

## Children of San'a

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Werner Arnold invited me to be his *Stellvertreterin* during his absence from Heidelberg in the winter semester 2003 – 2004. I stayed, together with my family, for the whole year and had the wonderful experience of working with Alexander. Three years and three months after his death I still miss him and sometimes, when my mind is somewhere else, expect to be able to consult him on some linguistic matter or other. He had fun in his life and in his research, and I think he would have liked these enthusiastic children and their stories of games and their everyday life.

Children are wonderful informants. They are full of energy and always keen to correct and repeat, where adults would have long since turned away in despair. Recording children is also very much a team activity – even when the researcher begins recording a single child, very soon others join in, or older children insist on correcting the information given by the younger child. In recent years I have recorded children in the Old City of San'a describing their everyday activities – particularly, but not exclusively, as this collection shows – games. Many of the old games described by Hussain al-Amri in Serjeant & Lewocks's great book on San'a (al-Amri 1983) continue to be played in some form or other. Some games have been introduced recently from other countries, as evidenced by the non-dialect forms for essential words in the game (see 5.1 with the use of *hūna* and *'ismik ēh*) – how these games arrived, though, I can only guess. In some cases, words from other languages form an essential part of the game, as in the English 'yes!' towards the end of the game *wagal* 'hopscotch', a game not described here but included in *Wasf Ṣanṣā': Texts in Ṣanṣānī Arabic* (Watson & Al-Amri 2000). My previous published texts on children's games have been recorded by adults, and in contrast to the adults' descriptions, the children describe in a very pro-active manner. The game is not only described, it is also played – and often carried on until I had fully understood the rules. In some cases, until I had won!

During recordings older children often begin by acting as if they are performing in front of the teacher, often avoiding more dialectal forms, younger children less so. The younger children have a tendency to speak very fast and list, as quickly as possible, all the terms they feel to be important. This we see with the younger boy's description of the house, and the game *guwaygif*. The texts are generally less well

structured than adult texts, often abbreviated with points taken for granted, and marked by frequent repetition. In many cases, the children are unaware what the chants used in games mean – rather like children today in England, who chant, but do not understand, rhymes such as ‘Ring a ring of roses’. A particular speech is almost inevitably concluded with the non-dialectal, but school-typical, words *wa-šukran*.

The type of filler and the degree to which fillers and conjunctions is generally an individual matter. In these texts we see that the older boy makes frequent use of *b-ismih* – literally, ‘what’s its name?’, while the girl uses *bašdā* and non-dialectal *bašdayn* ‘then’. One of my other young informants uses uninflected *w-irjaš* or *yirjaš* which has, in this as in many other Yemeni dialects (cf. Watson et al 2006), become grammaticalised to denote succession in terms of time – i.e. ‘then’. In texts recorded here, *yirjaš* and inflected *nirjaš* are used sparingly by the children in the grammaticalised sense of ‘then’.

This selection was recorded on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2006 by three children in a house in the Old City of San’a. It is presented in the order recorded. The children – one girl and two boys – were between the ages of nine and eleven, and all attend school. They have spent all their lives in San’a. The mother of one of the children had spent her pre-married childhood in Raymah, but her speech was relatively unaffected by the dialect of Raymah because her father insisted on her living a very sheltered early life. She married early into the Old City. Her speech is considered by San’ani women informants to be that typical of the Old City. The first text, by the elder boy, and the last text deal with caring for the household animals – the goats, which are cared for in the yard and which provide milk for the family, and the pigeons in the roof. For the games, the game was firstly played, or chanted by one of the children, and then described by another child – generally the older boy. In the texts, pauses are noted by /. Pre-pausal glottalisation (cf. Jastrow 1984, Watson & Asiri 2007) is attested in the speech of all three children, but is only noted here in the transcription when particularly salient. In the case of all three children, there is considerably voicing of non-geminate /t/ in all positions except where followed by a voiceless obstruent.

1 *Al-mašaz*

– *al-yawm iṭnay’n / at-tārīx šašarih ar-bašah alfayn u-sittih / b-ismih<sup>1</sup> / niṭḥākā ḍalḥīn šan al-mašaz innahū b-ismih al-mašaz innū nixarrijhin aš-šubḥ al-ḥawš /*

– *kam mašākum mašaz /*

– *mašānā ’arbaš / arbaš kibār / unṭā /*

1 The goats

Today is Monday. The date is 10<sup>th</sup> April 2006. What’s it called. We’re now going to talk about the goats, what’s it called, we let them out into the yard in the morning.

– How many goats do you have?

– We’ve got four. Four adults. Females.

1 The use of *b-ismih* ‘lit: what’s its name?’ is a frequent filler in the older boy’s speech, particularly when he speaks quickly.

