



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

Children of San'a

Watson, JCE

Title	Children of San'a
Authors	Watson, JCE
Type	Book Section
URL	This version is available at: http://usir.salford.ac.uk/9408/
Published Date	2009

USIR is a digital collection of the research output of the University of Salford. Where copyright permits, full text material held in the repository is made freely available online and can be read, downloaded and copied for non-commercial private study or research purposes. Please check the manuscript for any further copyright restrictions.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: usir@salford.ac.uk.

Children of San'a

JANET C. E. WATSON

Salford

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 Šansā': Texts in Šansānī 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 10th 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 iṭṭay’n / at-tārīx šašarih ar-bašah alfayn u-sittih / b-ismih¹ / niḥākā 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 10th 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-ḡawš yu'kulayn bismih yu'kulayn yu'kulayn ḡaṭāwir² wa-yu'kulayn ḡaḍb wa-yu'kulayn³ kiftih / al-kiftih kun niddī min ṣind al-ṣiris / lā bih ṣiris nikun nisīr niddīh / wa-nxarriḡhin aṣ-ṣubḡ ṣa-nḡiss nixallīhin lā ḡuhr min sibb aṣ-ṣams yid-fayn / baṣḍayn nixallayn lā ḡ-ḡuhr yit-lagwaḡayn⁴ / aywih yitlagwaḡayn yī'akkilayn al-ḡaṭāwir alladī fi l-ḡāṣ' / wa-kiftih / wa-l-ḡaṣīṣ' / wu-baṣḍayn law-mā ḡadū ḡuhr nixallayn [= nixallīhin] az-zuḡzūḡī / wa-ḡīnū maḡar nidaxxilhin al-ḡarr /

– *ayyin zuḡzūḡī /*
 – *ḡāḍa z-zuḡzūḡī 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 bih maḡar wallā ḡadū ṣaṣī ḡadū bard / nidaxxilhin al-ḡarr ṣasibb yid-fay'(n) / wa-ṣ-ṣubḡ kaḡālik / wu-niḡṡaḡ .. /*

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

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.⁵ 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. *ḡiṡrah* pl. *ḡiṡar* 'Essensreste' (Behnstedt 1992).

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

4 Cf. *lagat* '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.

*ḥalīb⁶ / innī al-bismih al-bint mā tušjāš
min ummahā šalā sibb mā tušjā / lā
nibšad al-kīs nisīr nisīr nifukkhā wa-
naḥlubhā / aywih / hā / xalāš / wa-
bašdayn nijammiš al-ḥalīb /
– fī mā tijammišu l-ḥalīb /
– nijammiš fī wašā zabādī kabī'r / wallā
fī gārūrih / wu-bašdayn ⁷wu-bašdayn
niššal taḥtiḥ šūdī taḥt al-wašā / šasibb al-
mā⁸ / taḥt al-wašā šasibb yitbaxxar /
bašdayn nuskubih / wa-bašd yawm t̄ānī
nuxuḍḍuh šasibb yūgaš dihānih⁹ / wu-
bass / wu-xalāš / wu-bašdayn nišrabih /
wa-bašdayn yidlaš laban /*

*– aywih / fī t-tallājih aw fī š-šubbā'k¹⁰ /
alladī yašni marīd fī ḥalgiḥ / mā nuḍruḥš
fī t-tallājih nuḍruḥuh fī š-šubbā'k /*

*– laban / aywih laban /
– lā kaḍayyāh wu-yibtašdayn šalā dūl /
an-naḥjih allī kānayn fī fumm^wiḥ / yib-
tašdayn / miš law-mā nixuḍḍuh / šādū
šādū ḍarī min bizz al-mišziḥ / ḍarī / šādū
ḍarī / xalā'š /
– bismih / ida l-jāhil bi-šal yigarribūh lā
šind bizz al-mišziḥ wu-bašdayn 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^wih lā hū yisfal / w-innahū ġarr
nafj bašdamā tibaxxirūh wu-yuxuđđūh
bašdayn yišarrībūh / yišarrībūh aw yid-
daw lih dihənih /*

– *yiddaw lih dihənih / aywih ad-dihənih
ħakk al-laban kam nixuđđuh wu-bašd
yiđlaš / wa-yddawh lih / w-innah tibaššid
an-nařj /*

– *xalāš /*

– *hāđā bismih baytī / baytī hī tjt sāř
ħubūb zuġār dawā'ir / yiddaw li-l-mišzih
wa-hī bismih wa-hī wāhimih awlā hī
wālidih řasibb yizdād al-ħalīb /*

– *kam tiddaw – fi l-yawm /*

– *kulla yawm kulla yawm yiddaw lih
řasibb yuġūmū ař-řubħ illa w-gadī
malān ħalīb /*

– *kam / kulla yawm / zayy-ma ħnā bi-
na'kul / talāt karrāt fi l-yawm / ař-řubħ
u-bašda l-ġadā wa-l-řařī / wu-nixarriřhin
yitlagwuđay'n / ař-řubħ niddī aywih ař-
řubħ nikun niddīlahin wallā nixalluđ
lahin nixalluđ lahin mařa .. ħařāwir /
hāđā l-baytī / aywih mařa l-ħařāwir
wallā 'ayyi ħāřih wallā niddīlahin řāřī
baytī bass /
xalāř / řukəran /*

2 Games

2.1 *yā hizallī yā hizallī*¹²

yā hizallī yā hizallī

nazalt al-bīr ařallī

tařtə rummānih kabīriř

wa-řanāġid al-xađīruh

gad dikařħal gad dimaġnaj

gad nazal řanřā l-gadīmih

yuxđub al-bint az-zaġīriř

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 grains¹¹. 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 *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

¹¹ Actually porridge oats.

