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Conversations Among Women: A Text in the Arabic Dialect of Khuzestan (Southwest Iran)

ABSTRACT This paper presents the transcription and translation of a recording made 2016 during fieldwork in the city of Ḥamīdiyya, in Khuzestan, located about 25 km to the north-west of the region's capital city Aḥwāz. The text is introduced by a brief discussion of some of the characteristic phonological, morphological and lexical features of Khuzestani Arabic in general, and some peculiarities of the Ḥamīdiyya dialect in particular. Language contact with the country's official language, Persian, of course is also significant, but will not be the focus of this discussion.

KEYWORDS Arabic dialectology, *gəlat* dialect, Bedouin-type, Khuzestani Arabic, minority variety, field research

1 Introduction

Khuzestani Arabic (KhA) is an Arabic variety spoken in the southwestern Iranian province of Khuzestan. It belongs to the southern group of the Bedouin-type Mesopotamian *gəlat*-dialects.

The text is preceded by some notes on characteristic features of KhA discussed in relation to their occurrence in the following text. Most linguistic features described below are found throughout Khuzestan. Some features characteristic of the north-western area of Ḥamīdiyya or Ḥuwayza will be highlighted. Ḥamīdiyya is a town of approximately 20,000 inhabitants and the centre of the district that bears the same name.

As can be seen in the following discussion, the dialect of Ḥamīdiyya shows several typical rural or *ʕarab* features (cf. Ingham 1973; 2006), such as the application of the

gahawa-syndrome in imperfective verbs (see below).¹ The majority of the features described below appear in the following text and wherever possible, there is a reference to an example in the text via the respective sentence number within brackets.

2 Grammatical and lexical notes

Phonology

- Besides the two short vowel phonemes *ə* and *a*, there are five long vowels: *ā*, *ē*, *ī*, *ō*, *ū*.
- Long *ē* is in most cases pronounced as a central glide *īə*; in the area of Ḥamīdiyya, we often hear *ī* instead of *ē*, e.g. *ʃalī-ha* ‘on her’ (in contrast to Aḥwāzī *ʃalē-ha*).²
- Word-final *a* tends to be raised (whether originating as a feminine gender marker, pronominal suffix or other) to a mid-front vowel varying between [ɛ] and [æ] in non-emphatic, non-guttural contexts.
- The interdental *t̪*, *ḏ* and *ḏ̪* are generally retained, although sometimes *ḏ* is pronounced *d* (cf., for example, *hāda* ‘this’ < *hāḏa* in sentence 26).
- The Old Arabic (OA) affricate *ǧ* has shifted to *y*, e.g. *əḥyār* < *ʔaḥǧār* ‘stones’ (sentence 99).
- *k* and *g* have been affricated in front vowel environments, e.g. *ʔačəl* < *ʔakl* ‘food’ (sentence 50); *yḏīǧ* < **yḏīg* < *yaḏīqu* ‘to distress (sb.)’ (sentence 77).
- The dialect exhibits the so-called *gahawa*-syndrome: Stage 1: in a non-final syllable of the structure C₁aC₂, a short vowel (*a*) is inserted after C₂ when C₂ is a guttural, e.g. OA *ʔaxḏar* > *ʔaxaḏar* ‘green’ (sentence 9). The rural/*ʃarab* dialects also show the *gahawa*-syndrome in the imperfective verbs of Form I, e.g. *yʃarəf* < OA *yaʃrifu* ‘he knows’ (sentence 113).

Morphology

- Gender distinction in the 2nd and 3rd persons of verbs and pronouns is a feature of all KhA dialects.
- The independent pronouns of the 3rd persons possess two variants, vowel-initial (i.e. of the structure ʔvCCv) versus consonant-initial: MSG *huwa* (sentence 52) vs. *ʔəhwa*; MPL *huma* ~ *humma* vs. *ʔəhma* (sentence 115); FSG *hiyye* (sentence 100) vs.

1 Note that the terms *ʃarab* and *ḥaḏar* only roughly correspond to the terms rural and urban, cf. Leitner (Forthcoming: 18–29) for a detailed discussion of these terms.

2 Cf. Ingham (1976: 68), who describes this feature as typical of the ʕAmāra and marshland region as well as of the northern and eastern areas of Khuzestan.

ʔəhye; and FPL *hənnā* (sentence 91) vs. *ʔəhna*. Ingham describes the vowel-initial forms as typical of the Šaṭṭ al-ʿArab and southern KhA dialects as well as the dialects of the Bani Lām north and east of ʿAmāra (Ingham 1976: 70, fn. 29; in Ingham 2007: 574 only the forms with initial vowel are provided). Except for the FSG forms, in the text from Ḥamīdiyya the consonant-initial forms of the 3rd person pronouns prevail.

- A typical urban feature within this geographical region (Ingham 1973: 544) found in the area of Ḥamīdiyya is the extended use of *-ē-* in the inflectional suffixes of the PFV.³ Thus, in this dialect, the form is not restricted to geminated and defective verbs. For example, *kabbarēt* ‘I raised (sb.)’ (sentence 17), *ənmuṭlēt* ‘I lay down’ (sentence 32), or *lḥagīāna* ‘we lived to see’ (sentence 124; in Aḥwāz the respective form is *laḥagna*).
- Optional suffixation of *-an* after 1st person singular imperfective verbs of the hollow (i.e. medial weak) and geminated type: e.g., *ʔaḍullan* ‘I stay,’ and *ʔamūtan* ‘I die’ (sentence 86). This South-Mesopotamian feature is a contraction of the verb and the postponed 1st person singular pronoun *ʔāna* (Ingham 2000: 127).
- The genitive marker is *māl* (sentence 33), which is subject to gender and number agreement (FSG *mālat*, MPL *mālīn*, FPL *mālāt*).
- In KhA, there are two forms of the verb ‘give’: *nəṭa, yənṭi* and *ʔəṭa, yəṭi* (sentence 47) (cf. Behnstedt and Woidich 2014: 409). In the following text, only the second form is found.
- KhA has four forms to express non-existence: *māku* (most common form), *māmən* (sentence 85), *māməš* and, in some cases, *mā bī*. Existence is expressed with the particles *ʔaku, hassət* or, in some cases, *bī*.
- The prefix *ta-* of the Form V verbs: e.g., *tačabbašət* ‘I have learnt’ (sentence 72) is another rural feature found in the dialect of Ḥamīdiyya (cf. Ingham 1973, 197: 541–542). The corresponding urban form shows no vowel in the prefix (*tčabbašət*).