*untā / wu-xamsih siyyāl zuḡā'r / wāḥidih kabīrih ddit iṭnayn iṭnayn bismih iṭnayn siyyā'l / wu-wāḥidih bismih iddit untā' / wa-l-bāḡī 'untā talāt / mā bilā wāḥidi ddit tuyūs / baṣḍ nixarriḡhin aṣ-ṣubḡ fi l-ḥawš yu'kulayn bismih yu'kulayn yu'kulayn ḥaṭāwir<sup>2</sup> wa-yu'kulayn gaḍb wa-yu'kulayn<sup>3</sup> kiftih / al-kiftih kun niddī min ṣind al-ṣiris / lā biḥ ṣiris nikun nisīr niddīh / wa-nxarriḡhin aṣ-ṣubḡ ṣa-njiss nixallīhin lā ḡuhr min sibb aṣ-ṣams yid-fayn / baṣḍayn nixallayn lā ḡ-ḡuhr yit-lagwaḍayn<sup>4</sup> / aywih yitlagwaḍayn yi'akkilayn al-ḥaṭāwir alladī fi l-ḡāṣ' / wa-kiftih / wa-l-ḥaṣīš / wu-baṣḍayn law-mā gadū ḡuhr nixallayn [= nixallīhin] az-zugzugī / wa-ḡinū maḍar nidaxxilhin al-ḡarr /*

– ayyin zugzugī /  
 – ḡāḍa z-zugzugī ḡakkanā /  
 – nidaxxilhin / wa-nddīlin 'ukkāl / ṣasibb bī-jaw bī-jaw ṣasibb lā yuhrubayn / nidaxxilhin / baṣḍā fi l-ḡawī lā 'ummī ṣindahin / wa-baṣḍayn nidaxxilhin al-ḡarr lā biḥ maḍar wallā gadū ṣaṣī gadū bard / nidaxxilhin al-ḡarr ṣasibb yid-fay'(n) / wa-ṣ-ṣubḡ kaḍālik / wu-niftaḡ .. /

– wa-'ayyāḡin tuḡlubūhin /  
 – ḡaḡḡīn bayn aṣ-ṣubḡ baṣḍamā yikam-milayn yu'ukkulayn ṣasibb yūḡaṣ' al-ḡalīb xayrāt / aywih / kulla yawm illā lā biḥ

Females. And five young ones. One of the adults gave birth to two, two, what's it called, male kids. And one gave birth to a female. The rest are (females). Three females. Only one gave birth to males. Then we let them out in the morning into the yard so they can feed, what's it called, so they can feed on scraps, and they eat green fodder and gat leftovers. We get the gat leftovers from weddings.<sup>5</sup> If there's a wedding we go and get it. We let them out in the morning and let them stay until noon so they can warm in the sun. Then we let them pick up [the fodder] from the ground until lunchtime. Yes, they take [it] from the ground, they eat the scraps which are on the ground, and gat remains, and grass, and then when it's noon we let them into the alley. If there is rain we put them into the stall.

– Which alley?

– This alley of ours.

– We let them in and give them [something] to eat, so that they come, they come, so they don't run away. We let them in. Then in the yard my mother is with them, then we let them into the stall if there is rain or it's the evening and it's cold. We put them into the stall so they can get warm. Same thing in the morning. And we open ..

– When do you milk them?

– Now during the morning after they've finished feeding so there'll be lots of milk. Yes. Every day, if there is milk,

2 cf. *ḡiṭrah* pl. *ḡiṭar* 'Essensreste' (Behnstedt 1992).

3 The oats are not called *bayṭī*, as the sisters are all too keen to point out, but the boy has always known them as *bayṭī* and refers to them as such.

4 Cf. *laḡaṭ* 'vom Boden aufheben' (Behnstedt 2006). The *w* adds the sense of repetitious movement, in this case conveying the idea of 'here and there'.

5 Singular in the Arabic.

*ḥalīb<sup>6</sup> / innī al-bismih al-bint mā tuṣṣāš  
min ummahā ṣalā sibb mā tuṣṣā / lā  
nibṣad al-kīs nisīr nisīr nifukkhā wa-  
naḥlubhā / aywih / hā / xalāš / wa-  
baṣṣdayn nijammiṣ al-ḥalīb /  
– fī mā tijammiṣu l-ḥalīb /  
– nijammiṣ fī waṣā zabādī kabī'r / wallā  
fī gārūrih / wu-baṣṣdayn <sup>7</sup>wu-baṣṣdayn  
niṣṣal taḥtiḥ ṣūdī taḥt al-waṣā / ṣasibb al-  
mā<sup>8</sup> / taḥt al-waṣā ṣasibb yitbaxxar /  
baṣṣdayn nuskubih / wa-baṣṣ yawm ṭānī  
nuxuḍḍuh ṣasibb yūgaṣ diḥaniḥ<sup>9</sup> / wu-  
bass / wu-xalāš / wu-baṣṣdayn niṣṣaribih /  
wa-baṣṣdayn yidḥal laban /*

