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 triliteralism, 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. Dessoulay. In this book, Dessoulay 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. Dessoulay 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 Dessoulavy’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, Dessoulavy 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 Dessoulavy 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 Dessoulavy: there is now much more linguistic knowledge available about Maltese than that which was at Dessoulavy’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 Dessoulavy 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 *أتِرُ* meaning 'trace, mark, print'. But whereas the Maltese *matra* (now obsolete, but recorded by Caruana) also means 'sign', the Arabic word *أثر* 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 *أثر* 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', /behr/ meaning 'sea'. The Maltese verb *bahhar* II means 'to navigate', while the Arabic verb *بُثِّرَ* 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 *بَلْد* 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 Joe'/barri means 'wild', and the Arabic word means also 'savage, not domesticated'.

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

**BASAR**

**basar**: The Arabic form I verb بصر 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 ناصر, the active participle of the form I verb نصر, means 'seeing, quick-sighted, acute'. The equivalent Maltese word basar, 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 ثصر and ثصير, 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 نصر 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 َبَيْشَنَ and َبُثِّينَ mean ‘to be inside, conceal oneself, penetrate’, and َبُثِّينَ means ‘to be big-bellied, be hidden, concealed’. َبَيْشَنَ 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 َخُبَلَ I, whence Maltese َحُبُول, and َخُمَلَ I.

**BÂTI**

bâti: The Maltese word bâti means ‘slow (of a fire)’. The Arabic word َبَطِينَ, the active participle of the verb َبُطِّينَ I, meaning ‘to be slow’, and the words َبَطِينَ and َبُطِّينَ 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 أَبْتَر and the Maltese equivalent word abtar have the identical meaning of ‘tailless, bob-tailed’. However, in the Koran (108/3), أَبْتَر 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 َبَيْشَنَ II mean ‘to separate’, the Arabic word having also the additional meanings of ‘to appear, manifest, explain, make distinct’. َبَيْشَنَ 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 َبَيْشَنَ II, َتَيْشِينَ, 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. َتَيْشِينَ 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 Tibjin 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 َبَيْت 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 ghasfur 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 َبُدن, both being the respective relative adjectives. Bidni means 'bulky', while َبُدن 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**

bledja: 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-
The meaning of the Maltese word *biedja* is 'agriculture', but this is a meaning not contained explicitly in the Arabic word *بَيْدَة* (baida), 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 مَبِيلُ (mbil), 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 ضَحِكْ/dahak both mean 'to laugh'. The meaning of the Maltese word *dahhiek* is 'comical, something or someone that provokes laughter'. The Arabic word ضَحِكْ, 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. ضَحِكْ, as remarked above, is the intensive active participle of ضَحِكْ 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 ضَحِكْ and *dahhiek*, *dahhiek* may conceivably be regarded as a local formation of an active participle of the form II verb دَحَّاكَ, 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 نَحْلُ/dahal meaning 'to
enter'. The Arabic word إِنْ تُحَلَّل 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 ـٰـ يـأ 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 ـٰـ ؤ 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 ـٰـ ؤ occurs in the Koran (50/45), but only in its primary sense, meaning 'to remind, warn'.
tidakir: Tikhir is the equivalent of ـٰـ ؤ ر، both words being the verbal noun of the respective form II verbs ـٰـ ؤ /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 ـٰـ ؤ occurs in the Koran (10/72) with the meaning of 'a reminding'.

DAGHA
dagha: The Arabic verb ـٰـ ؤ 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 ـٰـ ؤ 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**

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

**mdawwar:** The Arabic form II verb دَوْرَ means 'to whirl, turn, make round, rotate', and the equivalent Maltese form II verb *dawwar* means 'to turn'. The Arabic passive participle دُوُر means 'turned, made round, circular', while the equivalent Maltese passive participle *mdawwar* means 'surrounded'. Thus, while دُوُر 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 ضَرْبَ/*darab* meaning 'to strike', and the unitary verbal nouns ضَرْبَة/*darba* meaning 'a stroke, blow'. Whereas the Maltese word *darbtejn*, the dual of *darba*, has the meaning of 'twice', the Arabic dual word ضَرْبَتان (ضَرْبَة 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 a مَعْدَل مُتَّلَق (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 اَمْنَ, 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 ِ-َ-َ-َ, is اَمْنَ 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 فعل تَفْعِلْبُ, 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 existent 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 *wabhar*, from the Arabic root ِ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 اَمْنَ. In that case, the form of the word would have changed, but the meaning would be the same in the two languages.

