

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOME SEMANTIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALTESE AND KORANIC ARABIC

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LIVING languages are constantly changing and developing, sometimes almost imperceptibly, sometimes more rapidly. These changes occur not only in the morphology of the language, although it is here that they are perhaps most noticeable, particularly in the case of those languages which formerly may have had a high degree of inflection, but also in its semantics. The purpose of this article is to examine some of the more interesting and obvious semantic changes which have occurred in Maltese, showing the difference between the meanings of certain equivalent or corresponding words in Arabic and Maltese.

Maltese is a living branch of the Semitic group of languages, and its major parent language is Arabic. However, the direct link between the parent and offspring languages was severed almost 900 years ago. The Arabs ruled Malta for a little over two centuries, from 870 to 1090, during which time they imposed their language on the existing native population, although it probably underwent certain phonetic changes at that time. As the native population absorbed the language they probably forced certain phonetic changes to occur on account of the difficulty they may have found in pronouncing certain Arabic sounds. After the severance of the direct link the offspring language then continued to develop into a separate language in its own right. Had Malta remained in direct contact with the Arabic language, then Maltese may have developed in the same way as other Arabic dialects. As it was cut off, however, the language was subjected to other external influences by non-Semitic tongues, mainly of a Romance nature and particularly Sicilian, and they affected and changed it accordingly.

In this same way, external linguistic influences may have played their part in effecting changes in the meanings of certain words. However, such changes need not necessarily be the result only of external linguistic influences, for other factors, often of a local nature, also play their part. These are factors such as differing natural or geographical conditions, differing customs, or different religious beliefs between the places or spheres of parent and offspring, or influencing and influenced,

languages (or indeed between two groups of speakers of the same language). The meaning of a word may be specialized or defined, leading to a restriction in its meaning, or alternatively it may be extended: the process of restriction and extension may occur in the passage of a word from one language to another, or even within one language itself. There may also be a change of meaning from cause to effect, or *vice versa*, or from the part to the whole, or *vice versa*. There may even be a change from the original meaning to its antonym.

So far, we have talked only of words as a whole changing their meanings, but the term 'words' needs to be made more specific when used in the context of Semitic languages. When dealing with Semitic languages, we must bear in mind the extreme importance of trilateralism, and its accompanying system of forms or patterns constructed round a group of letters, or radicals, which indicate some basic idea or some basic meaning. Different forms or patterns of words so constructed round a group of radicals, especially verbal patterns, may give very precise and often subtle differences of shades of meaning. When talking, therefore, of changes in the meanings of words (using 'words' here in a general sense), one may not necessarily be dealing only with changes in the basic idea or basic meaning of the root: more subtle changes may be noticed in the way in which the basic meaning of a root may be the same in both languages, but a specific meaning may have changed from one particular form in Arabic to another, different form in Maltese. Instances of such changes will be seen in the following pages, and they occur usually for one or two reasons. First, a particular form of pattern may be almost completely non-existent in Maltese (e.g., verbal form IV). Therefore words of such a form in Arabic, if they are to be adopted by Maltese, have to be adapted to a different form. Second, while certain forms or patterns may not only exist in Maltese but may be in common use, they may not occur when a certain letter may be one of the radicals (e.g., certain verbal forms, such as II and V, do not occur in those verbs which have *gh* or *h* as medial radical). Therefore, once again, words of such a form in Arabic, if they are to be adopted by Maltese, must be adapted to a different form in Maltese if they contain the letters in question in certain positions. Examples of such words will be seen later.

The Maltese words in this study are taken from 'A Maltese-Arabic Word List', by C.L. Dessoulavy. In this book, Dessoulavy lists a great number of Maltese words, arranged under some key word followed by other words derived from that same root. He also indicates whether the root may be of Common Semitic occurrence, and whether it occurs in the Koran. Dessoulavy lists some 675 such roots, which, together with deri-

vatives, total some 1,850 words. It should, however, be emphasized that it does not necessarily follow that a given Maltese word has an Arabic word, of which it may be the equivalent, in the Koran: many have not.

Without in any way denigrating Dessoulavý's work or intending to minimise its importance, there are two explanatory notes which must be given at the very beginning. They are mentioned here both so as to avoid possible confusion later, and to help put in a clearer perspective some remarks which will follow in the main body of this study. Often, when giving a Maltese word, Dessoulavý gives what he regards as the Arabic word of which the Maltese word is the equivalent, or to which it corresponds. There are occasions, however, when the Arabic word which Dessoulavý gives as the origin of a particular Maltese word may be either suspect, or even perhaps wrong. This writer realises that these are serious assertions to make, but hastens to add that they are in no way meant as an unkind criticism of Dessoulavý: there is now much more linguistic knowledge available about Maltese than that which was at Dessoulavý's disposal. The second point concerns word forms or patterns. The meaning of a word may be taken from a language both in its spoken usage, and also – or alternatively, if it is a word which has fallen into disuse or is used in a literary medium only – in its literary usage. Words thus employed in speech or literature are, or have been, actively used. Certain of the words which Dessoulavý gives, however, are theoretical forms only, being used neither in speech nor literature, past or present. It thus follows that their meanings likewise are of necessity partly theoretical, since they cannot be checked by experience.

In certain cases, suggestions are made as to why the Maltese word may have changed its meaning from that of the Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, or as to what an original meaning might have been. It must be stressed that such suggestions are offered as hypotheses only, and not as hard facts, since there is no way of proving them. Other explanations may be equally plausible.

Finally, by way of introduction, it remains to be said that, unless there is some valid reason for doing otherwise, normally only the primary meanings of words are given, and secondary meanings are left unmentioned. It is, after all, in the primary meanings that we are most interested. Also, where Koranic references are given, only one is noted. A given word may occur a number of times in the Koran, but the reference given refers to an example where the meaning in question can be clearly seen.

In the following pages the key words are arranged alphabetically in the order in which they appear in 'A Maltese-Arabic Word List'. Derivatives are given under the appropriate key words.

ATAR

matra: The Maltese root word *atar*, meaning 'footstep, sign', agrees with the Arabic root word **أثر**, meaning 'trace, mark, print'. But whereas the Maltese *matra* (now obsolete, but recorded by Caruana) also means 'sign', the Arabic word **مأثرة** means 'feat, accomplishment, benefit, heritage'. Here the meanings differ, although there might be said to be a close similarity between the meanings 'sign' and 'heritage, benefit', since a heritage or benefit could be the sign remaining from some former deed.

We could also have here an example of an occurrence, mentioned in the introduction to this article, of which further instances will be noticed later. Sometimes the same meanings may be found for equivalent root words in both Arabic and Maltese, but the meanings may then differ in the derived forms. Where the meanings in Maltese contain the basic idea of the root, albeit perhaps modified in some way, throughout the derived forms, while the corresponding Arabic derived words may have different meanings, it could be that Maltese has developed some of its own meanings for the derived words related to the basic idea of the root, regardless of the meanings of the corresponding Arabic derived words. There may thus be differences in the meanings of the derived words in the respective languages, even when the root meanings may be the same.

Thus, while **مأثرة** has one meaning, *matra* has a different one, in this particular instance the same as the meaning of the root *atar*.

BAHAR

bahhar: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'sea', **بحر** / *bahar* meaning 'sea'. The Maltese verb *bahhar* II means 'to navigate', while the Arabic verb **بَحَّرَ** II means 'to throw into the sea, to be heavy (sea)'. There is thus no connection between the meanings in the two languages, even though these respective meanings of the derived words are connected with the root meaning in both languages. It could be that Maltese has developed its own local meaning for the word, without reference to the meaning of the Arabic word to which it is equivalent.

BARR

barr: The Maltese word *barr* means 'the wild', while the Arabic word **بَر** means primarily 'land, ground, continent, province', and in the Koran (5/97) 'land'. The Maltese word thus has a more intensive and specific meaning than the Arabic word.

It should be noted, however, that in an adjectival form the meanings agree in both languages, since *بَرِّي* / *barri* means 'wild', and the Arabic word means also 'savage, not domesticated'.

Mention should also be made of the Arabic word *بَرِّيَّة*, a relative noun, meaning 'the wild', for here there is an equivalence in meaning, though not in form, with the Maltese root noun *barr*.

BASAR

basar: The Arabic form I verb *بَصَرَ* means 'to see, discern, notice, understand', and in the Koran (20/96) 'to see, perceive'. The equivalent Maltese word *basar* I means 'to foresee, foretell'. While the meanings in the two languages are closely related they are not identical. The Maltese meaning implies seeing into the future, while the Arabic meanings have no such sense: the meanings of the Arabic word in both its standard and Koranic senses imply seeing at the present time only. However, the Arabic meanings do imply using one's powers of reasoning when seeing, rather than just simply seeing something and nothing more, and imply that one makes certain deductions from what one sees.

bâsar: The Arabic word *بَاصِر*, the active participle of the form I verb *بَصَرَ*, means 'seeing, quick-sighted, acute'. The equivalent Maltese word *bâsar*, the active participle of *basar* I, means 'diviner, prophet'. The meanings in the two languages are different, and the comments made under **basar** (q.v. above) apply here also. The meanings of both words, however, are logical extensions of the meanings of the respective form I verbs from which they derive.

It should be added, for the sake of completeness, that the Arabic words *بَصِيرَة* and *تَبَصُّر*, the latter being the verbal noun of form V, both mean 'foresight', and it may be suggested that there is here a connection with the idea of the Maltese meanings. However, the word 'foresight' does not really imply any ability to see into the future in any prophetic way, but rather implies the ability to make certain forecasts based on data or experience which one has at one's command. In this respect the meaning 'foresight' has a logical connection with the verb *بَصَرَ* I, *a propos* of which the comment was made that its meaning implies not just simply seeing, but also making deductions from what one sees.

BATAN

batan: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'belly'. The Maltese form I verb *batan* means 'to con-

ceive'. The Arabic form I verbs **بَطَنَ** and **بِطِنَ** mean 'to be inside, conceal oneself, penetrate', and **بَطْنٌ** means 'to be big-bellied, be hidden, concealed'. **بَطْنٌ** occurs in the Koran (6/152), with the meanings 'to be concealed, be within, be secret'. Though the meanings in the two languages are not the same, there could be said to be a connection between them: when a foetus is conceived, it is concealed within the mother for some time.

The standard Arabic words for 'to conceive' are **حَبَلَ** I, whence Maltese *ħobol*, and **حَمَلَ** I.

BÂTI

bâti: The Maltese word *bâti* means 'slow (of a fire)'. The Arabic word **بَاطِنٌ**, the active participle of the verb **بَطَّؤُ** I, meaning 'to be slow', and the words **بَطِئَ** and **بَطِنَ** all also mean 'slow'. However, the Arabic meaning is of general application, while the Maltese meaning has acquired a specific application, referring only to the slowness of a fire.

BATRA

abtar: Both the Arabic word **أَبْتَرُ** and the Maltese equivalent word *abtar* have the identical meaning of 'tailless, bob-tailed'. However, in the Koran (108/3), **أَبْتَرُ** has an interesting specialized meaning not found in Maltese. It means 'docked, without a tail', but in the sense of having no son or posterity.