*– aywih / fī ṭ-tallājih aw fī š-šubbā'k<sup>10</sup> /  
alladī yaṣnī marīḍ fī ḥalgiḥ / mā nuḍruḥš  
fī ṭ-tallājih nuḍruḥuh fī š-šubbā'k /*

*– laban / aywih laban /  
– lā kaḍayyāh wu-yibtaṣṣdayn ṣalā ḍūl /  
an-naḥḥijh allī kānayn fī fumm<sup>w</sup>ih / yib-  
taṣṣdayn / miš law-mā nixuḍḍuh / ṣādū  
ṣādū ḍarī min bizz al-miṣṣih / ḍarī / ṣādū  
ḍarī / xalā'š /  
– bismih / iḍa l-jāhil bi-ṣṣal yigarribūh lā  
ṣind bizz al-miṣṣih wu-baṣṣdayn yumzuḍū*

[if] the daughter doesn't suck from her mother because she doesn't suck because we haven't taken off the bag, we go and untie it and milk her. Yes, that's it. Then we collect the milk.

– What do you collect the milk in?

– We collect it in a large yoghurt container, or in a bottle. Then, and then we put a stick under it, under the container, for the water, under the container so that it is smoked. Then we pour it [i.e. the milk] [in]. And after a day we shake it until it becomes schmaltz, that's it, that's it. Then we drink it. And then it becomes yoghurt.

– Yes. In the fridge or in the cooling window. [In case] someone has a bad throat, we don't put it in the window, we put it in the cooling window.

– Yoghurt, yes yoghurt.

– Like that, and they disappear immediately. The ulcers that were in his mouth, they disappear. Not when we shake it, when it is still fresh from the teat of the goat. It's still fresh. That's it.

– Then, if the child has a cough they take him to the goat's teat and squirt [it

6 This following section is rather layered and, if we are simply to go from the text, unclear. He means that they milk the goat when the kid does not feed from its mother. They limit the kid's feeding by putting a bag over the nanny goat's udders. This is taken off for milking, and for allowing the kid to feed.

7 This following somewhat condensed section refers to smoking the milk. This is done by placing a lighted stick under an upturned container before milking directly into the container.

8 Probably a semi-conscious reference to the practice of flavouring water with incense using a similar process.

9 Translated here as schmaltz. The dictionaries give the meaning as 'butter' or 'fresh butter' or 'cream'. The German *Butterschmalz* conveys a closer meaning to that of the original.

10 The wooden cooling window consists of a wooden shelf surrounded on all sides by perforated *mashrabiyyah*, projecting from the house on the north side, where possible. Here food is placed and kept cool. Many people now have electric fridges, however the *šubbāk* is still used for gentle cooling. The *šubbāk* is also used to peep through without being seen (cf. Piamenta 1990).

*lā fumm<sup>w</sup>ih lā hū yisʕal / w-innahū ġarr  
nafj baʕdamā tibaxxirūh wu-yuxuḍḍūh  
baʕdayn yišarribūh / yišarribūh aw yid-  
daw lih dihanih /*

– *yiddaw lih dihanih / aywih ad-dihānih  
ḥakk al-laban kam nixuḍḍuh wu-baʕd  
yiḍlaʕ / wa-yddawh lih / w-innah tibatʕid  
an-nafj /*

– *xalāʕ /*

– *hāḍā bismih baytī / baytī hī tjt sāʕ  
ḥubūb zuġār dawāʕir / yiddaw li-l-miʕnih  
wa-hī bismih wa-hī wāhimih awlā hī  
wālidih ʕasibb yizdād al-ḥalīb /*

– *kam tiddaw – fi l-yawm /*

– *kulla yawm kulla yawm yiddaw lih  
ʕasibb yuġūmū aʕ-ʕubḥ illa w-gadī  
malān ḥalīb /*

– *kam / kulla yawm / zayy-ma ḥnā bi-  
naʕkul / taḷāt karrāt fi l-yawm / aʕ-ʕubḥ  
u-baʕda l-ġadā wa-l-ʕaʕt / wu-nixarriġhin  
yitlagwuḍayʕn / aʕ-ʕubḥ niddī aywih aʕ-  
ʕubḥ nikun niddīlahin wallā nixalluḍ  
lahin nixalluḍ lahin maʕa .. ḥaṭāwir /  
hāḍa l-baytī / aywih maʕa l-ḥaṭāwir  
wallā ʕayyi ḥāġih wallā niddīlahin ʕāfi  
baytī bass /  
xalāʕ / ʕukəran /*

directly] into his mouth, if he's got a  
cough. If it's just ulcers after they've  
smoked it and shaken it, then they give  
it to him to drink. They let him drink it  
or they give him the butter-schmaltz.