FAGHAL

faghal/fghâl: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'doing'. The Maltese word *faghal/*fghâl means 'business', and Dessoulay gives as the Arabic words of which it is the equivalent فَعَلُ and فَعَلّ 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'. فَعَلّ 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 *faghal/*fghâl
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 َفَتَل، which would be َفَتَل، 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 َفَغَبَل/َفَغَبَل occurs only in proverbs and sayings, such as َأَغْمِل َفَغَبَل، in the sense of 'mind your (own) business'.

**FARD**

**fired**: The meaning of the Maltese verb َفَيْرَد I is 'to separate', and Dessoulavy gives it as being the equivalent of the Arabic verbs ُفَرَت I or َفَرَت IV. ُفَرَت I means 'to be alone, single, sole', and as such is an intransitive verb. It is the causative form IV verb َفَرَت 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 َفَلَح means 'to be strong'. Dessoulavy gives it as being the equivalent of the Arabic form IV verb ُفَلَح, 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 َفِيْخَل I is 'to confuse, discompose', and Dessoulavy gives it as being the equivalent of the Arabic verbs ُفِيْخَل I and َفِيْخَل II. The meanings of ُفِيْخَل I are 'to become cowardly, remiss, weak, to fall short of, to faint, fail', and are all intransitive. ُفِيْخَل 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 قَفْسَلَ I, its
meaning agrees with the Arabic word قَفْسَلَ 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 قَفْسَلَ 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 mean­
ings of the form I verbs in the respective languages from which they
are derived.

GARR

garr, garrier, ingarr, migrur: 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 garr I means 'to carry', while the Arabic verb
جرر 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.
جرر 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 garrier, the intensive active participle of the form
I verb, means 'a carrier', while the intensive active participle of the
Arabic form I verb، جُرَّار means 'a drawer, puller, tower'.

The Maltese verb ingarr VII means 'to be transported', while the
Arabic form VII verb إنَجَّر means 'to be drawn, dragged, pulled'.

And the Maltese word migrur, the passive participle of the form I
verb, means 'transported', while the Arabic word of which it is the
equivalent، مَكْرُور, 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.

migarr: The meaning of the Maltese word migarr, a mimated noun of place,
is 'wharf, a place to which merchandise is carried'. This agrees logi­
cally 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، مَجَرَّ بِهِ, 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.

**GARRAF**

**gorf:** The meaning of the Maltese word **gorf** is 'an enormous man', literally meaning 'like a *garfa* (precipice)'. The Arabic word جرف, given by Dessoulavy as the word of which he regards **gorf** as the equivalent, means 'cliff, precipice'. The word جرف, which is the same as جرف, 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 **gorf** and a different Arabic word, جلف, 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 ل and ر between the two languages, and a transference of meaning by association? - big men may be rough or boorish.

**GEBEL**

**gebel:** The present meaning of the Maltese word **gebel** is 'stone, rock'.

The meaning of the Arabic word جبل 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 **gebel** has a vestige of the meaning of 'hill, mountain' both in literature, and in certain place names, such as 'Gebel Ciantar', 'Ciantar's Hill'.

**Gid**

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

There is nevertheless a difference in meaning between **gid** and جيد. Good fortune or prosperity implies a benefit to somebody which comes by circumstances of chance or out of his control, whereas the meanings
of all imply strenuous and conscious effort on somebody's part, and although benefit of some sort may be implied, it is not guaranteed.