BEJJEN

bejjen: Both the Maltese word *bejjen* II, and the Arabic word **بَيَّنَ** II mean 'to separate', the Arabic word having also the additional meanings of 'to appear, manifest, explain, make distinct'. **بَيَّنَ** in the Koran (2/155) has only the meanings 'to make clear, manifest, expound', but not 'to separate'. However, perhaps by making something clear or manifest one therefore makes it stand out and so it seems separate: hence there is a related idea.

tibjîn: The meaning of the Maltese word *tibjîn*, the verbal noun of *bejjen* II, is 'distinction', whereas the meanings of the Arabic verbal noun of **بَيَّنَ** II, **تَبْيِينٌ**, are 'explanation, clear demonstration, specification'. The Arabic word does not have the meaning of 'distinction' as it would be regarded in its primary sense in English. **تَبْيِينٌ** has the meaning of something which stands out or which is manifest. The meaning 'distinction', in its primary sense, would seem to agree more with the

meaning of the verb as 'to separate', i.e., something distinct in the sense of being by itself, rather than distinct in the sense of being clear. Perhaps this could be more clearly illustrated by some meaning such as 'distinctness'.

As was remarked under the heading **ATAR (matra)**, this may be another example of the derived word in Maltese taking a derivative of the meaning of a simpler word, rather than taking the meaning of the derived word in Arabic of which it is the equivalent: here *tibjîn* seems to have taken its meaning from the meaning of *bejjen* II.

BEJJET

bejt: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'house'. The Arabic word بيت means 'a house, dwelling, family, household' and in the Koran (29/40) also it means 'a house, household, sanctuary'. The equivalent Maltese word *bejt* now means 'a roof', and thus the meaning has a certain restriction and specificity about it, referring not to a dwelling as a whole, but to only one part of it.

It is interesting to note, however, that in certain compound terms in Maltese, both of them having a specific sense, the word *bejt* does indeed mean 'house', although it would not be used with this meaning other than in these terms. They are *għasfur tal-bejt*, 'a house sparrow', and *Wara l-bjut*, literally 'behind the houses', a term used to describe a certain part of the village of Tarxien situated behind the built-up area.

We thus have a clear example of a word not only changing its present meaning in Maltese from the original Arabic meaning, but one where we can actually see evidence of the word undergoing its change of meaning within Maltese itself.

BIDNI

bidni: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'body'. The Maltese word *bidni* is the equivalent of the Arabic word بدني, both being the respective relative adjectives. *Bidni* means 'bulky', while بدني means 'physical, pertaining to the body'. While the meanings in the two languages are very closely related, the meaning of the Maltese word, 'bulky', implies large size, a sense not contained in the Arabic word.

BIDWI

biedja: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'the country' (in the sense of rural as opposed to ur-

ban). The meaning of the Maltese word *biedja* is 'agriculture', but this is a meaning not contained explicitly in the Arabic word بَادِيَة, which means 'country, desert, wilderness, bedouins'. While the Arabic word thus refers to the country itself or to the people who live there, it does not refer to the way of livelihood of the country, although this could be implied.

The meaning of *biedja* is, however, a logical derivative of the meaning of a more basic Maltese word. The word *bidwi*, and the Arabic word بَدْوِي, both mean 'belonging to the country, agriculturalist', and indeed the primary meaning of *bidwi* in Maltese is now simply 'a farmer'. As has been remarked already, it is possible that Maltese may have developed its own meaning for the derived word without reference necessarily to the Arabic derived word of which it is the equivalent, or to which it corresponds.

DAHAK

dahhiek (dahhák): The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'laughing', and the form I verbs ضَحَكَ /*dahak* both mean 'to laugh'. The meaning of the Maltese word *dahhiek* is 'comical, something or someone that provokes laughter'. The Arabic word ضَحَّكَ, in addition to its straightforward meanings as an intensive active participle of form I, means also 'a jester, joker'. The meanings in the two languages are thus identical, since a jester is someone who makes you laugh.

But it is in the form of these words that their interest lies, especially since the meanings are the same. ضَحَّكَ, as remarked above, is the intensive active participle of ضَحَكَ I, and *dahhiek* is also ostensibly the intensive active participle of *dahak* I. The meaning of both words has acquired what is effectively a transitive signification, however, whereas the form I verb in both languages is intransitive.

It must be added, however, that despite the apparent equivalence in form between ضَحَّكَ and *dahhiek*, *dahhiek* may conceivably be regarded as a local formation of an active participle of the form II verb *dahhak*, meaning 'to make to laugh', rather than as an intensive active participle of the form I verb. If this should be so, then the meanings of the Maltese word, at least, would be absolutely logical in their transitive signification.

DAHAL

indahal: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'entering', the form I verbs دَخَلَ /*dahal* meaning 'to

enter'. The Arabic word **إِنْدَحَلَ** VII means 'to go in, penetrate', and this meaning is absolutely logical for form VII. The equivalent Maltese word *indahal* VII means 'to intrude', and this implies rather going in somewhere where one perhaps should not be going in. This is a shade of meaning not found in other forms of the Maltese root, or in the Arabic word of which *indahal* is the equivalent. It does, indeed, have almost a pejorative connotation.

DAKKAR

dakkar: The root **ز-ك-ر** has two basic meanings in Arabic, the more common being connected with the idea of 'mentioning, reminding', and the other of 'fecundation'. The root in Maltese has retained only the latter, less common, idea. Thus, while **زَكَّرَ** II means 'to remind, impregnate (a palm tree)', the equivalent Maltese word *dakkar* II means only 'to fecundate a fig tree'. We therefore have an example of the primary meaning of the Arabic word being dropped in Maltese. The word **زَكَّرَ** occurs in the Koran (50/45), but only in its primary sense, meaning 'to remind, warn'.

tidkîr: *Tidkîr* is the equivalent of **تَذْكَير**, both words being the verbal noun of the respective form II verbs **زَكَّرَ**/*dakkar*. The Arabic word means 'a reminding, warning, fecundation, impregnation', these being the logical meanings stemming from the form II verb, while the Maltese word means only 'fecundation', this likewise being the logical meaning stemming from the Maltese form II verb. The word **تَذْكَير** occurs in the Koran (10/72) with the meaning of 'a reminding'.

DAGHA

dagha: The Arabic verb **رَعَا** I means 'to call out, pray, invite, swear against, curse', and thus within Arabic itself we see opposing meanings, with 'to pray' on the one hand being more common than 'to curse' at the other extreme. This verb occurs in the Koran (3/33) only with the meaning 'to call (upon)'. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese word *dagha* I is 'to curse' only, and thus we see, as with **DAKKAR** (*dakkar*), that Maltese has kept the less common and more 'extreme' meaning of the Arabic word.

daghwa: The meaning of the Arabic word **رَعْوَةٌ** is 'a call, invitation, claim, prayer, curse, imprecation', and in the Koran (2/182) it means 'a call, prayer, claim, petition'. The equivalent Maltese word *daghwa* means 'blasphemy'. Thus in both languages the meanings of the respective simple nouns are absolutely logical when taken in conjunction

with the respective form I verbs (q.v. above) from which they derive. As was remarked above, the meaning of the Maltese word does agree entirely with one of the meanings of the Arabic word, even though it is the less common and more 'extreme' meaning which Maltese has kept.

DAR

dawwâra: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'turning, roundness'. The meaning of the Maltese word *dawwâra* is 'circumference', which implies the distance around, or the measurement of, something round. The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, رَوَّارَةٌ, means, *inter alia*, 'roundness', but with no connotation of the circumference of that roundness.

mdawwar: The Arabic form II verb دَوَّرَ means 'to whirl, turn, make round, rotate', and the equivalent Maltese form II verb *dawwar* means 'to turn'. The Arabic passive participle مَدَوَّرَ means 'turned, made round, circular', while the equivalent Maltese passive participle *mdawwar* means 'surrounded'. Thus, while مَدَوَّرَ means something simply round or made round, *mdawwar*, in its sense of 'surrounded', implies something not necessarily made round, but put around something else. The Arabic meanings are therefore logical and accurate as the passive participle of the form II verb, while the Maltese meaning seems to be slightly removed.

DARAB

darbtejn: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'hitting, striking', the form I verbs ضَرَبَ/*darab* meaning 'to strike', and the unitary verbal nouns ضَرْبَةٌ/*darba* meaning 'a stroke, blow'. Whereas the Maltese word *darbtejn*, the dual of *darba*, has the meaning of 'twice', the Arabic dual word ضَرْبَتَيْنِ (ضَرْبَتَيْنِ in the oblique cases) does not have this specific sense, but means simply 'two strokes, two blows'.

It is interesting to wonder why Maltese should have chosen this particular root to get the meaning of 'twice', rather than use the dual of some word of a root connected with the idea of 'time'. (The normal Arabic way of expressing 'twice' would be to use a verbal noun as مَفْعُولٌ مُطْلَقٌ (absolute object), putting it in the dual). It is possible, of course, that the Maltese word *darbtejn* may have started in this way, and then become isolated with its specific meaning.

It is also possible that *darbtejn* may be a calque of an Italian expression. *Colpo* means 'a blow', but *due colpi*, literally 'two blows', is used with the meaning of 'twice'.

EMMEN

emmen: The Maltese word *emmen* means 'to believe'. The Arabic word to which it ostensibly corresponds is **أَمَّنَ** II, which means 'to assure, reassure, give confidence to, insure life, intrust'. We thus have quite a difference in meaning between the two languages.

Two points, however, may be made. The usual Arabic word for 'to believe', from the root **أ-م-ن**, is **آمَنَ** IV. Maltese has hardly any verbs at all of form IV, and the few which do exist, with the exception of *wera*, 'to show' (from *ra* I, the equivalent of **رَأَى** I), occur either in certain religious expressions, such as *m'akbrek*, *Mulej*, 'how great is God' (literally 'what has made God great', the equivalent of an Arabic **فَعَلَ تَعَجُّبًا**, or verb of wonder), or in certain archaic literary expressions. It is therefore possible that the meanings of certain verbs, which in Arabic may be of form IV, have had to pass to another, existent form in Maltese. This could be the case here, where the meaning has passed from the Arabic form IV verb to an ostensible form II verb in Maltese.

There is also another point which must be made about the form of the verb *emmen*. It may ostensibly be a form II verb, but may not, in fact, necessarily be so. If it were a genuine Maltese form II, it might well be *wemmen*, and not *emmen*, on the analogy of the form II verb *wabħhar*, from the Arabic root **أ-خ-ر**. If this should be so, then *emmen* may, in fact, be a form of local Maltese adaptation of the original Arabic form IV verb **آمَنَ**. In that case, the form of the word would have changed, but the meaning would be the same in the two languages.

FAGHAL

faghal/fgħâl: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'doing'. The Maltese word *fagħal/fgħâl* means 'business', and Dessoulavy gives as the Arabic words of which it is the equivalent **فَعَال** and **فِعَال**. **فَعَال** would be the verbal noun of form III, but there is, in fact, no form III verb of this root. As a simple noun, however, it means 'operation, a good or bad action done by two or many agents'. **فِعَال** means 'a good or bad action done by a single agent, favour, kindness'. Neither of these words occurs in the Koran, and neither has a meaning which bears any close relationship to the Maltese meaning, although there is admittedly a connection between 'operation' and 'business'.

It might be suggested, however, that the Maltese word *fagħal/fgħâl*

could be the verbal noun of a Maltese form I verb, now non-existent, if it ever did exist at all. It would correspond to the verbal noun of the Arabic form I verb *فَعَلَ*, which would be *فَعْلٌ*, meaning 'a deed, action'. The meaning in the two languages would thus, in this case, be very closely related.

It should be added that the word *fagħal/fgħâl* occurs only in proverbs and sayings, such as *agħmel fagħlek*, in the sense of 'mind your (own) business'.

