

# LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF FR. MAGRI'S FOLK-TALES

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STUDENTS of folk-lore in Malta are seriously handicapped by the lack of a Corpus of Maltese Folk-Tales that could make a scientific study of this type of popular fiction possible in its various aspects. The material collected so far is scattered in various publications that are often difficult to trace, and many more tales that are still current await collection.

The following are the main printed sources:

Bonelli, L., *Saggi del Folk-lore dell'isola di Malta*, Palermo, 1895.  
 (Contains, *inter alia*, summaries in Italian of twelve Maltese tales)  
 Three tales, with Italian translation, in 'Il Dialetto Maltese', published in *Archivio Glottologico Italiano* (Supplem. Period. IV, 1897, pp. 87-98).

Magri, E., S.J., Ten tales published in *X'Jghid il Malti jcul-Gherfbla mictub tal Maltn*. Malta, 1925 (originally published serially in *Cotba tal-Moghdija taz-Zmien*, (Pastime Books) Nos. 1-62 [1899-1907].  
*Hrejjes Misserijietna*, Books I-IV. Malta, 1902-4. (Published in the collection *Cotba tal Moghdija taz-Zmien* Nos. 15, 18, 29, 38-39).  
*X'Jgbejd il-Malti fuq id-Dinja ta' Taht u fuq ir-Rjeb*. Malta, 1905 (in *Moghdija taz-Zmien*, No. 44).

Stumme, H., *Maltesische Studien: eine sammlung prosaischer und poetischer texte in Maltesischer sprache...* Leipzig, 1904. (German translation *Maltesische Märchen Gedichte und Rätsel in Deutscher Uebersetzung*. Leipzig, 1904).

Ilg, B., *Maltesische Märchen und Schwänke*, 2 vols. Leipzig, 1906.

Bradley, R.N., Ten tales, in English translation only, in *Malta and the Mediterranean Race*, London, 1912, pp. 247-77.

Galea, L. and M.A. Murray, *Maltese Folk-Tales*, Malta, 1932. (Translation of five Maltese tales originally published by Fr. Magri. Some of the stories differ from Magri's versions, but the differences are pointed out in the notes).

Farini, A., *Fiabe, Leggende e Tradizioni Maltesi*, 3 vols. Malta, 1934-36.  
 (An Italian reading book for use in the schools. It contains modified translations of various tales given by Magri, Bonelli and Stumme).

The Maltese texts of the tales by Magri, Stumme and Bonelli make up a total of 102 tales, including variants and repetitions. Fr. Magri's collection, including 13 variants, totals 62, which is by far the greatest single

collection available in Maltese. Stumme's collection, including variants, numbers 37 and forms an important addition. Stumme's texts deserve a separate study from a linguistic point of view, but unfortunately Ilg's collection of 139 tales and drolleries, being in German translation only, is of no linguistic interest and cannot therefore be considered in this study. For the same reason Bradley, Murray and Farini fall outside the purpose of this article, while Bonelli's texts are too few in number to provide sufficient data for a detailed study.

Limiting ourselves to Magri's work, we shall start by giving a complete list of his folk-tales, with English translations in brackets. No. 1 in Magri's collection is a general introduction to the tales contained in *Hrejjef Misserijietna*: Nos. II-XV follow Magri's own enumeration, to which Nos. XVI-XXVII have been added to cover the tales published in his other publications.

HREJJEF MISSERIJJETNA – *L-Euuel Ctieb* (Our Fathers' Tales – Book One) [M.Ž. 15]<sup>a</sup>

- II. *Kif sarret l-ewwel dgħajsa fid-Dinja* (How the first boat in the world was made)
- III. *In-Nisel tal-Maltin* (The Origin of the Maltese People)
- IV. *Iż-Żewġ Plieri bejn il-Baħar il-Gewwienu u l-Baħar il-Barrani* (The Two Pillars between the Internal and the External Seas)
- V. *Is-Serp ta' ħafna Rjus* (The many-headed Serpent)
- VI. *Bufies*
- VII. *il-Hila ta' Bin il-Mara l-Għarfa* (The Prowess of the Wise Woman's Son)
  - (i) *Bin il-Mara l-Għarfa joqtol il-Golfu* (The Wise Woman's Son kills the 'Golfu')
  - (ii) *Bin il-Mara l-Għarfa jġib il-Għasfur iġħanni* (The Wise Woman's Son brings the Singing Bird)
  - (iii) *Bin il-Mara l-Għarfa jġib is-Siġra tal-Għasfur iġħanni* (The Wise Woman's Son brings the Tree of the Singing Bird)
  - (iv) *Bin il-Mara l-Għarfa jġib il-għadam tal-ljunfanti biex is-Sultan jibni bibom 'maqdes'* (The Wise Woman's Son brings the elephants' bones with which the Sultan can build a Temple)
  - (v) *Bin il-Mara l-Għarfa jġib ix-Xebba tal-Gmiel* (The Wise Woman's Son brings the Lady of Beauty)
- VIII. *Tifla jġib il-Għasfur iġħanni* (A Girl brings the Singing Bird)

HREJJEF MISSERIJJETNA – *It-Tieni Ctieb* (Our Fathers' Tales – Book

<sup>a</sup> M.Ž. stands for *Mogħdija taz-Zmien*.

Two) [M.Ž. 18]

- IX. *Dak li jhobb 'lOmmu, jew is-Sansun Malti* (The Man that loves his Mother, or, The Maltese Samson).
- X. *Il-Għaġeb tal-Ilma* (The Water Monster)
- (i) *Dak li jagħmel il-Ġid fid-Dinja jehles Xebba mill-Għaġeb tal-Ilma* (He that does good in the World frees a Maiden from the Water Monster). [+variant]
- (ii) *L-Erba' Snajja'* (The Four Trades)
- XI. *It-Tmienja jehles Bint is-Sultan mid-Dragn Draganti* (The Eighth Son delivers the Sultan's Daughter from the Dragon)
- XII. *Is-seba' Tronġiet Mewwiġa* (The Seven Inhabited Citrons) [+variant]

HREJJEJ MISSERIJIETNA – *Il-Tielet Ctieb: Dawk li jagħmlu l-Ġid fid-Dinja* (Our Fathers' Tales – Book Three: Those that do good in the World) [M.Ž. 29]

XIII. *Is-Xini jimxi f'Art* (The Land Ship) [+3 variants]

XIV. *Balmies*

XV. *Misserijietna u l-Ġganti* (Our Fathers and the Giants)

(i) *Butlettax* (The Thirteenth Child)

HREJJEJ MISSERIJIETNA – *Ir-Raba' Ctieb: Misserijietna u l-Ġganti* (Our Fathers' Tales – Book Four: Our Fathers and the Giants) [M.Ž. 38, 39]

- (ii) *Uljed il-Ġganta, jew, in-Nisel tal-Għawdxin u tal-Mostin* (The Children of the Giantess, or, the Origin of the people of Gozo and Mosta)
- (iii) *Il-Mara li garret il-Ħaġar kbir għall-bini f'Malta u Għawdex* (The Woman that carried huge stones for building in Malta and Gozo)
- (iv) *Il-Borġ tal-Imramma* (place-name in Gozo)
- (v) *Il-Kuruna tal-Ġganti* (The Crown of Giants – place-name in Gozo)
- (vi) *Is-Swar tal-Ġganti* (The Giants' Bastions – place-name in Gozo)
- (vii) *Il-Ġemgħa tal-Ġganti* (The Giants' Gathering – place-name in Gozo)
- (viii) *Il-Ġgant u s-Sajjied il-Għasafar* (The Giant and the Bird Hunter) [+variant]
- (ix) *Il-Ġgant Għulija* (The Giant Goliath)
- (x) *Tifel jeqred disa' Ġganti* (A Boy destroys nine Giants) [+variant]

- (xi) *Tifla teqred Ġganta* (A Girl destroys a Giantess) [+variant]
- (xii) *Is-Si ġra* (The Tree)
- (xiii) *Għar il-Lhud* (The Jews' Cave)
- (xiv) *Il-Belt tal-Lhud* (The Jews' City)
- (xv) *Il-Fieres* (The Knight)
- (xvi) *Kanċla* (place-name in Gozo)
- (xvii) *In-Najt* (nickname)
- (xviii) *Ta' Seksek* (The Gossiper -- nickname)

X'JGHID IL-MALTI FUQ ID-DINJA TA' TAHT U FUQ IR-RJIEH (What the Maltese say about the Nether World and the Winds) [M.Ž. 44]

XVI. *Id-Dinja ta' Taht* (The Nether World) [+variant]

XVII. *It-Tifsir tal-Istorja ta' Balmies* (The Explanation of the Story of Balmies)

XVIII. *Ir-Rjieħ* (The Winds) [+3 variants]

X'JGHID IL-MALTI JEU L'GHERF BLA MICTUB TAL-MALTIN (What the Maltese say, or The Unwritten Lore of the Maltese People)

XIX. *Karru Debeb, Ieħor Harir* (A Chariot of Gold and Silk)

XX. *Marzu i-Twil* (Long March)

XXI. *Bakkar u Isbar* (Rise early and work till late)

XXII. *Il-Hrafa tax-Xiħ midfun ġol-Għar* (The Story of the Old Man buried in the Cave)

XXIII. *L-Aħmar ifejjaq Bint is-Sultan* (The Red (Doctor) cures the Sultan's Daughter)

XXIV. *Il-Hrafa tax-Xhur* (The Tale of the Months) [+2 variants]

XXV. *Bint is-Sultan wieġeb 'le' għal tliet mistoqsijiet* (The Sultan's Daughter answers 'No' to three questions)

XXVI. *Bin il-Furnar iġhid tliet 'Hwejje ġ Moh ġa ġa' lil Bint is-Sultan* (The Baker's Son sets three Riddles to the Sultan's Daughter)

XXVII. *Il-Bidwi li qassam l-Annata flok Alla l-Imbierək* (The Farmer that planned the (agricultural) year in the place of Blessed God)

XXVIII. *Jannar bla xita jissellef jumejn m'għand ħub Frar* (Rainless January borrows two days from his brother February)

Nos. II, III, IV, XV(ii)-(vii), (xiii)-(xiv), (xvi)-(xviii), XVII and XXVII in the above list should more appropriately be considered as aetiological tales, purporting to explain a cause. The remaining stories fall neatly under the more specific heading of Fairy Tales. For the purpose of this study, however, all the texts published by Magri have been considered.

#### Magri's Style and Sources

Magri's literary style has been highly praised by Professor P. P. Say-

don<sup>2</sup>. And indeed his tales are a source of lasting wonder and pleasure to generations of children and of adults alike. Important considerations in this respect are: (i) the age in which Magri collected his fairy tales, (ii) the personal style of his informants, and (iii) whether Magri himself tampered with the oral texts.

In 1883 Guillaume Spitta-Bey,<sup>3</sup> explaining his own method for the transcription of Egyptian fairy tales, wrote:

*J'ai transcrit directement le texte arabe d'après les paroles et, pour ainsi dire, sous la dictée des gens du peuple. Jamais je ne me suis permis d'y rien retoucher. On trouvera donc réunies ici toutes les imperfections de style que la manière naturelle et irréfléchie de raconter comporte, à savoir: des répétitions... des changements et des contradictions... même des confusions, etc.. On remarquera aussi partout une grande mobilité dans la prononciation, dont les variations continuelles sont justement ce qui anime les paroles parlées et leur donne un charme particulier, à l'encontre des paroles transmises par l'écriture, où une orthographe impitoyable fixe et arrête la langue et lui fait perdre les nuances qui ne veulent pas se soumettre aux lois dictées...*

Magri collected his tales in the last years of the 19th and the early years of the 20th century. Now this was a period when the Maltese language, after centuries of neglect, already showed signs of considerable Sicilian and Italian infiltration that is reflected in Magri's tales, words that would almost certainly not have found their way in the texts had the tales been collected in earlier centuries. To a certain extent the language and style of the folk-tales of any country change with the centuries and from narrator to narrator. Magri was well aware of this, and in trying to find a solution he managed to create a literary masterpiece without falling far short of the ideal set out by Spitta-Bey.

