10	ləhīs	lə-hīs	
66:10	ləwṭākəməh	l-əwṭākəməh	
67:4	šōwər	šāwər	Audio supports this.
67:5	ḏə-ğərábk	ḏə-ğərábk	
67:5	ʔəlān	ʔəlā	Audio supports this.
67:8	əl-tād	əl tād	
68:7	śəllīs	śəllīsən	Object agrees with fp <i>tēfər</i> . Audio supports this.
68:10	ğəgēn	ğīgēn	For other options, see §2.1.6.
68:15	amgərēt	amgəmrēt	Audio supports this.
69:5	l-ād əl ləhāḱəm	l-ād ləhāḱəm	Audio supports this.
69:5	ḏə-šənīs	ḏə-šanīs	Audio supports this.
69:5	l-ʔərayb aḱāhəm	ʔərayb l-aḱāhəm	Audio supports this.
69:6	əl faḱḱ	əl-faḱḱ	
69:7	ḏə-yəsbiwəh	ḏə-səbiwəh	Probably. Audio supports this.
69:7	əl-šəh	əl šəh	
69:8	ḏə-həbēr	ḏə-həbēr	
69:8	zəgəd	ḏə-zəgəd	Audio supports this.
70:2	əl-wágəbkəm	əl awágəbkəm	Audio supports this.
70:2	ləhīs	lə-hīs	
70:3	kəlēm	ʔəlēm	
70:4	wə-ṭəbərīs	wə-yəṭəbrəs	Possibly. Audio supports this. ¹⁴
70:4	u-wbədəh	wə-yələbdəh	Possibly. Audio supports this. ¹⁵

¹⁴ The perfect *ṭəbərīs* is grammatically possible here, but the fact that the preceding and following verbs are imperfects (used in a past narrative) suggests that the audio reflects the correct text.

¹⁵ Like *ṭəbərīs* (see the previous note), *wbədəh* is preceded by an imperfect.

Text #	Printed	Correct Reading	Note
70:5	<i>ləwʔakəməh</i>	<i>l-əwʔakəməh</i>	
70:8	<i>w-waʔkam</i>	<i>wə-waʔkam</i>	
70:8	<i>aʃdəḳā</i>	<i>asdəḳā</i>	Audio supports this. Cf. correction to 18:13, but see also §5.4, n. 12.
71:2	<i>əl-yərtōḳi</i>	<i>əl yərtōḳi</i>	
71:3	<i>amxəbəy</i>	<i>amxəbəyi</i>	Audio supports this.
71:3	<i>ḏə wə-kō</i>	<i>ḏē wə-kō</i>	Audio supports this.
71A:2	<i>əl fēməh</i>	<i>əl-fēməh</i>	
72:1	<i>ʔayʔ</i>	<i>ʔāt</i>	Audio supports this. ¹⁶
72:2	<i>lə ḥō</i>	<i>lə-ḥō</i>	
72:3	<i>əḏ-wəzūm</i>	<i>ḏē wəzūm</i>	See §3.4.
72:3	<i>ḏ-əwzūm</i>	<i>ḏē wəzūm</i>	See §3.4.
72:3	<i>hē</i>	<i>hē</i>	Probably. Audio supports this. See §11.9, n. 4.
72:3	<i>ləwʔakəməh</i>	<i>l-əwʔakəməh</i>	
72:3	<i>karš</i>	<i>ḳarš</i>	
72:4	<i>əl fēm</i>	<i>əl-fēm</i>	
72:5	<i>ləḥō</i>	<i>lə-ḥō</i>	
72:5	<i>aḡīgēn ḏə-wbūd</i>	<i>aḡīgēn ḏē wəbūd</i>	Probably. Audio supports this. ¹⁷
72:5	<i>wə- ḏə-nəšəḡbōr</i>	<i>wə-ḏə-nəšəḡbōr</i>	
72:6	<i>əl fēm</i>	<i>əl-fēm</i>	
73:3	<i>kəru</i>	<i>ḳəru</i>	
73:5	<i>əl ʔāt</i>	<i>əl-ʔāt</i>	
73:8	<i>ləḥīs</i>	<i>lə-hīs</i>	
73:11	<i>əḏ hātīm</i>	<i>əḏ-hātīm</i>	
74:3	<i>əl-bīs</i>	<i>əl bīs</i>	
74:9	<i>əl-ḡātərbəm</i>	<i>əl ḡātərbəm</i>	
74:10	<i>əḏ ḡədhōt</i>	<i>əḏ-ḡədhōt</i>	
74:13	<i>l-ənkáthəm</i>	<i>əl ənkáthəm</i>	
74:14	<i>əl-ḡātərbəm</i>	<i>əl ḡātərbəm</i>	

¹⁶ The audio actually has *ʔāt mənīn*, while the text has *ʔayʔ mənḳáy* (corrected to *ʔāt mənḳáy*). The form *ʔayʔ* (feminine) is grammatically incorrect here, but *mənḳáy* (with a 1cd suffix) is correct. We have to assume that the original speaker could have said *mənḳáy* and that the reader could have mistakenly read *mənīn* (with a 1cp suffix). Also note that the verb used (text and audio) is 1cp *nəḥōm* and not dual *ḥəmə*.

¹⁷ The audio actually has *aḡayḡ ḏē* ‘this man’, not *aḡīgēn ḏē* ‘this young man’, but both options are perfectly acceptable here, while *ḏə-wbūd* is awkward.