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*¹³
 And gave it to the cow

2.1.1 *yā hizallī yā hizallī*¹⁴

gad nazalt al-bīr aṣallī / yašnī gad nazal
al-bīr yiṣallī / taḥt rummānih kabīrih
*zayy-mā*¹⁵ *hnā law-mā nṣallī taḥt šaja-*
rih / hāḡdā zayy-mā hū / yṣallī taḥt
rummānih kabīrih / gad / wa-šanāḡīd
al-xaḡīruh / yašnī šijarih xaḡruh /
šanāḡīd al-xaḡīruh / 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-ddallaṣ / idā gad nazal*
šanṣā l-gadīmih / yuxḡub yuxḡub al-bint
az-zaḡīrih / w-uxthā / w-uxtahā kabīrih
gad gassamat nuṣṣ al-jihīnih wa-ddithā
la-l-bahīmih / xalā(ṣ) / wu-šukran /

2.2 Game¹⁶

ism al-liṣbih sīn sīn sigā simiṣ / al-
uḡniyih /
sīn sīn sikā simiṣ ayyām awiṣ hā simiṣ
*ayyām as-sunbul al-lism*¹⁷ */ ṣālī / hānā' /*

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

The name of the game is *sīn sīn sigā simiṣ*. The song [goes]:
sīn sīn sigā simiṣ the days of *awiṣ* oh *simiṣ*, 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*¹⁸ / *māzin šāluḥ / ḥusayn / asmā' al-banāt mānā' / anwār / aḥlām / asmā' an-nabatāt / ūnab / rummānih / ḥabḥabih / asmā' as-sayyārāt / hīluks / šālūn / murseidīz / asmā' an-nabā .. al-jamād / ibrih / ḥajarih / gālaṣ / asmā' / alwān as-sayyārāt / aḥmar / axḍar / azrag / wa-hākaḍā law-mā yiddaw asmā' banāt / ḥayawān / jamād / ayyi ḥājih / yallāh / wu-šukran /*

– *wu-baṣḍayn / innū baṣḍayn yitmāsak dā'irih / wu-baṣḍā nigūl al-uḡnīyih / wu-baṣḍā 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 /*

3 The house²⁰

– *dahḥīn aṣṭī 'ašrah / ašrah / al-bayt yibnā min / niṣmar min al-lawwal ḥāji l-lasās / inna mā biš asā's / mā yisbirš al-bay't / baṣḍayn 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 / nīsih / wu-simint wu-guṣṣ / al-guṣṣ yifṣalih min dāluṣ' / min nāzil al-ḥijā'r / wa-l-biluk wa-l-yājū'r / wu-min dāluṣ' al-guṣṣ / ṣasibb yūgaṣ ḥālī / wu-min xāri'j / wu-min xārij al-ṣuḡū'd / wu-min*

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].¹⁹ 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

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-
fiḡān ṣas .. /*

– *at-tijwab ḥakk al-jubwā' / ṣasibb lā
wāḥid yinkaṣ / wu-baṣḍadayn al-bismih /
al-kunan / la-l-maḍar / ma ykunš 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-xalāš wu-šukran
/ ḥāḍa llaḍī fi l-bayt / ammā baṣḍ addī
ṣalī 'allaḍī dāxil al-bayt / xalā'š /*

– *ḡuraṣ / amkinih / ḡallagṭ /
– māšī /*

– *ḥākī / rāṣī /*

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

– *kayf al-ṣuḡūd /*

– *wa-l-xazāyin / wa-š-šubbāk wa-t-
fiḡā'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 šī²² bih maḍar
wallā šī /*

4 Pigeons²³

*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 [some-
one] 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 orna-
ments 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 *šī* in conditional or negative existential sentences.