FARD

fired: The meaning of the Maltese verb *fired* I is 'to separate', and Dessoulavy gives it as being the equivalent of the Arabic verbs *فَرَدَ* I or *أَفْرَدَ* IV. *فَرَدَ* I means 'to be alone, single, sole', and as such is an intransitive verb. It is the causative form IV verb *أَفْرَدَ* which means 'to separate, set apart, isolate'. The Maltese verb thus resembles the Arabic form IV verb in meaning.

As was remarked under **EMMEN** (*emmen*), the verbal form IV is almost non-existent in Maltese. It is thus possible that the meaning of the form IV verb in Arabic has had to be transferred to another, existent form in Maltese, in this case form I.

FELAH

felah: The Maltese form I verb *felah* means 'to be strong'. Dessoulavy gives it as being the equivalent of the Arabic form IV verb *أَفْلَحَ*, which means 'to be successful, lucky, to make progress, prosper'. This verb occurs in the Koran (6/21) with these same meanings. Although there is a connection between the meanings in the two languages, they are not identical. The Arabic word does not specifically mean 'to be strong', although its meanings are connected with this by implication.

We also have here a further example of a possible change from a form IV verb in Arabic to a verb of a different form in Maltese, in this case form I.

FIXEL

fixel: The meaning of the Maltese verb *fixel* I is 'to confuse, discompose', and Dessoulavy gives it as being the equivalent of the Arabic verbs *فَشِلَ* I and *فَشَّلَ* II. The meanings of *فَشِلَ* I are 'to become cowardly, remiss, weak, to fall short of, to faint, fail', and are all intransitive. *فَشِلَ* occurs in the Koran (3/118) with the same meanings. *فَشَّلَ* II, which does not occur in the Koran, means 'to frustrate,

confound, tire, thwart', and these meanings are transitive. Thus, while the form of the Maltese word *fixel* I agrees with Arabic فَشَلَ I, its meaning agrees with the Arabic word فَشَلَ II. We therefore have an example of a possible transference of meaning from one form in Arabic to another, different form in Maltese.

fixla: The meaning of the Maltese word *fixla* is 'confusion', whereas the meaning of the Arabic word فَشَلَةٌ is 'fatigue'. There is here no direct relationship at all between the meanings in the two languages. It must be noted, however, that the two meanings agree logically with the meanings of the form I verbs in the respective languages from which they are derived.

ĠARR

ġarr, ġarrier, inġarr, miġrur: The basic meaning of the root in Arabic is connected with the idea of 'dragging, pulling', whereas the basic meaning of the root in Maltese is connected with the idea of 'carrying'. Thus the Maltese verb *ġarr* I means 'to carry', while the Arabic verb جَرَّ I means 'to pull, drag, tow, tug'. It must be added that جَرَّ does also mean 'to transport', but this is not its primary meaning. جَرَّ I is the only word of the root occurring in the Koran (7/149), and here also it has the meaning of 'to drag'.

The Maltese word *ġarrier*, the intensive active participle of the form I verb, means 'a carrier', while the intensive active participle of the Arabic form I verb, جَرَّار, means 'a drawer, puller, tower'.

The Maltese verb *inġarr* VII means 'to be transported', while the Arabic form VII verb اِنجَرَء means 'to be drawn, dragged, pulled'.

And the Maltese word *miġrur*, the passive participle of the form I verb, means 'transported', while the Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, مَجْرُور, likewise the passive participle of the form I verb, means 'drawn, pulled, hauled'.

Although there is thus a connection between the respective sets of meanings in the two languages, they are not identical. The Maltese root seems to have developed the secondary, rather than the primary, meaning of the Arabic root.

mġarr: The meaning of the Maltese word *mġarr*, a mimated noun of place, is 'wharf, a place to which merchandise is carried'. This agrees logically with the basic meaning of the idea of the root in Maltese, a wharf being used in connection with transport. The meaning of the Arabic mimated noun of place, مَجْرَم, is 'a place where something is dragged or drawn', and this agrees logically with the basic meaning of

the idea of the root in Arabic. Both sets of meanings are thus logical developments of the meanings of the root in the respective languages, but there is only a loose connection between them.

ĠARRAF

ġorf: The meaning of the Maltese word *ġorf* is 'an enormous man', literally meaning 'like a *ġarfa* (precipice)'. The Arabic word جُرُف, given by Dessoulavy as the word of which he regards *ġorf* as the equivalent, means 'cliff, precipice'. The word جُرُف, which is the same as جُرُف, occurs in the Koran (9/110), also with the meaning of 'bank, precipice'. Thus, although the meaning of 'precipice' is common to both languages, the Arabic word has no hint of the Maltese figurative meaning referring to a man.

There is, however, a further possible connection, which might be mentioned, between the Maltese word *ġorf* and a different Arabic word, جُرُف, which means 'rude, rough, uncivil, boorish'. Is it too far-fetched to suppose that there may have been a change in the medial liquid letters ج and ر between the two languages, and a transference of meaning by association? – big men may be rough or boorish.

ĠEBEL

ġebel: The present meaning of the Maltese word *ġebel* is 'stone, rock'. The meaning of the Arabic word جَبَل is 'a mountain, big hill', and these are also the meanings which the word has in the Koran (2/262). We thus have not only an effective difference in the meanings in the respective languages, but there is also a difference in 'scale'.

It must be added that the word *ġebel* has a vestige of the meaning of 'hill, mountain' both in literature, and in certain place names, such as 'Ġebel Ciantar', 'Ciantar's Hill'.

ĠĪD

ġīd: The meaning of the Maltese word *ġīd* is 'good fortune, prosperity, wealth'. The meaning of the Arabic word جِدَّة is 'diligence, energy, effort, zeal'. Dessoulavy says that there has undoubtedly been some confusion with the Arabic adjective جَيِّد, meaning 'good, excellent' (which would give *ġīd*, just as the Arabic word سَيِّد, 'lord, master', gives *sīd*).

There is nevertheless a difference in meaning between *ġīd* and جِدَّة. Good fortune or prosperity implies a benefit to somebody which comes by circumstances of chance or out of his control, whereas the meanings

of جَدّ all imply strenuous and conscious effort on somebody's part, and although benefit of some sort may be implied, it is not guaranteed.

GILD

glūdi: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is identical, the words جِلْد / *gild* meaning 'skin, hide, leather'. The meaning of the Maltese word *glūdi* is 'like a skin, leathery'. Dessoulavy gives the Arabic word of which he thinks *glūdi* to be the equivalent as جَلْوِدِيّ, and this means 'a skinner, dealer in skins'. There might thus seem to be a difference in the meanings of two ostensibly equivalent words. The meaning 'like a skin, leathery' is the meaning of the relative adjective, and this word would be جِلْدِيّ in Arabic. In actual fact, *glūdi* is not the equivalent of جَلْوِدِيّ, but is effectively the equivalent of جِلْدِيّ, with a modification: it is a relative adjective formed from the plural noun *glūd*, the plural of *gild*, and not formed from the singular. Thus it is the form of the word which has changed in Maltese, while its meaning is exactly the same as that of the corresponding relative adjective in Arabic.

HEDDEM

heddem: The meaning of the Maltese form II verb *heddem* is 'to cook on a slow fire'. The nearest Arabic word to which it might be related is هَضَمَ I, meaning 'to digest food, to digest (food: stomach)'. The only connection between the two sets of meanings lies in the idea of food contained in both of them, but there the similarity ends. Moreover, the meaning of the Maltese word is connected with food before it is eaten, that of the Arabic word with food after it is eaten.

HEJM

hejjem: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'love'. The Arabic noun هَيْم means 'love', and the equivalent Maltese word *hejm* means 'affection'. هَيْم is the verbal noun of the form I verb هَامَ, meaning 'to fall in love with, be enamoured, love desperately'. The Maltese form II verb *hejjem* means 'to fondle, spoil (a person)', and it is usually used in a pejorative sense. The meaning of the Arabic form II verb هَيَّمَ is 'to bewilder a.o. (love), infatuate, captivate'. Although the meanings in both languages are connected with the idea of love, the Arabic meanings are concerned with love only in a 'spiritual' sense, whereas the Maltese meanings are of love with a physical element attached to it, and also with a pejorative connotation.

While there is the difference in meaning mentioned, it should also be noted that the meaning of the Maltese form II verb is closer to the meaning of the Arabic form I verb than to the form II verb. It is thus possible that we may have a further example of the transference of (approximate) meaning from one form in Arabic to another, different form in Maltese, possibly because of the loss of the form I verb in Maltese.

HA(D)

ittiehed: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is identical, the form I verbs *أَخَذَ*/*ha* meaning 'to take'. The Arabic form VIII verb *اِشْتَدَّ* means 'to take, take to oneself, take up, adopt', and it occurs in the Koran (2/110) with the same meanings. The equivalent Maltese word *ittiehed* VIII means 'to be taken'. The passive meaning of the Maltese word is not found in the Arabic word. We thus have another possible example of the transference of meaning from some other form in Arabic to form VIII in Maltese.

It may be noted, out of interest, that the common form of the passive verb would be VII in both languages. The Arabic verb *أُخِذَ* I, however, cannot occur in form VII, in which it would have the theoretical meaning of 'to be taken', as form VII does not occur in verbs which have *hamza* as their initial radical.

HAMEL

hamel: To a certain extent, the basic meaning of the root in both languages is closely related, and in some cases identical, but there is not a full equivalence of meaning. The Arabic verb *حَمَلَ* I means 'to carry, bear, support', and it occurs in the Koran (20/110) with these same meanings. The equivalent Maltese verb *hamel* I also means 'to bear'. However, the meaning of the Maltese verb implies bearing somebody in the sense of not liking him, but putting up with him: the form I verb has only this figurative meaning, and does not have the meaning of 'to carry'.

The idea of 'carrying', however, is contained in other words of the root, some of which agree in meaning entirely with the Arabic words of which they are the equivalents. *Hemel* means 'a load', and thus something carried, as does *حِمْل*: but it must be added that *hemel* means a load of a precise weight or quantity, and not just any load. *Hamla* means 'a torrent, torrential mass of water' (and as such something which carries things away with it?), as does *حَمَلَةٌ*.

hammel: The meaning of the Maltese verb *hammel* II is 'to clean out (chickens, rabbits)' (and thus to carry away the dirt?). The Arabic form II verb حَمَلَ means 'to charge, load, impose a burden upon', and occurs in the Koran (2/286) with these same meanings. There is here no direct relationship at all between the meanings in the two languages.

mahmul: The meaning of the Arabic word مَحْمُول, the passive participle of the form I verb (q.v. above), is 'borne, carried'. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese word *mahmul*, also the passive participle of the form I verb, is 'tolerated'. The meanings in the two languages are thus related but not identical, the meaning of each passive participle being a logical development of the meanings of the respective form I verbs.

HANEK

hanek: The Arabic word حَنَك means 'mouth, palate, lower jaw, part beneath the chin'. The equivalent Maltese word *hanek* means 'the gum'. While the meanings are thus very closely related, in that they refer to similar parts of the body, they are not identical in the two languages, the Maltese meaning being more specific and restrictive than the Arabic meaning.

HARB

mhareb: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'war'. The meaning of the Maltese word *mhareb* (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon), the passive participle of form III, is 'unfortunate, unhappy'. The Arabic word مُحَارَب, the passive participle of form III, means 'fought, contended with'. The Arabic form I verb حَرَب means 'to plunder', and the passive participle مَحْرُوب means 'plundered, deprived of one's possessions'. Dessoulavy gives مَحْرُوب as being comparable in meaning to *mhareb*, although it is obviously not comparable in form. Although there is no direct semantic connection between either of the Arabic words مُحَارَب and مَحْرُوب and the Maltese word *mhareb*, there could be said to be an association of ideas: somebody who has been fought or deprived of his possessions may indeed be unfortunate or unhappy.