Writing on '“Displaced” Folktales', in *Humaniora: Essays in Literature, Folklore, Bibliography honoring Archer Taylor on his Seventieth Birthday* (New York, 1960, p. 161) Professor Reidar Th. Christiansen says: 'All too often investigators have lost sight of the various vicissitudes a tale undergoes before it is finally available for study. The prudent worker must always consider the person who told the story in the first place, the field collector who recorded it (at least before fidelity could be achieved through mechanical recording apparatus), and last, but not least, the person who finally edited the tale for publication, for all have a share in the folktale text before us. For these reasons a critical analysis of variants is im-

<sup>2</sup>Saydon, P.P., 'Xi Kittieba tal-Malti mejtin,' in *Ward ta' Qari Malti*, Vol. II, 1937, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Spitta-Bey, G., *Contes Arabes Modernes*, Leide, 1883, pp. V-VI.

perative, and especially so with regard to folktales recorded, say, within the last fifty years.<sup>3</sup>

In some cases Magri indicates the provenance of his tales, giving his informant's name and locality. In others he only gives the place where a particular tale was heard, while in others again no indication whatever is given, as in 11 out of the 12 tales included in *X'ighid il-Malti jew l-Għerf bla miktub tal-Maltin*. The majority of the tales were collected 'first hand'; Fr. Magri heard them personally and took them down under dictation. Others were communicated to him by educated people who were interested in his work. These educated informants included, according to Magri, Rev. Gaetano Sammut, of Attard, Mr. and Mrs. A.M. Galea, who wrote down several of his tales, Rev. Michelangelo Spiteri, of Rabat (Gozo), Fr. Dwardu, of Ghajnsielem (Gozo), and Mr. V. Mifsud Bonnici, who was himself a keen collector of popular idioms and sayings. To these may be added the name of Theresa Cannataci, first cousin to Magri's mother. The latter became a widow at the early age of eighteen, and on her second marriage her two children by her first husband, Emanuel and Salvatore, passed under the care of her cousin Theresa, from whom Fr. Magri took down various tales, according to information supplied by Theresa's niece,<sup>4</sup> to whom *iz-Zija Žez* is part of a living family tradition. Ilg also provided Magri with a few texts, according to a personal communication received in July, 1960 from Frau Bertha Koessler-Ilg, who is now living in Argentina. His informants from among the unlettered 'folk' included *Salvu Kajjuwa* or *ta' Borboġa* (Xagħra, Gozo), *Il-Peċċa* (Rabat, Gozo), *Ġamri tal-Vuljakk* (Xagħra, Gozo), *Patist ta' Hili* (Rabat, Gozo) and *Nikol Ghabdilla* (Qrendi, Malta). To these five informants Magri owed the three tales included in *X'Jghid il-Malti fuq id-Dinja ta' Taħt u fuq ir-Rjiej*, with their four variants. In one other instance (No. XII) Magri gives the name of the informant - President Micallef's mother, to whom he was related without, however, giving the place. For the majority of his tales, however, we are left wondering as to who his informant could be. Fr. Magri's silence on this matter could hardly have been due to lack of scientific preparation, for throughout his writings he showed an ability to combine accuracy with an easy and popular presentation of facts, theories and ideas. One is led to suspect that he suppressed the names of his other informants because at that time anything written in Maltese, let alone fairy tales, was considered *infra dig* by the educated classes. One may also surmise that, both in the case of his cousin and in that of other respectable and educated families where Magri heard his tales, more often than not recounted by

<sup>4</sup>Mrs. Caterina Gerada, née Cannataci, of Zejtun, who was herself brought up by her aunt Tereza.

ladies and gentlemen who had learned them from their maids and servants in the nursery, Fr. Magri was loath to reveal the name of his immediate source in order not to embarrass his friends.

Whatever the reason, the fact remains that Magri drew his material from various localities in Malta and Gozo. The greater number came from Gozo: from Rabat, (Victoria) Nos. XII(var.), XIII, XIV, XV(xi), XV(xii), XVI(var.), XVIII(+ 2 var.); from Sannat Nos. XIII(var.), XV(viii), XV(x); from Gharb Nos. VI and XV(xv); from Xaghra Nos. XVI and XVII. The tales from Malta came from the following localities: Bormla (Cospicua) No. V; Tarxien Nōs. VII (i)-(v); Gudja No. VIII; Valletta Nos. IX and XI -- the latter from the Mandraġġ area; Luqa No. X(i); Lija No. X(i); Attard No. X(ii); Żejtun No. XV(i); Zurrieq No. XV(ix), and Qrendi No. XVIII (Var. iv).

By and large, it may be said that the social *milieu* giving rise to the collection is such that one could rightly expect the tales published by Magri to be real and genuine folk texts of the utmost importance as a linguistic document of the early 20th century. To what extent they can, in reality, be considered as such will be seen from the following observations.

In his preface to *X'Igħid il-Malti fuq id-Dinja ta' Taħt* (1905) Magri explained his method of collecting and transcribing Maltese folk-tales. The following extract is relevant to our purpose:

'When I hear someone telling Maltese stories, I try to hear them from many others; then I compare one with the other in order to find out whether they say the same thing and whether they relate the story in full; I try to find out how it was told in the past, before Maltese began to be mixed, and before books by foreign writers were read. When in an old story I find that today they introduce things or words which did not exist or were not said in the past, I make them conform to words used by village people when I was a boy. If now, for instance, you hear someone make people of the times use the words: "Let's have a coffee" you can't very well use these words in a story about events which happened when coffee was still unknown in Malta; therefore one must say: "Let's have something to drink"; if today you hear somebody place in the mouth of a villager of a hundred or two hundred years ago the words *brodu* (broth) and *biljut* (boiled meat) you must, willy nilly, say *meraq*, or *bqajqa* or *imgħolli*, because that is what they said in those days.'

This passage proves: (a) that Magri very rightly took great pains in collecting as many variants as possible before establishing the 'definitive' text of a particular folk-tale; (b) that he tried to substitute old-sounding, archaic words for comparatively recent loan-words whenever he felt justified in doing so.

In the same preface Magri went on to say: 'Therefore I do not invent anything in these stories and I confess that the modifications which I mentioned are very few and hardly worth mentioning. To make ourselves clearer, I must here point out that our village people, when we city people ask them something, try to speak differently and change the words, so to say, to speak as we do. Hence very often one can hardly know what they are saying and how they say it. To do so one must find them unprepared when they are talking among themselves; or after a long time they have made your acquaintance and realise that you don't mean to poke fun at them, when they may tell you the thing as it is'.

Two factors should therefore be kept in mind in considering the tales as linguistic texts: (a) the changes, however slight, that Fr. Magri made, and (b) the alterations due to the informers themselves in dictating the tales. Both factors are difficult to assess with any degree of certainty.

Our analysis of Magri's tales will deal with three aspects: (i) initial formulas, (ii) closing formulas, and (iii) lexical material (Semitic and Romance). Whenever possible this analysis will be illustrated with comparative data from Arabic and Sicilian folk-tales.

### *Initial Formulas*

These form an integral part of the technique of telling fairy tales. The formulas are more or less fixed, but some lexical addition is possible within the limits of the traditional patterns. The more important types as recorded in Magri's tales are:

(i) Formulas containing the clause *kien hemm* (there was; also, there were), or its later developments *darba kien hemm* (once [upon a time] there was [were]), *darba waħda kien hemm* (there was [were] once), *mela darba kien hemm* (well, there was [were] once), *mela darba waħda kien hemm* (well, once upon a time there was [were]).

(ii) A direct statement plunging straight into the story: Ex. *Is-Sultan Salamun kellu ħub għaref wisq* (King Solomon had a very clever brother) [No. XIX].

(iii) An initial statement in reported speech: Ex. *Ighidu li fi ż-żmien iet l-imghoddija, meta x-xjuħ kienu jikbrū bil-bosta...* (It is said that in olden times, when old people reached a very advanced age...) [No. XXII]. This type occurs only once in Magri's tales.

Examples of variants of (i) above occur in various tales as follows: (a) *Mela darba kien hemm raġel li...* (Well, there was once a man who...) [No. XX]; (b) *Kien hemm żewġ aħwa, wieħed...* (There were two brothers, one...) [No. XXI]; (c) *Mela darba waħda kien hemm żewġ aħwa: wieħed fqir u...* (Well, once upon a time there were two brothers: one poor and

... ) [No. XXIV]; (d) *Darba kien bemm sultan li kellu tlitt itfal*. (There was once a king who had three children... ) [No. V]; (e) *Ikun bemm raġel xib, u kellu tlitt itfal*... (There was once [lit. there is, historic present] an old man, and he had three sons... ) [No. XV, vii].

The following opening sentences fall under heading (ii): (a) *Meta Salammun kien tifel oħtu kienet tinsab f'art*... (When Solomon was a boy, his sister lived in a country... ) [No. II]; (b) *Għadda żmien bi żmien: dak li kien joġġhod it-tifel qal lis-sultan* (In time [lit. time after time passed] he that hated the boy told the king... ) [No. VII, v]; (c) *Is-sultan rama bandu li min jagħmel xini f-art għandu tifla jżewwiġhielu* (The Sultan issued a proclamation that he who would make a land-ship would have his [the Sultan's] daughter in marriage) [No. XIII].

It is clear from the above that the most common formula is that containing the words *kien bemm wieħed* (*raġel, Sultan, etc.*). This clause opens up a line of fruitful comparative study. It immediately recalls the opening formulas of various tales collected from many countries of the Arabic-speaking world. J. Oestrup<sup>5</sup> says that in modern Arabic tales *la plus fréquente* [formule de commencement], *surtout en Égypte, est la phrase solennelle: Kân fîh wâhid, mois qui ont pour l'oreille des Orientaux le même timbre fantastique et merveilleux que pour nous autres les paroles: 'Il était une fois -'. Toute une foule d'idées et d'images variées et attrayantes se présentent par le son de ces paroles, elles sont le 'Sesam, ouvre-toi', la formule mystérieuse qui nous laisse entrer dans le royaume ensoleillé des fées et des génies.* This is borne out by a perusal of Spitta-Bey's *Contes Arabes Modernes* in which eleven out of the twelve tales recorded begin with the formula *Kân fîh wâhid*. From San'a' (Yemen), the nine tales collected by Rossi<sup>6</sup> begin with the words *Kân bih* (*märeħ, 'aşarah, wâhid, räġġäl, etc.*). *Kân be-r-râzel* is the opening formula of two tales from Djidjelli (Algeria) given by Philippe Marçais,<sup>7</sup> while G. Colin's tales in Moroccan Arabic and Socin-Stumme's tales from Houara (Morocco) start with the formula *kân* (or *kânt*) *wâhd*...<sup>8</sup>

We have here unmistakable evidence pointing to the Semitic origin of Maltese narrative technique. This is furthermore borne out by the North

<sup>5</sup> Oestrup, J., *Contes de Damas*. Leyde, 1897, p. 7. Oestrup adds that the formula *kân ma kân* is commonly used at the beginning of Syrian tales. This opening formula can be traced in the initial line of a Maltese rhyme, *Darba kien ma kien*, collected from Imdina, in Malta, and published by H. Stumme, *Maltesische Studien*. Leipzig, 1904, B 37, p. 67.

<sup>6</sup> Rossi, E., *L'Arabo parlato a San'a'*. Roma, 1939, pp. 67-92.

<sup>7</sup> Marçais, Philippe, *Textes Arabes de Djidjelli*. Paris, 1954, pp. 94-137.

<sup>8</sup> Colin, Georges S., *Crestomathie Marocaine*. Paris, 1939, and *Recueil de Textes en Arabe Marocain I - Contes et Anecdotes*, Paris, 1942; Socin, A. and Stumme, H., *Der Arabische Dialekt der Houwara des Wād Sūs in Marokko*, Leipzig, 1894.

African meaning of Ar. *darba* in the sense of 'fois' recorded by Beaussier and Kazimirski.<sup>9</sup>

### Closing Formulas

Both Ilg<sup>10</sup> and Stumme<sup>11</sup> in their collections paid special attention to this aspect of the technique of story telling. They both declared in their introductions that they were stimulated to do so by a publication on formula closings in fairy tales which was published a few years before they worked on the Maltese material, namely Robert Petsch, *Formelhafte Schlüsse im Volksmärchen*.<sup>12</sup> Magri was apparently unaware of this publication but nevertheless it is possible to glean some interesting material under this heading from his tales.

The following are the main types of closing in Magri's collection:

(i) Exclamatory or interrogatory sentences: Exx. (a) . . . *l-immieges tibra' l-briegex, kemm int bla melh!* (lit. May the striped sparus swallow up the learned rock-fish! How lacking in salt you are! Salt = wit, good sense) [No. XX]; (b) *Bahn li int! Ma rajtx li dawh huma x-xbur? Ghax maqdar-hom!* (You big fool! Didn't you notice those were the months? Why did you revile them?) [No. XXIV].

(ii) Lesson or moral drawn from the story: Exx. (a) *Minn dak inbar kolliox beda jmur harir u f'qasir zmien gie f'tiegħu* (Since then everything went smoothly and in a short time he recovered) [No. XXI]; (b) *il-bidwi hareġ 'il missieru mill-ghar u minn dak inbar hadd f'Malta ma għalaq iktar fil-gherien 'il missieru u il ommu hajjin* (The peasant brought his father out of the cave and since then no one in Malta shut up his father and mother in the caves while still alive) [No. XXII]; (c) . . . *għax sewwa jgħidu: Kull ma jiddi u jleqq mbux dejjem debeb* (because it is well said: Not all that glitters is gold) [No. XXIII].

(iii) Punishments and rewards to villains and/or heroes of story: Exx. (a) *Dahal id-dar, sakkaw il-bieb bil-mustieħ, u beda jagħti fuq il-mara u t-tabib sakemm bagħathom id-dinja l-oħra* (He went in, locked the door and began to beat his wife and the doctor till he sent them to the other world) [No. VI]; (b) *lx-Xebba tal-Ġmiel qalet lis-Sultan: Int issir kelb, dak ta' wrajk isir qattus, u dak it-tifel nieħdu b'gharus tiegħi* (The Lady of Beauty told the Sultan: You will become a dog, the one next to you becomes a cat, and that young man I'll take for a husband) [No. VII. v]; (c) *Biex ix-xiħa li għalqitba hemma ti ġi mħallsa, qaxxruha u l-ġild tagħha għamluħ bastra*

<sup>9</sup> Professor J. Aquilina: personal communication on 15 November, 1958.

<sup>10</sup> Ilg, B., *Maltesische Märchen und Schwänke*, 2 vols. Leipzig, 1906.

<sup>11</sup> Stumme, H., *Maltesische Studien*, Leipzig, 1904.

<sup>12</sup> Berlin, 1900. Quoted by Stumme, *Maltesische Märchen*, Leipzig 1904 pp. xiii-xiv.

*ghall-bieb* (So that the hag who shut her up be punished, she was skinned and her skin was turned into a door-mat) [No. VIII]; (d) . . . *taw in-naru bdew jizfnu u jdoqqu l-platti madwar il-ggant sakemm inbaraq u ntemm gewwa* (They set fire and began to dance and play on the plates round the giant till he was burned and consumed by the fire) [No. XV.i]; (e) . . . *Lill-obrajn is-Sultan stagħnibom* (The Sultan enriched the others) [No. X.ii] (f) *Imbagħad għamlu tmint ijiem festi għat-tieġ tagħhom u baqgħu jgħixu dejjem għal qalbbom* (Then they celebrated a week of festivities and lived happily ever after) [No. XII, var.].