<i>Text #</i>	<i>Printed</i>	<i>Correct Reading</i>	<i>Note</i>
74:14	<i>l-ənkátən</i>	<i>əl ənkátən</i>	
74:19	<i>nkōh</i>	<i>nkō</i>	Audio supports this. See §3.2.3, n. 3.
74:21	<i>əl-nəkátki</i>	<i>əl nəkátki</i>	
74:23	<i>’ād əl hē tāmūm</i>	<i>’ādəh əl tāmūm</i>	Audio supports this.
74:24	<i>əð nūka</i>	<i>əð-nūka</i>	
75:2	<i>əmkəwrətəh</i>	<i>əmkəwrətəh</i>	Audio supports this.
75:2	<i>wəḳaytəh</i>	<i>wəḳayta</i>	The form must be a fs participle.
75:2	<i>hāl ḡayg</i>	<i>hāl aḡayg</i>	Audio supports this.
75:7	<i>əmkwáyṛəs</i>	<i>ð-əmkwáyṛəs</i>	Audio supports this.
75:7	<i>w-’āmōr</i>	<i>w-’āmōr</i>	
75:8	<i>əl xā</i>	<i>əl-xā</i>	
75:10	<i>w-’ād</i>	<i>wə-l-’ād</i>	Audio supports this.
75:10	<i>’ār fáḳək tay ’ār</i>	<i>əl fáḳək tay ’ār</i>	Audio supports this.
75:12	<i>əl xā</i>	<i>əl-xā</i>	
75:14	<i>(yə)śnēm</i>	<i>yəśnēm</i>	Audio supports this.
75:14	<i>əl xā</i>	<i>əl-xā</i>	
75:15	<i>əl-sē</i>	<i>əl sē</i>	
75:16	<i>əl ḥayd</i>	<i>əl-ḥayd</i>	
75:17	<i>ðə-ḥəftōk</i>	<i>ḥəftōk</i>	Possibly. Audio supports this.
75:17	<i>əl ḥayd</i>	<i>əl-ḥayd</i>	
75:18	<i>əl xā</i>	<i>əl-xā</i>	
75:23	<i>ḡənáy</i>	<i>ḡənáy</i>	
75:25	<i>bə-ḡiggēn</i>	<i>bə-ḡiggēn</i>	
76:3	<i>əl-wádak</i>	<i>əl wádak</i>	
76:3	<i>əl-təṣawləḥ</i>	<i>əl təṣawləḥ</i>	
76:6	<i>əl-wádak</i>	<i>əl wádak</i>	
76:6	<i>əl-təṣawləḥ</i>	<i>əl təṣawləḥ</i>	
76:7	<i>əl-təṣawləḥ</i>	<i>əl təṣawləḥ</i>	
76:9	<i>lə-wṭákməh śīni</i>	<i>l-əwṭákməh, śīni</i>	
76:10	<i>əl-kūsa</i>	<i>əl kūsa</i>	
76:11	<i>lə-šəkrō</i>	<i>wə-šəkrō</i>	Audio supports this.
76:11	<i>əl šihəm šīwōṭ</i>	<i>əl šihəm əl šīwōṭ</i>	Audio supports this.
76:11	<i>əl-təkūsa</i>	<i>əl təkūsa</i>	
76:11	<i>w-əl ’əḥād</i>	<i>wə-l-’əḥād</i>	
77:1	<i>ḳərayb əmgərīr</i>	<i>ḳərayb l-əmgərīr</i>	Audio supports this. See §8.12, n. 6.

<i>Text #</i>	<i>Printed</i>	<i>Correct Reading</i>	<i>Note</i>
77:5	ðēh	ðe	Audio supports this. See §3.4.
77:6	wə-hō wəḥayk	wə-həwḥayk	Audio supports this. ¹⁸
77:8	həh bər	hē bər	Audio supports this.
77:8	l-yədōbəh	əl yədōbəh	
77:8	mənwikən	mənwikəm	Audio supports this.
78:1	əl xaffəh	əl-xaffəh	
81:1	k-ʾāšər	ʾāšər	Possibly. Audio supports this. See §8.11, end.
81:5	əl-yəbáydyd	əl yəbáydyd	
82:1	ǵələk	ǵələk	
82:2	ðə-yəhəbšáwr	əl yəhəbšáwr	Audio supports this.
82:2	aǵayg	ǵayg	Audio supports this. See §13.5.1.1, n. 11.
82:4	ðə-ʾādən	ðə-ʾādən əl	Audio supports this.
82:4	ð-yāfērērən	ð-ʾāfērūr	Audio supports this. ¹⁹
82:4	həhtámk	həthámk	
83:3	xāhe	xā-hē	See §8.20.
83:4	lʾād	l-ʾād	
83:7	əl-bər	əl bər	
84:1	ḥəmbəráwtən	əmbəráwtən	Probably. Audio unclear. See §4.4.
84:7	fərōk	fərōk	
84:9	l-ātōši	əl ātōši	
85:4	bər-ḥədáydas	bər-ḥədáydas	Audio supports this. Cf. 85:9.
85:4	xəwfēt	xəwfēt	This error is also in <i>ML</i> , p. 440.
85:5	xəwfēt	xəwfēt	
85:5	tōli	təwōli	Audio supports this.
85:6	aǵəggənōt	aǵəggənōt	
85:7	xəwfēt	xəwfēt	

¹⁸ The form here must be a 1cs perfect of the H-Stem verb *həwḥū* ‘come to help’. The form *wəḥayk* does not exist.

¹⁹ Even though we could conceivably find an imperfect here, *yāfērērən* is not the correct imperfect form, which is *yāfērūr* (or *yāfirūr*); see the *ML* (p. lxix and p. 14).