Lexis

The lexical items that KhA shares with most other Mesopotamian dialects (cf. e.g. Erwin 1963 on Baghdadi Arabic; cf. also Ingham 1973: 546), are e.g. *hassa* ‘now’ (sentence 19), *kalləš* ‘very, totally’ (sentence 125), *ʔaku* ‘there is’ and *xəš* used as an attributive adjective preceding nouns as in *xəš walad* ‘a good boy’ or as an adverb as in *hiyye xəš təsʔal* ‘she asks good questions’ (sentence 39).

3 This feature is also common in southern Iraq, including Bašra (Ingham 1974: 16, fn. 1; Jastrow 2007: 421), in several Gulf Arabic dialects (Holes 2016: 33–34) and even in some dialects in Sudan and North Africa (Holes 2016: 33–34).

Lexical features that are only shared with southern Mesopotamian dialects, or even found only in KhA (cf. Ingham 1973: 547 for more southern Mesopotamian and distinct KhA items), are e.g. the conjunction *čīā* ‘because’ (sentence 59), the discourse particles *ča* (sentence 28) and *xō* (sentence 67), *farax* ‘child’ (sentence 44) and the interrogative *yāhu* (MSG) ‘who?’ (sentence 125; its FSG form *yāhi* occurs in sentence 30) (cf. Ingham 2000: 127).

Borrowed items from Persian are e.g. *dehdār* ‘village mayor’ (sentence 117) and *zendān* ‘jail’ (sentence 82).

3 Text

The following text is a dialogue which I recorded during my fieldwork in Khuzestan in September 2016. The two women were interviewed while sitting on the sidewalk in front of their houses in a quiet street in Ḥamīdiyya, Khuzestan. Both are aged around 50 and come from poor families. The topics of their conversation are: family, former times, tattoos and childbirth.

The transcription of the text is not consistently phonemic because it indicates, for example, the allophones *i* and *u* of the phoneme *ə*. Also noted is the raising of final *-a#* to *-e#* and assimilations such as *ln > nn* and *št > šš*.

There are various forms of address, most often bi-polar kinship terms (cf. Yasin 1977), used by the elderly woman to address their listeners, e.g. *yumma* ‘(lit.) oh mother’ (sentence 2), *yadde* ‘grandmother’ or *šamma* ‘(lit.) uncle’ (both in sentence 8). As there exist no real equivalents for such forms of address in English, they will not be translated.

The speakers in the following texts are:

- A: Aḥmad, a young journalist from Aḥwāz
- B: First elderly woman from Ḥamīdiyya
- BL: The author
- C: Second elderly woman from Ḥamīdiyya
- D: A young man, friend of Aḥmad

- A: 1. *awlād-əč, šad-hum əfrūx?*
- B: 2. *ēh, šad-i yumma, frēxāt⁴ šad-i...*
- A: 3. *ham əssōlfīn-hum səwālāf, maṭal ətgəli-lhum: ‘əgəšdu xall asōlf-əlkum!’?*
- B: 4. *ēh, ča waḥ(ad)!*
- A: 5. *š-əssōlfī-lhum?*
- B: 6. *asōlf-əlhum, zamān gabul, yadde, hēc šəfət, hēc šəfət...*
- A: 7. *šənhu? ēh l-hēc šəfət w l-hēc šəfət w-əḥna rrīd-hən.*

4 *farax* ‘child,’ PL *əfrūx*, has the commonly used diminutive form *frēx*, PL *frēxāt*.