(iv) Other characteristic formular endings: Exx. (a) *U sar it-tieġ u għammru u tgħammru u spiccaw* (And the wedding took place, they lived together, had children and the story is finished!) [No. XXVI]; (b) *U għammru u tgħammru u spiccaw!* (They lived together, had children and the story is finished!) [No. XII]; (c) *U kulħadd mar għal xogħlu* (And everyone went on his own) [No. X]; (d) *U baqa' billi ħa* (And he was left with what he had taken) [No. XXVII]; (e) *U nfirdu bis-sliema* (And they separated amicably) [No. XIV]; (f) *U ġie ċ-ċief u kielu* (And the petrel came and ate him up) [No. XVIII].

Of the formular endings given by Stumme the following are examples that do not appear in any of Magri's tales: (a) *Tombi tombi u spediet / Kwart sapun erba' ħabbiet!* (It's over, it's over and done / a quarter of a rotole of soap is worth four grains!) [Stumme, No. X]; (b) *Tambo tambo u spidiet / u kulħadd imur mal-wied!* (It's over, it's over and done / And let everyone go away with the torrent!) [Stumme, No. XX]; (c) *Wiż-żwiemel iax-xama' / U b. . . a' wiċċ min qal u sama'* (And the horses are of wax / And to hell with those who have told and heard) [Stumme, No. XV].

Also missing, from both Magri's and Stumme's collections, are the 'if-so' style endings given by Ilg, of which the following translations are examples: (a) 'And unless they have died, they are still alive' [Ilg, No. 22]; (b) 'unless he founded an empire and lives still, this is a sign that he has not yet died' [Ilg, No. 8]; (c) 'unless they separated they look into each other's eyes even today' [Ilg, No. 132].

The following examples of Arabic and Sicilian closing formulas offer scope for the study of differences of stylistic presentation:

### *Djidjelli (Algeria)*

- (i) . . . *u mārtu m-mēskīna šarbet ħq-qbēwa b-la-sēkkēħ* (et sa malheureuse épouse but son petit café sans sucre) [Marçais, No. 1];  
 (ii) *w-āl-ħrāfa rāħet brēq-ħrāq w-āna žit trēq-trēq* (Le conte, tout brûlé, s'en est allé. Moi, promptement, suis arrivé). [Marçais, No. 2];  
 (iii) *žāt en-nāmra, žabdētta u-klātu* (La panthère l'attrapa et le mangea) [Marçais, No. 4].

### San'â' (Yemen)

(i) *bâdâ hazânâ wal-lâyl ġânâ* (Questo abbiamo raccontato e la notte (ci) è arrivata) [Rossi, No. 4];

(ii) *Mâđik sâ'ab talâmlamû û-wuga 'at mârâteh, mârât âz-zamân, lâ šabr û-lâ tamân* (Allora si riunirono ed essa diventò sua moglie, moglie del tempo (durevole) non di un mese o di una settimana) [Rossi, No. 5];

(iii) *Lâw bâytanâ garīb,* (Se la nostra casa fosse vicina,  
*Û-ma-ânâ zâbīb,* E avessimo dello zibibbo,  
*la-nâddî lokum ġuđđ zâbīb* Vi daremmo un paniere di zibibbo  
*wállâ tâmr nâġrânî.* Oppure di datteri del Nagran)

[Rossi, No. 7]

(iv) . . . *ur-râhu lobum wal-yahûdi ma zid ġê* (e se ne andarono e l'Ebreo non venne più) [Rossi, No. 8];

(v) *'In sadagnâ, řas-sâdig Allâh;* (Se abbiamo detto la verità, io  
*'u-'in kâđâbna, řa-'alâyna la* veritiero e Iddio; se abbiamo mentito,  
*'nat Allâh.* su di noi sia la maledizione di Dio).

[Rossi, No. 9]

### Egypt

(i) *Wêqa 'adum waja ba'd letnên ħallifum řubjân wêbanât* (Et les deux (époux) demeurèrent ensemble et eurent des fils et des filles) [Spitta-Bey, No. I];

(ii) *wêĥadba bilĥuđa wêqa'adum waja ba'dê ři'lkamal* (Il l'embrassa, et ils demeurèrent ensemble en pleine harmonie) [Spitta-Bey, No. II];

(iii) *wêĥadum elwazyr ĥûwa walġâđy wêba'atu ġâbum elmar'a el' agûze řêĥaraġûhum ettalâte ři 'nnâr wêťaijarûhum ři 'lhawa* (Ils saisirent le vèzir et le cadi, envoyèrent chercher la vieille, les brulèrent tous les trois dans le feu et les dispersèrent au vent) [Spitta-Bey, No. VI];

(iv) *řêlamm ennâs elĥaťab wennâr wêramum el 'agûze byje wêbintêĥa ři 'nnâr* (Les gens rassemblèrent du bois et du feu, et on jeta la vieille et sa fille dans la feu) [Spitta-Bey, No. VII];

(v) *řêamar biĥđûr elĥabûdy wêzôġet abûĥ wewalla 'ennâr wêramâhum řyĥa řêĥurqum wêĥalâř* (Il ordonna d'amener le juif et la femme de son père, fit allumer un feu et les jeta dedans. Ils se consumèrent, et c'est fini) [Spitta-Bey, No. XII];

### Sicily:

(i) . . . *lu viddanu addivinto' jennaru di Re, e*

*Tuttu foru filici e cuntenti,*

*E nwâtri semu ccà senza nenti.* [Pitrè, <sup>15</sup> No. I]

<sup>15</sup>Pitrè, G., *Fiabe e Leggende*. Palermo, 1888 (Biblioteca delle Tradizioni Popolari Siciliane, Vol. XVIII).

- (ii) . . . Iddi arristaru filici e cuntenti  
E nuàtri ccà nni munnamu li denti [Pitrè, No. II]
- (iii) . . . Chidda murfù  
E lu cuntà finfù [Pitrè, No. VI]
- (iv) Iddi arristaru maritu e mughghieri,  
E nui semu comu li sumeri. [Pitrè, No. VIII]
- (v) E campau filici e cuntenti (E visse felice e contento,  
E niautri nenti, e noi niente. ;  
'U cuntù è cuntatu: Il conto è contato;  
Nni mangiamu 'a pasta c'o mangiamo la pasta con lo stufato;  
stufatu  
'u cuntù è dittu: il conto è detto, mangiamo il fegato fritto)  
Mangiamini 'u fichitu frittù. [Pitrè, No. XV]

Verbal correspondences between Maltese and Sicilian tales sometimes appear to be almost literal translations, as the following examples show:

MAGRI NO. XXVI

... iżda hija webbset rasha li ma  
teħux ħliet 'il dak li jkollu l-ħila  
jghidilha tliet 'Hwejje ġ Moħ ġa ġa'  
li hi ma tkunx tista' tħisser.

... Saflaħħar wasal ġħand is-sul-  
tan u dana laqħbu bil-ferħ.

MAGRI NO. X(i)

Ix-xebba qaltu mill-bogħod: 'Twarrab  
minn hawn, ġħax is-serp jieklok'...

... qata' s-seba' ilsna mir-ħus tas-  
serp, sarrhom ġewwa maktur u mar  
ġħal xogħlu.

Dak ħare ġ il-maktur, fetħu, wera  
lis-sultan l-ilsna...

PITRÈ NO. I

... ma idda 'un si vulia maritari si  
prima 'un cci java unu c'un'nniminu  
difficurtusu, e idda 'un l'addimina-  
va: . . .

.. All'urtimu arriva a la cità, si  
presenta a lu Re. . .

PITRÈ NO. III

'Jitiħvinni, no vi mancia puru a vui  
stu 'nimali (cci rispunni idda).

Peppi pigħhia li setti testi e li  
ddivaca 'n terra; li japrfù tutti  
setti, e cci scippói li lingui; pig-  
ħhiói un pezzu di carta e 'si li  
'mmugħhiói dda intra.

Ddoppu ħi virificaru la cosa, Peppi  
nesci lu fazzulettu e cci nesci li  
lingui.

The following are some of the idioms, expressions and sentences that occur in Pitrè's above quoted Sicilian tales and which are found, on analysis, to have influenced the narrative style of the Maltese people. They may be matched by almost literal correspondences not only in

Maltese folk-narrative but also in everyday conversation. j

SICILIAN

A s' avvisu cunsidirati quantu  
genti concurreru... (p. 1)  
... si misi 'n testa di jiricci iddu  
(p. 2)  
s' accurdaru, cu la pattu... (p. 2)  
allocu di truvari... (p. 3)  
... (p. 3)  
manciaru francu (p. 5)  
ed abbi a calari la testa (p. 5)  
La Pippina s' assetta al' ucchiddu  
di lu sulì (p. 9)  
... tira 'na sciabbula e cci tagghia  
la testa (p. 11)  
Cammina, cammina, arrivanu...  
(p. 12)  
mortu pi mortu, ora lu sonu (p. 22)  
Peppi si vesti ben pulitu (p. 31)  
... comu nni nutrica unu, nni  
nutrica dui (p. 35)  
un omu chi sapi li setti linguì  
(p. 36)  
... si lu prova, e cci veni 'na  
pittura (p. 38)  
cu la finicia 'n testa (p. 39)  
si misi a dari la testa a li mura  
(p. 43)  
cci dissi chiaru e tunnu (p. 46)  
discursu porta discursu (p. 49)  
ca nun cc'eranu li pariggi (p. 53)  
Lu matarazzaru subbitu subbitu  
cci prepara dui matarazza (p. 93)  
lu fannu pezza pezza u poi lu sala-  
ru 'nta un barili (p. 103)  
Diu dona e Diu leva (p. 157)  
... e lu misi supra la 'ncunia  
(p. 187).

MALTESE EQUIVALENT

*Tistgħu taħsbu ma' dan l-avviż  
kemm ġew nies.*  
*Wahhal f'rasu li jmur hu.*  
*lkkurdaw, bil-patt li...*  
*minnflok ma jsib... isib...*  
*ikel frank*  
*u kellha tbaxxi rasha*  
*Peppina qagħdet għal għajn tax-  
xemx*  
*... jōħro ġ xabla u jaqtagħlha rasha*  
*Jimxu jimxu, u waslu...*  
*mewt b' mewt, issa nsaffru*  
*Peppi libes pulit.*  
*fejn iġġajjex wieħed, iġġajjex tnejn.*  
*... bniedem jaf b' seb' ingwi.*  
*ippruvah u ġieb impinġut*  
*b' ferne żija f'rasu.*  
*beda jagħti b' rasu mal-ħajt*  
*qaltlu ċar u tond*  
*kelma ġġib 'il oħra*  
*ma kienx hemm pari ġġhom.*  
*Il-matarazzar malajr malajr lesta*  
*zew ġ imierah.*  
*qattgħub biċċa biċċa u mellħub ġo*  
*barmil.*  
*Alla jagħti u Alla jieħu...*  
*... u qieghdu fuq l-inkwina*

mentri si custiunavanu (p. 223)  
ca putia aviri dudici anni (p. 271)

*waqt li kienu jikkustinjaw*  
*li seta' kellu tmax-il sena*

### *Vocabulary*

The vocabulary of Fr. Magri's tales is predominantly Semitic. This is as it should be, considering that Magri collected his tales mostly from the villages of Malta and Gozo, where the speech is less contaminated than in the cities. His efforts to portray the old manner of speech may have also helped somewhat in this direction.

Magri's texts make no appreciable addition to the Semitic Maltese lexicon. Most of the words making up the tales are still in current use; others are obsolescent, while a few are definitely archaic and provide material for interesting philological parallels, as may be seen from the notes provided by Professor J. Aquilina in a joint-article published in 1957.<sup>24</sup>

In the Semitic section are listed (1) a few words or meanings given by Magri that are not recorded in Vassalli's, Falzon's and Caruana's dictionaries<sup>25</sup> – though few in number, they provide an interesting addition to the known Semitic lexicon of Maltese; and (2) some of the lesser-known words and a few unrecorded secondary meanings with an indication, whenever possible, how the word has been replaced nowadays by a word of Romance origin or, sometimes, by another Semitic word.

For our purposes, the Romance section enables us to deal with the lexical material from a fresh angle. In view of Magri's avowed intention to reduce as much as possible the non-Semitic element in the vocabulary of his tales, it is surprising to find that the number of Romance words that occur in his texts runs to quite a considerable figure. This shows (a) that by 1900 the tales had suffered considerable change in the process of oral transmission and the informants freely used words of Romance origin that had come to form part of everyday speech, and (b) that in practice Fr. Magri only tampered with the text to a very small degree, and in any case not as much as one would think on reading his statement on page 87.

The 278 words listed under Romance Maltese, most of them of Sicilian or Italian origin, with a sprinkling of words derived from French, Spanish or English, have been classified under the following headings:

(i) **Words recorded by Magri but not in Maltese dictionaries.** 46 words are listed here, forming an important addition to the known Romance ele-

<sup>24</sup> Aquilina, J. and Cassar-Pullicino, J., 'Lexical Material in Maltese Folk-Lore', in *Journal of the Faculty of Arts*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1957), pp. 1-36.

<sup>25</sup> Vassalli, M. A., *Lexicon Melitense-Latino-Italum*, Romae, 1796; Falzon, G. B., *Dizionario Maltese-Italiano-Inglese*, Malta, 1845, 2nd. ed. 1882; Caruana, A. E., *Vocabolario della lingua Maltese*, Malta, 1903.

ment of Maltese. They represent Fr. Magri's contribution to the Maltese Lexicon. The words have been checked not only with Vassalli's, Caruana's and Falzon's dictionaries, but also with Busuttil's Maltese-English Dictionary *Dizjunariju mill Malti għall Inglis*, first published in 1900, that is when Magri had already started collecting his tales. Most of the words are still in current use; others, like *illuġġa* 'to vomit', *ulab* 'he hailed, called him' and *immarinaba* 'he deceived, tricked her' are peculiar to Maltese folk-tales and are rarely, if ever, used outside their folk-tale context.