<i>Text #</i>	<i>Printed</i>	<i>Correct Reading</i>	<i>Note</i>
85:9	<i>azéfarátš</i>	<i>azéfaráts</i>	Audio supports this. ²⁰
85:9	<i>xəwfēt</i>	<i>xəwfēt</i>	
85:10	<i>xəwfēt</i>	<i>xəwfēt</i>	
85:15	<i>kəth¹ō</i>	<i>kəthō¹</i>	
85:16	<i>ağəggənōt</i>	<i>ağəgənōt</i>	Twice in this line.
85:20	<i>həbrātk?</i>	<i>həbrātk.</i>	This phrase is not a question. ²¹
85:35	<i>yəsdáds</i>	<i>yəsdádš</i>	Audio supports this.
85:35	<i>səb^ʿáyya</i>	<i>ðə-səb^ʿáyya</i>	Audio supports this. Cf. 85:16, 19.
85:37	<i>ðə-həbráy</i>	<i>ðe həbráy</i>	See §3.4.
87:1	<i>əl sənáyn</i>	<i>lə-sənáyn</i>	
87:1	<i>w-əl ašəfēf</i>	<i>wə-l-ašəfēf</i>	
87:1	<i>ðə-həh</i>	<i>ðə-hē</i>	Possibly. See §3.1, end.
87:5	<i>b əð-kəhēb</i>	<i>bə-ð-kəhēb</i>	
87:5	<i>əð mən</i>	<i>əð-mən</i>	
88:9	<i>h-ağawf</i>	<i>ağawf</i>	Possibly. See §10.2, n. 3.
88:13	<i>əl-wádak</i>	<i>əl wádak</i>	
88:13	<i>bəh</i>	<i>ð-bəh</i>	Audio supports this.
89:5	<i>l-izáyṭ</i>	<i>əl izáyṭ</i>	
89:11	<i>əl-nəğōrəb</i>	<i>əl nəğōrəb</i>	
89:13	<i>l-əwzəmōna</i>	<i>əl əwzəmōna</i>	
89:17	<i>l-əwzəmōna</i>	<i>əl əwzəmōna</i>	
89:21	<i>l-əsənisən</i>	<i>əl əsənisən</i>	
89:22	<i>bə-səkən</i>	<i>l-səkən</i>	Audio supports this.
89:26	<i>ənká-w-boh</i>	<i>ənká əw-bō</i>	
89:27	<i>əl-hámsən</i>	<i>əl hámsən</i>	
89:32	<i>l-yəsyūr</i>	<i>əl yəsyūr</i>	
89:34	<i>sīš</i>	<i>šīs</i>	Audio supports this.
90:2	<i>əl hō</i>	<i>əl-hō</i>	

²⁰ The 2fs suffix *-š* of the text is not expected here, while the 3fs suffix *-s* heard on the audio is expected. A few words later, we meet another 2fs form, *tīš*, this time supported by the audio. This is ok; it seems that the speaker (in the story) has shifted from talking about the addressee to talking directly to the addressee. To accommodate this, the single close-quotation mark should be moved from the end of the line to after the word *xəwfēt*.

²¹ The correct translation of the passage is ‘I want you to give me your daughter in marriage’.

<i>Text #</i>	<i>Printed</i>	<i>Correct Reading</i>	<i>Note</i>
90:2	<i>əl-hīwəl</i>	<i>l-əhīwəl</i>	Cf. 98:1. ²²
90:5	<i>lūk</i>	<i>hūk</i>	Probably. Audio supports this. Cf. 90:4, and see §8.8, end.
90:8	<i>xā hēm</i>	<i>xā-hēm</i>	
90:11	<i>təšāməni</i>	<i>šāməni</i>	Possibly. See §12.5.5, n. 3.
91:14	<i>fənwikən</i>	<i>fənwikəm</i>	Audio supports this. ²³
91:15	<i>wə-ʾəḥād</i>	<i>l-ʾəḥād</i>	Audio supports this.
91:18	<i>mən xayr</i>	<i>mən ġayr</i>	See §8.7.
91:22	<i>kəlātḱ h-aġáyġ</i>	<i>kəlātḱ l-aġáyġ</i>	Probably. Audio supports this. ²⁴
91:23	<i>xəṭáwrḱiən</i>	<i>xəṭáwrḱiyən</i>	
91:24	<i>xəṭáwrḱiən</i>	<i>xəṭáwrḱiyən</i>	Twice in this line.
91:25	<i>xəṭáwrḱiən</i>	<i>xəṭáwrḱiyən</i>	
91:26	<i>l-əmšənhərūtən</i>	<i>əl əmšənhərūtən</i>	
91:28	<i>əl-tšōm</i>	<i>əl tšōm</i>	
91:29	<i>l-əsūməḥ</i>	<i>əl əsūməḥ</i>	
91:30	<i>wə-kō lə</i>	<i>wə-kō əl</i>	
91:30	<i>xəṭáwrḱiən</i>	<i>xəṭáwrḱiyən</i>	
91:30	<i>l-əwzámḱ</i>	<i>əl wəzámḱ</i>	
92:1	<i>ʾāśáwr</i>	<i>ʾāśáwr</i>	
92:3	<i>wa-yəṭáyḷ</i>	<i>w-ayəṭáyḷ</i>	Cf. 99:1.
92:4	<i>həġūm təh</i>	<i>həġūm ləh</i>	Probably. Audio supports this. ²⁵
92:4	<i>d-yəšnáwṣən</i>	<i>ḏ-yəšnáwṣən</i>	
93:5	<i>yəttáman</i>	<i>ḏ-yəttáman</i>	Probably. Audio supports this.
94:3	<i>əšxáwwəl</i>	<i>l-əšxáwwəl</i>	Probably. See §7.1.3, n. 3.
94:4	<i>əšxáwwəl</i>	<i>l-əšxáwwəl</i>	Probably. See §7.1.3, n. 3.

²² Stroemer's footnote to the form in 90:2 can be replaced with: ML *wly*.

²³ Hence the translation should read 'ahead of you', not 'ahead of us'. If it were the latter, the Mehri would be *fənwīn*.

²⁴ However, this may simply be a mistake on the part of the reader on the audio, since the verb *kəlūt* is nearly always followed by *l-*, rather than *h-*. See §8.8 and §8.12.

²⁵ Everywhere else in the texts (about ten times), the verb *həġūm* takes *l-* before an object (*təh* would be a d.o.), so it seems likely that the reader on the audio is not in error here.