HASEB

hasba: The basic meaning of the root in Maltese, and one of the basic meanings of the root in Arabic, are connected with the idea of 'thinking'. The meaning of the Maltese word *hasba* is 'a thought, intention', and Dessoulavy gives the Arabic word of which he regards it as the equivalent as حَسْبَة. However, حَسْبَة is the verbal noun of the form I

verb *ḥasaba*, meaning 'to compute, reckon', and thus *ḥasiba* means 'a sum, computation'. The Arabic word from which *ħaseb* I, 'to think', derives is *ħasiba* I, 'to think, suppose', which gives the simple noun *ħasb*, 'thinking, believing'. It is therefore possible that *ħasba* could be either a local Maltese formation, or it could be the equivalent of a possible Arabic unitary noun from *ħasaba*, namely *ħasiba*, or it could be an example of Maltese taking the verbal noun of one of two very similar Arabic verbs (indeed, identical in root), but differing only in their medial vowel.

ħsieb: *ħsieb* is the standard Maltese word for 'thought', rather than *ħasba* (q.v. above). The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent is *ħisab*, meaning 'reckoning, account, calculation', and it occurs in the Koran (13/40) with these same meanings. Again, therefore, as with *ħasba*, it would seem that Maltese has taken a word of the Arabic root meaning both 'to think' and 'to reckon', but has taken the Arabic word with a sense of 'reckoning' and adopted, or adapted, it in Maltese in the sense of 'thinking'.

HASS

ħhasses: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'feeling, perceiving'. The Arabic word *ħħassas* V means 'to listen to (news), seek for information, sense, perceive by the senses,' and it occurs in the Koran (12/87) with these same meanings. The equivalent Maltese word *ħħasses* V (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon) means 'to spy, listen clandestinely'. Although the meanings are closely related, and when one spies or listens clandestinely one is seeking for information, there is in the Maltese meaning a connotation not found in the Arabic meaning, namely that of the clandestine element. After all, a reporter or a researcher seeks for information, but neither is spying.

Dessoulavy adds the comment, *a propos* of *ħħasses*, that it may very likely have been influenced by the verb *ghhasses*. This form II verb means 'to look intently, spy', so there could indeed have been some influence. The Arabic form II verb *ħħassas* means 'to press, squeeze'. However, the form I verb *ħħass* means 'to keep night vigil, patrol by night', so there is a loose relationship between this meaning and that of *ghhasses*.

It is also of incidental interest to note, *a propos* of Dessoulavy's remark that *ħħasses* may have been influenced by *ghhasses*, that in Arabic *ħħass* may mean 'to feel' – the same meaning as *ħħass*.

HÂWI

hâwi: The meaning of the Arabic word **خَاوٍ**, the active participle of the form I verb **خَوَى** (q.v. below), is 'empty, void, wasted, in ruins', and in the Koran (2/261) it means 'ruined, collapsed'. The equivalent Maltese word *hâwi*, likewise the active participle of the form I verb *hewa*, is 'thin, scarce'. Although the meanings in the two languages are related, the Maltese meanings are less intensive than those in Arabic, and there would seem to have been an attenuation of emphasis between Arabic and Maltese.

hewa: The meaning of the Maltese form I verb *hewa* is 'to rarefy', and Dessoulavy gives it as the equivalent of the Arabic words **خَوَى** I or **أَخَوَى** IV. **خَوَى** I means 'to be ruined, be empty, be weak, feeble', and **أَخَوَى** IV means 'to be in ruins, be hungry, evacuate'. As with *hâwi*, (q.v. above), there seems to have been an attenuation of the meaning in Maltese: something rarefied, and thus made thin or scarce, is more attenuated in meaning than something being emptied or ruined, and thus made empty, void or in ruins.

The meaning of *hewa* is closer to the meaning of **أَخَوَى** IV than to that of **خَوَى** I. It is thus possible that we may have a further example of the transference of meaning (in this case similar, but not identical) from one form in Arabic to another, different form in Maltese. As we have seen previously, this is particularly so in the case of Arabic form IV verbs adopted by Maltese. These have to be adapted to a different form, usually form I.

HAZEN

hazîn: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'mourning, sadness'. But while the Maltese words *hazen* I (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon) means 'to mourn, put on mourning', and *hazna* means 'sadness', *hazîn* means 'bad'. The Arabic word of which *hazîn* is the equivalent, **حَزِين**, means 'sad'. There is thus not only a difference in meaning between **حَزِين** and *hazîn*, but *hazîn* has a different meaning from the other words of the Maltese root.

Dessoulavy says: 'On the semantics of bad = sad, cp. French "triste" and old use of English "sorry", perhaps influenced by **حَزِين**'.

HEREK

herek: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'moving'. Apart from the word *herek* I, all the other

Maltese words of the root, as well as the Arabic words of which they are the equivalents, are connected with this idea. *Herek*, however, (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon), means 'to rise early'. The Arabic word حَرَكَ I means 'to move, be in motion, get under way, get going'. Though the meanings in the two languages are related, even if somewhat tenuously, they are not identical. The Arabic meaning does not contain the idea of getting up – indeed, from the Arabic meaning, one must already be up – nor does it specifically relate to early in the morning.

JIES

jies: The meaning of the Arabic word يَاس is 'hope', whereas the meaning of the equivalent Maltese word *jies* is 'despair, hopelessness, despondency'. We thus have not only a change of meaning from one language to the other, but in fact a change from one meaning to another diametrically opposite to the original meaning: we have, in fact, an antonym.

It is interesting to note, however, that the word *jies* is used in Maltese almost exclusively in a 'negative' context in the sense of absence of hope, e.g. *qata' jiesu*, 'he gave up hope', *bla jies*, 'without hope'. In this 'negative' context, therefore, the idea behind the word does resemble more the idea of the meaning of the Arabic word.

KARBA

karba: The meaning of the Maltese word *karba* is 'a groan'. The meaning of the Arabic word كَرَبَ, to which *karba* is similar but not identical, is 'anguish, moan, groan, lamentation'. Although the meanings in the two languages are closely related, and indeed 'groan' figures in both, there is a difference between them. The Maltese word is used mainly in the sense of a groan resulting from physical pain, and not resulting from mental pain, as is implied in the Arabic meanings, although both indicate a facet of the same idea.

korob: The meaning of the Maltese form I verb *korob* is 'to groan', whereas the meaning of the Arabic form I verb كَرَبَ is 'to complain, lament, bewail'. As was remarked under *karba* (q.v. above), the Maltese word is used mainly in the sense of groaning as a result of physical pain, the Arabic meanings imply distress resulting from mental pain.

LAQAGH

milqghi: (It must be noted immediately that the Maltese root *l-q-gh* corresponds to the Arabic root ل-ق-ى, the final ي in Arabic having

become an *gh* in Maltese). The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'meeting'. The Arabic word مُلْقَى is the passive participle of the form IV verb أَلَقَى. أَلَقَى means 'to throw, discard, cast, replace', and مُلْقَى, in addition to its participial meanings, means also 'tried by misfortune, (in)auspicious, good/bad man': these meanings tend to branch away from the basic idea of the root. The Maltese word *milqghi*, likewise the passive participle of form IV, means 'civil, mannerly, well-bred, well received', and some of these meanings also branch away from the basic idea of the root, only the meaning 'well received' tying in logically with the basic idea of 'meeting'. Although there is a relationship between 'civil, mannerly' and 'a good man', the meanings in the two languages are not identical.

There is a further comment which might be made about the word *milqghi*. It occurs only in the place-name 'San Pawl Milqghi', not being used in any other way as an adjective. In its meaning of 'well received', it could refer to the reception which St. Paul was accorded by the Maltese when he was shipwrecked on the island. Or would it be too far-fetched to suggest that the word *milqghi* could refer to the trying by misfortune of St. Paul when he found himself forcibly landed in Malta, having been shipwrecked? If this were so, then *milqghi* would have a meaning identical to that of مُلْقَى.

LBIES

iltibes: The basic meaning of the root in Maltese, and the primary basic meaning of the root in Arabic, are connected with the idea of 'clothing'. All the words in Maltese of this root are connected with this idea, and all except *iltibes* VIII agree entirely in meaning with the Arabic words of which they are the equivalents. *Iltibes* VIII means 'to be dressed', and this fits in logically with the idea of the root. The Arabic word التَّبَسُّ VIII, however, means 'to be confused, ambiguous, to be occupied with, get mixed up', and there is thus no connection between this meaning and the Maltese meaning.

It must be added, however, that whereas the form I verb لَبَسَ in Arabic means 'to clothe oneself, to put on (clothes)', the form I verb لَبَسَ, with medial *fatha* as distinct from medial *kasra*, means 'to confuse, render dubious'. التَّبَسُّ is thus the form VIII derivative of لَبَسَ, and not of لَبَسَ. The meaning connected with 'doubt' is not found in the idea of the Maltese root, and thus *iltibes* could be a purely local Maltese formation when connected with the idea of 'clothing'.

LEWA

milwa: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'twisting, turning'. The Maltese word *milwa* means 'a skein, a thing which is twisted'. (It is now obsolete with these meanings, but is recorded by Falzon). The meaning of one of the Arabic words of which *milwa* could be the equivalent, **مِلْوَة**, is 'a capstan, windlass', and of the other, **مِلْوِي**, 'a windlass, capstan, wrench, spanner, peg of musical instruments'. The meanings in the two languages are not identical, although there is a close relationship between them. This is particularly so in the respective meanings 'a skein' and 'a windlass, capstan', in that both are concerned with having something twisted round them, thread in the former and rope in the latter case.

It should be added that the word *milwa* is now used in Maltese only in the expression *milwa zalzet*, 'a link of sausage' – and sausage is something which is rolled.

LEWLU

lewlu: The meaning of the Arabic word **لَوْلُو** is 'pearl(s)', whereas the meaning of the equivalent Maltese word *lewlu* is 'small beads'. While there is a relationship between the meanings in the two languages, they are not identical, the Arabic word denoting a more precious object than the Maltese word.

Is it possible that geographical reasons may have accounted for the change of meaning? Pearls would be familiar objects to the Arabs, particularly since there were pearl fisheries in the Persian Gulf, whereas they would not be nearly as familiar to the Maltese, while beads would.

MAQQAT

maqqt: The meaning of the Maltese form II verb *maqqt* is 'to ill-treat'. *Maqqat* is similar – though perhaps not identical – to the Arabic word **مَقَّت** II, meaning 'to hate, render hateful, detest, loathe, abhor'. Although there is a connection between the meanings in the two languages, there is an interesting difference: the relationship between the respective meanings seems to resemble rather one of 'cause and effect' than being identical. If somebody ill-treats somebody else (the 'cause'), the latter will then presumably hate and detest the person doing the ill-treating (the 'effect').

mqît: The meaning of the Maltese word *mqîl* is 'harsh, ill-tempered, sullen', while the meaning of the Arabic word **مَقِيَّت** is 'hated, loathsome, detestable'. Both agree logically with the basic meanings in the res-

pective languages, but once again the comments about 'cause and effect' (q.v. above) apply equally here: if somebody is harsh or ill-tempered to somebody else (the 'cause') he will then be loathsome to or hated by the person to whom he was harsh (the 'effect'). However, the Arabic word مَقِيْت also means 'parsimonious, mean': these meanings resemble the 'cause' themselves, rather than the 'effect', and are correspondingly closer to the meaning in Maltese.