(ii) **Romance words recorded by Vassalli.** 65 Romance words occurring in Magri's tales were recorded by Vassalli in 1796. There are far more Romance words in Vassalli's dictionary than one would suspect, and this historical approach will amply repay a more detailed study of the Romance element in his *Lexicon*. The words that had already crept into Maltese by 1796 may be classified under a variety of topics, such as (1) **Geographical Terms, etc.** Exx. *ajru* 'air, atmosphere', *friegu* 'strait', *xmara* 'river'; (2) **Dress and Costume**, Exx. *għlekk* 'jacket', *gmiemen* 'tassels, puffs', *kabozza* 'a greatcoat with hood attached', *maktur* 'handkerchief'; (3) **Family Relationship**, Exx. *barba* 'uncle', *familja* 'family', *nannu* 'grandfather'; (4) **Weights, Measures and Receptacles**, Exx. *koċċ* 'a little', *qannata* 'a pitcher', *qartalla* 'a big basket', *qoffa* 'a basket'; (5) **Food and Drink**, Exx. *boqqa* 'a draught', *platt* 'plate', *ravijul* 'ravioli', *ross* 'rice'; (6) **Money**, Exx. *borza* 'purse', *dinier* 'a small coin less than a grain'; (7) **Law**, Ex. *plegġ* 'bail, security'; (8) **Fauna**, Exx. *ċief* 'cinerous petrel', *żarmuġ* 'a young rabbit'; (9) **House and Home**, Exx. *kamra* 'room', *siġġu* 'chair'; (10) **Fruit**, Exx. *gastna* 'chestnut', *frott* 'fruit'; (11) **Trades**, Exx. *furnar* 'baker', *lant* 'place of work', *mina* 'tunnel', *mramma* 'a thick wall', *taljola* 'a pulley', and various others.

(iii) **Romance words in Magri's tales recorded by Busuttil only.** Busuttil was Magri's contemporary and the 23 words listed under this heading show that they had gained everyday speech currency, and were also deemed to possess lexical value. Here again one notices various words in common use that were not recorded by Falzon (1st ed. 1845, 2nd ed. 1882), examples being *anġlu* 'angel', *għardinar* 'gardener', *karru* 'chariot', *manġu* 'a handle', *salt* 'assault, blow', *skud* 'one scudo, equivalent to 1/8', *torri* 'tower', *xkaffa* 'shelf', etc. A careful checking and comparison of Falzon's and Busuttil's dictionaries should reveal the extent of the lexical material recorded for the first time by the latter and also make it possible to make a fair appreciation of his work in this field.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> J. Wignacourt's *The Odd Man in Malta* (London, 1914) contains a chapter (pp. 44-58) devoted to a caustic review of Busuttil's Dictionary. A more serious evaluation of Busuttil's work, however, is called for.

(iv) Words recorded by Falzon but not in Vassalli. Falzon has long been regarded as the best printed source for the Romance element of the Maltese vocabulary. The 144 words included under this heading show the extent to which the Maltese lexicon had been influenced by outside sources since Vassalli's time, although it is safe to state that many more Romance words had crept into Maltese by the 18th Century than were actually recorded by Vassalli, as may be seen from a perusal of Agius De Soldanis's Ms. dictionary at the Royal Malta Library.<sup>27</sup> Only 20 years separated the issue of the second edition of Falzon's dictionary from the first tales published by Fr. Magri. Falzon may therefore be considered a safe check for the freshness of the language used by Magri's informants and it is significant that this section provides by far the largest number of words.

Some words included here replaced other words of Semitic origin. Falzon often gives the Semitic equivalent in brackets showing how the new loan-words extended, modified or otherwise gave a more specific meaning than the original native word. The following are examples; R.M. *gurnata* 'day', S.M. *jum*; R.M. *granc* 'crab', S.M. *qābru*; R.M. *gvernatur* 'governor', S.M. *hakem*; R.M. *kardarun* 'boiler', S.M. *nhasa*; R.M. *ikkmanda* 'to order', S.M. *amar*; R.M. *kok* 'cook', S.M. *tebbieh*; R.M. *kuruna* 'crown', S.M. *klil*; R.M. *kustilja* 'rib', S.M. *dewlgha*; R.M. *ljun* 'lion', S.M. *dorbies*; R.M. *loppju* 'opium', S.M. *ghajjun*; R.M. *marca* 'pus', S.M. *widek*; R.M. *ors*, 'bear', S.M. *debb*; R.M. *pala* 'a shovel', S.M. *luh*; R.M. *pinna* 'feather', S.M. *rixa*; R.M. *rigal* 'gift', S.M. *mhibba*; R.M. *salva g g* 'savagc', S.M. *barri*, *xaghri*; R.M. *stampa* 'to print', S.M. *taba*; R.M. *tazza* 'glass', S.M. *kies*; R.M. *xkupa*, 'broom', R.M. *imselha*.

The references, in Roman letters, bracketed after each word in the following lists, are to the titles of the tales given at the beginning of this study; the Arabic numerals refer to the pages on which the words occur in the particular publication under reference.

## SEMITIC WORDS

### WORDS OR MEANINGS UNRECORDED IN MALTESE DICTIONARIES

**Dwiel** (XVI, 13) plural of *dejl* 'skirt, short chemise'. *Djul*, given in the Maltese dictionaries, is the regular plural form, *dwiel* being the irregular plural figuring only in the text of this folk-tale.

**iekol maghna** (XXIV, 90) 'eat with us'. Outside folklore *kul maghna* is used by adults, *iekol* being only used by children, who likewise say *iehu* 'take', the adult imperative form in common use being *hu*. These

<sup>17</sup>R.M.L. Ms. 143a: *Damma tal Kliem Kartaginis mscerred jel fom tal Maltin u Ghaucin...*

forms are built by analogy with *ieqaf* 'stop', and it is found on analysis that the form is only taken by verbs that are irregular and with *w* as first radical (weak), e.g.  $(w)akal$  'he ate',  $waqaf$  'he stopped' and  $(w)abad$  'he took'.  $Kul$  and  $hu$  were probably developed later, as *iekol* and *iehu* are the correct forms required by Maltese grammar in building the Imperfect Tense, which is formed by prefixing *n* to the Imperative, e.g.  $n + iekol = niekol$  'I eat',  $n + iehu = niehu$  'I take'.

**lewlieni** (XXIV, 87) occurs in the text of a weather proverb given in the tale

Meta Jannar tarah lewlieni

Ma tarax il-bidwi tant hieni.

i.e. 'when January is full of rain the farmer doesn't look so happy'. Magri explains the word *lewlieni* in a footnote as 'that fills with rain (*ilewwem*), for it drowns everyone in its waters'. According to this explanation, the word should read *lewliemi* and not *lewlieni*. *Lewlieni* is not given in any Maltese dictionary.

**Mohgaga**, in the formula *ħa ġa moh ġa ġa* (XXVI, 113) recited by Maltese children when playing at riddles, meaning 'thing the meaning of which is disputed, a riddle'. This word is not given in the Maltese dictionaries. For etymology see Aquilina's explanation (op.cit., p. 15).

**mebda** (VI, 37) 'nobody', more commonly *l-ebda*, is not recorded in Maltese dictionaries. *Ebda* is always used as an adjective preceding a noun, e.g. *ebda bniedem* 'no man'. In the present context it is used adverbially in the sense of *qatt* 'never' in a rhyme on the *Buġies* tale,

Hanini mar Buġibda

Imnejn ma jiġi mebda

i.e. 'my husband (dear) has gone to Buġibda / whence he will never return'. *Mebda* is made up of preformative *m* reduced from *ma* + *ebda* 'no one', which is always used in conjunction with a number, e.g. *ebda wieħed* 'no one' or with a noun with or without an article, e.g. *ebda bniedem* or *l-ebda bniedem* 'no man'. This form with preformative *m* is rare in Maltese (see Aquilina, op.cit. p. 25).

**Għulija** (XV. ix, 37) invariably occurs with *ġgant* as *Ġgant Għulija* in Maltese folk-tales. This leads one to suspect a direct Biblical influence through the David and Goliath (M. *Gulija*) story, with which this and other Maltese tales share several *motifs*. *Nanna Għula* figures as a wicked old hag in a few tales not included in Magri's collection. Magri explains in a note (p. 44) that M. *ġgant Għulija* is identical with the Lebanese *Għul*, a devilish spirit that devoured people. *Għul* is explained as 'desert wild beast' by Caruana. The suggestion is here made that *Għulija* may have supplanted the older *għul* under the influence of

the Biblical story when *ghul* became less known. ]

**Qrajna** (XV. xii, 58) fem. diminutive of *qarn* 'horn'. Falzon and Vassalli give *qrajjen*, masc. diminutive. The feminine form, which is not recorded in dictionaries, may be doubly-diminutive *qrajjen + a*, as the feminine ending in Maltese is often used in that sense.

**Rassàs** (XV. xii, 63) pres. part. of *rassas* 'he crowded'. The meaning required by the context is 'pursuer' - *ghax ikolli r-rassàs urajja*, 'for my pursuer will be hard behind me'.

**Sandar** (XV. x, 45) occurs in the tale as *imorru ghas-sandar*, which Magri explains as 'they go out to steal'. The word *sandar* recorded in M. dictionaries has a different meaning. In everyday use one hears *qata' sandar* in the sense of 'he was lucky', which meaning of luck or success could be stretched to apply to luck in robbery, etc.

#### UNUSUAL WORDS OCCURRING IN MALTESE FOLK-TALES

**Baqbieqa** (XII, 60) 'a pitcher or pot for water' (Falzon). The word is also given by Vassalli and Caruana. ]

**Baqqi** (XXIV, 84) imperative from *baqqa*, 'he watered or irrigated', mostly used in the idiom *issaqqi u tbaqqi* 'to water repeatedly' in M. folklore. The word occurs only in Caruana's dictionary.

**Bassarin** (X. ii, 28) pl. of *bassàr* 'prophet, a diviner, a guesser' (Falzon). Nowadays the word is largely replaced by *profeti* <It. *profeti*.

**Bikkmu** (XVI, 11) 'he silenced him', made up of *bikkem* 'he made (one) dumb' + *u*, 3rd pers. masc. pron. suffix. In everyday speech the sense is more commonly expressed by the word *sikkta*, from *sikket* 'he silenced'.

**Duwa** (IX, 7) 'physic, medicine' (Falzon), nowadays largely replaced by *mistura* 'mixture' or *medicina* <It. *medicina*. Its derived verbal form *dewwa*, *idewwi* 'to cure, to medicate' is still used.

**Dwiemes** (XXII, 26) pl. of *demus*, explained by Falzon, following Vassalli, as 'a sepulchral vault in which, it is said, the Maltese anciently buried their decrepit relations when in a state of dotage'. Caruana and Vassalli give the following proverb in which the word occurs:

Kien ilbierah, kien lewliemes, He was yesterday, he was the day be-  
Izda illum huwa gewwa d-dwiemes. fore yesterday, / But today he lies  
in the grave)

**Gergha** (XII, 54) noun of unity from *gera* 'he digested, swallowed up at one draught', used in the tale in conjunction with second derived form *gerra* in the phrase *kont in gerrghek gergha* 'I would have swallowed you at one gulp'. This second form is still used both in its original sense 'to digest', as in *dan l-ikel ma ngerrghux* 'I can't digest this food', and in its figurative sense 'to stand (a person)', as in *dak il-*

*bniadem ma nġerrghux* 'I can't stand that fellow'.

**Ġorf** (VII.v, 51) 'a very tall man, a giant', said of a strong person. Exx. *qisek ġorf* 'you look like a giant', *sar donnu ġorf*, 'he became like a giant', *fib daqs ġorf* 'he is as tall as a giant'. Cp. *golġu*, figuring in another tale (see Romance section, p. 105)

**Hâtem** (XXVI, 114) 'a seal, a ring', nowadays largely replaced by *ċurkett* < It. *cerchietto*'. The word, however, survives in the phrase *il-hâtem tal-qarnita*, a ring with the image of an octopus used to cure a person suffering from pterygium.

**Inniedu** (XXV, 107) imperfect tense of *nieda*, 'he proclaimed, published'. Nowadays the use of this word in common speech is restricted to the proclamation of the marriage banns. Over the past quarter of a century there has been a revival of the word in literary circles, e.g. *inniedu konkors* 'we announce a competition'.

**Jamar** (XXII, 27) 'he commands, orders' nowadays largely replaced by Romance word *jordna* < It. or Sic. *ordina*, but still occasionally heard in the expression *Kallajamar* 'God willing'.

**Jeklilè** (XXIII, 48) 'otherwise, or else'. This word is nowadays restricted to literary use, its place in common parlance being taken by *inkella*, with same meaning. For etymology see Aquilina (op.cit. p. 17 under *inklelè*)

**Jomm** (XXIV, 85) for *ja omm* 'o mother!' is still heard in country districts. Otherwise *ma*, short for *mamma* 'mother', heard in baby language, is used instead for general purposes.

**Kies** (VII.v, 51) 'a glass, a drinking glass'. Falzon gives the expression, given also by Vassalli, *sqieb kies l-imrar* 'he has made him drink of the cup of bitterness', and adds *kies tat-tqarbin* 'pyx, box in which the consecrated Host is kept in Roman Catholic countries'. R.M. *tazza* has now largely replaced S.M. *kies* (pl. *kjies*) in the sense of 'glass'.