- B: 8. *hā, agəl-hum, yadde, zamān əl-yōm abu yumma yadda yat-kum əl-yōm māt rakaḏət l-ən-Nīəsān, aw ḥaṣadna, aw lagaṭna, aw lamlamnēna w kəll ši sawwēna, ʕamma.*
 9. *ʕamme, yibna əl-axaḏar w-əl-yābəs, ḥaṭṭēna, asawwi mətāf ʔəlhūm awwal lə-frēxāt awwal hād, ʕamme, awwal āne awwal āne rabbēt l-yitāma ... kaḏḏēt-li wakət, mā ḥadd.* 10. *w-ən-nōb, awlād əkubraw, yəwwəziət-hum, ən-nōb ʕarat ʕad-hum əfrēxāt.* 11. *w-asōləf, asōləf əl-mā ġara ʕala-y dāk əl-wakət, kəlla əl-hād əl-wakət.*
- A: 12. *ʔənti dāk əl-wakət ʕənhi ʕānat məhənt-əč? ʕūgult-əč?*
- B: 13. *məhənt-i? ʕūgult-i? ʕad rayl-i w mʕāyəs-ni w mʕāyəs-t-a w hahaw hahaw w yāybīn əd-darəb hād kəlla, ha? kull ši mā ʕalīə.* 14. *w lamman mā, lamman mā māt – yā mən xēr əl ləfā-k əmḥammad – ən-nōb ʕār əl-ḥabəl əhnā ʕār əl-ḥabəl bə-čtūf-i⁵ – də-xall⁶ asōləf xayye – ʕār əl-ḥabəl bə-čtūf-i.* 15. *gəmt⁷ aʕāyən l-əbnayy-t-i, axəf ʕalī-ha xaṭar.* 16. *aʕāyən l-əwliəd-i, axəf ʕalīə xaṭar – təsməf-ni yā ʕamme?* 17. *hā, lamman mā kabbarət-hum kabbarət-hum aḷlāh ġasam-əlhūm ənsiəwīnāt⁸, əl-ḥamdillāh wa ʕəkər.* 18. *ən-nōba⁹, ʕaraw ʕad-hum əfrēxāt.* 19. *hassa, ʕərət ʕayūz baʕad mā bī-ya ḥəl.* 20. *gāmu mətəl mā āne bārət-hum¹⁰ huma ham bārō-ni.* 21. *ʕūf ʕamma hād ət-tuwālēt, ʕaziz galb-i, kəll ši ʕamma waḷḷa.* 22. *ḥəṣadna, lammēna təbən, lammēna – ġanēna ḥaywān, kull ši sawwēna ya ʕaziz galb-i.* 23. *wə-dabbərna ʕəʕat-na, hād əl-wakət əl marr ʕalīə-na, ha ha.* 24. *hassa lamman mā ʕərt ʕayayiz¹¹ hassa ḥatta mā bīə waḷḷa amšī...*
- A: 25. *hāda d-dəgga w dəgge ʕalīə-k...?*
- B: 26. *hāda ʕamma, hāda ʕamma madgūg hāda ʕūd mə¹²-ʕʕīr əl-mara tāxəḏ rayyəl, əṭṭuṭṭ əhnā niyāšīn, ʕūd əʕʕīr ḥəlwa.*
- A: 27. *hāy mən xadēti aw ġabəl lā tāxḏīn daggēti...?*
- B: 28. *la, waḷḷa la, baʕad ʕərt əbnayye ḥdiəṭa w gəmət: yumma, ča dič əd-digge w hāy dəgg, hāy dəgge hāy dā – hā ān(e) ham sawwan-li! – agəl əl-, lə-n-nəswān əl ydiggan, gāman ysawwan-li.* 29. *ydiggan, ēh! ča əš-ḥālā-hən hādanni ya?¹³!*
- A: 30. *yāhi ʕānat əddigg?*
- B: 31. *ʕayāyiz ham ʕayāyiz ʕad-na, ʕamma – w taʕāli yumma taʕay ʕədwa-ləč.* 32. *ənmuṭlēt w daggat ḥawāyb-i, ənmuṭlēt, daggat hādann, hā ʕūf əš-ḥālā-hən! tʕūf-hən?*

5 The more common plural of *čətəf* 'shoulder' is *čtāfāt* not *čtūf*.

6 On the prefix *də-* used for emphasis in Iraqi Arabic, see Blanc (1964: 117).

7 Cf. Behnstedt and Woidich (2014: 233) on cognate forms with the same meaning in Chad, Nigeria and Kuwait.

8 Diminutive plural of *nəswān* 'women.'

9 *ən-nōb* ~ *ən-nōba* is a conjunction meaning 'then.'

10 Cf. Holes (2001: 39) on Bahraini Arabic: '*bāra* "take care of, take pains over."'

11 Diminutive of *ʕayūz* 'elderly woman.'

12 < *mən* 'when.'

13 Particle used for expressing astonishment or obviousness, like 'well, what do you think?! Of course, they were stunning!'

- A: 33. *ēh, wāyəd ḥəlwa, bass had-əš-šəkəl māl-hən fūd¹⁴ šənhi, mətəl hassa hād əl-əhlāl?*
- B: 34. *fūd hāy fūd hāy ḥamāma-yā mən xēr əl ləfā-k, w hāda ḥəlāl... [laughs].*
- D: 35. *şəgəd?*
- B: 36. *waḷla, fazīza tḥāyən ḥala-yā yā fazīzt-i.*
- A: 37. *hāy ətfəhm-əč. səʔli-ha suʔāl!*
- BL: 38. *aku ši akla xāşsa l-əl-mara əl yāybe?*
- D: 39. *hiyye xōš təsʔal!*
- B: 40. *lō asōləf-əlkum hāy, yadde – tafal, tafal, əgʔəd, əskət əskət! 41. šūf, āne, mən baʔad rayl-i ʔadal, mən zamān dāk əl-wakət, baʔad əzləmt-i ʔadal. 42. ynədhən-ni ən-nəswān əl-muḍayyğāt maʔal aḥ aḥ ʔad-hən ḥaməl. 43. ygūlan ‘taʔay’ yʔarafan-ni āne aḍanni¹⁵, əl-marāt¹⁶, baʔad ʔazīz galb-i šlōn māmāt māl̄t əl-hawāz?! hā. 44. ynədhən-ni w-amšī, arūḥ lə-t-tuwāb l-ət-tuwāb – oşal əl-hāy əl-ḥərma w tyīb, ətyīb aʔarəf amahhd-a əl-farax, aʔarəf agəşş əs-sərr, aʔarəf agamməʔ, wa aʔarəf šənhi šəkəl əl-mara hāy əl tərīd ətyīb, aʔtəhəm bī-ha, əş-yōyəf-əč, gəlli-li!*
- A: 45. *saʔəlat-əč, ətgəl-lič, l-əl-yāyba ḥam ʔad-əč ačla xāşsa? əl-mara tərīd ətyīb, ş-taʔīn-ha?*
- B: 46. *ət tərīd ətyīb? hā, tərīd ətyīb, yumma, assaww-əlha – əl-ḥaywāna nəḥlib-ha, w-ənsawwi baḥat w dəhən māl ḥaywān w-ənḥuʔt-a hāda ḥəlu əb-baʔn əl-mara əl-yāyba. 47. nəḥləb hāyşə, w nsawwi, ʔazīzt-i, w nəʔi. 48. nəʔi l-hāy əl-mara əl-yāyba şway yşīr ḥəlu, lōf-ha ḥəlu, gədrat-ha, kəll ši yşīr ʔad-ha ... 49. ət-ʔəfəl mā yəndarr, ət-ʔəfəl. 50. əla ḥaʔtatt-a hēc ḥala şīdər-ha w māčla hād əl-ačəl, mā yḍarr-ha, mā yḍarr ʔəfəl-ha.*
- A: 51. *w mən ətyīb əş-taʔīn-ha?*
- B: 52. *ēh, huwa hāda, ʔazīz galb-i.*
- A: 53. *nəfəs hāda?*
- B: 54. *ēh, huwa hāda əl-ḥurūrāt maʔal.*
- C: 55. *əs-səmač, w əd-diyāy.*
- B: 56. *fəlfəl, mā-şinhi¹⁷. 57. b-hāy fūd, hāy əl-mara tīyīb. 58. bass āne, yadde, kāməlan yadde. 59. w rādaw, w ʔō-ni kərət¹⁸ bass āne čī mā ʔadi s-səğən¹⁹ xāla awwal mā*