**GILD**

**glâdi:** The basic meaning of the root in both languages is identical, the words جلد / gild meaning 'skin, hide, leather'. The meaning of the Maltese word glâdi is 'like a skin, leathery'. Dessoulayv gives the Arabic word of which he thinks glâdi to be the equivalent as جلود, 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 جلود in Arabic. In actual fact, glâdi is not the equivalent of جلود, but is effectively the equivalent of جلود, with a modification: it is a relative adjective formed from the plural noun جلد, the plural of جلد, 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 هضم 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 حييم means 'love', and the equivalent Maltese word hejm means 'affection'. حييم is the verbal noun of the form I verb هام, 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 حييم 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 أخذ/ha meaning 'to take'. The Arabic form VIII verb أخذ 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 أخذ 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 حمل 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 حمل: 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 حاملة.
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 بنمل 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 بنمل, the passive participle of the form I verb (q.v. above), is 'borne, carried'. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese word malimul, 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 بنك 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 َمحارب, the passive participle of form III, means 'fought, contended with'. The Arabic form I verb َمحرب means 'to plunder', and the passive participle َمحارب means 'plundered, deprived of one's possessions'. Dessoulavy gives َمحارب 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 َمحارب and َمحارب 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 َحسب. However, َحفظ is the verbal noun of the form I
verb حساب, meaning 'to compute, reckon', and thus حسابية means 'a sum, computation'. The Arabic word from which حاسب I, 'to think', derives is حاسب I, 'to think, suppose', which gives the simple noun حاسب, 'thinking, believing'. It is therefore possible that حاسبة could be either a local Maltese formation, or it could be the equivalent of a possible Arabic unitary noun from حاسبة حاسب, namely حاسبة حاسب, 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.

Hsieb: Hsieb is the standard Maltese word for 'thought', rather than حاسب (q.v. above). The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent is حساب, meaning 'reckoning, account, calculation', and it occurs in the Koran (13/40) with these same meanings. Again, therefore, as with حاسبة, 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

Thasses: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'feeling, perceiving'. The Arabic word استمتعة 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 ثاسس 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 ثاسس, that it may very likely have been influenced by the verb غسّاس. This form II verb means 'to look intently, spy', so there could indeed have been some influence. The Arabic form II verb غسّاس means 'to press, squeeze'. However, the form I verb غسّاس means 'to keep night vigil, patrol by night', so there is a loose relationship between this meaning and that of غسّاس.

It is also of incidental interest to note, a propos of Dessoulavy's remark that ثاسس may have been influenced by غسّاس, that in Arabic غسّاس may mean 'to feel' — the same meaning as غسّاس.
**HAWI**

HAWI: The meaning of the Arabic word حَوْىٕ, the active participle of the form I verb حَوْىٕ (q.v. below), is 'empty, void, wasted, in ruins', and in the Koran (2/261) it means 'ruined, collapsed'. The equivalent Maltese word hawwi, 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 حَوْىٕ I or حَوْىٕ IV. حَوْىٕ I means 'to be ruined, be empty, be weak, feeble', and حَوْىٕ IV means 'to be in ruins, be hungry, evacuate'. As with hawwi, (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 that something being emptied or ruined, and thus made empty, void or in ruins.

The meaning of hewa is closer to the meaning of حَوْىٕ IV than to that of حَوْىٕ 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.

**HAŻEN**

HAŻEN: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'mourning, sadness'. But while the Maltese words hażen I (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon) means 'to mourn, put on mourning', and hażma means 'sadness', hażn means 'bad'. The Arabic word of which hażn is the equivalent, حَزَٰن, means 'sad'. There is thus not only a difference in meaning between حَزَٰن and hażn, but hażn 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 حَزَٰن'.

**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 حَرْكَ 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 نا 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 أَرْكَ, 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 أَرْكَ 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 لِق-هِ, the final ی 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 *الطَّفَقَ* is the passive participle of the form IV verb *الطَّفَقَ* means 'to throw, discard, cast, replace', and *الطَّفَقَ*, 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 *الطَّفَقَ*.