– They give him schmaltz. Yes the  
schmaltz of the milk. How long we have  
to shake it before it is ready! Then they  
give it to him, and it gets rid of ulcers.

– That's the end!

– This is [called] bayti. Bayti is like  
small round grains<sup>11</sup>. They give [it] to  
the goat when it's whatever, when it's  
pregnant or has just given birth so that  
the milk increases.

– How often do you give it, during the  
day?

– Everyday, everyday we give it to them  
so that when we get up in the morning  
she's full of milk.

– How often? Everyday, like we eat,  
three times a day: in the morning and  
after lunch and in the evening. We let  
them out to pick up [fodder]. In the  
morning we give, yes, in the morning  
we give them, or we mix [it] for them,  
we mix [it] for them with scraps. That's  
bayti, yes with the scraps or anything or  
we give it to them just as it is.

– That's it! Thank you!

## 2 Games

### 2.1 yā hizallī yā hizallī<sup>12</sup>

*yā hizallī yā hizallī*

*nazalt al-bīr aʕallī*

*taḥtə rummānih kabīrih*

*wa-ʕanāġīd al-xaḍīruh*

*gad dikaḥḥal gad dimaġnaj*

*gad nazal ʕanʕā l-gadīmih*

*yuxḍub al-bint az-zaġīrih*

<sup>11</sup> Actually porridge oats.

## 2 Games

### 2.1 Oh hizallī Oh hizallī

*Oh hizallī Oh hizallī*

*I went to the well to pray*

*Beneath a large pomegranate [tree]*

*And vines of green*

*He put on kohl, he played the coquette*

*He went to the Old City*

*To ask for the hand of the young girl*

*wa-l-kabīrih hī lašīnih*  
*gassamat nuṣṣ al-jihīnih*  
*wa-ddithā la-l-bahīmih*

The older girl is no good  
 She divided half the *jihīnih*<sup>13</sup>  
 And gave it to the cow

2.1.1 *yā hizallī yā hizallī*<sup>14</sup>

*gad nazalt al-bīr aṣallī / yašnī gad nazal*  
*al-bīr yiṣallī / taḥt rummānih kabīrih*  
*zayy-mā*<sup>15</sup> *hnā law-mā nṣallī taḥt šaja-*  
*rih / hāḏā zayy-mā hū / yṣallī taḥt*  
*rummānih kabīrih / gad / wa-šanāḡīd*  
*al-xaḏīruh / yašnī šijarih xaḏruh /*  
*šanāḡīd al-xaḏīruh / zahr / gad tikaḥḥal*  
*gad timaḡnaj / yašnī gad tikaḥḥal bu-xṭā*  
*wa-hū yurguṣ / b-itxaybal / gad ta-*  
*kaḥḥal yašnī bi-txaybal yuxṭā w-bi-*  
*t'anwas /*

– *yit'anwas /*

– *aywih / bi-ddallaʿ / idā gad nazal*  
*šanṣā l-gadīmih / yuxḏub yuxḏub al-bint*  
*az-zaḡīrih / w-uxthā / w-uxtahā kabīrih*  
*gad gassamat nuṣṣ al-jihīnih wa-ddithā*  
*la-l-bahīmih / xalā(š) / wu-šukran /*

2.1.1 Oh *hixallī* Oh *hizallī*

I went to the well to pray. That means, he went to the well to pray. Under a large pomegranate [tree], like when we go and pray under a tree. That's like if he prays under a large pomegranate [tree], and the white grape vines, that is a green tree, grape vines, flowers [i.e. greenery]. He puts on kohl, he plays the coquette. That means he put on kohl and walks about in a dancing manner. He acts daft. He's made himself up with kohl and moves around in a daft, flirty manner.

– He flirts?

– Yes, he acts the coquette. He went down to the Old City to ask for the hand of, to ask for the hand of the young girl. Her sister, her big sister had divided up the *jahīnih* and given it to the cow. That's it! And thank you!

2.2 Game<sup>16</sup>

*ism al-liṣbih sīn sīn sigā simiš / al-*  
*uḡniyih /*  
*sīn sīn sikā simiš ayyām awiš hā simiš*  
*ayyām as-sunbul al-lism*<sup>17</sup> */ ṣālī / hānā' /*

2.2 Game

The name of the game is *sīn sīn sigā simiš*. The song [goes]:  
*sīn sīn sigā simiš* the days of *awiš* oh *simiš*, the days of sorghum. The [i.e.