**Kus** (XII, 53) 'a jug, or oil pot'. Nowadays the word survives mostly in the saying *iddendilx kusek f'bieb l-imghallaq*, lit. 'do not hang your oil pot at the door of the hanged man's relatives'; or *iddendilx kusek mieghu* i.e. 'do not provoke any trouble with him', lit. 'don't hang your oil pot on him'.

**Maqdes** (VII.iv, 48) Only Caruana gives this word, as *maqdes* 'luogo di santità, santuario'. Magri uses the word between inverted commas "maqdes", which he explains as 'a small building for worship; if it belonged to Catholics, today we would call it *kappella* 'chapel' or *oratorju* 'oratory'. The word has since passed into literary use in the generic sense of 'church, place of worship', but it has not gained currency outside literature.

- Mewwija** (XII, 53) 'inhabited, full'. Caruana and Falzon write this word with an *N*, i.e. *Newwija*, while Vassalli gives both forms, *Mewwija* and *Newwija* (p. 626, s. v. *Xagħra*). All three dictionaries record the word as a place-name, alone or as *Xagħret Mewwija*, denoting a portion of the site where Valletta is built. In a long note, Fr. Magri (p. 67) says that the word is often corrupted to *milwija* 'twisted', but his informant, who would have been 115 years old at the time of publication of the tale in question, always used *mewwija*. The meaning of 'inhabited' fits in with the sense required by the tale, as each of the seven citrons had a girl inside. Abela in his *Descrittione di Malta* (1664) wrongly explains *Mewwija* in place-name *Xagħret Mewwija* as an Arab's name. He records the saying, which Magri reproduces in his note, *Xagħret Mewwija għad ji ġi żaman* (sic) *li kull xiber jiswa mija* 'On the plain Mewwija a time will come when each span (of land) will be worth a hundred' – a sort of prophecy attributed to the Saint Corrado who, according to tradition, had been forced to leave Malta by the intrigues of the people of Mosta. )
- Mindil** (XXIV, 85) As used in Magri's tale, *mindil tal-ħobż*, the word means 'a napkin', but outside this context it may also mean 'the omentum'. For etymology see Aquilina (op.cit., p. 33). The word *sarvetta* < Fr. *serviette*, has replaced *mindil* in Modern Maltese in this sense. )
- Mizrukin** (XVI.i, 17) The word occurs in the tale in the expression *miżrukin bil-ferħ*. Magri explains in a note (p. 34): 'This word is not heard nowadays, except in the nickname *Ta' Żerrek* and in the name *It-Tieqa iż-Żerka*. *Żerek* or *Żarak*, *jiżrek* means 'he filled, to fill', hence *miżrukin bil-ferħ* means 'filled with happiness'. Of the M. dictionaries only Vassalli gives *żerek*, *jiżrek*, but in the sense 'ad Venerem incito, pec. marem ad coitum venereum invitat femina'. )
- Mnieges** (XX, 15) Magri writes *imniegħes*, but Falzon gives *mnieges*, pl. of *mingus* 'striped sparus' (fish), which fits in with the sense required by the text, *l-imnieges tibla' l-briegex*, 'May the striped sparus eat up the rockfish'. Caruana derives the word from *nigza*, and writes *minguż*, *mniegeż*.
- Imrasi** (XXI, 19) pl. of *marsa* 'haven, sea-port, harbour, gulf or baġ' (Falzon). The pl. form is given by Vassalli and Falzon, but not by Caruana. Apart from place-names, such as *Marsa*, *Marsamxett*, *Marsalforn*, *Marsaxlokk*, the word is no longer used, *port* or *bajja* being used instead.
- Mselha** (XV.i, 63) 'broom'. Caruana does not give this word in his dictionary. Nowadays the word, still current in Gozo, in Malta is largely replaced by *xkupa* < It. *scopa*, or, in its more polite form, *zija*.
- Għaguż** (XXII, 30) 'decrepit, worn out with age' (Falzon). The word figures

as a family name, written *Agius*. The fem. form, *għaġuza*, means both 'lobster, sea fish' and 'decrepit old woman', as in the proverb *għal-bekk l-għaġuza ma tridx tmut, għax iktar ma tikber iżjed titgħallem* 'that is why the decrepit old woman doesn't want to die, because the older she gets the wiser she becomes!'. Its denominative verbal form *għaġġez* is still occasionally heard, as in *iż-żmien iġhaġġez* 'time makes (one) grow old'. Otherwise the word has gone out of currency, *xib* or *xiba għakka* being used with the same meaning. In M. folklore we find the belief that the oldest woman living in the parish, called *l-Għaġuza*, is thrown from the church steeple on Thursday, in the middle of Lent.

**Għaràs** (XVI, 15) 'nuptials, wedding'. This is the sense required by the context *u sar il-għaràs u t-tieġ*. Only Vassalli gives this word, as a plural form (sing. *għirs* [għars]) which he explains thus: 'hozze; convito o banchetto nuziale, accompagnato d'altre allegrie, come di suoni, balli, canti'. Nowadays *tieġ* is used with the same meaning, but originally it meant 'corona di cui anticamente s'adornavano le spose nel giorno delle nozze' (Falzon). A Maltese proverb quoted in G. Aquilina's novel *Taht Tliet Salmiet* says: *Il-mejjet ras ma' ras, u l-ħaj irid l-għaràs*, 'The dead head by head and the living wants to marry'.

**Għarem** (XIV, 43) pl. of *għarma* 'a heap of threshed or winnowed corn etc.'). The word is still used by peasants.

**Għarxa** (XV, xi, 47) m. *agħ-rax* 'lame, cripple'. In Modern Maltese *zopp* (f. *zoppa*) <It. *zoppo*, has gained general use, with its derivatives *izzoppja* or *izzappap* 'he grew lame' and *zappap* 'he limped'. Cf. It. *zoppicare*.

**Għelmem** (XV, xii, 67) pl. of *għelm* 'sign, mark'. The verbal derivative is still used, *għallem il-hobz* 'he marked the bread'.

**Għewar** (XXIV, 84) pl. of *għar*, 'shame'. The word is given in the tale in the proverb *Fix-xita ta' Fra' jinkixfu l-egħwar* 'With the rains of February all secrets are out' i.e. hidden roots sprout. For etymology see Aquilina (op.cit., p. 21).

**Għwiereb** (XV, xviii, 73) pl. of *għwareb* 'an angular stone used in building' (Falzon). Vassalli does not give this word, which survives in the building trade.

**Qadib** (XXIII, 45) 'a rod or wand', also 'a branch, a twig'. Only Falzon gives the pl. *qodbien*. Hardly used today.

**Qawqam** (XXII, 27) The word occurs in the first line of the rhyme:

Ixtri l-qawqama u l-qawqam. . . .

The sense required by the text is 'cattle'. Vassalli gives this word without, however, giving its meaning. Instead he notes that *qawqam*

is the form given by Agius, but he himself had heard *qamqam*. I have recently heard *qawqam* used in a version of the same tale by a 99-year old woman at *Tas-Salib*, in the limits of Rabat, in Malta.

**Qasam** (XXIII, 44) 'a large tenure, estate, or possession' (Falzon). The Maltese historian Abela (1664) links this word with the introduction of the feudal system in Malta following the coming of the Normans in 1090. The island was parcelled out among the followers of Count Roger into estates (M. *qasam*, pl. *oqasma*), which were then subdivided into *raba'* lit. 'fourth part', and enclosures (M. *għalqa*, pl. *egħlieqi*).

**Qatigh** (XXVI, 58) 'much, many, a great deal, abundance' (Falzon). The word is still used in Gozo. In Malta it is largely replaced by *ħafna*.

**Reħma** (XXII, 30) 'mercy'. The word occurs in the hortatory *il-ħnieħna u r-reħma tas-sultan!* '(May I implore) the clemency and mercy of the sultan!' Vassalli says that in his day the word was very commonly used in prayers, such as *Alla jagħti r-reħma u l-ħenna lilna u lil qrabatna* 'May God grant mercy and Heaven to us and our relatives'. Nowadays this word is hardly ever used, but it survives in its derived verbal form *raħħam* 'he implored mercy'.

**Serriegħa** (XV. viii, 35) 'a wrestling bout'. For etymology see Aquilina's explanation (op.cit., p. 21). In Modern Maltese 'he wrestled' is expressed by *issara*, but the sense of 'a wrestling bout' *serriegħa* is lost.

**Silf** (XIV, 48) 'the husband of the wife's sister; the wife of the wife's brother; brother-in-law' (Falzon). The word is still used. The definition of *brother-in-law* (Falzon) or *cognato* (Vassalli) does not convey the exact relationship conveyed by *silf* (pl. *sliejef*).

**Swejda** (XII.ii, 65) diminutive of *sewda*, fem. of *šwed* 'black'. The word occurs in the following rhyme, placed in the mouth of the talking bird in the tale:

Girlingirlija – swejda Għarbija,

Mnieħer il-langasa – sufftajn il-lenbijal

Only Vassalli gives this form *swejjed*, *swejda* 'neretto'. Caruana gives the word as the name of a little bird. *Swejda* is not heard nowadays outside Maltese Folklore.

**Trajbu** (XI, 42) is used by Magri in the sense of 'little baby', as a diminutive form of *tarbija* 'baby'. Vassalli, followed by Falzon, distinguishes between *trajbu* 'a doll, a little girl's puppet or 'baby' and *trajbija*, diminutive of *tarbija* 'a little boy, baby or infant'. In an interesting note Vassalli records the very ancient Maltese custom of preparing rag dolls or puppets which children, especially girls, threw over the flames of the bonfire on St. John's Eve. Vassalli hints at a possible Phoeni-

cian influence, relating to the sacrifice of children to the Phoenician god Molok. He then gives details of the custom as surviving in his day: 'Oggi però questa superstiziosa cerimonia à variato di molto, ed i fanciulli sogliono farla nella vigilia di S. Giovanni Battista in occasione dei gran-fuochi che si fanno. Ella al presente consiste nel passare per tre volte sul fuoco il fantoccio e fingendo di battezzarlo s'invoca il nome di S. Giovanni. Se mai caderà sul fuoco o intorno nel passarlo, allora si ripete la cerimonia'. The custom survived, in modified form, up to within living memory. The word *trajbu* nowadays also denotes the lace pillow used in the manufacture of Malta lace.

**Wadaf** (XV.viii, 36) 'sling', is more commonly heard as *wadab*. For etymology see Aquilina's note (op.cit., p. 13). In Modern Maltese it has been replaced by Sic. *sbandola*.

**Warranijiet** (XV.xii, 71) or, more commonly, *waranijiet* 'backwards, back'. The word is still used, but it is being largely replaced by *lura*.

**Xorka** (XXIII, 44) pl. of *xrik* 'partner'. *Ixirka* is sometimes used instead of *xorka*. Caruana gives the proverb *bormet ix-xorka qatt ma ssiw sewwa* equivalent to Eng. 'too many cooks spoil the broth'.

## ROMANCE WORDS

### I. WORDS RECORDED BY MAGRI BUT NOT IN MALTESE DICTIONARIES

**Annôta** (XXVII, 147) 'year, yearly crop', dialectal variation of *annâta* < Sic. and It. *annata*.

**Bandu** (XIII, 3) 'proclamation'. Cp. It. *bando* (DEI, xiii sec.) and Sic. *banu*. Before and throughout the rule of the Knights (1530-1798), and for some years later, *bandi* were read by the town-criers (*banditori*). *Hare ġ bandu* 'a proclamation was issued', is still heard in some villages.

**Barkata** (XV.xviii, 73) a standard for measuring loads of roof- or floor-slabs. In the quarry trade, *barkata* refers to slabs only, meaning 'twelve slabs'. A more etymological meaning is 'boat-load', cp. It. *barcata*, Sic. *varcata*.

**Basta** (IX, 7) 'so long as, provided that', as in the present context *basta nara 'l ommi mfejqa* 'so long as I see my mother cured'. The meaning differs from that of Sic. *basta* 'verbo usato in forza di avverbio per imporre termine, basti, non più' (Mort.)<sup>18</sup> or of It. *basta* 'enough' (DEI).

<sup>18</sup>In this Section the abbreviations Mort. and DEI are used to indicate the following dictionaries: Mortillaro, V., *Nuovo Dizionario Siciliano-Italiano*, Palermo, 1853, and *Dizionario Etimologico Italiano*, di Carlo Battisti e Giovanni Alessio. 5 vols. Firenze, 1950-57.