MAR

mar: The Maltese form I verb *mar* means 'to go', and Dessoulavy gives as the Arabic words of which it is the equivalent either مَرَّ I or مَارَ I. مَرَّ means 'to elapse (time), pass, cross, proceed, go', and in the Koran (2/261) it means 'to pass'. مَارَ means 'to be in commotion (sea), move to and fro, move, undulate', and in the Koran (52/9) it has the more intensive meaning of 'to spin, heave, shake, be convulsed'. Thus, although *mar* resembles more مَارَ in form, it resembles more مَرَّ in meaning. While both مَرَّ and مَارَ are connected with the idea of motion, there is one observation which may be made *a propos* of the comparison of the meaning between the Maltese and Arabic words. *Mar* implies that an animate subject is necessary, as does مَرَّ in its more common meanings: مَارَ implies an inanimate subject.

The verb *mar* is of mixed conjugation in Maltese, in some parts conjugating as a hollow verb and in others as a doubled verb. It would seem that it does, in fact, derive from مَرَّ, but has been influenced by مَارَ. This will become more apparent under *mawra* (q.v. below).

mawra: The Maltese word *mawra* means 'a walk', and may be regarded as the unitary form of the verbal noun of the form I verb *mar*. The Arabic word to which it is comparable, مَوْر, the verbal noun of the form I verb مَارَ, means 'commotion, tossing of waves'. The word مَوْر occurs in the Koran (52/9), but only as a مَفْعُولٌ مُطْلَقٌ (absolute object) of the verb مَارَ in the expression يَوْمَ تَمُوزُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا, 'on the day when the heavens shall shake' or 'shall spin dizzily'.

The verbal noun of the form I verb مَرَّ would be مَرَّة or مُرُور. It would thus seem once again that *mawra* is derived from مَرَّ, but has been influenced by مَوْر, which it resembles in form, even though it is not particularly close in meaning. And, as was remarked in connection with *mar* (q.v. above), *mawra* and مَرَّة would both imply the necessity (or, in the case of مَرَّة, the more usual necessity) of an animate association, while مَوْر implies an inanimate association.

MEXA

mexxej: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'walking', the form I verbs مَشَى / *mexa* both meaning 'to walk'. The most common meaning of the Maltese word *mexxej*, ostensibly the intensive active participle of *mexa* I, is 'a leader, guide'. The Arabic word مَشَّاهٍ, the intensive active participle of مَشَى I, and the word of which Dessoulavy gives *mexxej* as the equivalent, means 'a good walker' (and also 'a slanderer', which is the meaning it has in the Koran (68/11), but this is irrelevant here). While there is a relationship between the meanings in the two languages, they are not absolutely identical. Admittedly, a guide may be a good walker, but the Arabic meaning would seem to be closer to the idea of the meaning of the form I verb.

There are, however, two additional remarks which must be made. First, although the word *mexxej* is most commonly used with the meaning of 'a leader, guide' (not only in the context of walking, but also in the context of, for example, a political party), it does occur also in the physical context of good walking, but not very frequently. It occurs also in a similar associated sense in an expression such as *qal dan bi kliem mexxej*, 'he said this in fluent words', in the sense of "good walking" words'.

Second, although Dessoulavy gives مَشَّاهٍ as the Arabic word of which he regards *mexxej* as the equivalent, this may perhaps not necessarily be the case. Whereas مَشَّاهٍ is the intensive active participle of مَشَى I, *mexxej*, though apparently identical in form, may be a local formation of an active participle of the form II verb *mexxa* (cp. **DAHAK** (*dahhiék*)). This verb means 'to lead, guide, govern', and hence *mexxej*, as 'leader, guide', has an absolutely logical meaning. The Arabic form II verb مَشَّاهٍ means 'to make to walk, go, to promote (an affair), to adopt, adjust, to move'.

MULEJ

Mulej: The meaning of the Arabic word مَوْلَى is 'lord, master, friend, companion, ally, follower', and in the Koran (47/12) it means 'patron, protector, master'. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese word *Mulej* is 'Lord'. There are two comments which must be made about the difference in the meanings of this word between Arabic and Maltese. First, the Maltese meaning 'Lord' refers specifically and exclusively to God: the Arabic meaning 'lord', on the other hand, has a purely temporal signification. Second, the various shades of meaning of the

Arabic word themselves cover a full range, from 'lord, master' (with a sense of domination), through 'friend, companion, ally' (with a sense of equality), to 'follower' (with a sense of subservience). In this last shade of meaning we get a complete opposition of meaning between 'Lord' (in Maltese) and 'follower' (in Arabic).

NAM

newwem: (It must be noted immediately that the form II verb *newwem* is now obsolete in Maltese with this spelling, although it is recorded by both Falzon and Caruana. It exists at the present time as either *newnem* or *nemnem*). The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'sleeping', the form I verb نَامَ /*nam* meaning 'to sleep', while نَامَ also means 'to die, abate (wind, sea), be extinguished (fire), (become) calm'. The meaning of the Arabic form II verb نَوَّمَ is 'to make asleep, lull, put to bed, benumb, torpify', and these are exactly the meanings one would expect of the causative form II. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese form II verb *newwem* is 'to be weak (of a fire, light)', and bears no direct relationship to the meaning of the Arabic word. However, although the Maltese meaning is connected with the idea of the root, one would expect such a meaning to be that of the root form itself (with which meaning there is an almost identical one in the Arabic root form, 'to be extinguished (fire)'): or, conversely, one would expect the meaning of *newwem* II to be causative or intensive, rather than just stative, as it is. *Newwem* has therefore most probably been given a purely local meaning.

NEWWEL

tnewwel: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'giving, handing over'. The meaning of the Arabic form V verb تَوَوَّلَ is 'to take, reach with the hand'. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese word *tnewwel* V is 'to be handed, presented'. Although the meanings in the two languages are closely related, there is a distinct difference between them: being handed or presented with something is not the same as taking it.

NIFS

minfes: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'breath'. The Maltese word *minfes*, (which is used almost exclusively in the dual), means 'a nostril'. The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent مَنْفَسٌ, means 'an air-hole, ventilator'. While there is an absolutely logical connection between the meanings in the

two languages, the Maltese meaning is more specific: the nose is an air hole or ventilator, but the Arabic word does not specifically mean 'nostril', at all.

GHAD

ghad: The meaning of the Maltese verb *ghad* I is 'to say'. The meaning of the Arabic verb of which it is the equivalent, **قَالَ** I, is 'to repeat, return, resume, be wont to', and it occurs in the Koran (2/276 and 36/39) with these same meanings. The meaning of *ghad* as 'to say' must therefore be one which Maltese had adopted for itself.

mgħawwed and **tagħwîd:** The meaning of the Maltese verb *ghawwed* II is 'to repeat, do again'. The meaning of *mgħawwed*, the passive participle of form II, is 'done over again', and of *tagħwîd*, the verbal noun of form II, 'a repetition'. Both these meanings tie in logically with the meaning of the form II verb from which they derive. The meaning of the Arabic passive participle of form II, **مُعَوَّد**, is 'accustomed, trained, used, conditioned', and of the verbal noun of form II, **تَعْوِيد**, 'accustoming, habituation'. **عَوَّيَ** II in Arabic means 'to train, accustom', and thus likewise in Arabic the meanings of the words derived from form II tie in with the meaning of the form II verb. But while there is a connection in the ideas of the respective words in the two languages, the meanings are not the same. The idea of 'repeating', which is found explicitly in *ghawwed*, although it may be said to be contained implicitly in **عَوَّيَ** II, is found basically in the Arabic words **قَالَ** I and **أَعَارَ** IV, so that in this respect the meanings of the Maltese words tie in with the basic idea of the Arabic root. It is possible, therefore, that there may have been a partial transference of meaning from one form in Arabic to another, different form in Maltese. This could be accounted for, as we have seen previously, by the fact that form IV in Maltese is almost non-existent, and meanings associated with form IV in Arabic may have had to transfer to another, different form in Maltese.

GHADİR

ghdîr: The basic meaning of the root in Arabic is connected with the idea of 'excusing', and in Maltese of 'excusing, pitying'. The meaning of the Maltese word *ghdîr* (given by Falzon with this spelling) is 'compassion', whereas the meaning of the Arabic word to which it is comparable, **عِدَار**, is 'bashfulness, modesty, chastity'. Although there may be a tenuous relationship between the meanings in the two languages, they are not the same.

GHAGĠEB

tagħġib: The basic meaning of the root in both languages, and also of the Arabic root in the Koran, is connected with the idea of 'wonder'. The meaning of the Maltese word *tagħġib*, the verbal noun of form II, is 'astonishment'. The meaning of the Arabic verbal noun of form II *تَعْجِيب*, of which *tagħġib* is the equivalent, is 'arousing of admiration, act of causing astonishment'. There is thus a slight difference in the meanings. The Arabic meaning is rightly that of the causative form II, whereas the meaning of the Maltese word is rather that which would be associated with the verbal noun of form I, it being the 'effect' rather than the 'cause'.

GHAJB

ghajjeb: The basic meaning of the simple noun in both languages is identical, the Arabic word *عَيْب* meaning 'shame, disgrace, vice, fault, defect', and the equivalent Maltese word *ghajb* meaning 'shame, dishonour'. The two words in Maltese which are derived from the root both show a slight change of meaning, and an attenuation of the meaning between Arabic and Maltese. The Arabic verb *عَيَّب* II means 'to shame, stigmatise, censure, condemn, disgrace, dishonour'. The equivalent Maltese verb *ghajjeb* II means 'to mock, make faces at'. We thus see that, while there is a connection between the meanings in the two languages, not only has there been an attenuation of meaning between Arabic and Maltese, but also an attenuation within Maltese itself.

ghajjieb: The meaning of the Maltese word *ghajjieb*, ostensibly the intensive active participle of the form I verb, is 'a mocker'. The meaning of the Arabic word *عَيَّاب*, the intensive active participle of the form I verb, and the word of which *ghajjieb* is ostensibly the equivalent, is 'a censor, criticizer, given to fault-finding'. There is thus, once again, an attenuation of the meaning of the Maltese word, which, though related, is not identical in meaning to the Arabic word.

It must be asked, however, if *ghajjieb* is, in fact, the equivalent of *عَيَّاب*. The form I verb, of which *ghajjieb* is ostensibly the intensive active participle, no longer exists in Maltese, if indeed it ever did exist. It is possible that *ghajjieb* may be a local Maltese formation of an active participle of the form II verb *ghajjeb* (cp. **DAHAK** (*dahhiek*) and **MEXA** (*mexxej*)), and not of a theoretical form I verb. If this should be so, its meaning would be absolutely logical as a derivative of *ghajjeb* II.

GHALEB

mghalleb: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is identical, the form I verbs *غَلَبَ* /*ghaleb* meaning 'to vanquish, overcome,' and the Arabic word has these same meanings in the Koran (2/250). The meaning of the Arabic word *مُعَلَّب*, the passive participle of form II, is 'vanquished, overcome'. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese passive participle of form II, *mghalleb*, is 'made thin, emaciated'. Although there is no direct relationship between the meanings in the two languages, there is perhaps an indirect association: those who are defeated may suffer hard times at the hands of the conquerors and become emaciated, while the conquerors may exploit and get fat on the conquered.

gholob: The meaning of the Maltese word *gholob* is 'to grow thin'. The meaning of the Arabic word *غَلَبَ* I, as remarked above, is 'to overcome, vanquish, dominate'. The Maltese word *gholob* corresponds to the Arabic word *غُلِبَ*, the passive of form I. While the meanings in the two languages do not directly agree, there is an indirect association of meanings, for reasons similar to those given under **mghalleb** (q.v. above).