12 Chanted by the girl.

13 A type of millet bread.

14 Explanation by the older boy.

15 This non-dialect form is common among children. The original dialect form is *sāṣ-mā*.

16 The recording is led by the girl. The children respond by giving the required type of name in turn.

17 The children give their names.

*wālīd / asmā' al-lawlād*<sup>18</sup> / *māzin šāluḥ / ḥusayn / asmā' al-banāt mānā' / anwār / ahlām / asmā' an-nabatāt / šīnab / rummānih / ḥabḥabih / asmā' as-sayyārāt / hīluks / šālūn / murseidīz / asmā' an-nabā .. al-jamād / ibriḥ / ḥajarih / gālaṣ / asmā' / alwān as-sayyārāt / aḥmar / aḥḍar / azrag / wa-hākaḍā law-mā yiddaw asmā' banāt / ḥayawān / jamād / ayyi ḥājīh / yallāh / wu-šukran /*

– *wu-bašdayn / innū bašdayn yitmāsak dā'irih / wu-bašdā nigūl al-uḡnīyih / wu-bašdā nigul asmā banāt hum kulla wāḥid yiddī 'ism / laykin miš mutšābahīn / idā hum mutšābahī'n / yuxruj wāḥid / yuxruj min al-liṣbih / law-mā yintahī al-liṣbih / law-mā tintahī ad-dā'irih / xalāṣ / šukran /*

your] name! Ali, Hana, Walid. Boys' names: Mazin, Salih, Husayn. Girls' names: Mana, Anwar, Ahlam. Names of plants: Grapes, pomegranate, watermelon. Names of cars: Hilux, saloon, Mercedes. Names of plan .. solid [objects]: needle, stone, glass. Names of colours of cars: Red, green, blue. And so [it goes on] until they have given the names of girls, animals, solid [objects], anything, that's it, and thank you!

– And then, then they hold hands in a circle. And then we chant the song and then we say, girls' names and everyone gives a name [in turn], but they can't be the same [one].<sup>19</sup> If they are the same, [that] one goes out. He goes out of the game, until the game comes to an end, until the circle is finished. That's it. Thank you!

### 3 The house<sup>20</sup>

– *dahḥīn aštī 'ašrah / ašrah / al-bayt yibnā min / nišmar min al-lawwal ḥāji l-lasās / inna mā biš asā's / mā yisbirš al-bay't / bašdayn niddī ḥijar wu-simint wu-simint wu-ḥijā'r / wu-bismih / wu-simint / wu-ḥijā'r /*

– *wu-yājūr /*

– *wu-yājū'(r) / wu-mā' ṣasibb nuxluḍ / nīsiḥ / wu-simint wu-guṣṣ / al-guṣṣ yifṣaliḥ min ḍāluṣ' / min nāzil al-ḥijā'r / wa-l-biluk wa-l-yājūr' / wu-min ḍāluṣ' al-guṣṣ / ṣasibb yūgaṣ ḥālī / wu-min xāri'j / wu-min xārij al-ṣuḡū'd / wu-min*

### 3 The house

Now I want to describe, describe. The house is built from, the first thing we build is the foundation, if there is no foundation there'll be no house. Then we bring stones and cement and cement and stones, and what's it called, and cement and stones.

– And baked brick?

– And baked brick. And water so we can mix the sand and cement. And gypsum. The gypsum is on top. Underneath is the stone, breeze block and baked brick. On top [i.e. the last layer] is the gypsum, so that it's attractive. And outside, outside

18 The children in turn give a name of the mentioned type of object, chanting the name in trochaic rhythm, as they have done with their own names, and lengthening word-initial CV syllables to CVV.

19 I.e. Each child has to give a different name.

20 Recorded by the oldest boy.

*ḍāluṣ yifṣal tijwab / wa-l-kunan fawg aṭ-  
ṭigān ṣas .. /*

– *at-tijwab ḥakk al-jubwā' / ṣasibb lā  
wāḥid yinkaṣ / wu-baṣḍayn al-bismih /  
al-kunan / la-l-maḍar / ma ykunṣ yudxul  
la-l-makān / yumkin yisīr ḥāḍāk / yūgaṣ  
fi l-kunan wa-yinzil manzal / wa-l-  
mīzābī / yifṣalū fi l-jubwā' ṣasibb yuxruj  
al-mā' min al-bismih / min al-jubwā' /  
ṣasibb lā yistaḍull / wu-xalāṣ wu-ṣukran  
/ ḥāḍa llaḍī fi l-bayt / ammā baṣḍ addī  
ṣalī 'allaḍī dāxil al-bayt / xalā'ṣ /*