Text #	Printed	Correct Reading	Note
94:5	<i>tabdēdi</i>	<i>tabdēd</i>	Probably. No audio found. ²⁶
94:6	<i>lā tādōr</i>	<i>l-ʾād tādōr</i>	Probably. See §13.2.1. ²⁷
94:6	<i>l-ədōr</i>	<i>əl ədōr</i>	
94:6	<i>l-əḵawdər</i>	<i>əl əḵawdər</i>	
94:9	<i>əśxáwwəl</i>	<i>l-əśxáwwəl</i>	Probably. See §7.1.3, n. 3.
94:11	<i>šay</i>	<i>šəh</i>	šay does not fit the context.
94:15	<i>təšwēdan</i>	<i>təšwēd</i>	Probably. No audio found. ²⁸
94:20	<i>l-āmárk</i>	<i>əl āmárk</i>	
94:24	<i>lə sēkən</i>	<i>lə-sēkən</i>	
94:25	<i>l-axáyr</i>	<i>əl axáyr</i>	
94:26	<i>əsyēr</i>	<i>l-əsyēr</i>	Probably. See §7.1.3, n. 3.
94:28	<i>l-yəsəlawl</i>	<i>əl yəsəlawl</i>	
94:28	<i>ağərōyhəm</i>	<i>ağərōyhən</i>	Probably. No audio found.
94:31	<i>əl-bōdək</i>	<i>əl bōdək</i>	
94:38	<i>l-yəsyáwr</i>	<i>əl yəsyáwr</i>	
94:39	<i>l-yəsyáwr</i>	<i>əl yəsyáw</i>	
94:42	<i>xāháh</i>	<i>xā-hē</i>	
94:42	<i>ḏə</i>	<i>əḏə</i>	
95, n. 1	Cf...	ML gww (p. 126)	
95:1	<i>lə ḥəməh</i>	<i>lə-ḥəməh</i>	
95:5	<i>əl ḥābū</i>	<i>əl-ḥābū</i>	
96:3	<i>kəlē</i>	<i>ḵəlē</i>	
96:5	<i>yəhəḵāša</i>	<i>yəhəḵōša</i>	Probably. No audio found. ²⁹
97:15	<i>wə-l</i>	<i>wə-əl</i>	
97:15	<i>wə-rədd</i>	<i>wə-rəd</i>	
97:22	<i>l-səyərš</i>	<i>əl səyərš</i>	
97:28	<i>həfsəḥən</i>	<i>həfsəḥəm</i>	Possibly. No audio found. ³⁰

²⁶ Assuming that this is a 2fs subjunctive, this form should not have a final -i; see the ML (p. xxxiv). This is discussed by Wagner (2001: 345).

²⁷ On the unexpected and probably erroneous 2fs imperfect form *tədōr*, see the discussion in Wagner (2001: 345). The expected form is *tədayri*.

²⁸ After *təḥaymi*, we expect the subjunctive form *təšwēd* (§7.3), but *təšwēdan* is an imperfect (ML, p. lxiv).

²⁹ The ML, p. 241 (s.v. $\sqrt{\text{ks}}$), gives the imperfect of this H-Stem verb as *yəhəḵōša*, obviously a typographical error for *yəhəḵōša*. This is the expected form based on the paradigm given for *ḥərbā* in the ML, p. xli.

³⁰ Given that this command is addressed to *bəʿēli šarḥ* ‘the party-goers’, we expect here the mp imperative *həfsəḥəm*, rather than the fp *həfsəḥən*. However, in a parallel passage earlier in the story (99:15), the speaker specifically addresses ‘the women (of the party)’, so perhaps the fp imperative is really intended here. In the Yemeni Mehri

Text #	Printed	Correct Reading	Note
97:31	<i>kālētəm</i>	<i>kālētən</i>	Expect fp form. No audio found.
97:37	<i>amşarrək!</i>	<i>amşarrək</i>	The following subjunctive is part of the same sentence.
97:41	<i>wə-ʾəśś</i>	<i>wə-ʾəś</i>	
97:42	<i>əl ḥaybəh</i>	<i>əl-ḥaybəh</i>	
97:45	<i>ḏə-həh</i>	<i>ḏə-hē</i>	
97:51	<i>əl hāl</i>	<i>əl-hāl</i>	
98:4	<i>lā tənkei</i>	<i>l-ʾād tənkei</i>	Probably. See §13.2.1.
98:11	<i>lū wádaš</i>	<i>əl wádaš</i>	Probably. See §13.4.3, end.
98:12	<i>wə-l ʾəḥād</i>	<i>wə-l-ʾəḥād</i>	
99:4	<i>aṭayṭ</i>	<i>ḏ-ṭayṭ</i>	Probably. No audio found.
99:11	<i>əl-meśəš</i>	<i>əl meśəš</i>	
99:13	<i>mət</i>	<i>mən</i>	See §13.5.3.1, end.
99:21	<i>lə kawb</i>	<i>lə-kawb</i>	
99:35	<i>ṭall</i>	<i>ṭal</i>	
99:37	<i>wə-ḏə xətáwn</i>	<i>wə-ḏə-xətáwn</i>	
99:46	<i>əl-nakš</i>	<i>l-ənkēš</i>	Probably. No audio found. ³¹
99:48	<i>lə xaṭṭ</i>	<i>lə-xaṭ</i>	
100:5	<i>əl háməlak</i>	<i>l-əháməlak</i>	
100:7	<i>ḏə-ḥārōs</i>	<i>ḏə-hārōs</i>	
101:14	<i>arəžəš</i>	<i>ʾārəžəš</i>	
102:7	<i>ʾār ənkōna</i>	<i>ʾār w-ənkōna</i>	Possibly. See §12.5.4.
103:3	<i>əl-šēš</i>	<i>l-āšēš</i>	
103:4	<i>əl-ḳáwdər</i>	<i>əl əḳáwdər</i>	
104:5	<i>əl ḥarāsis</i>	<i>əl-ḥarāsis</i>	
104, n. 1	not in the ML	ML <i>šḳš</i> (p. 378) ³²	

version of this story, on which the Omani version is based (Müller 1902: 121 = 1907: 40; Bittner 1914b: 14), we find, instead of an imperative, a 1cp perfect, *fsāḥən*. In Omani Mehri, the 1cp perfect would be *həfsəḥən*. In the Ḥarsusi version of this text (Stroemer 2004: 46, text 8:28), we also find a 1cp perfect, *afsahən*. The difference in tenses is probably due to the different meanings of this verb in the dialects. In Yemeni Mehri, the H-Stem of *ʾfsh* means ‘stop’ or ‘dismiss’, while in Omani Mehri (and Jibbali), it means ‘leave off, stop doing’ (cf. *ML*, p. 103). Johnstone (*HL*, p. 35) defines the Ḥarsusi cognate as ‘waste time’.

³¹ The verb here has to be a 1cs subjunctive of *nūka*, plus a 2fs object suffix. We expect this to have the form *l-ənkēš*, as found in 99:43 (cf. also *nənkēk*, 20:78; *tənkēs*, 40:15).