- Baxx** (XXIV, 83) in *oqgħod baxx* 'sit down, be seated', still used in Gozo. In Malta one is more likely to hear instead *oqgħod bil-qiegħda*, while *oqgħod baxx* means 'Silence! Be quiet'. The M. sense here does not agree with that of Sic. *bassu* or It. *basso*.
- Bravu** (VI, 37) meaning (i) 'well done, good', as in *bravu għalik* and (ii) 'intelligent, learned' as in *dak bravu ħafna* 'that man is very learned'. Cp. Sic. *bravu*, It. *bravo*.
- Bukkett** (XIV, 43) 'bunch of flowers' < Fr. *Bouquet*.
- Buttazza** (XVI, 24) 'a cask of wine'. Cp. Sic. *buttacciu* 'piccola botte' (Mort.), It. *bottaccio* 'barilotto' (DEI).
- Ezerċtu** (XIII, 8) 'army', < Sic. *esercitu* (Mort).
- Fatta** (XVI, 7) 'a sort of', in common use, as in the expression *bħal fatta ma ridtx* 'I sort of did not want'; also *nies ta' dil-fatta* 'people of this sort'. The text of the tale requires the meaning 'shaped like...', i.e. *fatta ta' baqra*, 'shaped like a cow'. Cp. Sic. *fatta* 'specie, sorta, genere, qualità, condizione' (Mort). The expression *kif u x'fatta* 'how and in what manner' is still current in the colloquial language.
- Fond** (XV, xi, 49) a household occupation for ladies, unspecified by Magri; Cf. It. *fondo* with different meaning.
- Furmarija** (XXIII, 47) 'Infirmary'. The expression *tabib tal-furmarija* 'infirmary (House) doctor', may still be heard. The Hospital of the Knights of St. John was known as the *Sagra Infirmeria*, whence this word passed into Maltese. Cp. Sic. *Nfirmaria* 'luogo o stanza dove si curano gli infermi' (Mort).
- Golfu** (VII, 39) explained by Magri as 'a bird that prowls by night, eats other birds, and, according to the beliefs of our forefathers, exerts extraordinary influence on human beings'. Magri tries to identify this bird with the white or barn owl (M. *ba-ba ġann*), and, amongst other suggested derivations, he links up the M. word *golfu* with Ar. *gufa*, whence It. *gufo*, 'uccello rapace notturno' (DEI).
- Gollanda** (XV, xi, 49) like *fond*, (q.v.) left unexplained by Magri, but very likely stands for *għollanda* (dialectal form *gorlanda*). Cp. It. *ghirlanda* 'garland'.
- Grazzja** (VIII, 56; XVI, 10) in *ħa grazzja magħħa* 'he had a liking for her; he was fond of her; he was in love with her'. This meaning is purely local and is neither It. nor Sic. *grazia*.
- Gzatu** (XVIII, 50) 'she accused him' < Sic. *accusari*, It. *accusare*.
- Ġakkijiet** (XVI, 8) pl. of *ġakk* < Eng. *jack* (mechanical term).
- Ġangaturi** (X, ii, 28) 'joiners', verbal noun of agent from *gongħa* 'to join' < Sic. *aggiunciri*.
- Gibjetta** (XV, ix, 39; VII, iv, 48) 'a small cistern or tank'. A word in common

- use. Cp. Sic. *gibbiedda*, dim. of *gebbia* 'ricetto d'acqua murato' (Mort).
- Gostra** (XIV, 44) nowadays used in the sense of 'greasy pole' – a summer sports popular at seaside resorts on special occasions, such as the feast of the patron saint, etc. In its wider meaning, as in the tale where it occurs, it means 'tournament, joust'. Cp. It. *giostra*, Sic. *giustra* 'l'armeggiar con lance a cavallo, correndo l'un cavaliere contro l'altro colla mira di scavallarlo' (Mort).
- Iddubbaw** (XV, xii, 54) 'they obtained, they acquired'. The word *iddobba* has a variety of meanings: (i) he just managed e.g. *kemm tiddobba* 'just enough'; (ii) 'you've had it', e.g. *iddubbajtha*, and (iii) it has passed into a proverb *Budobba billi kellu ddobba* 'Budobba (fictitious rhyme-name of person) had to make do with what he had!' It. *addobbare* 'to decorate, to furnish' is far removed in meaning. Much closer is the Sic. *addubbari* 'rimedio o riparo...; racconciare, ridurre, rimettere in buon essere le cose guaste' (Mort).
- Kap** (XXIII, 46) 'chief', < Sic. *capu*, It. *capo*.
- Kastig** (X, 25) 'punishment', < It. *castigo*, Sic. *castigu*.
- Katakombi** (XI, 34) 'catacombs'. Sometimes pronounced *katatombi* by regressive assimilation. Cp. Sic. *catacumbi*, It. *catacomba*.
- Kumplament** (XXIV, 90) 'the remainder'. Falzon and Busuttill give only *kompla* 'he accomplished', he finished'. Note the distinction between *kumplament* and *kumpliment* 'compliment'. Cp. Sic. *cumplimentu* 'complimento; cosa finita, assoluta, compimento' (Mort).
- Ikkorda** (XVI, 9) 'he came to an agreement' < Sic. *accurdari* (Mort).
- Illugga** (XIV, 50) used in the sense of 'he vomited', as explained by Magri. The Maltese word may derive from Sic. *alluggiari* 'albergare' with the meaning of its antonym *sluggiari* 'diloggiare, abbandonare un'abitazione' (Mort).
- Imanwal** (XV, xviii, 73) 'he assists in masonry work, etc.' denominative verb from *manwiel* 'a mason's labourer, a bricklayer's man' (Falzon), pl. *mmawel*, or *mnawal* (Vassalli). The verb form is not given in Maltese dictionaries. Cp. Sic. *manuali* 'colui che serve al muratore' (Mort).
- Jimpesta** (X, 23) 'he sullies or dirties', fig. 'he badgers' < Sic. *mpistari*.
- Jimporta** in *ma jimpurtax* (VII, iv, 48) 'it doesn't matter' or 'never mind'. Cp. Sic. *mpurtari*, and the equivalent Italian phrase *non importa*.
- Lagrimanti** (XI, 39) 'weeping, tearful', occurs only in the following rhyme:  
 Dragun Draganti, (O dragon dragon, I am Peter  
 Jien huwa Pietru the Tearful One; in the con-  
 Il-Lagrimanti. text 'The Child of Tears')
- Cp. Sic. *lagrimanti*, It. *lagrimante*.
- Immarinaha** (XVI, 10) meaning 'he deceived her' according to Magri's ex-

planation. The Maltese meaning is far removed from that of Sic. *ammarrinari* 'metter dell'aceto sul pesce fritto, o sopra altri cibi per conservarli' (Cp. M. *immarrinat*). For the idea of cheating, Cp. It. *marinare* (la scuola) 'to play truant'.

**Offri** (IX, 8) occurring in the tale as *toffri* 'to offer'. Cp. Sic. *offeriri*, It. *offrire*.

**Ola!** (XIII, 5) 'hello! hi there!' and *ulab* 'he hailed him, called him'. Magri uses this word frequently in his tales. It looks like a direct borrowing from It. *olà*. The verb *ulab* 'he hailed or stopped him' seems to be a local formation. Cp. Sic. and It. *olà!*

**Passulina** (XII, 55) 'raisins' commonly heard together with its Semitic equivalent *zibib*. Cp. Sic. *passulina*, It. *passerina*.

**Pett** (XV.xvii, 73) a word used in the quarrying trade, < It. *petto*, Sic. *pettu*, but note that both words are unconnected with stone quarrying.

**Piena** (XV, 61) 'pain', < Sic. or It. *pena*.

**Pjaċir** (XXIV, 85) 'pleasure; a good turn, a favour'. Cp. Sic. *piaciri*, It. *piacere*.

**Rkaptu** (XXII, 29; also XV.xii, 55) in *issib irkaptu* 'to find a way out; to solve, to remedy'. Outside this context it can also mean 'capital, equipment, means', as in *irid ikollok irkaptu għal dak ix-xogħol* 'you have to be well equipped for that work'. Cp. Sic. *ricapitu* 'la materia da mettere in opera per gli oggetti di loro arte' (Mort).

**Serpentin** (X, 26) 'sea serpent' according to the context in which it occurs. *Serp* 'snake', *serpentin* 'sea serpent', *golġu* 'a prowling bird', *dragun* 'dragon' are among the mysterious animals that figure and often substitute one another in Maltese folk-tales. Cp. Sic. *sirpenti* 'serpe grande, serpente di mare' (Mort), It. *serpente*.

**Sittażbrilja** (XVIII, 43) Magri (ibid., pp. 59-62) explains that a proud man is called by this name, and the same epithet is given to one who instead of sleeping, spends the night watching, or who lives to a ripe old age and seems to have got the better of death. In Maltese beliefs the Sittażbrilja figures as a woman of great wisdom, the sister of Solomon, Samson and Job, and every thirty years she is rejuvenated and starts life again at 18; this will go on till the end of the world. Magri identifies her with the Moon, who watches by night, is rejuvenated every thirty days, and was the source of much wisdom in the past. The derivation of this word is obscure. Any connection with *settembria* 'autunno' (DEI)? Autumn could be associated with the three winds personified in the tale. Cf. also Ilg's study of M. legend *Is-Settusibilla* (1914)

**Skarta** (XVIII, 43) occurring in the context *ir-riħ skartabom*, explained by Magri as 'the wind drove them on to the land'. Outside this context

*skarta* may mean 'to discard, to set aside, to reject' (Falzon) or 'to play truant' as in *tiskarta liskola*, with which cp. It. *scartare* and Sic. *scartari*. The Maltese sense in the tale may be remotely connected with that of Sic. *scortari* 'guidare' (Mort), It. *scortare* 'to escort'.  
**Temp** (XIII, 5) 'In *raġel ta' temp* 'advanced in years'. Cp. It. *attempato*.  
**Nittradik** (IX, 11) 'I betray you'. Busuttill gives verbal noun *tradiment* only, meaning 'treachery, breach of faith, fidelity or trust'. He also gives an interesting extension of this meaning, in *l-ixkubetta kienet fuq it-tradiment* 'the gun was at full cock'. Cp. Sic. *tradiri*, It. *tradire*.  
**Tratt** (XV.xvii, 73) used in the quarry trade. The meaning of It. *tratto*, or Sic. *trattu* 'spazio, distanza' (Mort) has no connection with quarrying.  
**Itturufnat** (XV.i, 60) 'exiled'. Romance Past Participle from Sem. *tarfien* 'exile'. Busuttill records the word in explaining *tarraf*, but omits it in the main sequence of his dictionary. One also hears sometimes *turuf-nament* 'exile'.

## II. ROMANCE WORDS RECORDED BY VASSALLI

**Ajru** (X.ii, 30) 'air, atmosphere' cf. Sic. and It. *aria*.  
**Balla** (XIV, 46) 'ball' also, as recorded by Vassalli 'quantità di roba messa insieme' <Sic. *balla* 'quantità di roba messa insieme e rivolta in tela o simile materia per trasportarsi da luogo a luogo' (Mort); **Barba** (XI, 37) 'uncle' <It. *barba* 'zio; v. spec. it. sett. ma che ricompare nel romanzo di Terra d'Otranto e nel territorio di Taranto e di Bari' (DEI) — not recorded by Mortillaro; **Bata** (XII.ii, 65; VII.ii, 43) 'he suffered' <Sic. *patiri*, It. *patire*; **Bċejjet** (VI, 36) pl. of *biċca* 'piece' <Sic. *picca*, or *pezza* 'un poco di pannicello' (Mort); **Bixkilla** (XV.xii, 53) 'a wicker basket', also figuring in place-name *Bir Bixkill*, at Tarxien <It. *fiscella*; **Boqqa** (XXIV, 86) 'a draught — wine, etc.' cf. It. *boccata*, Sic. *yuccata*; **Borża** (XII.ii, 62) 'a purse' <It. *borsa*, Sic. *burza*.  
**Ċajt** (XXIII, 49) 'joke, idle talk' <Sic. *chiatta*; **Ċakkār** (XXIII, 45) 'a countryman, a clown' given by Vassalli as *ċakkāl*, cf. Sic. *ciaccari* meaning, among other things, 'lavorare il terreno per la prima volta' (Mort), whence possibly the idea of countryman inexperienced in the ways of the city; Sp. *chacarero* 'field labourer'; **Ċappa** (XI, 42) 'a mass' <Sic. and It. *chiappa*; **Ċekjen** (XIII, 4) 'a little, younger child' <Sp. *pequeno* through Arabic; **Ċurniena** (XVIII, 54) 'a bag, packet, satchel' also 'pouch, knapsack' (Falzon) <It. *camiera* 'xiv sec.' 'tasca per la selvaggina' (DEI).  
**Dinier** (XXIII, 51) 'a small coin less than a grain', pl. *dwiener*, <Sic. *dinaru* 'moneta della minor valuta, che è la sesta parte del grano' (Mort); **Domna** (XXVI, 113) 'medal, a charm or amulet worn by Catholics', pl.

*domniet, dwamen*, < Sic. *domina* 'reliquia o altra cosa sacra, che portasi da alcuno appesa al collo per divozione, di sotto le vesti' (Mort).

**Familja** (VIII, 60) 'family' < It. *famiglia*; **Farda** (XV.xii, 57) 'a horse or saddle cloth' < Sic. *farda* ' propr. pezzo di tessuto di più maniere, o sia par parte di che compongonsi, cucendola con altri somiglianti, vestiti, coltri, e cosa simile, ed è per lo più della lunghezza della cosa, che compone; telo' (Mort); **Forn** (XII, 55) 'bakehouse, oven' and **Fumar** (XXVI, 110) 'baker' < It. *forno, fornaio*, Sic. *furnu, furnaru*; **Friegu** (IV, 24) 'strait; a narrow pass or firth' (Falzon) cp. It. *pelago*; **Frott** (XXIV, 186) 'fruit' < It. *frutto*, Sic. *frutti*.

**Ġlekk** (XXIII, 44) 'a jacket' < Sic. *gileccu*, It. *gilè*, **Ġmiemen** (XXIII, 45) pl. of *ġummiena* 'a tassel, a puff' (Falzon) cf. Sic. *giummuni*; **Gabdoll** (XIV, 50) 'a kind of shark' cf. It. *capodoglio*, Sic. *capidoliu*; **Gabja** (XVI, 8) explained by Vassalli as 'castello o macchina fabbricata per tirare su pesi' and by Falzon 'a top' (mar.) < It. *gabbia*.

**Ittra** (XI, 36) 'letter' < Sic. *littra* or It. *lettera*, with which cp.; for initial *l* dropped in its passage to Maltese, *lingwa* (It. *lingua*) in expression *jaf b' seb'ingwi* 'he speaks many (*lit.* seven) languages'.