– *ḡuraṣ / amkinih / ḡallagt /  
– māṣī /*

– *ḥākī / rāṣī /*

<sup>21</sup> – *niṣmīr al-bayt min amkinih / aw wu-  
ḍubīḡ wa-ṣufwaf / wa-maxāzin / wa-  
tuḥaf wa-ṣuwar / ammā niḍraḥḥin / wa-  
ṣugūd /*

– *kayf al-ṣugūd /*

– *wa-l-xazāyin / wa-ṣ-ṣubbāk wa-t-  
ṭigā'n / wa-t-ṭabagāt miṭl al-maxāzin /  
wa-t-tuḥaf / wa-d-daymih wa-l-ḡuraṣ  
an-naw'm / wa-l-maḍar wa-d-dihlīz /  
ṣamayd yudxul wāḥid lā ṣī<sup>22</sup> biḥ maḍar  
wallā ṣī /*

#### 4 Pigeons<sup>23</sup>

*ḍaḥḥīn ana bdā' min al-ḥamām / lā  
nisabbir lahin bayt / awwal-mā nijirrhin*

are the arched windows. And on top they do the roof wall, and there are wooden boards above the windows so ..

– The parapet for the roof, so that if someone falls [they don't fall], and then the what's it called, the boards [above the windows] for the rain, [so that] it doesn't come in to the room, it can go like that, it goes on the board and falls down [i.e. drips off], and the drain pipes, they put [them] on the roof so that the water goes away from the, what's it called, from the roof, so that if [someone] looks out [of the window, he doesn't get soaked!], and that's it and thank you. That's what's in the house. Now I'm going to get Ali for the inside of the house. That's it.

– Rooms, rooms, I've turned it off.

– No.

– Say [something], wait!

– We build the house out of rooms, or, and floors and shelves and storerooms, and ornaments and pictures, we put them [in], and arched windows.

– What are the arched windows like?

– And store cupboards and a cooling window and windows, and rooms on the lower floor like store rooms, and ornaments and the kitchen and rooms for sleeping, and the top room and the hall, so that you can come in if it rains or whatever.

#### 4 Pigeons

Now I'm going to start with the pigeons. If we make them a house, when we first

21 This part is recorded by the younger boy, who basically lists what he can see and think of in the house.

22 Dialect-typical use of *ṣī* in conditional or negative existential sentences.

23 Recorded by the older boy.



*awwal ḥājīh nisabbirlahin bayt min  
 tinīk / tummih nirabbīhin mā gad nixar-  
 rijhin / nixallīhin sanih / wallā šahr /  
 nijiss ni'akkilhin ni'akkilhin law-mā  
 yištīnayn / šasibb yigūlayn inn iḥnā  
 ḍayyubīn / mā yuhrubānš / l-iḥnā mā  
 niddīš 'ukkāl yašnī law tijiss tixallīhin  
 sanih mā tiddīlahinš ukkā'l / nirjaš  
 niḥallahin wa-lā šād yijayn / yisīr yi-  
 lawwayn / awwal-mā nijirrahin nixallī-  
 hin sanih / bašdayn niḍirra šwayyih min  
 al-muknis / hinaykih šalā jamb / lā gadī  
 tūlad / tišīr tikūn tilagguḥun tilagguḥ-  
 hun tiḍraḥḥun fī t-tanakih / šasibb duḥ-  
 raḥ al-bayḍ / tiḍraḥ al-bayḍ / wu-  
 bašdayn niddī lhin ḍirrih / ḍirrih šasibb  
 yištābahayn / wu-bašdayn aḥṭaḥ lin aš-  
 ṣubḥ wu-yiḍṭrayn / wu-bašduhun hī  
 bismih / bašḍ al-ḥamā'm / yiḍṭrayn wu-  
 bismih / wu-yitgašwašayn / yašnī yiddan  
 ḥarakāt / wu-subḥān allāh al-šaḍīm /  
 aywih / aywih / yidgallabayn / fī l-hawā'  
 / mā yistawjašanš wu-bašdayn nixallayn  
 / yašnī yuxrujayn min al-bayt / lā ḍ-ḍuhr  
 law-mā jī min al-madrasah addīlin ukl /  
 ukkā'l / wu-bašdayn azīd axallīhin y-  
 lawwayn / wu-bašdayn law-mā gadū  
 bašḍ gabl al-maḡrib bi-šwayyih bi-xamz  
 dagāyig / aḍlaš ašalfuḡluḥun aw aḥar-  
 ruṣluḥun [click, click] wallā kaḍayyih /  
 wu-bašdayn hin ša-yjayn w-adaxxilhin  
 al-bayt w-aḡallig w-hin yurgudayn w-  
 argud / bašdayn aš-ṣubḥa kaḍālik / wi-  
 ḥākaḍā wa-xalāš /*