23 Recorded by the older boy.

*awwal ḥājih nisabbirlahin bayt min
 tinīk / tummiḥ nirabbīhin mā gad nixar-
 rijhin / nixallīhin saniḥ / wallā šahr /
 nijiss ni'akkilhin ni'akkilhin law-mā
 yištīnayn / šasibb yigūlayn inn iḥnā
 ḍayyubīn / mā yuhrubanš / l-iḥnā mā
 niddīš 'ukkāl yašnī law tijiss tixallīhin
 saniḥ mā tiddīlahinš ukkā'l / nirjaš
 niḥallahin wa-lā šād yijayn / yisīr yi-
 lawwayn / awwal-mā nijirrahin nixallī-
 hin saniḥ / bašdayn niḍirra šwayyih min
 al-muknis / hinaykih šalā jamb / lā gadī
 tūlad / tisīr tikūn tilagguḥun tilagguḍ-
 hun tidraḥḥun fi t-tanakih / šasibb du-
 raḥ al-bayḍ / tidraḥ al-bayḍ / wu-
 bašdayn niddī lhin ḍirriḥ / ḍirriḥ šasibb
 yištābahayn / wu-bašdayn aḥtaḥ lin aš-
 ṣubḥ wu-yiḍīrayn / wu-bašḍuhun hī
 bismih / bašḍ al-ḥamā'm / yiḍīrayn wu-
 bismih / wu-yitgašwašayn / yašnī yiddan
 ḥarakāt / wu-subḥān allāh al-šadīm /
 aywih / aywih / yidgallabayn / fi 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 afa-
 rušluḥun [click, click] wallā kaḍayyih /
 wu-bašdayn hin ša-yjayn w-adaxxilhin
 al-bayt w-aḡallig w-hin yurgudayn w-
 argud / bašdayn aš-šubḥə 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 Games²⁴5.1 *adxul min hūna*²⁵

*ism al-liṣbih adxul min hūna / yilṣabū
majmūṣah hī yisabbirū dā'irih / wi-
yirjaṣ wāḥid yuxruj yitzāgamū baṣṣdayn
yudxul yihaddid fī wāḥidih²⁶ / 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
/ adawwīr w-aḡammuḍ w-axtār allaḍī
ṣtī / yaṣni llaḍī wugaṣat fih al-hāḍā / al-
iṣārih / wu-baṣṣday'n / yigūm allaḍī
naṣsih / yigūm allaḍī xtārih / wu-yifṣal
naṣs allaḍī fī ṣiltih / 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*^{27, 28}

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

– *yaṣnī / 'ism al-liṣbih hī l-guwaygif tumma lṭaymī / tummah xubazbiz²⁹ / tummah baṣd al-xubazbiz ṣudayrī / tummah digaynī / tummah fumaymī / tummah ṣubayrī awwal tummah ṣubayrī tṭānī / baṣd nuxayrī / wu-baṣdā: / jubayhā'n / baṣdā /*

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

5.2.2 *aš-šarḥ*³⁰

aš-šarḥ / guwaygif yaṣnī law-mā hī bismih / wāḥid yigdasimū³¹ farṭgayn / al-lawwal al-lawwal bismih / yisannib / ṣalā gaḥāh / baṣdayn yurjum al-kurah / wi-yixfaṣhā / baṣdayn al-farṭg at-tṭānī dā zigimhā / yuxruj wi-yuḍxul allaḍī maṣih / at-tṭānī / w-innū mā zigimhāš 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/.

– *hādā guwaygif wallā waygif*³²
 – *hādā waygif gwaygif / wi-baṣḍayn*
hākaḍā / w-inn ḥāṣabū ṣal ṣikkā'l / al-
fā'iz al-farīg al-fā'iz / ṣalā ṣukkā'l /
yīṣakkilih / yīṣakkilih / yīḍalluṣ rijl wu-
rijl māšī / yīṣakkilih / arbaṣ aydī wallā
rbaṣ arjil / yīṣakkilih / wu-xalāṣ / hī
hādā / yaṣnī wu-yijlisū yīṣabū yīṣabū
yīṣabū yīṣabū in yikammil yīṣakkilih /
wa-yigūlū kulla ḥājih / tuḥḥāḥ / 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!

References

- Al-Amri, H. 1983. Children's games in Ṣan'ā'. In R.B. Serjeant & R. Lewcock (eds.), *Ṣan'ā': An Arabian Islamic city*. London: World of Islam Festival Trust.
- Behnstedt, P. 1992. *Die nordjemenitischen Dialekte. Teil 2: Glossar. Alif – Dāl*. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert.
- Behnstedt, P. 2006. *Die nordjemenitischen Dialekte. Teil 2: Glossar. Fā' – Yā'*. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert.
- Jastrow, O. 1984. Zur Phonologie und Phonetik des San'anischen. In H. Kopp & G. Schweizer (eds.), *Entwicklungsprozesse in der Arabischen Republik Jemen*. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, 289–304.
- Piamenta, M. 1990–1991. *A dictionary of post-classical Yemeni Arabic*. Leiden: Brill.
- Watson, J.C.E. 2006. 'The morphology of Arabic: Diminutive verbs and diminutive nouns in San'ani Arabic'. *Morphology* 16: 189–204.
- Watson, J.C.E. & A.S. Al-Amri 2000. *Wasf Ṣan'ā': Texts in Ṣan'ānī Arabic*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Watson, J.C.E. & Y. Asiri 2007. Pre-pausal devoicing and glottalisation in varieties of the south-western Arabian peninsula'. Paper presented at ICPhS, Saarbrücken, Aug. 2007. <http://www.icphs2007.de/conference/Papers/1738/1738.pdf>
- Watson, J.C.E., B. Glover Stalls, K. al-Razihi & S. Weir 2006. 'Two texts in the language of Jabal Razih'. In L. Edzard & J. Retsö (eds), *Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon II*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 40–63.

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