**Kabozza** (XI, 37) pl. *kbabez* 'a great cloak; a great coat with hood attached' used mostly, within living memory, by the villagers of Gharb, in Gozo < Sic. *cappucciu* 'abito che portavano i nostri antichi in capo in cambio di cappello' (Mort); **Kamra** (V, 28; XXIII, 47) 'room' < Sic. *cammarà*, It. *camera*; **Kaxxa** (XXIII, 48) 'strong box, or, simply, a box' < Sic. *cascia*, It. *cassa*; **Koċċ** (XVI, 15) 'a little, a small quantity, a modicum' (Falzon), but 'a good measure of' in Gozo < Sic. *coċciu* 'qualsiasi minima cosa, un minimo' (Mort); **Kutu** (XXI, 20) in *kutu kutu* 'quietly, very softly' < Sic. *cotu* 'chinato e basso per celarsi e nascondersi alla altrui vista', and *cotu cotu* (Mort).

**Lant** (XIV, 45) 'an oblong trench made in the ground' (Falzon) but also more commonly (i) 'place of work' e.g. *mar fuq il-lant* (ii) 'good business' e.g. *għamel lant* or (iii) 'experience' e.g. *mbux tal-lant* < Sic. *antu* 'il luogo ove riposano in conversazione a mezzo il lavoro diurno' (Mort).

**Majna** (XVI, 10) 'he unfurled', also 'he surrendered' < It. *ammainare*, Sic. *ammainari*; **Maktur** (X, 25) 'handkerchief' < Sic. *muccaturi*; **Mant** (XII, 55) 'mantle' < It. *manto*, Sic. *mantu*; **Marzu** (XIX, 12) 'March' < Sic. *Marzu*; **Mina** (XVI, 20) 'a mine, an arched passage or covered way' (Falzon) < It. and Sic. *mina*; **Mramma** (XIII, 57) 'a strong or thick wall, or principal wall' < Sic. *maramma* 'fabbrica propriamente delle muraglie' (Mort).

**Nannuh** (XXIII, 47) 'his grandfather' < Sic. *nannu* It. *nonno* — one of the few words denoting relationship that, although Romance in origin, take

- the Semitic pronominal suffixes, thus *nannu* + *wi, k, b, na, kom, bom*, like *ziju* 'uncle', *parrinu* 'godfather' and *kunjatu* 'brother-in-law'; **Ndokra** (XVI, 7) 'to keep or preserve, to guard, to watch over' (Falzon) < Sic. *nducchirari, nducchiari* (Barbera),<sup>19</sup> *aducchiari* (Mort).
- Papa** (XVIII, 48) 'Pope' < Sic. and It. *Papa*; **Pixxun** (XVI, 25) 'the calf of the leg' < Sic. *pisciuni*; **Platt** (XII, ii, 65) 'a dish, plate' < It. *piatto*, Sic. *piattu*; **Plegg** (XXV, 107) 'bail, security, surety, bondsman, guarantee' (Falzon) < Sic. *pleggiu*; **Plieri** (IV, 24) 'obelisks, pillars' < Sic. *pileri* 'contrassegno di confine; pilastro da ponti' (Mort) < It. *piliere*.
- Qannata** (XV, xi, 48) 'a pitcher, an ewer, water-pot' < Sic. *cannata*; **Qan-piena** (V, 27) 'bell' < It. and Sic. *campana*; **Qartalla** (XII, iv, 48) 'a big basket' < Sic. *cartedda*, It. *cartella*; **Qastna** (VIII, 55) 'chestnut' < It. and Sic. *castagna*; **Qnatar** (XI, 42) pl. of *qantar* 'a weight of 100 Roto-li' < It. *cantaro*, Sic. *cantaru*; **Qoffa** (XV, xii, 57) 'a basket' < It. and Sic. *coffa*.
- Ravjul** (VIII, 56) 'a kind of dish composed of paste, cheese and eggs' (Falzon), given by Vassalli with *w* instead of *v*, i. e. *rawjul*, < It. *ravioli*, Sic. *raviola* 'vivanda in piccoli pezzetti, fatta d'erbe battuta con cacio, uova, ricotta ed altro, ravvolti in pasta' (Mort); **Ross** (XXIV, 86) 'rice', given by Vassalli as *rozz*, cp. Sic. *risu*, It. *riso*.
- Sapuna** (IX, 7) 'soap', pl. *spapen*, < Sic. *sapuni*; **Siegla** (XXIV, 88) and its pl. *swiegel* 'a little cord, a line' (Falzon) < It. *sagola*; **Siggu** (XVIII, 50; XXV, 107) 'a chair' < It. *seggio*, Sic. *seggia*; **Skola** (XV, x, 42) 'school' pl. *skejjel*, or, as given by Vassalli, also *skoli*, < It. *scuola*.
- Taljola** (XVI, 8) 'a pulley wherein a cord or rope runs to draw water or anything else' (Falzon) < It. *tagliuola*; Sic. *tagghiola*; **Tbandal** (XVII, iii, 46) 'to swing' < Sic. *pinnuliari*, or *panduliari*; **Tnabal** (XVI, 27) or *tnabar*, pl. of *tanbur* 'drum' < It. *tamburo*, Sic. *tamburu*.
- Xmara** (X, 23) 'river' < Sic. *sciumara* or *ciumara* 'corso largo di acqua' (Mort); **Xorta** (IX, 10) 'sort, kind, species' < It. *sorta*, Sic. *sorti*; **Xorti** (VII, ii, 43) 'chance, fate, destiny, also 'luck', < It. *sorte*, Sic. *sorti*.
- Zgajjaw** (XIV, 46) 'to reproach' (Falzon) < Sic. *sgaiari*; **Zrameg**, (XXVI, 111) pl. of *zarmu g* 'a young rabbit', cp. Sic. *carmucciu* 'coniglio giovane' (Mort).

### III. ROMANCE WORDS IN MAGRI'S TALES RECORDED BY BUSUTTI ONLY

- Anglu** (XXVII, 147) 'angel' < Sic. *ancilu*; It. *angelo*; **Armi tan-Nar** (XVI, 19) 'fire arms' cp. It. *armi da fuoco*, Sic. *armi di focu*.
- Bott** (XV, xv, 71) 'pot, tin' cp. It. *botte* 'cask'.

<sup>19</sup> Barbera, D.G., *Dizionario Maltese-Arabo-Italiano*, 4 vols. Beyrouth, Imprimerie Catholique, 1938-40.

- Dajna** (XVI, 16) explained as 'a fierce beast; also a fat woman, dirty and wearing her dresses short' by Magri (op.cit., p. 34) who excluded any relation to Provençal *dajna*, but cp. It. *daino*, Sic. *addaniu*.
- Ġardinar** (XIV, 43) 'gardener', <Sic. *jardinaru*, It. *giardiniere*.
- Karrijiet** (XIX, 11) pl. of *karru* 'chariot, waggon' <Sic. *carru*, It. *carro*.
- Lok** (VII, 59) 'place, spot, situation, station, position, site, room, seat, residence, mansion, post, ground' (Bus.); occurring in the expression *f'lok bla nies* 'in an uninhabited place'; used in Gozo in the sense of 'house', but very rarely so in Malta, <Sic. *locu*.
- Manku** (XI, 42) 'a handle, a haft' <Sic. *manicu*, It. *manico*; Mod (XV.xii, 69) in *bil-mod* 'slowly, gently, softly', <Sic. *modu*, It. *modo*.
- Poġġa** (XXIV, 83) 'to lay, to put, to lean against'; also, as in the present context 'he became one's companion' in *poġġa miegħu* <It. *poggiare*, Sic. *appujari*.
- Salt** (VII.iii, 47 and XII.ii, 65) occurring here in *ta s-salt* 'he darted at', but meaning also 'assault, a furious attack; 'onset' <It. *assalto*, Sic. *assaltu*; **Skond** (XI, 37) 'according' <It. *secondo*, Sic. *secunnu*; **Skud** (VII, 40) 'coin equivalent to 20 pence', historically used in Malta for many centuries, <It. *scudo*, Sic. *scutu*; **Spicċa** (VIII, 56) 'he finished' also 'hedied' <Sic. *spicciari* 'sbrigarisi, spacciarsi, far presto' (Mort).
- Tant** (XXIII, 44) in *tant u tant* 'so much, an unspecified sum of money' < It. *tanto*, Sic. *tantu*; **Terz** (XXIII, 46) 'a third' also 'a measure of wine' cp. Sic. *terzu* 'terza parte del, quartuccio, misura di capacità per fluidi' (Mort); **Tiggotta** (XVI, 25) 'to bail, to clear a boat, etc. of water', but explained by Magri in the tale as 'to vomit' <It. *gotta* [Lat. *gutta*] (DEI); **Torri** (XI, 36) 'tower' <Sic. *turri*, It. *torre*; **Trajditura** (XVI, 22) fem. of *trajditur* 'traitor' <Sic. *traditura*, It. *traditora* – for inclusion of *j* in words similarly of Romance origin cp. *trajbunal*, for *tribunal* < It. *tribunale*, occurring in Maltese folk-prayers; *ajkla* 'eagle' <It. *aquila*, *Ajkulina* for surname *Aquilina*, *ajru* 'air, weather' <It. *aria*, but note that other forms derived from same source *tradire* conform to the usual pattern of Romance loanwords, e.g. *ittradejtni* not *ittrajdejtni*, *tradiment* not *trajdiment*.
- Velijiet** (VII.v, 52) pl. of *velu* 'veil' <Sic. *velu*, It. *velo*; **Virgi** (XV.xii, 69) 'rods, canes' <It. *verga*, Sic. *virga*.
- Xkaffa** (IX, 9) 'shelf, a ledge', given by Vassalli, without however, defining its meaning, which may explain why Falzon left it out of his dictionary, <It. and Sic. *scaffa*.
- Zgur** (XII.ii, 65) 'sure' <Sic. *sicuru*, It. *sicuro*.

IV. WORDS RECORDED BY FALZON BUT NOT IN VASSALLI

- Ajkli** (XV.xii, 63) pl. of *ajkla* 'eagle' <It. and Sic. *aquila*, (Mort); **Ankra** (XVIII, 47) 'anchor' <It. and Sic. *ancora*; **Arloggi** (V, 27) pl. of *arlogg* 'clock, watch' <It. *orologio*, Sic. *roggiu*; **Amaw** (XIX, 11) 'they armed, furnished or fitted up' <Sic. *armari* meaning 'fornize' (Mort); **Avolja** (XXI, 20) 'even though, notwithstanding' <Sic. *avugghia*; **Avukat** (XXIII, 45) 'advocate, lawyer' <It. *avvocato*, Sic. *avvocatù*; **Azzarin** (XVI, 7) 'rifle, gun' <Sic. *azzarinu*, It. *acciarino*.
- Bacı** (XV.xii, 53) 'dock' <It. *bacile* 'xiii sec.; bacino, vassoio' (DEI), Sic. *bacili*; **Bič** (XVIII, 43) for *Lbič*, 'South West Wind' <Sic. *Libici*, It. *libeccio*; **Biljard** (XXV, 105) 'billiards', included in the 1st ed. of Falzon's dictionary (1845) and rather out of place in Magri's tale <It. *billiardo*, unrecorded by Mort; **Biskuttin** (XV.xii, 56) 'biscuit' <Sic. *biscuttinu*, It. *biscotto*; **Bnazzi** (XXVII, 148) 'a calm, calmness' <Sic. *bunazza*, It. *bonaccia*, c. 1215 (DEI); **Bosk** (IX, 11) 'wood' <It. *bosco*, Sic. *boscu*; **Bronž** (XI, 36) 'bronze' <It. *bronzo*, Sic. *brunzu*; **Bukkaport** (IX, 3) 'hatchway' <It. *boccaporto*, Sic. *buccaporta*; **Bžonn** (XI, 42) 'need' <It. *bisogno*, Sic. *bisugnu*.
- Čiēri** (XXVII, 147) 'chick peas' <Sic. *ciciru*, It. *cece*, **Čurkett** (XXV, 107) 'a ring' <It. *perchietto*, Sic. *circheddu* (Mort).
- Damask** (XVII, 46) 'damask' <It. *damasco*, Sic. *damascu*; **Djamanti** (XV.v, 34) 'diamond' <It. *diamante*, Sic. *diamanti*; **Dragun** (X.ii, 30) 'a dragon, <It. *dragone*, Sic. *draguni*; **Dublun** (XXIV, 89) 'a doubloon, a coin' according to Busuttill, equivalent to 40 scudi <Sic. *dubluni*, It. *dobblone*
- Festi** (XII.ii, 66) pl. of *festa* 'feast' <It. and Sic. *festa*; **Fidi** (XXVII, 147) 'faith' <Sic. *fidi*, It. *fede*; **Forka** (XXVI, 114) 'gallows' <It. *forca*, Sic. *furca*; **Fors** in *bil-fors* (XIV, 39) 'compulsory, by force' <It. and Sic. *forza*; **Fossa** (VII.v, 51) 'a gem, a jewel' ~ sense unrecorded in Italian and Sicilian by DEI and Mort; **Friskatur** (IX, 7) 'a basin, a washhand basin', as distinct from Sic. *friscaturi* 'colui che fischia, fischiatore' (Mort).
- Ġgant** (XV.i, 61) 'giant' <It. *gigante*, Sic. *giganti* — in Gozo often pronounced *ġgant*; **Ġumata** pl. *ġranet* (XXIV, 85) 'a day' <It. *giornata*; Sic. *jurnata*; **Gallett** (XIV, 37) 'sea biscuits or biscuits' <It. and Sic. *galletta*; **Gaziba** (VI, 35) 'misfortune, a roguish trick', explained by Aquilina as a Romance formation, ultimately from Ar. *Kataba* 'to lie'. **Granč** (XVIII, 48) 'a crab' <Sic. *granciu*, It. *granchio*; **Ġunglien** (XV.xi, 50) 'sesame seed' <Sic. *giuggiulena*; **Gagga** (VII.ii, 44) 'a cage' <Sic. *gaggia*, It. *gabbia*; **Gvernatur** (XVIII, 49) 'governor' <It. *governatore*, Sic. *governaturi*; **Gwerra** (XVI, 15) 'war' <It. and Sic. *guerra*.
- Ibbaxxa** (XV.xv, 71) 'to pull or bring down, to lower, to humble or abase