There are some further observations which might be made about the Maltese words *mghalleb* and *gholob*. The word *gholob*, with its local Maltese meaning of 'to grow thin', could give rise to the local Maltese formation of the theoretical causative form II verb *ghalleb*, meaning 'to make thin', whence there is *mghalleb* with its meaning of 'made thin, emaciated'. This would also give rise to the further interesting situation whereby *ghaleb*, 'to vanquish, conquer', goes from the active in form I to the passive in form VII, *inghaleb*, identical to Arabic *انْغَلَبَ* VII in both form and meaning, meaning 'to be overcome'. *Gholob*, on the other hand, would go from the passive (or, more accurately, the stative) in form I, 'to grow thin', to the active in the theoretical form II verb *ghalleb*, 'to make thin'.

GHALLIEM

ghalliem: The basic meaning of the root in both languages, and of the Arabic root also in the Koran, is connected with the idea of 'knowing', and then, in the causative derivatives, of 'teaching'. The Maltese word *ghalliem* means 'a teacher', and is ostensibly the intensive active participle of the form I verb. The Arabic word to which *ghalliem* is ostensibly equivalent in form is *عَلَّمَ*, genuinely the intensive active

participle of the form I verb, and it means 'knower, thoroughly learned, omniscient', and in the Koran (5/108) it means 'knower'. The form I verbs عَلِمَ /*ghalem* (recorded by Falzon) mean 'to know'. Thus not only is there a difference in the two languages between the meanings of عَلِمَ and *ghalliem*, but whereas the meaning of the Arabic word fits in logically with the form of the word, the meaning of the Maltese word, regarding *ghalliem* as the intensive active participle of form I, does not. The idea of 'teaching' is associated with the form II verb and its associated words, as in عَلَّمَ /*ghallem*, 'to teach', مُعَلِّم /*mghallem*, the active participle, 'a teacher', and تَعْلِيم /*taghlîm*, the verbal noun, 'instruction'. The Maltese word *ghalliem* thus really has the meaning of an active participle of the form II verb.

It is possible, however, that this may indeed be what the word really is. *Ghalliem* may be a local Maltese formation of an active participle of the form II verb *ghallem* (cp. **DAHAK** (*dahhiek*), **MEXA** (*mexxej*) and **GHAJB** (*ghajjieb*)). As such, its meaning would be absolutely logical.

GHAN

ghan: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'helping'. The meaning of the Maltese verb *ghan* I is 'to help'. This meaning is the equivalent of that of the form IV verb in Arabic, أَعَانَ, which occurs in the Koran (25/5) with the same meaning. We thus have another example of the transference of meaning from one form in Arabic to another, different form in Maltese.

The reason for the transference of meaning from Arabic form IV to a different form in Maltese may be that which has been given several times previously in this article.

GHATI

ta: The basic meaning of the root in both languages, and of the Arabic root in the Koran, is connected with the idea of 'giving'. The meaning of the Maltese root *ta* I is 'to give'. This meaning is the equivalent of that of the form IV verb in Arabic, أَعْطَى. Once again we have an example of the transference of meaning from one form in Arabic – in this case, form IV – to another, different form in Maltese, possibly for the reasons given previously.

QABBAS

qabbas: The Maltese word *qabs* means 'fuel, wood', and it is the equivalent of the Arabic word قَبَس, meaning 'brand, firebrand, live coal'.

The Maltese denominative verb *qabbas* II means 'to set on fire'. Arabic does not have a form II verb of this root, so the Maltese word must be a local formation. Arabic does have the form I verb *قَبَسَ*, meaning 'to obtain fire (from)'. Though there is a close relationship between the meanings of *qabbas* and *قَبَسَ*, they are not identical, and may be regarded as being opposite in effect: the Maltese meaning is 'to set on fire', while the Arabic meaning is 'to obtain fire (from)'.

QADD

qadd: The meaning of the Arabic word *قَدَّ* is 'size of the body, measure, proportion, figure, shape'. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese word *qadd* is 'the waist'. Although there is a close relationship between the meanings in the two languages, they are not identical: the Maltese meaning is more specific and restrictive than the Arabic meaning, relating to one particular part of the body, rather than the body or figure in general.

QAL

qwiel: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'saying', the form I verbs *قَالَ/قال* meaning 'to say'. The meaning of the Maltese word *qwiel*, which is properly the plural of *qawl*, the verbal noun of *qal* I, is 'a proverb, utterance, saying'. The Arabic word to which it corresponds is *أَقْوَال*, the plural of *قَوْل*, likewise the verbal noun of *قال* I. *قَوْل* means 'a saying, speech, declaration, statement, report', and occurs in the Koran (37/30) with the same meanings. The Maltese singular noun *qawl*, the equivalent of *قَوْل*, likewise means 'a talk', but generally of a proverbial nature in the sense of a short, pithy saying, and not in the general sense of 'a speech, talk', as does *قَوْل* in Arabic. However, while *qwiel* means 'a proverb', the word *قَوْل* pl. *أَقْوَال* does not tend to have this meaning by itself: such a meaning may be rendered by the qualified noun, as *قَوْلٌ مَّأثورٌ*, 'a proverbial saying, aphorism'. Maltese has dropped the qualificative, and given the specific meaning to the noun by itself.

QALL

qilla: The meaning of the Maltese word *qilla* is 'fierceness, severeness'. Arabic words to which it is similar are *قَلَّ* and *قَلَّةٌ*, both meaning 'a shiver, shudder, trembling'. Although there is a certain resemblance in the meanings in the two languages, they are by no means identical. It might be suggested that there is almost a resemblance to 'cause and

effect' in the respective meanings: fierceness (the Maltese meaning, and the 'cause') on the part of some creature may lead to trembling (the Arabic meaning, and the 'effect') on the part of another.

QARAH

qierah: The basic meaning of the root in both languages, and of the Arabic root in the Koran, is connected with the idea of 'wounding'. The Maltese form I verb *qarah* means 'to flay, wound', and the Arabic form I verb of which it is the equivalent, قَرَحَ, means 'to wound, cut'. The meaning of the Maltese word *qierah*, the active participle of *qarah*, is 'inclement, bad', used only to describe the weather. The meaning of the Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, قَارِحٌ, the active participle of قَرَحَ, in addition to its straightforward participial meanings, is 'subtle, cunning, experienced, astute'. In the meaning of the word *qierah* there would therefore seem to have been an attenuation and change of meaning not only between Arabic and Maltese, but also within Maltese itself. The meaning of the participle *qierah* is quite some way removed, although indirectly related, from the idea of the meaning of the verb *qarah*.

It is of interest to note a usage in English coincidentally similar to the Maltese usage, in that one refers at times to 'piercing cold'.

QARIB

mqâreb: The basic meaning of the root in both languages, and of the Arabic root in the Koran, is connected with the idea of 'nearness'. The Maltese word *mqâreb* is the active participle of a form III verb which no longer exists, if indeed it ever did, and it means 'troublesome'. The Arabic form III verb قَارَبَ means 'to be the neighbour of, be approximate to, speak kindly to'. The active participle مُقَارِبٌ, to which *mqâreb* is equivalent, in addition to its straightforward participial meanings, means also 'average, mean, middling, bad, wicked'. We thus have an interesting contrast of meanings within Arabic itself, between 'to be the neighbour of, speak kindly to', and 'bad, wicked'. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the meaning of the Maltese word *mqâreb* should be similar to the more unpleasant of the Arabic meanings, but at the same time tending to attenuate it. Certainly the meaning 'troublesome' is out of place when compared with the meanings of the other Maltese words of the root, all of which are connected with the idea of 'nearness' in one way or another.

QASSAT

qassat: The form II verbs *قَسَّط*/*qassat* in both languages mean 'to distribute'. However, in Maltese, the word *qassat* is used only in connection with saying the rosary: the idea of 'distributing' is implicit here inasmuch as, in telling one's beads when praying, one is moving them one by one through one's fingers. The Maltese meaning does therefore differ from the meaning of the Arabic word inasmuch as it has acquired a local specialized meaning.

QIRRA

qirra: The meaning of the Maltese word *qirra* is 'excessive cold, frost'. The meaning of the Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, *قِرَّة*, is 'coolness, chill, cold, bad weather'. Although there is a very close relationship between the meanings in the two languages, they are not identical. The Maltese meaning is perhaps a little more precise than that in Arabic, and at the same time it implies a greater degree of cold – one might almost say the Maltese meaning is more intense.

This example is therefore interesting in that it runs counter to the general tendency of an attenuation of the meaning (when there may be a change) between that of the Arabic word and that of the Maltese word.

RADAGH

reddiegha: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'sucking, suckling', the form I verbs *رَضَعَ*/*rada* meaning 'to suck the breast'. The meaning of the Maltese word *reddiegha*, (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon), is 'a wet nurse'. An Arabic word to which *reddiegha* is similar, *رَضُوعَة*, means '(female) that suckles its young'. The words in the two languages are not identical, but they are close enough to be loosely comparable. It is therefore interesting to note that, while they are so closely related in the idea of the meaning, the actual meanings in the two languages are in some ways opposed. The Arabic meaning refers to a female that suckles its own young, whereas the Maltese meaning of 'a wet nurse' implies a female that does the suckling for another's young – and thereby, by inference, the mother of that offspring does not suckle her own young.

It is possible that the Maltese word *reddiegha* could, however, be regarded as a type of noun of profession, meaning 'a suckler, one who gives suck': as such it could therefore refer not only to a wet nurse but also to a creature which suckles its own young, and it would then agree entirely with the meaning in Arabic.

RADDAD

raddad: The meaning of the Maltese word *raddad* II is 'to caress'. There is no Arabic word with the same meaning to which *raddad* may be equivalent, but there are two roots which Dessoulavy suggests as being comparable, both of which may bear an approximate similarity by association. The verbs رَضَّ I and رَضَّ II both mean 'to bruise, crush, break coarsely'. The similarity lies in the idea of physical contact, but if there is any direct derivation of *raddad* from رَضَّ, then there has been a considerable attenuation of meaning, as well as a certain change.

There is also the Arabic verb رَضِيَ I, meaning 'to be pleased with, take pleasure in, approve'. However, the idea of any derivation of *raddad* from رَضِيَ, or even any link between them, must surely be too far-fetched.

Either the derivation of *raddad* must be from رَضَّ II, although with a considerably modified meaning, or the Maltese word may have formed a purely local meaning.

RAJJEB

rajjeb: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'doubt', رَجِبَ/*rajb* meaning 'doubt', the Arabic word having this meaning also in the Koran (2/21). The meaning of the Maltese word *rajjeb* is 'contentious, wrangling, litigious'. Dessoulavy gives رَجِبَ II as an Arabic word to which *rajjeb* may be similar, (although رَجِبَ is a verb, whereas *rajjeb* is not), meaning 'to tire, make to doubt, destroy'. Although the meanings in the two languages are not directly related, there is perhaps a connection between them. This connection may perhaps be better seen in the Arabic verb رَاى I, which means 'to cause doubt, suspicion to'. The connection may be tenuous and a little far-fetched, but the idea of doubt and suspicion is connected with the idea of going to law – and hence being contentious or litigious.

The active participle of رَاى is رَائِبٌ, and the Maltese word *rajjeb* would, in fact, seem to resemble this participial form more closely than it does the verb رَجِبَ.