get them the first thing is to make them  
 a house from a large tin. Then we raise  
 them. We don't let them out. We leave  
 them a year, or a month. We keep feed-  
 ing them and feeding them until they  
 become tame, so that they think [lit:  
 say] that we are nice and don't escape.  
 If we didn't give them food, that is if  
 you were to keep them for a year and  
 not give them food, then when you let  
 them free they wouldn't come back  
 again. They would fly around. [So]  
 when we first get them we leave them  
 for a year, then we scatter [lit: sprinkle]  
 a little from a broom [i.e. the small  
 sticks from the broom], just here at the  
 side, [for] if she wants to give birth [i.e.  
 lay eggs] then she can go and pick up  
 [the bits] and put them in the tin, so that  
 she can lay the egg, lay the egg. Then  
 we give them some corn, corn, so that  
 they can have breakfast. Then we open  
 up for them in the morning and they fly.  
 And some of them, what's it called,  
 some pigeons fly and do somersaults,  
 that is they make [wonderful] move-  
 ments and, God be praised. Yes, yes,  
 they turn over in the air. They don't hurt  
 themselves, and then we let them, that is  
 they go out of the house until noon  
 when I come back from school and give  
 them food, food. Then I let them fly  
 around again. And then shortly before  
 sunset – five minutes [before], I go up  
 and clap for them and whistle for them  
 like that. Then they come and I put them  
 into their house and shut [it], and they  
 go to sleep and I go to sleep. Then the  
 [next] morning it's the same thing, like  
 that. That's it.

5 Games<sup>24</sup>5.1 *adxul min hūna*<sup>25</sup>

*ism al-liṣbih adxul min hūna / yilṣabū  
majmūṣah hī yisabbirū dā'irih / wi-  
yirjaṣ wāḥid yuxruj yitzāgamū baṣṣdayn  
yudxul yihaddid fī wāḥidih<sup>26</sup> / fī wāḥidih  
yā 'iṭṭayn / yigūl yigūl adxul min hūna  
hum yigūlū lā w-allāh / adxul min hūna  
lā w-allāh / law-mā yūṣal lā ṣind al-yad  
allaḍī xaraj minhā / awwal wāḥidih /  
wu-baṣṣdayn yigūl adxul min hūna yigūlū  
'ī w-allāh / baṣṣdayn yudxul wi-hum  
yigūlū 'ismik ēh / w-anā gūl ismī  
sambūsih / baṣṣdayn hum yigūlū sambū-  
sih yā sambūsih y-allī kuntī maḥbūsih /  
maḥbūsih ṣann ṣann / w-uxtārī wāḥidih  
minnā / hum yijlisū / w-anā musannibih  
/ adawwir w-aḡammuḍ w-axtār allaḍī  
ṣtī / yaṣni llaḍī wuḡaṣat fīh al-hāḍā / al-  
iṣārīh / wu-baṣṣday'n / yigūm allaḍī  
naḥsih / yigūm allaḍī xtārīh / wu-yiṣṣal  
naḥs allaḍī fīṣiltih / wu-ṣukran /*

- ṣiyyāl kaṭīr yilṣabū / banāt wi-ṣiyyāl /
- aywih muxallaṭ muxallaṭ /
- law-mā tikammil ad-dā'irih / law-mā  
tikammil ad-dā'irih /
- law-mā diḡ min al-bidāyih /
- ṣukran wi-ṣukran /

## 5 Games

## 5.1 'I come in here'

The game is called 'I come in here'. A group plays and forms a circle. Then one goes out. They all hold hands and then one is decided upon. One or two. He says, he says, I come in here. And they say, No, by God! I come in here. No, by God! Until he gets to the hand where he came out of [the circle]. The first one. Then he says, I come in here, [and] they say, Yes, by God! Then he goes in and they say, What's your name? And I say, My name is Sambousa. Then they say, Sambousa, Sambousa, [you] who were imprisoned, imprisoned from from. Choose one of us. [Then] they sit down while I am standing. I turn round with my eyes shut and choose [by pointing] whoever I want. That is, the one who I point to. Then that one stands up. The one I choose stands up and [then] does the same as I did. And thank you!

- Lots of children play, girls and boys.
- Yes, [it's] mixed, mixed.
- [The game continues] until the circle finishes, until the circle finishes.
- Until it comes round to the beginning [again].
- Thank you, and thank you!

24 Recorded by the girl.

25 The syntax and morphology used in the game phrases suggests it may have originated in Cairo – *ismik ēh* in place of SA *bismiṣ* 'what's your f.s. name', *hūna* in place of SA *hānā* 'here'.