- oneself' (Falzon) < Sic. *abbasciari*, It. *abbassarsi*; **Imbarumbara** (XV.v, 34), more commonly heard as *barumbara*, 'pigeon house' < Sic. *palummaru* 'stanza dove stanno a covare i colombi' (Mort); **Infem** (XVI, 11) 'Hell' < It. *inferno*, Sic. *infenu*.
- Kacca** (XXIII, 44) 'hunting, shooting, chase' < It. and Sic. *caccia*; **Kaccatur** (XXVI, 110) 'hunter' < It. *cacciatore*, Sic. *cacciaturi*; **Kalzetti** (XI, 34) 'stockings' < It. *calzetta*, not in Mort; **Kamrier** (XXII, 45) 'a valet de-chambre' < It. *cameriere*, Sic. *cammareri*; **Kantun** (XVI, 23) 'a quadrangular building stone' < It. *cantone*, but contrast Sic. *cantuni* 'sorta di stipo situato negli angoli delle mura' (Mort); **Kanun** (XVIII, 50) 'cannon' < Sic. *cannuni*, It. *camnone*; **Kardarun** 'copper boiler' < It. *calderone*; **Karità** (VI, 36) 'charity' < It. and Sic. *carità*; **Karrettun** (XX, 14) 'wagon, a large cart' < It. *carrettone*, Sic. *carrettu*; **Karrozza** (XXIII, 51) pl. *krarez* unrecorded in M. dictionaries, 'a coach, a carriage' < It. *carrozza*; **Katina** (XV.i, 63) 'chain' < Sic. *catina*, It. *catena*; **Kcina** (XVIII, 48) 'kitchen' < It. and Sic. *cucina*; **Ikkmanda** (VIII, 59) 'to command' < It. *comandare*, Sic. *cumannari*; **Kok** (XV.xii, 52) 'cook' < It. *cuoco*, Sic. *co-cu*; **Kolp** (XVI, 8) 'a blow' in the expression *f'kolp* 'at one blow, suddenly', more commonly heard in Gozo < It. *colpo*, Sic. *corpu*, cp. It. *a un colpo*, Sic. *ntra un corpu*; **Korla** (XV.i, 60) 'anger' < It. *collera*, Sic. *col-ira* or *colura* (Mort); **Inkorla** (XII.ij, 66) 'to get angry, to fall in a passion, to rage'; **Koxxa** (XV.xii, 50) 'thigh' < It. and Sic. *coscia*; **Kuccarun** (VII.v, 52) 'a soup spoon, a ladle' < Sic. *cucchiaruni*, It. *cucchiaione*; **Kuccier** (VIII, 56) 'a coachman' < Sic. *cucchieri*, It. *cocchiere*; **Kunjett** (XVIII, 46) 'a small bottle, a phial' < Sic. *cugnettu* [Lat. *cuneus*] (DEI); **Kuntenta** (VIII, 57) 'content, joyful, pleased' < Sic. *cuntenta*, It. *contenta*; **Kuruna** (XV.v, 34; XII, 8) 'a crown' < Sic. *curuna*, It. *corona*; **Kustilji** (II, 19) 'ribs' < It. *costola*, Sic. *cuttigghia*.
- Lanterna** (XVIII, 55) or, more commonly, *lanterna* 'lantern' < It. and Sic. *Lanterna*; **Liri** (XVI, 26) 'pounds sterling' < It. and Sic. *lira*; **Ljun** (IX, 8) 'lion' < Sic. *ljuni*, It. *leone*; **Ljunfant** (VII.iv, 48) 'elephant' < It. *elefante*, Sic. *liunfanti*; **Loppju** (XVIII, 58) 'opium', made up of article l + oppju, whence *illoppja* 'to give opium, to anaesthetise' < Sic. *loppju* (Mort) It. *oppio*; **Lukanda** (XXIII, 45) 'an inn, lodging' < It. *locanda*, Sic. *lucanna*; **Lvant** (XIV, 36) 'East, the Levant' < Sic. *Livanti*, It. *Levante*.
- Majjistran** (XVIII, 43) or, more commonly, *Majjistral*, 'North West Wind' < Sic. *maistrali*, It. *maestrale*; **Marca** (XII, 55) 'pus, a fat or greasy substance in general' < Sic. *marcia*; **Martell** (XI, 42) 'a hammer' < It. *martello*, Sic. *marteddu*; **Mazzamorra** (XIV, 37) 'crumbs of sea biscuits' which, according to Magri, are used as bait in fishing < It. *mazzamurro*

- 'xvi sec; tritume di biscotto; v. usata in marina' < Sic. *mazzamurru* 'esca da pigliar pesci' (DEI); **Mnanar** (XII.iv, 48) pl. of *mannara* 'an axe, a hatchet' < Sic. *mannara* (Mort), It. *mannaia*; **Muntun** (XIV, 39) 'a ram' < Sic. *muntuni*, It. *montone*.
- Namra** (XII, 40) 'hobby' and, outside this context, meaning also 'love, inclination, passion' < It. *innamorare*, Sic. *nammurari*; **Infoska** (VIII, 56) 'he grew angry, vexed or annoyed' < It. *infoscare* 'to become dark, to darken', Sic. *nfuscari* 'conturbarsi' (Mort); **Ingwanta** (XVIII, 47) 'a glove' < Sic. *nguantu*, It. *guanta*.
- Ordni** (XXIII, 46; XI, 42) 'order' < Sic. *ordini*, It. *ordine*; **Ors** (IX, 9) 'a bear' < It. *orso*, Sic. *ursu*.
- Pala** (XV.xi, 51) 'a shovel, a baker's shovel' < It. and Sic. *pala*; **Palazz** (XIX, 11) 'a palace' < It. *palazzo*, Sic. *palazzu*; **Palijiet** (XVI, 8) pl. of *pāl* 'a pale, a stake of wood' < It. and Sic. *palu*; **Passejh** (VII.v, 51) 'his steps', made up of dual *pas'sejn* 'two steps', from *pass*, pron. suffix *b* (3rd pers. masc.) resulting in elision of *n* < It. *passo*, Sic. *passu*;
- Patt** (XI, 36; XXVI, 113) 'agreement, covenant, condition, bargain, compact' < It. *patto*, Sic. *pattu*; **Paxxuta** (XI, 39) 'fed, nourished, contented, pleased' < It. *pasciuto*, Sic. *pasciutu*; **Pesta** (XIV, 44) 'plague, pestilence' < Sic. *pesta* or *pesti*, It. *peste*; **Pinna** (XV.xii, 54) 'feather' < Sic. *pinna*, It. *penna*; **Pizelli** (XXIV, 86) 'common peas' < It. *pisello*, Sic. *pisedda*; **Plajja** (XV.ix, 38) 'littoral, shore, bank or coast' < Sic. *praja* 'lido che scende dolcemente nel mare, spiaggia' (Mort); **Polz** (XXIII, 48) 'pulse' < It. *polso*; **Poni** (XV.xii, 63) 'a pony' < Eng. pony; **Ponn** (XI, 38) 'a fist' < It. *pugno*, Sic. *pugnu*; **Ponta** (XV.i, 62) 'a point, a sore' < It. and Sic. *punta*; **Post** (VIII, 59) 'site, post, stand' < It. *posto*, Sic. *postu*; **Pranzu** (VII.v, 52; XXIII, 46) 'a dinner' < Sic. *pranzu*, It. *pranzo*; **Prinčipijiet** (XXV, 105) pl. of *prinčep* 'prince' < It. *principe*, Sic. *prinčipi*; **Punent** (XIV, 36) 'West' < Sic. *punenti*, It. *Ponente*.
- Rama** (XXIII, 46) in the context *rama jidlek għonq ix-xebba*, meaning 'he set to, he started to massage the girl's neck', ~ meaning distinct from It. *amare* or Sic. *amari*; **Razzett** (XV.vi, 34) pl. *rziezet* (XXI, 20) 'a cow house' < It. *ricetto*, Sic. *ricettu*, or *risettu*; **Rigal** (XVI, 26) 'a present, gift' < Sic. *rigalu*, It. *regalo*; **Ritratt** (XXVI, 113) 'portrait, likeness' < It. *ritratto*, Sic. *ritrattu*; **Roti** (XIII.ii, 9) pl. of *rota* 'wheel' < Sic. *rota*, It. *ruota*; **Rozolin** (XV.xii, 56) 'rosolio, a kind of liquor' < It. *rosolio*, Sic. *rosoliu*.
- Sajjetti** (XIII, 6) pl. of *sajjeta* 'a thunderbolt' < It. *saetta*, Sic. *saitta*; **Sala** (XXIII, 47) 'hospital ward' in this context, but otherwise 'a hall' < It. and Sic. *sala*; **Salvaġġ** (XI, 35) 'savage, wild' < It. *selvaggio*, Sic. *salvaggiu*; **Sangristija** (XV.xviii, 73) or, more commonly, *sagristija* 'sac-

risty or vestry' < Sic. *sagristia*, It. *sagrestia* or *sacristia*; **Sefturi** (VIII, 60) pl. pf *seftur*, 'servant' < It. *servitore*, Sic. *servituri*; **Sensja** (XXII, 29) explained by Falzon as 'permission, licence', and *bis-sensja*, which survives in Gozo, 'with your leave', which fulfils the sense required by the context in this tale, though it is more commonly used to mean 'discharged from work', especially in the Dockyard area. *Sensja* probably derives from It. *licenza* with initial syllable *li* dropped, and the *ç* changed to *s* under the influence of English pronunciation *licence*; **Serp** (V, 27) 'a serpent' < It. *serpe*, Sic. *serpi*; **Servjent** (XXIII, 48) 'hospital attendant' < It. *servente*, Sic. *serventi* but not in the Maltese sense. **Servizz** (XXIII, 47) in *irgjel tas-servizz*, 'servicemen' < It. *servizio*, Sic. *servizju*; **Setta** (XV.xiii, 70) in *tas-setta*, literally 'of the Sect' i.e. the Freemasons, believed to fly through the air with music < It. and Sic. *setta*; **Silfjun** (XIV, 50) 'wigeon or whim' (Falzon), but in the context of this tale denoting a big fish, cp. It. *silfo* 'xviii sec. spirito dell'aria, risale al Lat. *sylyphus*; *Sylphes* (nel testo tedesco) di Paracelso (1451-1527), spiriti dell'aria simili agli uomini che abitano le foreste' (DEI); **Sinjur** (XIX, 11) 'Lord, gentleman, master, sir' (Falzon), also 'rich' < Sic. *signuri*, It. *signore*; for association of idea of wealth cp. It. *farla da signore* 'to roll in wealth'; **Sjett** (XXIV, 85) 'a dish', surviving in Gozo and, as a family nickname *Tas-Sjettu*, in Malta < Fr. *assiette*; **Skalora** (XIV, 42) 'panick grass, canary grass, birds' seed' < It. *scagliuola*, Sic. *scagghiola*; **Skarpan** (XVI, 11) 'shoe maker' < Sic. *scogghiu*; *scarparu*; **Skoli** (XVIII, 36) 'a rock' < It. *scoglio*; **Skorfna** (XIV, 50) 'sea scorpion' < It. *scorfano* (DEI), Sic. *scrofana* 'sorta di pesce' (Mort); **Spalla** (VI, 35; IX, 4) 'shoulder' < It. *spalla*, Sic. *spadda*; **Spag** (XVI, 8) 'pack thread' < It. *spago*, Sic. *spagu*; **Nispara** (XIII, 6) 'I fire', from *spara* 'he fired' < It. *sparare*, Sic. *sparari*; **Spejjeż** (VII.iii, 46) pl. of *spiza* 'charge' < Sic. *spisa*, It. *spesa*; **Spilingun** (XII, 58) 'a large pin' < Sic. *spinguluni*, (Mort); **Jistampakom** (XIV, 47) from *stampa* 'he printed, imprinted' < It. *stampare*, Sic. *stampari*; **Stanjata** (XV.xi, 49) 'a coffee-pot, a tin-pot' < Sic. and It. *stagnata*; **Suldati** (XI, 42) 'soldiers' < Sic. *suldatu*, It. *soldato*.

**Ta** (XII.ii, 59) short for *tata*, 'child's name for father' < Sic. *tata*; **Tarzna** (XI, 42) given by Falzon as *tarznar*, 'arsenal, dockyard' < Ar. through Sic. *darsina*; **Tazza** (XI, 41) 'a drinking glass' < It. and Sic. *tazza*, 'mug, cup'; **Termentina** (XV.xii, 69) or, as given by Falzon, *turpentina*, It. *trementina*, Sic. *trimintina*; **Tir** (XIV, 33) 'short' < It. *tiro*, Sic. *tiru*; **Tmun** (XIII.ii, 9) 'helm, rudder' < Sic. *timuni*, It. *timone*; **Tosku** (XXVI, 110) 'poison' < Sic. *tossicu*, It. *tossico*.

**Vjolin** (XXV, 105) 'violin' < It. *violino*, Sic. *viulinu*; **Xabla** (X, 25) 'sabre

or sword' <It. *siabola*, Sic. *sciabula*; **Xalata** (XI, 35) 'sport, diversion, recreation, outing' <It. *scialare* 'condurre vita molto spenderaccia' (DEI); **Xkubetta** (XIV, 34) 'a fowling piece, a rifle' <Sp. *escobeta*; **Xkupa** (XVIII, 46) 'a broom, a brush', <Sic. *scupa*, It. *scopa*.  
**Zekkin** (XXIV<sub>v</sub>.ii, 91) 'a sequin or ducat' <It. *zecchino*, Sic. *zicchinu*;  
**Zija** (XXIV<sub>v</sub>.ii, 90) 'aunt' <It. and Sic. *zia*.