14 Discourse particle expressing uncertainty.

15 Cf. Ḥassūnizadeh (2015: 470) on CA *q-n-ʔ*, I. stem: ‘to increase the number of one’s offspring’ [here and in the following, the translations of the Arabic originals given in Ḥassūnizadeh’s dictionary are my own]; (Holes 2001: 313) ‘*ḍana* “foetus, confinement, newly born child, small child.”’

16 Generally, the plural of KhA *mara* ‘woman’ is *nəswān*. The usually uncommon external plural form *marāt* used in this sentence might be influenced by the form *māmāt* ‘midwives,’ which is also an external plural and appears in the same sentence.

17 Elliptical for *mā ʔadri šənhi* ‘I don’t know what (F).’

18 < P *kārt*.

19 Probably < *səğəl* ‘register, record,’ cf. Woodhead and Beene (1967: 213).

fāl, ərafadət həy əs-sālfa. 60. *walla āna iyā-ni, hād əl-biəhdās²⁰ māl salf-i²¹, tağarrar fāla-y w gālō-li: 'yūzi²² mən həy əs-sālfa!* 61. *gət-əlhūm: 'šlōn ayūz-a?'* 62. *mā ayūz, xatṭāyē əl-mara əl-muḍayyǧā, waḥda – ?əntum awlād-i – waḥda, ətərkuḍ, tərkuḍ gālat xayba taḥālī-li, wən abū bēhdaš hād, yrīd ymənḥ-əç mən fadi, lā, mū zīən hēç mən fad-e.* 63. *əl-mara tərkaḍ-əlhā: yēt-əç, yēt-əç ḥatta lō, ḥatta lō yḥəbsūn-ni!* 64. *əyēt-əç, həf fālā-ç²³.* 65. *akəḍḍ əl-ḥərma, w-alafləf-ha, yumma, w-asərr-ha w həy, w aṭayyāḥ²⁴ əṭfayyālat²⁵-ha w agamməṭ w aḥdəl w həy, b-əl-āxəra ən-nōb kaḍḍū-ni, gālaw: marat ḥaššūni²⁶ yayyəbat-na.* 66. *gət-əlhūm çā, w-axāf?! xāl – xadā-ni əl-biəhdās w sawwa fāla-y əmtəḥān, mən hād salf-i.* 67. *huwwə əhnā xō b-salf-əl-biəhdās māl əs-salaf.* 68. *w-ən-nōb xadō-ni l-ḥamīdiyya, l-ḥamīdiyya kaḍḍat-ni māma.* 69. *əš-ḥəlu ḥaçī-ha!* 70. *gālat-li fəyn-i šlōn ənti əṭḍannīn ən-nəswān?* 71. *gət-əlhā walla āne aḍanni n-nəswān, mən yāḥ²⁷ fāṭimat əz-zahra, umm əl-ḥasan, fāṭima.* 72. *āne yaddat-i umm ubū-y tyaddad, w taçabbašət²⁸ mən ḥadər id-ha.* 73. *tāflīm hād tadrīb.* 74. *əh, əftahāmət əšlōn, əl-ḥərma həy əṭḍanni yaddat-i umm ubū-y, fəyūz, hā.* 75. *šlōn mā sawwat āne sawwət.* 76. *baḥad hēçī hāda l-farax əl-muḍayyāg aftəḥəm əš-šənhu mā šənhu, hēçī baḥad ...* 77. *əl-farax əl-muḍayyāg əftəḥəm bī šənhu əb-baṭn-a, šənhu, šənhu əš-yōyəf-a, yḍiğ nafs-a.* 78. *arkəḍ-la, yā fəziz galb-i, afawwr əl-māy, aṭubx-a, aṭubx-a, aṭubx-a w-aḥuṭṭann-a b-əl-māfūn.* 79. *baḥla xall nšər(r)b-a māy fāyər yiğsil şadr-a – min gidrat aḷla.* 80. *hāda šway əl asawwi yšir zīən, hēçī.* 81. *həy hēç is-sālfa w farəd raḥma...wa lā šāf, šəfət-li mašğiza, famma famma abū aḥmad wa lā šəfət-li mašğiza.* 82. *gālō-li baḥad ənti tyōzīn la yḥassnūn rās-əç w yḍəbbū-ləç b-əz-zendān²⁹ [laughs].* 83. *xall nagūm, əḍrūs-i³⁰ tāyḥāt.* 84. *walla, gālō-li baḥad yūzi! hād ḥadd-əç ənti mən əš-şuğla!* 85. *gət-əl(hum) çā xər, kəll xər əs səda³¹, tara kəll ši māmən, āne hēçī mā-ni – amšī lə-l-əxre ...* 86. *əmn ašir arīd amūtan agūl, adawwur, ḥafərt-i əşşir wəsiḥa.* 87. *hīçī mā yaṭann ən-nəswān, agḥəd mən faşyāt l-əş-şubuh.* 88. *hēç əš-yōyəf-əç gəllī-li, ş-ənsawwī-ləç baḥad rūḥ-i, hēç, həy baḥad āne hād ḥadd-i fəziz galb-i.*

20 < P *behdāšt* 'hygiene, healthcare' (Junker and Alawi 2002: 108).