26 The speaker switches gender.

5.2 *al-guwaygif*<sup>27, 28</sup>

5.2.1 *gwaygif / tumma lāyīm / ism al-liṣbih guwaygif / ism al-liṣbih guwaygif / tummi lāyīm tummah /*

– *yaṣnī / 'ism al-liṣbih hī l-guwaygif tumma lāyīm / tummah xubazbiz<sup>29</sup> / tummah baṣd al-xubazbiz ṣudayrī / tummah digaynī / tummah fumaymī / tummah ṣubayrī awwal tummah ṣubayrī tānī / baṣd nuxayrī / wu-baṣdā: / ju-bayhā'n / baṣdā /*

– *baṣdā ṣuyūnī awwal wi-ṣuyūnī tānī / wi-baṣd ruwaysā'n / baṣd sulayxān wu-sulayxān tānī / wu-baṣdā 'iḍn awwal wu-'iḍn tānī /*

5.2.2 *aṣ-ṣarḥ*<sup>30</sup>

*aṣ-ṣarḥ / guwaygif yaṣnī law-mā hī bismih / wāḥid yigdasimū<sup>31</sup> farīḡayn / al-lawwal al-lawwal bismih / yisannib / ṣalā gaḥāh / baṣdayn yurjum al-kurah / wi-yixfaṣhā / baṣdayn al-farīḡ at-tānī dā zigimhā / yuxruj wi-yuḍxul allaḍī maṣih / at-tānī / w-innū mā zigimhāṣ yiddī (g)waygif wu-baṣdayn luḍaymī / w-kaḍā / gwaygif yigaffī / wa-yurjum al-kurah wa-yixfaṣhā min kaḍāk /*

5.2 *Guwaygif*

5.2.1 The game *guwaygif*, then [slapping] the cheek. The game is called *guwaygif*. The game is called *guwaygif*, then the cheek, then ..

– I mean the name of the game is *guwaygif*, then [slapping the] cheek then [slapping the hands together as if] making bread then after making bread the chest, then the chin then the mouth, then the first cheek, then the second cheek, then the nose, and then .. the forehead, then ..

– Then [touching] the first eyes, then the second eyes, then [touching] the head, then [slapping] the thigh, and the second thigh, and then [holding] the first ear and the second ear.

## 5.2.2 The explanation.

The explanation. *Guwaygif* when, what's it called, you, they divide up into two teams. The first, the first, what's it called, stands up, with his back [to the rest]. Then he throws the ball up and hits it [back towards the second team]. Then the second team, if they catch it, he is out and one of those [in his team] with him comes in, the second one. [But] if they didn't catch it, he does *guwaygif* and then the cheek, like that.

27 A brief list of the words used in the game is given by the younger boy. The second part of the game – the actual *guwaygif* part – involves throwing a ball up into the air and slapping or holding some part of your body before catching the ball. Linguistically interesting is the use of nominal diminutives of the *fuṣayl* form in mentioning (most) parts of the body to be slapped, otherwise rare in SA (cf. Watson 2006).

28 Compare the far clearer description of this game in al-Amri (1983) – described, no doubt, without any of the accompanying slapping and ear holding considered by the children to be essential!

29 Slapping the hands together as if making bread.

30 This rather oblique explanation of the game is recorded by the older boy.

31 Voicing of /t/.

– *hāḏā guwaygif wallā waygif*<sup>32</sup>  
 – *hāḏā waygif gwaygif / wi-baṣḏayn*  
*hākaḏā / w-inn ḥāṣabū ṣal ṣikkā'l / al-*  
*fā'iz al-farīḡ al-fā'iz / ṣalā ṣukkā'l /*  
*yīṣakkilih / yīṣakkilih / yīḏalluṣ rijl wu-*  
*rijl māṣī / yīṣakkilih / arbaṣ ayḏ wallā*  
*rbaṣ arjil / yīṣakkilih / wu-xalāṣ / hī*  
*hāḏā / yaṣnī wu-yijlisū yilṣabū yilṣabū*  
*yilṣabū yilṣabū in yikammil yīṣakkilih /*  
*wa-yigūlū kulla ḥājih / tuḏḏāḥ / wu-*  
*xalāṣ wu-ṣukran /*

With *guwaygif* he has his back [to the others] and throws the ball and hits it like that.

– Is that *guwaygif* or *waygif*?  
 – That's *waygif* [or] *guwaygif*. And then like that. They count in hops. The winner, the winning team, in terms of hops. They hop it, they hop it. He lifts one leg, but not the other. He hops, four hands or four feet, he hops. That's it. And they keep playing and playing until he finishes hopping. And they say everything, [such as] apple, and that's it and thank you!

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32 It isn't really called *waygif*, as his older sisters are later quick to point out.