³² The word to which this footnote refers is *məšḳayš* (104:5), which is given in the *ML* as *məšḳayš* (with non-glottalic *k*). It is unclear which form is correct. The transla-

<i>Text #</i>	<i>Printed</i>	<i>Correct Reading</i>	<i>Note</i>
104:6	<i>lāhīs</i>	<i>lā-hīs</i>	
104:22	<i>həyḏāntihəm</i>	<i>ḥəyḏāntihəm</i>	
104:23	<i>həyḏāntihəm</i>	<i>ḥəyḏāntihəm</i>	
104:28	<i>əl-yənáfam</i>	<i>əl yənáfam</i>	
104:28	<i>əl-wīḳa</i>	<i>əl wīḳa</i>	

One final comment: In the audio of text 17, all the duals of the first few lines are read as plurals by the reader on the audio tape. Presumably, the duals were used by the original speaker, but the reader replaced them with the plural forms that came more naturally to him.

tion given in the text is 'eastwards' and in the *ML*, 'sunrise, east'. Interestingly, the corresponding passage in the Ḥarsusi version of this text (Stroomeer 2004: 18, text 3:5) has *məḡarrəbīn* 'westwards' (though this word is not in the *HL*). A. Lonnet suggests (p.c.) that *məṣḳayš* refers to a geographical area, which is in the east from a Mehri perspective and in the west from the perspective of Ḥarsusi speakers, who live in the northeastern area of Dhofar or in the Wusta region to the east of Dhofar.

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 11 7.1.3; 11.6
 12 3.4; 11.6
 13 7.1.6; 8.12
 14 12.5.9
 15 7.1.10.1; 13.5.3.2, n. 16
 16 3.4; 13.1; 13.5.3.2
 17 5.5.3
 20 13.5.1.1 (2x)

Text 47

2 10.5; 12.4; 13.5.3.2
 3 8.21
 4 8.11; 13.3.1.2
 5 12.5.6; 13.5.1
 6 7.1.10.1
 8 13.2.1
 9 13.2.2
 11 3.5.1; 7.1.6; 7.1.10.1; 8.8; 8.12
 (2x); 12.5.4; 13.2.4
 12 4.6; 5.3
 14 7.1.2

Text 48

general 9.3, n. 4

1 8.2
 2 9.5; 12.4
 3 8.12; 8.15; 9.5
 5 8.2; 8.15; 11.2; 13.3.2
 6 7.1.1; 8.9; 8.12; 9.1.3; 12.1.1;
 12.4
 7 2.1.5; 13.3.1.1
 8 8.12; 11.4
 9 12.5.6
 11 3.6; 8.2
 12 8.13; 11.2
 13 4.3, n. 5; 8.2; 8.15; 14

14 4.3, n. 5; 8.19
 16 8.2
 17 7.1.10.1; 8.5; 8.16
 18 12.4
 19 8.2; 8.9
 23 3.2.3; 3.6; 8.13; 9.3; 12.1.4
 24 9.3 (2x); 12.5.17
 25 9.3
 26 4.4; 8.3; 13.5.3.2
 27 3.6; 8.21
 28 3.2.3; 8.5
 30 12.1.2; 12.5.4
 31 3.4 (3x); 8.21
 33 12.1.1; 12.4

Text 49

1 12.5.11; 13.3.1
 3 7.3.1
 5 8.4; 13.2.1; 13.4.1
 10 7.1.2; 13.2.5
 11 8.12
 16 7.1.3

Text 50

1 7.1.2; 7.3; 9.1.1; 13.3.1.1
 2 11.1
 3 3.7; 8.3
 4 12.3; 13.5.3.3 (2x)
 5 5.4; 5.4, n. 9

Text 52

1 12.5.8
 2 5.4; 8.13
 3 3.2.3, n. 2; 12.5.12
 4 7.1.4
 6 7.3; 12.5.4; 13.4.1
 7 11.5
 9 13.5.1.1
 10 7.1.10.1
 11 7.1.10.1; 11.7
 12 5.5.3

13 3.4

15 8.1; 13.2.2; 13.5.3.3

16 12.1.2

17 8.1; 13.2.2

18 3.2.3

Text 53

1 9.3; 9.5; 10.1; 13.5.1.2

3 7.1.7; 13.5.2

4 3.2.3; 3.3; 7.1.3

6 7.1.10.1, n. 20; 9.4; 12.1.1;
12.5.1; 13.3.1.2

13 12.5.12

Text 54

1 5.5.4

2 13.5.3.1

3 3.5.1; 3.5.3; 12.1.4; 13.5.3.1

4 7.3.3

6 10.2

7 3.4

9 5.3; 12.5.14

11 8.13; 12.5.14

13 7.3.4; 12.5.6; 13

14 5.1

15 12.5.1

16 7.3.1

17 8.6; 8.17; 13.5.1

18 7.1.3; 12.1.4; 13.4.1

19 2.1.5; 7.1.10.2

20 13.2.2

Text 55

2 8.11

4 3.2.3, n. 4

5 7.1.2; 13.5.3.1

7 7.1.4; 13.1.1; 13.4.3

9 13.1.2; 13.4.2

10 7.1.6; 13.4.2

16 13.2.1

Text 56

1 11.9

2 8.3

5 11.7

8 13.3.2; 13.5.2

9 13.2.5

10 13.2.5

11 13.4.1, n. 7

14 13.2.5, n. 3

Text 57

4 4.5; 13.2.1

5 12.5.17

6 13.5.1.1

7 8.13

8 2.1.5; 7.1.5; 7.1.10.1; 7.1.10.2

9 11.5; 12.5.17

10 7.1.10.2

11 13.2.2

12 3.5.5; 12.5.12

13 7.1.3

14 3.4

Text 58

1 5.5.4

2 12.5.3

4 13.5.2

8 8.21

9 2.1.5; 10.5

Text 59

general 1.1, n. 4.