21 Ḥassūnizadeh (2015: 386): '*salaf* "district, *fašira*."'

22 < *ğāz, yğūz*, cf. Holes (2001: 96) '*ğāz fan/min* "cease to do s.th."; Woodhead and Beene (1967: 80) '*ğāz min* "to stop, quit, give up"'; Ḥassūnizadeh (2015: 890) '*yāz min* "cease to do, give up s.th."'

23 This phrase appears to have a different meaning in Baghdadi Arabic, cf. Woodhead and Beene (1967: 126): '*ḥəf fālē!* "What a pity! Too bad!"'

24 Also *ayayyāb-ha*.

25 Diminutive of *ṭəfla* 'daughter.'

26 Diminutive of the proper name Ḥassan.

27 < *ğāh* 'power, position.'

28 Cf. Ḥassūnizadeh (2015: 198–199): '*çabbaš* "to train; domesticate."'

29 < P *zendān* 'jail' (Junker and Alawi 2002: 387), cf. Ḥassūnizadeh (2015: 320).

30 *ḍərəs* PL *ḍrūs* is the normal word for 'tooth' in KhA, cf. Holes (2001: 311) on Bahraini Arabic: '*ḍirs* PL *ḍrūs* "tooth"; contrast Baghdadi Arabic, Woodhead and Beene (1967: 279), which has kept the CA meaning 'molar (tooth).'

31 Cf. Ḥassūnizadeh (2015: 374): '*sidā*: "happen."'

- BL: 89. *w-ən-nəs-wān ham čānan yaštəglan b-əz-zərəfa?*
- B: 90. *ēh nətləf ham b-əz-zərəfa lō nəḥsəd, lō nləmm ḥənṭa, taṣay fazizti taṣ(ay) taṣ(ay) – waḷla ʔāne əyēt b-ġēr ṣabāye!* 91. *ēh, fazizt-i, halla bī-hən, halla halla bī-hən banāt-na hənna haḍan yəḥčan ṣarab.* 92. *lō ʔalaṣ zəlme yəḥṣəd nrūḥ ənləmm əl-baṭ (?) w-ənləmm-a ənduwwəs-a w-əndərrī w-ənləmm-a nəḥərz-a b-əl-biət, əngūl xāf³² əs- marār – murūr əl-wakət, xāf əndull əb-ġēr zād mā ṣad-na ʔḥīn, w-əndamm-a.* 93. *nāxd-a l-makīna l-ḥənṭa naṭḥan-ha w nākəl-ha.* 94. *hēc, hēc ṣad-na šəgāṣ mən rabb əl-ṣālamīn.* 95. *ənləmm – əḥna ṣāḥbāt əbyūt əḥna ḥārcāt, hassa baṣad mən ʔəḥna baṣad aḷḷā w-əl-ṣādrīn.* 96. *ēh, kəll šī sawwəna waḷla yā fazizt-i.* 97. *šūfi, aləmman aləmman – hā yadda? fədwa. māṭ rayyl-i xō māṭ, xō māṭ rayyli – aḷḷa yərḥam wāldīə-kum əl-kill w-əl-ġamīṣ – māṭ, ṣadi bəti, yumma taṣay taṣay – hā? – yumma xall nāxd əṭ-ṭəsət w nāxd hēcī ṣala š-šəwərəf ṣala salaf-na hēc.* 98. *la dīč kaffan dīč, xall nāxd əṭ-ṭəsət yumma w nəftarr hēc ṣala s-salaf.* 99. *šə-nsawwi? əllaggəṭ əl-əḥyār əl-ḥərri³³, əl-ḥəlu, əllaggṭ-a w ənnəgḡḡ-a³⁴, b-muwāṣīn, b-əṭ-ṭšūta, mā ḥəṭṭ-a hēc b-əl-gāṣ w yšīr ḡabar.* 100. *ənnəgḡḡ-a w-ən-nōba difnā w ṣadənn-ā³⁵ w sawwəna tannūr – əš-ḥəlu! – w nəxbəz bī hēc ṣeš, xōš? hāy ḥiyye hēcī.* 101. *ən-nōb ələč fazizti.*
- C: 102. *ham takallafna yā-bni b-əl-əbyūt, ham āne xaləft-i bass banāt, šāyəb-na marīd, ham rəḥna ən-naxal, rəḥna l-əš-šilib ...* 103. *... ṣala gūlt əl ygūl ḥasəd-na b-īdīə³⁶-na, nəgganna³⁷ ibnān³⁸ kill šī šəfnā ḍəm, wāyəd.* 104. *əl-ḥamdu-li-ḷḷāh w šəkər hassa mən aḷḷa yṣaddī-ha hēc wāyəd ḥəlu.*
- A: 105. *əl-ibnān, əš-čəntu ssawūn bī?*
- C: 106. *əl-ibnān, xō nəḥsəd ḥəṣād b-īdīə-na, zərəf, w-ən-nōb əḥṭṭ-a b-əl-banna – yəgall əl yəsmāṣ³⁹ – əḥḥaml-a ṣa-l-ḥaywāna, yčalləb b-əl-banna.* 107. *āne xō mənḥā gašīra w mənna – yəgall əl yəsmāṣ, yəgall əl yəsmāṣ – əl-məṭi ṣāli, ačalləb bī nyīb-a; ndabb-a b-əl-gāṣ, əl-banna.* 108. *hāy kəwwəm-na həna, sawwəna bəyādūr, gabul māku tarātra, ti – yəgall əl yəsmāṣ, yəgall əl yəsmāṣ – ṣala məṭāya ndūs⁴⁰.* 109. *nəngəṭ ər-rōṭa, əndəbb-ha mən lə mən əl-wahda mən əl-bīədar.* 110. *yḍarrūn-a*

32 Invariable expression with the meaning 'perhaps, possibly, maybe,' cf. Woodhead and Beene (1967: 149) for the same meaning in Baghdadi Arabic.