RANDAN

randan: The meaning of the Maltese word *randan* is 'Lent'. The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent is رَمَضَانَ, meaning 'Ramaḍān, ninth Arabian month, fasting-month', and in the Koran (2/181) it means 'Ra-

maḍān'. Although the idea behind the meaning of the word is exactly the same in both languages, it referring to a period of fasting, the actual meaning itself is not identical. The change in meaning between Arabic and Maltese was no doubt brought about by the religious difference between the Arabs and the Maltese. The Arabic word refers to a period of the Muslim year, whereas the word in Maltese has been adopted, but is used to apply to a season of the Christian year.

It is of incidental interest to note that the standard Arabic term for the Christian season of Lent is الصَّوْمُ الْكَبِيرُ , 'the great fast'.

RAQA

raqa: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'curing'. The Maltese word *raqa* I means 'to cure, to cure jaundice'. The Arabic form I verb to which it is equivalent, رَقَى, means 'to cure by magic, give a charm to, enchant, use magic'. Although the idea of 'curing' is common to the meaning in both languages, the Maltese meaning in part contains a more specific sense, in that it partly refers to the curing of a specific ailment. It also differs from the Arabic meaning in that it does not have the idea of employing magic or charms to assist in the cure, as is the case with the Arabic word. This does not, however, exclude the possibility that, in Maltese folklore, jaundice may originally have been thought to be cured by a magic formula: in time the idea of associated magic may have fallen into disuse, leaving only the simple present meaning of 'to cure, to cure jaundice'.

mirqi: The Maltese word *mirqi* is the passive participle of the form I verb *raqa*, and means 'cured, cured of jaundice'. It is the equivalent of the Arabic word مَرْقُوقٌ, the passive participle of رَقَى I, meaning 'cured by magic, charmed, bewitched'. The remarks about difference in the meanings in the two languages made under **raqa** (q.v. above) apply equally here.

riqi: The meaning of the Maltese word *riqi*, the verbal noun of *raqa*, is 'a cure'. The meaning of the Arabic words to which it is equivalent, رُقَى and رُقُوقٌ, both verbal nouns of رَقَى, is 'a cure, cure by magic, charm, enchanting'. Once again, the remarks about differences in the meanings in the two languages made under **raqa** (q.v. above) apply equally here.

REMA

rema: The basic meaning of the root in Arabic is connected with the idea

of 'throwing', رَمَى I meaning 'to throw', and it has this same meaning in the Koran (8/17). The basic meaning of the root in Maltese is partly very similar, *rema* I, the equivalent of رَمَى, meaning 'to throw away', as distinct from simply 'to throw'. However, the Maltese root contains another meaning, quite lacking in Arabic, connected with the idea of 'aborting', and *rema* also means 'to abort (animal)'. Possible explanations as to why the Maltese root should have this latter meaning are given under *riemi* (q.v. below).

riemi: The meaning of the Maltese word *riemi*, the active participle of *rema*, means 'born before its time, abortive'. (This word is now obsolete, but is recorded by Falzon). The Arabic word to which it is equivalent, رَامٍ, the active participle of رَمَى, means 'throwing, thrower, marksman, calumiator, liar'. There is thus no connection at all between the meaning of the Arabic word and the specialized meaning of the equivalent Maltese word, although *riemi* in part, and the other Maltese words of the root which are common with Arabic words, do have related meanings, all connected with the idea of 'throwing'.

There are two possible ways, which may be suggested, in which the Maltese root may have come to have the specialized meaning connected with 'aborting'. First, one refers at times to some opportunity being thrown away or one's efforts being thrown away or wasted: in this case, the thing that one was doing would be unsuccessful, and hence abortive. (One particularly talks in English about an attempt which has been wasted or unsuccessful as being 'abortive'). Second, in the biological sense, if a female animal has a miscarriage and loses its foetus, the foetus may be regarded as being thrown or cast away: such an occurrence would be an abortion. This line of argument is supported by the word *terah*. The Arabic verb طَرَحَ I means 'to fling, throw, cast away'. The equivalent Maltese verb *terah* I means 'to throw, cast (offspring)', where we get the connection of ideas.

Dessoulavy also draws attention to the Arabic word رَمَعَ II, which means 'to abort'. It is possible that this Arabic root may have influenced the Maltese root in meaning, although not in form. An equivalent form I verb in Maltese would be *rema'*, and the active participle of a form I verb with *gh* as final radical, as would be the case here, would be *riema'*, and not *riemi* (cp. *tela'* - *tiela'*).

SABB

sabb: The Arabic form I verb صَبَّ means 'to pour out, be poured (liquid)', and it occurs in the Koran (89/12) meaning 'to pour'. One of its verbal

nouns is صَبَّ. The Maltese word *sabb*, presumably the equivalent of صَبَّ, has as one of its meanings 'a pouring', and in this respect agrees entirely with صَبَّ. However, *sabb* has also a specialized meaning, that of 'diarrhoea, dysentery', presumably by association with the idea of something pouring out. This shade of meaning is completely lacking in the Arabic word, and must be a local Maltese meaning only.

It is of interest to note that one of the meanings of the Arabic form I verb صَابَ is 'to pour': Maltese has *sawwab* II, meaning 'to pour out, empty'. It is therefore possible that there may have been some influence between *sawwab* and *sabb*.

SAJD

sajjied: The basic meaning of the root in Arabic is connected with the idea of 'hunting, fishing', and in Maltese of 'fishing' only. The Maltese word *sajjied* means 'a fisherman'. It is the equivalent of the Arabic word صَيَّار, which means 'hunter, fisherman, shooter, sportsman', صَيَّار being the intensive active participle of the form I verb صَادَ, which means 'to hunt, chase, fish'. Although the Maltese meaning is therefore identical to one of the Arabic meanings, it is not identical in full. Maltese has now restricted the meaning to the idea of 'fishing' only, and dropped the idea connected with 'hunting'. This restriction of the original Arabic meaning may be accounted for by geographical reasons: Malta probably offered no opportunity for hunting animals, whereas, being an island, it provided ample opportunity for fishing.

It is of interest to note, however, that the original meaning of *sajjied* as 'hunter' still exists in the term *qattus sajjied*, literally 'a hunter cat', in the sense of 'a cat which catches mice', rather than one which is not a mouser.

msida: The meaning of the Maltese word *msida* is 'a fish-pond, fishing-place'. The meaning of the Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, مَصِيدَةٌ, is 'net, snare, trap'. Although the ideas behind the meanings in the two languages are closely related, there is an interesting difference in the respective meanings: the Maltese word *msida* has the meaning of a mimated noun of place (the place where fishing is done), while the Arabic word مَصِيدَةٌ has the meaning rather of a mimated noun of instrument (the thing with which fishing is done).

It should be pointed out that the word *msida* had lost its lexical context, and was revived in literature by Prof. P.P. Saydon. For all practical purposes the word is now used only in the place-name 'Msida', and its meaning is probably purely local.

SAR

sajjar: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'becoming', the form I verbs *صَارَ* /*sar* meaning 'to become'. *صَارَ* occurs in the Koran (42/53), but with the meaning of 'to trend, reach, come home'. The meaning of the Maltese word *sajjar* II is 'to cook'. The meaning of the Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, *صَيَّرَ* II, is primarily 'to render a.o. a.th. such, make, render, cause to be/become'. These are the meanings one would expect of the causative form II. The word *صَيَّرَ*, however, also means 'to pickle'. There is thus a connection between the Maltese meaning and one of the Arabic meanings, although there is a difference between them. It is of interest to note that Maltese should have adopted and adapted the secondary meaning of the Arabic word to which it is equivalent, while not adopting the primary one.

There is a further observation which must be made. In Maltese the form I verb *sar* can also mean 'to be cooked to perfection, arrive at the point of perfection in cooking'. Thus the meaning of *sajjar* II is a logical development of the meaning of *sar* I. The outstanding question thus raised is how did the idea of 'cooking' come to be included in the form I verb *sar*? It could not have been influenced by the Arabic word *صَارَ*, as *صَارَ* contains no such idea. Is it possible that the modified meaning of *صَيَّرَ* II has influenced *sajjar*, and then the influence has gone back to form I *sar* in Maltese? Or is the idea of 'cooking' a purely local shade of the Maltese meaning, bearing only a fortuitous relationship to the meaning 'to pickle' found in *صَيَّرَ*?

SERH

serh: The meaning of the Maltese word *serh* is 'rest'. The meaning of the Arabic word to which it is ostensibly equivalent, *سَرَحَ*, the verbal noun of form I, is 'a flock pasturing freely, pasturage'. It is the verbal noun of *سَرَحَ* I, which means 'to drive (a flock) to pasture, go alone, send away'. Although the meanings of *سَرَحَ* and *serh* are not the same in the two languages, they are related by association: the idea of a flock pasturing at leisure, or of somebody going somewhere alone, may give an impression of rest.

serrah: The meaning of the Maltese form II verb *serrah* is 'to give rest'. The Arabic word to which it is equivalent, *سَرَّحَ* II, means 'to pasture a flock at leisure, send away, free, dismiss, release', and in the Koran (2/231) it means 'to send away, set free'. Although the meanings in

the two languages are not identical they are related by association: the idea of a flock pasturing at leisure, or of somebody being freed or released, ties in with the idea of rest.

tisrîh: The meaning of the Maltese word *tisrîh*, the verbal noun of *serrah* II, is 'repose'. The meaning of the Arabic word تَسْرِيحٌ, likewise the verbal noun of form II, in addition to its straightforward verbal nominal meanings, is 'dismissal, discharge, release, permission', and in the Koran (2/229) it means 'a sending away, a setting free'. Once again, although the meanings are not identical, they are related by association: the idea of dismissal or release ties in with the idea of repose.

There is a further point which must be raised in connection with this Maltese root. There may possibly be some confusion of meaning in Maltese with the Arabic words سَرَحَ and رَاحَ, the basic meaning of the latter being connected with the idea of 'rest'. Maltese has the form X verb *strieh*, meaning 'to rest', the equivalent in form and meaning of the Arabic verb اسْتَرَاخَ X. The root letters of *strieh* are *r-weak letter-h*, but there may be some possible confusion in meaning with words of the root *s-r-h*, the latter having been influenced by the former.

SRÂB

srâb: The meaning of the Maltese word *srâb* is 'a dazzling'. The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent is سَرَابٌ, meaning 'a mirage', and it occurs in the Koran (24/39) with this meaning. Although the meanings are related, they are not identical: both are concerned with light, but the original Arabic meaning of 'a mirage' is not explicitly contained in the Maltese meaning of 'a dazzling'.

Is it possible that the meaning may have changed for geographical reasons? The inhabitants of Malta would not be familiar with a mirage, but they would be familiar with dazzling light.

SIAMAT

stamat: The meaning of the Maltese word *stamat* is 'to be reduced to silence, be surprised'. *Stamat* is similar, though not identical, to the Arabic words صَمَتَ I, صَمَّتَ II and أَصَمَّتَ IV, and سَمَطَ I, سَمَطَّ II and أَسَمَطَّ IV, all of which mean 'to remain/keep silent'. Though the meanings in the two languages are in one respect identical, there is nevertheless a slight but subtle difference between them. The Maltese word has acquired a sense of being silent because one has been surprised by something, whereas this idea is not inherent in the Arabic meaning, which implies simply being silent without any enforcing reason.