1 7.3.3; 13.2.2

2 13.5.3.2

6 7.1.10.1

8 12.3

9 12.5.6

10 7.1.10.2; 13.2.1

11 7.1.10.2; 12.5.4

13 3.5.5

14 3.7

Text 60

- 1 4.3.1, n. 9; 8.6
- 3 4.5
- 4 3.3; 9.1.1
- 5 3.2.3; 7.1.5; 9.1.4
- 6 4.2; 12.5.3
- 7 13.2.2
- 8 3.2.3; 4.3.1; 5.3; 9.1.1; 13.2.1;
13.2.5; 13.2.5, n. 3
- 9 14
- 10 5.3; 8.15; 13.5.3.2
- 11 7.1.3
- 13 12.5.12; 14

Text 61

- 1 10.5; 13.1.1
- 4 3.1; 13.2.1
- 5 3.7
- 6 7.1.10.1; 12.5.3; 13.5.2
- 7 13.4.3
- 8 5.4
- 9 3.5.4; 5.4; 13.1.1

Text 62

- 1 13.3.1.2
- 3 7.3
- 4 3.2.3; 4.4; 13.5.3.2 (2x)
- 7 7.1.2; 12.1.2; 12.5.4
- 12 14
- 13 3.4; 13.5.3.3

Text 63

- 1 3.4; 5.5.3
- 2 8.2
- 3 3.2.3
- 4 7.1.10.1, n. 21; 11.3
- 6 3.6; 12.5.10
- 8 8.15; 12.4
- 9 7.1.10.2
- 12 7.1.10.2

- 13 3.7; 3.8.1; 7.1.10.1; 8.21; 10.2
- 15 7.3.4; 12.5.6
- 16 4.6

Text 64

- 1 7.1.8; 8.5; 8.8
- 2 12.5.18
- 3 12.5.4; 13.2.6
- 6 2.1.5; 5.2, n. 7; 7.1.8
- 8 7.1.2; 7.1.3; 13.2.2
- 9 4.6, n. 25
- 10 13.3.1.1
- 11 3.8.4; 9.1.4
- 12 12.5.14
- 15 12.5.19; 13.2.1
- 16 3.1
- 17 12.5.8
- 18 3.1; 8.12
- 19 7.1.8; 9.3 (2x)
- 21 3.6
- 25 12.5.16
- 26 7.1.8; 7.3.2; 12.5.16; 13.1.2
- 27 13.2.2
- 28 12.5.16
- 29 2.2.1; 7.1.7; 7.1.10.2; 13.2.2;
13.4.1; 13.5.3.3
- 30 7.1.2
- 33 9.1.1; 12.5.3

Text 65

- 1 3.5.2; 13.5.2
- 2 7.1.10.1; 11.3
- 3 7.1.3; 7.3.2
- 4 7.3.3
- 6 3.4; 5.5.4; 7.1.10.1
- 7 3.5.2; 5.5.3; 7.1.10.1; 13.3.1.1;
13.4.1; 13.4.1, n. 6
- 8 3.8.3; 4.3.3, n. 14; 5.1; 12.4;
12.5.9
- 9 3.1; 5.2, n. 6; 7.1.10.2; 11.4; 14
- 10 4.2; 8.9; 13.2.2

- 11 4.2; 7.1.7; 7.1.9; 12.5.4; 12.5.8;
13.4.1
- 12 4.2; 9.3
- 13 7.1.9; 11.2; 12.3; 14
- 14 3.4; 3.5.2; 7.1.8; 8.2
- 15 4.6; 9.1.1; 9.1.3; 9.1.5

Text 66

- 1 3.5.4; 3.8.1; 13.1.1
- 2 7.3.2; 12.4; 13.5.1.2
- 3 4.2; 7.3.2; 14
- 4 5.4 (2x); 9.1.4
- 7 5.4; 13.2.5
- 8 13.2.5
- 9 9.4
- 10 3.5.1; 5.5.3; 13.2.2

Text 67

- 1 7.1.3; 8.12, n. 5; 10; 10.5
- 2 7.1.5; 11.2; 13.2.1
- 3 5.5.4
- 5 3.5.1; 3.8.2; 3.8.5; 7.1.10.2
(2x); 13.2.1
- 6 3.8.2
- 8 3.1; 3.5.1; 3.8.3; 8.15; 13.1
- 9 3.5.4

Text 68

- 1 4.2
- 2 3.8.1; 10.1
- 3 8.12
- 5 8.11
- 6 4.2; 11.2; 13.5.2
- 9 2.1.5; 7.1.2
- 13 2.1.2; 13.1.1
- 14 2.1.3
- 16 13.5.1.1, n. 12

Text 69

- 2 8.11; 13.1
- 3 8.14; 9.3

- 4 13.1.1; 13.5.3.2; 13.5.3.3
- 5 9.1.4; 9.3; 9.5; 12.1.2; 13.2.2
- 6 5.4, n. 10; 13.2.5
- 7 5.5.4; 8.2
- 8 7.1.10.2; 9.4; 13.1.1

Text 70

- 2 4.3, n. 8; 5.5.3; 12.5.16
- 3 4.3, n. 8; 8.5; 9.1.1; 13.2.2
- 4 3.7
- 5 9.1.1
- 6 3.5.5; 3.8.4; 11.2; 14
- 7 5.4; 13.5.3.2

Text 71

- general 1.1, n. 4.
- 1 7.1.2; 14
- 2 7.1.10.2; 12.3; 12.5.17
- 3 7.1.5
- 4 3.8.1; 11.2

Text 71A

- 1 3.5.3; 4.2 (2x); 5.1; 5.5.3; 9.1.1;
12.1.3; 12.5.3; 12.5.10; 13.1.2

Text 72

- 1 4.2; 11.3
- 2 3.2.3; 4.2; 5.5.4; 8.5; 11.4
- 3 3.4 (2x); 3.8.1; 9.1.3; 11.9, n. 4;
12.5.6
- 4 8.12; 13.1.1
- 5 3.4; 11.4
- 6 4.4; 4.4, n. 23; 9.4; 10.5

Text 73

- general 4.3, n. 7
- 1 7.3.3
- 2 8.7; 14
- 3 12.1.2
- 4 3.8.1; 13.2.1
- 5 3.1; 4.3, n. 7; 4.6; 5.5.1; 7.1.4,