33 She probably means *trāb ḥərri* or *ṭīn ḥərri*, which denotes earth that is found in the deeper layers of the ground, is not mixed with stones and is used for building houses, cf. Ḥassūnizadeh (2015: 229).

34 Cf. MSA *naqafa* 'saturate (s.th.);' in Baghdadi Arabic *naggaṣ* (Woodhead and Beene 1967: 470).

35 < *ṣadlīna* 'we repaired.'

36 *ḥīd* 'hand' PL *ḥīdēn*, which becomes *ḥīdē-* [ḥīdīə] in construct state when suffixes are attached.

37 < *nəggalna* 'we carried.'

38 Cf. Cohen (1970: 4) on the root *ʔ-b-n* with the meaning 'stone' in various Semitic languages.

39 < *ʔagall* 'to revere, venerate, esteem highly, exalt' (cf. Woodhead and Beene 1967: 75). This is an expression of apology for mentioning a taboo word or a distasteful topic (for example, certain animals).

40 Above *ndəwwəs*.

- b-īdīā-hum marāwīh, rəhna ən-naxal, rəhna l-əš-silib, wāyəd tafabna.* 111. *bass əšwāy hənā bə-dāk əz-zamān həlu, rəğğā⁴¹, nađđāfa w amān.* 112. *əla wāhəd ysawwī-la māy huwa yğəsm-a wiyya yār-a, wiyya axú.* 113. *hassa la, hād əl-wakət la, axū bařad yřarəř axú?*
- D: 114. *inřalla əl-əyāwīd⁴²...*
- C: 115. *la, əhma əl-əyāwīd kəlman əb-məkān-a.* 116. *ēh, bass əhna gabul riğğat-na həlu, həlu.* 117. *hassa ham nařma mən allā, yřaddi hāda l-xər w hāda l-dehdār⁴³ māl-na w-əs-salaf māl-na, nařma, rəğğat-na həlwa.*
- BL: 118. *w malābəs-kum? ċān mətl əl-yōm?*
- C: 119. *malābəs-na hāy malābəs, əy mən gabul əhna: tōb, satər-ha, řabāye, əl-əhdīātāt la, yləbsan...*
- A: 120. *gabul tōb māl řanam w-yhūkūn-a ysawwi əhdūm, yřir xařən bass māku əhdūm ysawwūn-a.*
- C: 121. *ēh bəřət bəřət. xō, dōlāk əlařagaw w-əhna mā lařagna əl-awwaliyyīn.*
- B: 122. *la, la řamma, hassa əhna nəmři nəlbəs ət-tiyāb, ha-t-tōb.*
- C: 123. *nařma, hassa nařma.*
- B: 124. *gabul mā řəřna, má lřagīəna řalīə, gabul la.* 125. *hā ydūdat⁴⁴-na gabul əssōləřyğūl nsawwi, əl-bəřət w-nsawwi mətəl diřdāřa w nələbs-a, řiyyāb-na gabul l-awwaliyyīn, uuuhh, kəlləř hēċ gaylīn, yāhu nəř?al mən řad-hum, hēċ řazīzt-i.*
- BL: 126. *w malābəs əř-řəta?*
- B: 127. *hənnā hādanni hna yā řazīzt-i əy wařla, hādann lə-hədūm lā abaddəl-ha, řazīzti, hāy malābs əř-řəta.*
- A: 1. Your children, do they have children?
- B: 2. Yes, I have of course, I have children.
- A: 3. Do you also tell them stories, like, you tell them: ‘Sit down and let me tell you a story!’?
- B: 4. Yes, but of course!
- A: 5. What do you tell them?
- B: 6. I tell them, in former times, I have seen this and that...
- A: 7. What (exactly)? Yes, this ‘this and that’ is what we want (to hear).

41 Ĥassūnizadeh (2015: 325): ‘riğğā: “(good) relation, kindness, tenderness”; cf. MSA *riqqā* ‘gentleness, tenderness, kindness, thinness.’

42 Cf. *yūd* < *ğūd* ‘favour, generosity’ (cf. Ĥassūnizadeh 2015: 925); *řəyāwīd* means ‘good, generous people.’

43 < P *dehdār* ‘village mayor’ (Junker and Alawi 2002: 335).

44 Plural of *yadd* ‘grandfather,’ i.e. the plural pattern C₁C₂ūC₂, which is very common in KhA and sometimes is combined with an external plural suffix -a, e.g. *ydūd* ~ *ydūda*, or *břūt* ~ *břūta* ‘ducks’ (SG *bařta*).