STIEDEN

stieden: The basic meaning of the root in Arabic, and in the Koran, is connected with the idea of 'asking permission, begging leave'. The basic meaning of the Maltese words of the root is connected with the idea of 'inviting', but Maltese has lost all sense of 'permission'. Thus **إِسْتَأْذَنَ** X means 'to ask permission, take leave, ask leave of entering', and it means the same in the Koran (24/58), while *stieden* X means 'to invite'. Although the meanings in the two languages are closely related, they are not identical, and are in a sense inverted. While A would ask permission or take leave of B (the Arabic meaning), B would in fact invite A (the Maltese meaning): in other words, the subject in the meaning in one language effectively becomes the object in the meaning in the other. Yet in both languages there is a sense of requesting or asking somebody or something, leaving it to somebody else to accept or refuse.

stedin: The Maltese word *stedin* is the verbal noun of *stieden*, and means 'act of inviting, invitations' (the latter meaning being rightly that of the plural of the unitary noun *stedina*). It is the equivalent of the Arabic verbal noun of **إِسْتِئْذَانٌ** X, **إِسْتِئْذَانٌ**, which means 'asking permission, leave-taking, leave to enter'. The comments made under *stieden* (q.v. above) apply equally here.

mistieden: The word *mistieden* is the passive participle of *stieden*, and means 'invited, a guest'. The Arabic word to which it is equivalent, **مُسْتَأْذِنٌ**, the passive participle of **إِسْتَأْذَنَ**, means '(the person) asked permission of, taken leave of'. The comments made under *stieden* (q.v. above) apply equally here.

STIENES

mistienes: The basic meaning of the root in Arabic is connected with the idea of 'becoming accustomed, growing familiar'. There is absolute equivalence of meaning between the two languages in the respective form X verbs **إِسْتَأْسَسَ** / *stienes*, 'to grow familiar, get accustomed to'. In the respective passive participles the meanings differ. **مُسْتَأْسَسٌ** means 'accustomed, familiar', while *mistienes* (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon) means 'accompanied'. It is of interest to note that **إِسْتَأْسَسَ** X also means 'to become sociable, announce one's presence, ask an interview', and it occurs in the Koran (24/27) with the latter two shades of meaning: here might be seen a shade of meaning closer to that of the Maltese.

There is, however, a further point to be made. The other words of the Maltese root *u-n-s*, with the exception of *stienes*, all contain the idea of 'accompanying': *stienes* is the only word of the root to contain the idea of 'being accustomed'. It is therefore paradoxical that the only one of those words of the root which are common to both languages which agrees in meaning entirely with Arabic should be the 'odd one out' in the Maltese meanings.

TGHAN

tghan: The meaning of the Maltese word *tghan* is 'a dagger'. Although Arabic does not have any word to which *tghan* is equivalent which has an identical meaning, it does have the verb طَعَنَ I, meaning 'to stab, thrust, pierce, spear', and in the Koran (9/12) it means 'to fight, assault, thrust at'. Thus the connection by association between the meanings in the two languages may be seen.

UDIGHA

udigha: The meaning of the Maltese word *udigha* is 'addled egg' (i.e., rotten egg). Dessoulavy gives two Arabic words of which *udigha* could be the equivalent, وَدِيكَةٌ, meaning 'a deposit', and وَضِيغَةٌ, which also has 'a deposit' as one of its meanings. While the meanings in the two languages are by no means identical, there may nevertheless well be a connection by association or inference between them. Dessoulavy suggests that the meaning 'addled egg' comes from the idea of 'an egg left and so gone bad'.

There is another possible association which might be tentatively suggested. The Maltese expression *bajda udigha*, 'an addled egg', refers to an egg which is placed under a hen to make it lay: this egg will produce no chicken, and is left there virtually until it has gone bad. The Arabic root وَضَعَ is connected with the idea of 'putting', and the root وَدَعَ is connected partly with the idea of 'depositing'. As a *bajda udigha* is put under the hen, or is deposited there, would it be too far-fetched to suggest that this idea may have influenced the Maltese meaning?

WEBBEL

webbel: The meaning of the Maltese form II verb *webbel* is 'to nourish (e.g. a child)'. The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, أَبْلَغَ II, means 'to fatten camels'. Though there is a close relationship between the meanings in the two languages, they are not quite identical. The Arabic word refers specifically to fattening camels (the root letters ب-ل-ء being connected with the idea of 'camel'), while Maltese ap-

plies the word to nourishing in more general terms. Indeed, *webbel* may also mean 'to impress, put ideas into the mind': thus these secondary meanings may be thought of in terms of 'nourishing' ideas or principles, but in this secondary sense the meaning of *webbel* is quite some way removed from the meaning of **أَبْلَ**.

It might be remarked that, as far as this secondary meaning of *webbel* is concerned, there may be some possible link with, or influence by, the Arabic word **وَابَلْ** III, meaning 'to be assiduous to'.

WIEĠEB

wieġeb: The meaning of the Maltese word *wieġeb* (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon) is 'becoming, convenient, decent, right'. It is the equivalent of the Arabic word **وَإِجِبْ**, the active participle of the form I verb **وَجَبَ**, **وَإِجِبْ** meaning 'binding, unavoidable, necessary, essential'. While the meanings in the two languages are almost identical, they are not absolutely so. The 'degree' of the meaning is not as great in Maltese as it is in Arabic, and there has been an attenuation of the meaning: something may be becoming or right without necessarily being binding or essential.

WIEĠĠIB

twieġġib: The Maltese verb *wieġġib* III is the equivalent, with metathesis, of the Arabic verb **جَاوَبَ** III, both having the identical meaning of 'to answer'. The Maltese word *twieġġib* means 'an answer'. Dessoulavy gives it as the equivalent of the Arabic word **تَجْوَاب** (again with metathesis). **تَجْوَاب**, however, is the verbal noun of the form I verb **جَابَ**, which means 'to cross, travel, explore, pierce, penetrate', but it has no meaning at all connected with the idea of 'answering'.

However, it would be more accurate to say that *twieġġib* is *not* the equivalent of **تَجْوَاب**, and it can probably be said that there is no word in Arabic of which it is the equivalent in form. First, long *a* (**ا**) in Arabic does not change to long *i* in Maltese, but only to long *a* or *ie*: thus **تَجْوَاب** would not become *twieġġib*. Second, *twieġġib* is really a local formation of the verbal noun of form III, despite the prefixed *t*. (Other examples are *twexxir*, from *wieżen* III, 'to support', *twegħir*, from *wieġher* III, 'to make difficult and precarious', and *twelid*, from *wieled* III, 'to give birth to'). If *twieġġib* really is therefore the verbal noun of form III, then its meaning is absolutely logical since, as was remarked above, the form III verbs **جَاوَبَ**/*wieġeb* both mean 'to answer', the respective verbal nouns meaning 'an answer'.

WILD

milied: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'giving birth'. The meaning of the Maltese word *milied* is 'Christmas', while the meaning of the Arabic word to which it is equivalent, ميلاد, is 'birthday'. While the meanings in the two languages are very closely related, they are not identical. The Maltese word means only 'Christmas', and not 'a birthday' in general, such as is meant by the Arabic word, and is thus more specific.

It is of interest to note that the standard Arabic term for 'Christmas' is عيد الميلاد.

XAHAR

xieher: The meaning of the Maltese form III verb *xieher* is 'to divulge, publish'. However, while the Maltese word is of form III, it is equivalent in meaning to the Arabic form II verb شَهَرَ, the form III verb شَاهَرَ having an entirely different meaning ('to hire by the month'). We thus have another example of a word changing its meaning from one form in Arabic to another different form in Maltese.

This change may well be accounted for by the fact that verbs in Maltese with medial *b* and *gh* do not exist in form II, and usually have to change to form III, since *b* and *gh* are incapable of reduplication.

Two further remarks must be made about the Maltese word *xieher*. First, its primary meaning is 'to conduct malefactors through the streets in order to proclaim their misdeeds' (Falzon). With the meaning of 'to divulge, publish', the verb usually has an accompanying preposition, as *xieher bih*. Second, Vassalli gives the word as existing in form II with the meaning of 'to publish'. If it indeed existed in form II in Vassalli's day (late 18th and early 19th centuries), could this show a gradual change from form II to form III for verbs with medial *b*, *gh* or weak letter during the last century and a half? This might also explain the gradual restriction of the meaning to a specialized context.

XEBBAH

xebah: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'resembling, likeness'. The meaning of the Maltese word *xebah* is 'to be like'. There is no word at all in Arabic to which it is equivalent, form I being non-existent. The Arabic words with an identical meaning are شَابَهَ III and أَشْبَهَ IV, both meaning 'to resemble, be like, be similar'. We thus have a further example of a transference of meaning from one form in Arabic to another, different form in Maltese.

It is of interest to note, however, that both Maltese words for 'a likeness' are the equivalents in both form and meaning of Arabic words: *xebb* is the equivalent of شَبَّهَ, and *mxiebbha* (recorded by Falzon) of مُشَابَهَةٌ. The word شَبَّهَ is interesting in that it could be regarded as the verbal noun of form I, but, as was stated above, form I is non-existent in Arabic. The word *mxiebbha* is even more interesting, since the Arabic word مُشَابَهَةٌ, of which it is the equivalent, is the verbal noun of form III. Thus, although Maltese has transferred the meaning of the verb from form III to apparently form I, it still retains the equivalent of the Arabic verbal noun of form III for the noun.

There is a further remark to be made. The Maltese word *xebab* I may be not only an example simply of a transference of meaning from one form in Arabic to another in Maltese. *Xebab* could have been adopted in Maltese on account of the impossibility of the form IV verb أَشْبَهَ going straight into Maltese, form IV in Maltese being virtually non-existent. This raises the further interesting point about *mxiebbha* once again: if *xebab* should be the adopted and adapted equivalent of أَشْبَهَ IV, it is interesting that Maltese should still have kept the noun associated with form III in Arabic.

XEJN

xejn: The Maltese word *xejn*, which is usually preceded by some negative particle, means 'nothing'. This word bears a relic of the *nunation* of the نَصَب (usually called nowadays the accusative or adverbial case by Western writers), it being the equivalent of شَيْئًا, the نَصَب of شَيْء. The Arabic word شَيْء means 'thing, business', it having these same meanings in the Koran (2/19). Although the meanings of the words in the two languages are virtually identical, there is one important difference. The Maltese word is used almost invariably in a negative context, usually being preceded, as stated above, by some negative particle. e.g. *ma għandi xejn*, 'I do not have anything/I have nothing', *ma qaltli xejn*, 'She did not say anything to him/she said nothing to him'. The Arabic word شَيْء may be used in either a positive or a negative context. (For a similar opposition in meaning between Arabic and Maltese, cp. JIES (jies)).

It might be added that the standard Maltese word for 'a thing' in the positive, rather than the negative, sense would be *ħaġa*. This is the equivalent of the Arabic word حَاجَةٌ, meaning 'a want, need'.

xejjen: The meaning of the Maltese form II verb *xejjen* is 'to reduce to

nothing'. Dessoulavy gives the Arabic word شَجِّن II as the word of which he regards *xejjen* as the equivalent, and it means 'to reduce, make smaller, grow thin, disfigure'. Although the meanings in the two languages could be said to be similar, this fact is coincidental only. There is, in fact, no Arabic word from which *xejjen* is derived: it is a purely local Maltese formation from the word *xejn* (q.v. above).

Quite a considerable number of further examples could be cited, but it is hoped that the foregoing list, while entertaining no claim to being exhaustive, has illustrated some of the more interesting and obvious examples of semantic differences between Maltese and Koranic Arabic. Some of the reasons suggested for the semantic differences are likewise by no means exhaustive, and some are offered only as the most tenuous of hypotheses: while there is much in the field of semantics about which linguists may be certain or relatively certain, there is also much about which, at the moment, they must refrain from being categorical. It is, then, better that a cautious hypothesis might be supported by others than that a categorical statement might be rejected.

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