- n. 9; 12.5.4; 13.2.1; 13.3.1
- 6 8.9; 8.21; 12.5.6
- 8 9.3
- 9 9.3
- 10 9.3
- 11 3.8.1; 5.5.4; 12.5.4; 13.5.1.2
- 12 3.1; 3.5.3; 5.3

Text 74

- 1 7.3.3; 8.7; 12.5.11
- 2 12.5.1; 14 (2x)
- 3 3.4; 10.5; 13.5.3.1
- 4 7.1.3; 9.1.5; 14
- 5 5.5.3; 7.1.6; 8.2; 10.1
- 6 3.8.3
- 7 3.8.2; 7.1.3; 11.3
- 8 12.5.6
- 9 3.7
- 10 3.8.4; 8.9; 13.1.1
- 11 13.5.1.1
- 12 3.8.3; 7.3.2; 12.1.1; 12.5.3
- 13 7.1.3; 14
- 14 7.1.10.2; 7.3.2
- 15 5.3
- 16 13.5.3.3
- 17 2.1.5; 11.6; 13.5.3.2
- 18 7.1.5
- 19 3.2.3, n. 3; 11.5; 13.5.3.2
- 20 3.8.1; 3.8.3; 10; 11.6; 13.5.1.1
- 21 11.2; 11.6
- 22 3.1; 7.1.5; 11.2
- 23 3.1; 3.4; 13.1; 13.2.2
- 24 3.5.3

Text 75

- general 1.2, n. 11
- 1 8.12; 12.4
- 2 13.5.1.1
- 3 4.6; 13.4.1, n. 3
- 4 3.8.1; 8.8
- 5 11.3

- 6 2.1.5; 3.2.3; 3.8.1; 4.1, n. 2; 9.1.4; 11.6
- 7 3.2.3; 3.8.1; 4.1, n. 2; 8.11; 13.5.3.3; 14
- 8 3.8.1; 12.4; 12.5.6; 13.1.1
- 10 4.1, n. 2; 4.3.2; 12.4; 12.5.3; 13.2.2
- 11 11.2; 11.3; 13.3.1
- 12 12.5.3
- 13 4.3.2, n. 10
- 14 12.5.3
- 15 13.2.1
- 16 8.12
- 17 7.3.4; 10; 13.5.3.2
- 18 7.3.4; 8.12 (2x); 10; 12.5.6; 12.5.13
- 21 3.1; 12.5.13
- 22 2.1.5; 13.2.1
- 23 7.1.2; 7.1.5; 8.17; 12.3
- 24 3.6; 12.5.4
- 25 8.2

Text 76

- general 1.2, n. 11
- 1 3.8.4; 7.1.8; 12.4; 13.2.1
- 3 11.6; 13.2.2
- 4 3.1; 4.4
- 5 3.8.1; 5.4; 12.1.4
- 7 3.1
- 9 12.5.1
- 11 7.1.3; 8.1; 8.10; 13.1.1; 13.2.1; 13.5.1.1
- 12 3.4; 7.3.2; 13.4.1; 13.5.1.1; 13.5.1.2; 13.5.3.1; 14
- 13 4.4; 7.3.3
- 15 8.12
- 16 3.5.3
- 17 2.1.5; 3.5.4; 12.5.16

Text 77

- 1 8.10; 8.12, n. 6; 13.5.3.3

- 2 7.1.2; 7.1.10.1; 13.2.5
- 3 3.8.1; 7.1.2; 9.1.3; 12.5.4;
13.5.3.3
- 4 3.5.2; 6.2; 8.14; 12.5.9; 12.5.19;
13.5.2
- 5 3.4 (2x); 7.1.10.2; 8.8; 8.11;
13.3.1
- 6 7.1.6; 7.1.10.1; 7.3.4; 12.5.6;
13.5.3.2
- 7 3.1
- 8 3.7; 8.22; 12.5.19; 13.5.1.1
- 9 7.3
- 10 4.2; 8.14

Text 78

- 1 8.12

Text 79

- 9 6.7; 13.2.2

Text 80

general 1.1, n. 4.

- 1 11.4
- 2 10.1; 11.4
- 4 3.8.1; 8.17
- 5 12.1.3
- 6 7.1.3; 8.12
- 7 13.3.2
- 9 11.6
- 13 11.6
- 14 2.2
- 15 12.5.4
- 16 11.6
- 19 10.4
- 20 11.4

Text 81

- 1 8.11; 10.3, n. 5; 13.3.1.2
- 2 13.5.1.1
- 3 7.1.7; 7.1.10.2; 12.5.11;
13.5.1.2

- 4 4.5; 9.1.1; 9.3

Text 82

- 1 4.5; 7.1.5; 13.5.1.2
- 2 10.5; 12.5.1; 13.5.1.1
- 3 3.1; 13.4.4; 14
- 4 7.1.9; 7.1.10.2; 11.2; 11.5;
13.2.2
- 5 6.5.2, n. 14

Text 83

- 1 7.1.6; 13.1
- 2 2.1.3; 7.1.2; 7.3.2; 13.4.1
- 3 4.5; 8.20; 13.5.3.1
- 4 11.1; 13.2.2
- 5 2.1.5; 12.5.15
- 6 12.5.4
- 7 7.1.4; 9.1.1 (2x); 13.4.3

Text 84

- 1 4.4; 8.8; 9.1.1; 9.2; 13.2.1
- 2 3.6
- 4 4.2; 7.1.10.1; 10; 13.2.5
- 5 3.8.1; 5.3
- 6 3.2.3; 6.3.1, n. 8
- 7 6.3.1, n. 8; 7.1.3; 7.1.10.2
- 8 3.6; 6.3.1, n. 8; 11.6
- 9 13.2.2
- 10 10.4

Text 85

- 1 13.3.1.1
- 2 7.1.5
- 3 7.3.3; 9.1.4; 11.4
- 4 4.4, n. 17; 7.1.10.1; 9.5; 11.5
- 5 3.2.3; 8.19; 9.1.4
- 7 4.3.2; 7.1.3; 9.5
- 8 9.1.4
- 10 4.3.2, n. 10; 4.4, n. 17
- 12 9.1.4
- 13 8.8