- B: 8. Aha. I tell them, dear, the time, the day(s) of (the) father, dear, grandfather, your grandfather; the day he died, I ran to *ən-Nīāsān*, or we harvested, or we gathered (the harvest) or we collected (crops), everything we did. 9. We brought the green and the dry (i.e. we did everything). We put the, I made food for them, first for the children, first this, first I, first I raised orphans... it took me time, nobody (is like me?). 10. And then, the children grew up, I married them off, then they had children themselves. 11. And I tell, I tell what happened to me during that time, everything about that time.
12. What was your profession during that time? Your job?
- B: 13. My profession? My job? I know, this day my husband fed me and I fed him⁴⁵ and so and so and that was the way of life, right? He did not have any (troubles). 14. And when, when he died—may the good surround you Muḥammad—then the rope was here, I was the one responsible (lit. the rope was on my shoulders)—well let me tell sister—I was responsible. 15. I started to take care of my daughter, I was afraid something could happen to her [especially a sexual relation]. 16. I watched my son, I was afraid something could happen to him—do you listen to me? 17. So, after I had raised them and raised them (until they were grown-ups), God gave them (good, modest) women; thanks and praise be to God. 18. Then they had children. 19. Now, I have become an old woman; I no longer have power. 20. They started—As I had taken care of them, they (now) take care of me. 21. See, this toilet [they, my children, help her, to go to the toilet, now that she no longer has the strength to do so on her own]; Everything dear, by God. 22. We harvested, gathered straw, we gathered—we bred cattle, we made everything. 23. And we handled our life. That time that has passed quickly. 24. Now, that I have become an old woman, I can't even walk anymore, by God.
- A: 25. And this tattoo, has she tattooed you...?
- B: 26. This, this is tattooed, this shall—When a woman is about to take a man (to marry), she puts symbols here hoping to become (even more) beautiful.
- A: 27. This (tattoo): After you took someone or before you married, did you get the tattoo?
- B: 28. No, but no, when I became a young woman (of about 16) I started (to say), 'Look at this tattoo and that tattoo and that—please make me one as well!'—I told the, the women who were making the tattoos, and they (rose and) made me one. 29. They tattooed, yes! But how beautiful (they made them)!
- A: 30. Who made the tattoo?
- B: 31. Elderly women, some elderly women among us—[towards the second elderly woman] Come here, my beloved (lit. I would sacrifice myself for you). 32. I lay down, and she tattooed my eyebrows; I lay down and she made these tattoos; Look how beautiful they are! Do you see them?

45 This phrase probably also has a sexual connotation.

- A: 33. Yes, very beautiful. But their shape, what is it supposed to be? Like now this:
A crescent?
- B: 34. I think, I think this should be a pigeon—may the good embrace you—and that
a crescent.
- D: 35. For real?
- B: 36. By God, she is looking at me.
- A: 37. She understands you. Ask her a question! [talking to me].
- BL: 38. Is there any special food you give to the women who have just given birth?
- D: 39. She asks good questions!
- B: 40. If I tell you this—come, come, sit and keep silent! 41. See, I, when my husband
was still alive, at that time, when my man was still alive, 42. the women who
felt uneasy (here: with their pregnancy or delivery) woke me up like when they
were pregnant. 43. They said ‘Come!’ They knew that I aided (women) during
childbirth, the women, just like the midwives in Ahwāz! Yes. 44. They woke me
up and I went (to help). I go in the name of God, to guarantee divine recompense.
I arrive at that woman’s and she gives birth, she gives birth. I know how to put
the child into the cradle, I know how to cut the umbilical cord, I know how to
swaddle the child, and I know how a woman who is about to give birth looks like,
I understand her: ‘What hurts you? Tell me!’
- A: 45. She has asked you, she says, ‘The woman that has just given birth, is there
also a special diet for her? The women who is about to give birth, what do you
give her?’
- B: 46. The women who is about to give birth? Well, (if) she is about to give birth,
I make her—I milk the cattle, I make rice pudding and clarified animal butter
and we give (her) this: (it does) good in the pregnant woman’s belly. 47. We milk
the cow, and we make (this), and we give (it to her). 48. We give (this) to the
woman who has given birth and it all goes well. Her pain is gone (lit. good), her
strength, everything about her becomes (fine). 49. The child is not injured, the
child. 50. If she puts it like that on her breast and she has eaten this food, he is
fine, he comes to no harm.
- A: 51. And when she gives birth, what do you give her?
- B: 52. Well, this is it.
- A: 53. This same thing?
- B: 54. Yes, this is it, like warm things.
- C: 55. Fish, and chicken.
- B: 56. Pepper. I don’t know (what else). 57. With that this woman hopefully gives
birth. 58. But me, I have finished (my apprenticeship as a midwife). 59. And they
wanted to give me a licence [official certification for being a midwife]. But since
I did not have a citizenship at that time, I hindered this story. 60. And I—He came
to me, (from) this healthcare centre of my district, it was decided (?) against me
and they told me: ‘stop this work (lit. story)!’ 61. I asked them: ‘How can I stop?’

62. I won't stop: the woman is poor who has problems (and is)—you are my children⁴⁶—like, she is running and running. She said, 'Dear come to me.' Where is this carer who wants to prevent me from seeing you? No, that is not nice of him.

63. The woman [i.e. herself] runs to (see) her [i.e. a pregnant woman]: 'I have come to (help) you, I have come to (help) you, even if, even if they imprisoned me! 64. I have come, don't worry.' 65. I take the woman and enwrap her, and cut her umbilical cord, and so. And I help her to give birth to her daughter and I swaddle (it) and I do this and that. And in the end they took me (and) they said: 'The wife of Ḥassūni, helped us to give birth.' 66. I told them [the people from the health care centre]: 'Well do you really think I am afraid?' Let—The guy from the health care centre took me and let me take an exam, [he was] from my area. 67. He, here, well in the area of the health centre, of the [my] district. 68. Then they took me to Ḥamīdiyya, in Ḥamīdiyya a midwife took charge of me. 69. How beautiful was her way of speaking! 70. She said to me, 'My dear! How do you attend women's childbirth?' 71. I told her 'By God, I attend the women's childbirth, by the power of Fāṭima Zahra [wife of Ali, daughter of Muhammad], mother of Ḥasan, Fāṭima. 72. I, my grandmother, the mother of my father, she was a midwife, I have learnt (it) from her (lit. under her hand). 73. Studying is training. 74. Yes, I learnt (it). This woman attended women's childbirth, my grandmother, my father's mother, an old lady, right. 75. The way she did it, I did it. 76. And then, well like this, this child that has a problem, I understood what is what, like that. 77. The child that has a problem, I understand him, what is (wrong) with his belly, what, what hurts him, causes him to feel uneasy. 78. I run to him, I boil water, I cook it, cook it, cook it, and pour it into a vessel. 79. Let us make him drink hot (lit. boiling) water, that makes him feel good (lit. cleans his breast)—by the power of God. 80. This, what I make, makes (him feel) good, like that. 81. Well that is the story and it is a blessing. He, I did not see a miracle, father of Aḥmad, I haven't seen a miracle [I have rather learnt this profession by training]. 82. They said then, 'You stop now so they won't shave your head and put you in jail.' [laughs] 83. Let's get up, I don't have teeth anymore (lit. they have fallen down) [She is tired from all the talking and laughing]. 84. By God, they told me, 'Stop it now!' Enough now of your work (lit. this is your limit).' 85. I told (them), 'Well alright.' All good things that have happened, see, there is nothing, I am not—I go to the afterlife... 86. When I will die, I say, I look for—my grave shall be big. [She does her work for free and expects in exchange—from God—only a large tomb]. 87. The women don't give (me) anything, I work (lit. sit) from evening till morning. 88. Like that, 'What hurts you? [to a pregnant woman] Tell me, what can we do for you?' Like this, that is all I can say (lit. this is my limit).