16 2.1.2
 17 3.5.2; 4.4; 7.3.3; 13.5.3.2
 18 4.4; 12.5.10
 22 3.6
 24 2.1.5; 14
 25 3.2.3
 27 5.5.3
 28 2.1.5; 12.4
 29 8.9; 12.5.4
 34 3.5.4; 5.5.3
 35 8.9
 37 3.4

Text 86

1 13.4.1; 13.4.2
 2 7.1.6; 13.4.1; 13.4.2
 3 7.1.6
 4 3.6
 6 8.16; 13.4.1; 13.4.2
 7 5.5.4
 9 13.5.3.1
 11 7.1.6

Text 87

1 3.1
 2 3.8.1
 4 5.2, n. 2

Text 88

1 9.1.1
 2 7.3.1
 3 7.3.1
 5 9.3; 12.4
 6 7.1.2
 7 4.2; 9.1.1; 13.3.2
 9 4.5 (2x); 10.2, n. 3
 11 3.8.4
 13 7.1.8

Text 89

1 12.5.11

2 5.5.4
 3 3.8.4; 7.1.2; 13.5.3.1
 4 3.1; 9.1.1
 5 7.1.7; 13.2.1; 13.5.1.1
 8 3.5.2; 12.5.4; 13.2.1
 9 7.1.10.1; 8.12
 11 3.1; 13.5.2
 12 2.1.5; 13.5.3.1
 13 2.1.5
 14 3.2.3; 7.3
 15 12.5.6
 16 11.2
 18 7.1.5; 13.2.2
 20 5.5.3
 21 6.5.4, n. 21
 22 8.2
 23 7.1.10.1
 24 13.5.3.3
 27 7.3
 31 7.2.11, n. 33; 9.3; 13.5.2
 32 8.16; 8.22; 11.2
 33 7.1.2; 13.4.4
 35 6.5.4, n. 21; 7.1.10.2, n. 22;
 13.5.1; 13.5.1.1

Text 90

1 8.5
 4 8.8; 8.12 (2x)
 5 8.8; 8.12
 6 3.4; 13.2.1
 8 8.20; 12.5.5, n. 3; 13.2.4
 11 12.5.5
 12 13.5.3.3
 13 7.1.3
 14 7.3; 11.2
 15 7.1.5; 7.1.6; 7.2.7; 9.3; 13.5.2

Text 91

1 4.4; 4.4, n. 23; 7.3; 8.8; 9.1.1
 2 13.3.1; 13.5.3.3; 14
 3 3.1; 13.1; 13.5.3.3; 14

4 2.1.3; 7.1.1; 13.5.3.3
 5 13.5.3.3
 6 7.3.2; 13.1.1
 7 11.3; 12.1.1
 8 3.1; 7.1.10.2; 8.2; 13.5.1, n. 9
 9 7.1.3; 7.1.5; 12.5.5
 10 3.5.2
 11 2.1.3; 7.3
 13 9.5
 14 3.8.1; 7.3.1; 8.6; 8.22; 13.3.2
 15 3.1; 7.1.2
 16 13.1.1; 13.3.1.2
 17 11.4
 18 3.8.1; 8.7
 19 12.5.8; 13.3.1.2
 20 12.3; 13.5.1.1
 22 3.1; 3.2.3
 24 12.1.4
 26 7.3.4; 12.5.6; 13.2.3
 27 9.3
 28 5.5.3; 7.1.8; 8.12
 29 3.1; 13.2.1
 30 3.3; 8.12; 13.5.1; 13.5.1.1, n. 12
 32 8.18; 13.2.2
 33 8.18

Text 92

1 9.1.1
 2 3.8.1; 8.21; 13.4.1, n. 6
 3 9.1.1; 9.3
 4 3.2.3; 9.3
 6 3.5.1; 8.13; 13.5.3.3

Text 93

2 12.1.4
 3 11.6; 13.1
 5 8.2
 6 3.1
 7 9.5

Text 94

2 7.1.3; 7.3.2
 3 6.7, n. 29; 7.1.3, n. 3
 4 6.7, n. 29; 7.1.2; 7.1.3, n. 3; 8.12
 5 13.1.2
 6 13.2.1
 8 3.5.5; 3.6; 13.5.1.1; 14
 9 6.5.1, n. 11; 6.7, n. 29; 7.1.3, n. 3
 10 6.5.1, n. 11
 13 8.12
 14 8.12
 15 6.4.1, n. 9; 7.1.5
 16 13.5.1
 17 3.5.2; 7.1.9; 13.4.1
 18 8.17; 13.2.3
 19 4.5; 7.3.2
 20 7.1.9; 13.5.1; 13.5.3.2
 21 2.1.5
 22 2.1.5; 7.1.10.2; 12.5.9
 23 3.4; 7.1.10.2
 24 13.5.3.2
 25 3.8.1; 7.1.7; 12.5.17
 26 7.1.3, n. 3; 12.5.4 (2x); 13.2.2
 28 3.8.2; 7.1.8; 14
 32 7.1.3
 33 4.6; 5.5.1; 10.1; 13.2.1
 34 3.2.3
 35 12.5.1; 13.3.1.2
 36 3.1; 3.2.3; 8.21; 13.1
 37 3.4; 3.5.2; 4.3, n. 8
 39 7.1.9; 12.5.15
 40 12.5.15
 41 3.2.3; 3.8.4; 4.5; 7.1.4
 42 13.1.1; 13.4.2; 13.5.1; 13.5.1.1
 43 3.2.3, n. 2; 3.6; 6.5.1, n. 13; 13.4.2
 45 11.2; 13.1
 46 13.5.1.1

47 6.5.2, n. 14; 12.5.9

48 2.1.3

Text 95

1 10.1

2 11.1

4 3.2.3; 8.4

5 8.6

6 11.2; 13.5.3.2

8 3.8.4

11 3.5.2; 5.3; 13.5.1.1; 13.5.3.1

Text 96

1 7.1.4; 13.2.2

2 13.4.1

3 14

4 12.1.3; 13.1.1

5 8.1; 8.2; 12.1.4; 13.1.1

7 7.1.2; 12.1.3; 13.2.1; 13.3.1.2;
13.5.1.2

Text 97

2 11.5

3 11.5

5 5.5.3

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42 12.3

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