46 Expression commonly used with the meaning that one can be sincere and go on telling his/her personal story since the listeners are like family to him/her.

BL: 89. Have the women also worked in the fields?

B: 90. Yes, we also went to the crops. We harvested or gathered grain. Come my dear, come here, come—My God, I came without my Abaya! 91. Yes, my dear, welcome. They are very welcome: they are our daughters, they speak Arabic. [Speaking about us] 92. When the man went out to harvest, we went to gather (crop?). We harvested it and thrashed it and winnowed it and gathered it and stored it at home. We say maybe, one time, maybe we are left without food, without flour, and so we store it. 93. We take the mill (lit. flour machine), we mill it and eat it. 94. Like this, like this we had courage from God. 95. We harvest—we are houses' owners, we are working hard (lit. moving), now that we have become weak, God accepts that (lit. the apologising). 96. Yes, we have done everything, by God, my dear. 97. See, I harvested, I harvested—what, my dear [to the other woman]? My husband died, well he died, well my husband died—May God have mercy upon your parents and everyone!—he died. I have a daughter. [As if to her daughter]: 'Come here—What?—Let us take the washbowl and we take this on the streets in our district, like this. 98. No, these are enough, these, let us take the washbowl and we go around like that in the area.' 99. What did we do? We pick up the good stones, the good ones, we pick it up and soak it in water, in a vessel, in the washbowl. We do not put it like this on the floor where it goes bad. 100. We soak it in water and then we mix it and we build it and we make an oven—How beautiful!—and we bake bread with it, right? That is all. 101. [To the second elderly woman] Now it is your turn, my dear.

C: 102. We also had much trouble my son, at home. My offspring are all girls. Our old man is sick, we also went to the palm groves, we went to the rice fields... 103. ... like you say, we harvested with our (bare) hands, we carried stones, we faced a lot of inequities, many. 104. Thank God now if God keeps things going like that it would be very good.

A: 105. The stones, what did you do with it?

C: 106. The stones. Well, we harvested with our hands, the harvest, and then we put it on the packsaddle⁴⁷—pardon the expression (lit. the one who listens shall be venerated)—we carry it on the animal, it is strapped to the packsaddle. 107. So here me being short and there—pardon the expression, pardon the expression—the donkey being tall, I hang onto it. I bring it [the harvest]; I cast it onto the ground, the load. 108. We staple this, here. We make the threshing ground. In former times, there were no tractors—pardon the expression, pardon the expression—we trod it on donkeys. 109. We dropped the dung, we threw it from the, from the thing, from the threshing ground. 110. They winnowed it with their hands (like) ventilators. We went to the palm groves, we went to the rice fields, we worked very hard.

47 Ḥassūnizadeh (2015: 131): '*banna* "timber fixed with a rope like a net thrown onto an animal's back and packed with the harvest(ed spikes) to bring it to the threshing place."

111. But it was (also) a good time: kindness, cleanliness and security. 112. (Even) if someone made *māy huwa*⁴⁸ he shared it with his neighbour, with his brother.
113. Now not, nowadays no. Does a brother know (even) his brother any more?
- D: 114. Hopefully (there are still) good people...
- C: 115. No, they, the good people, each one has his place (let's stick to the past).
116. Yes, but in the past we had good relationships, good, good. 117. God is also kind to us now. He keeps (giving us) this good (life) and this village headman of ours and our district: it is a blessing, we have good relationships.
- BL: 118. And your clothes? Were they like today?
- C: 119. Our clothes, these clothes. Yes, in the past we (wore) a *tōb*, (that) protected her, an Abaya. The young girls not: they wore...
- A: 120. In the past (they made) dresses from sheep (wool). They wove it to make clothes: they were rough, but there were no (other) clothes, they made them.
- C: 121. Yes, *bəšət*, *bəšət* [traditional cloak]. Well, those (still) lived to see (that). But we did not live to see (the days of) the past.
- B: 122. No, no, dear: now we go and wear dresses, this dress.
- C: 123. A blessing; nowadays it is a blessing.
- B: 124. In the past we did not see, we did not live to see it, in the past not. 125. Our grandfathers told (us): they say, 'We made, the *bəšət*, we made like a *dišdāša* and we wear it.' Our old men, in the past, the ancestors, uuuh (How long ago these days are!), just like this they said, those that we asked [about the past], like that.
- BL: 126. And the winter clothes?
- B: 127. These are these here. By God, these clothes. I don't change them. These are the winter clothes.

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48 Lit. 'air water,' a very simple dish, red *marag* 'sauce' without meat.

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