**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 *إِلْتَبَسَ* 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 *لَبْسَ* in Arabic means 'to clothe oneself, to put on (clothes)', the form I verb *لَبْسَ*, with medial *fatḥa* as distinct from medial *kasra*, means 'to confuse, render dubious'. *إِلْتَبَسَ* is thus the form VIII derivative of *لَبْسَ*, and not of *لَبْسَ*. 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, جُلُعْ, is 'a capstan, windlass', and of the other, لُوْص, '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 ُلُبُعْ 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

maqqat: The meaning of the Maltese form II verb maqqat is 'to ill-treat'. Maqqat is similar — though perhaps not identical — to the Arabic word للهاوي, 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').

mqit: The meaning of the Maltese word mqit is 'harsh, ill-tempered, sullen', while the meaning of the Arabic word مُمَيَّز 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 "مفيد" 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 "ي" I or "ال" I. "ي" means 'to elapse (time), pass, cross, proceed, go', and in the Koran (2/261) it means 'to pass'. "ال" 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 "ال" in form, it resembles more "ي" in meaning. While both "ي" and "ال" 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 "ي" in its more common meanings: "ال" 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 "ي", but has been influenced by "ال". 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, "مر", the verbal noun of the form I verb "كار", means 'commotion, tossing of waves'. The word "مر" occurs in the Koran (52/9), but only as a "م" (absolute object) of the verb "كار" in the expression "يوم تُشِمِّع الأسماء مر", 'on the day when the heavens shall shake' or 'shall spin dizzily'.

The verbal noun of the form I verb "مر" would be "مر" or "مر". It would thus seem once again that mawra is derived from "مر", but has been influenced by "مر", 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 "مر" would both imply the necessity (or, in the case of "مر", the more usual necessity) of an animate association, while "مر" implies an inanimate association.
mexxej: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'walking', the form I verbs /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 مَسْتَئِي, the intensive active participle of مَسِئِي I, and the word of which Dessoulay 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 قال دان بى كليم المكسىج, 'he said this in fluent words', in the sense of '"good walking" words'. Second, although Dessoulay gives مِسْئِي as the Arabic word of which he regards mexxej as the equivalent, this may perhaps not necessarily be the case. Whereas مِسْئِي is the intensive active participle of مَسِئِي I, mexxej, though apparently identical in form, may be a local formation of an active participle of the form II verb mexxa (cp. DAHAK (dahhiek)) This verb means 'to lead, guide, govern', and hence mexxej, as 'leader, guide', has an absolutely logical meaning. The Arabic form II verb مِسْئِي means 'to make to walk, go, to promote (an affair), to adopt, adjust, to move'.

Mulej: The meaning of the Arabic word مَلِئِي 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 *rtSlam* meaning 'to sleep', while *rt:* also means 'to die, abate (wind, sea), be extinguished (fire), (become) calm'. The meaning of the Arabic form II verb *~r:Y* 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 *J;:;;-* 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 *~m~* 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, گاہد 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.

mghawwed and taghwǐːd: The meaning of the Maltese verb ghawwed II is 'to repeat, do again'. The meaning of mghawwed, the passive participle of form II, is done over again', and of taghwǐːd, 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, مَرَضَ، is 'accustomed, trained, used, conditioned', and of the verbal noun of form II, تَرِضَید, 'accustoming, habituation'. 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 گاہد, is found basically in the Arabic words گاہد I and گاہد 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.

GHADER

ghdíːr: 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 ghdíːr (given by Falzon with this spelling) is 'compassion', whereas the meaning of the Arabic word to which it is comparable, یعید, is 'bashfulness, modesty, chastity'. Although there may be a tenuous relationship between the meanings in the two languages, they are not the same.
GHAĞEB

taghgîb: 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 taghgîb, the verbal noun of form II, is 'astonishment'. The meaning of the Arabic verbal noun of form II تَعْجِيب, of which taghgîb 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'.

GĦAJJB

ghajjeb: The basic meaning of the simple noun in both languages is identical, the Arabic word غَيْب 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 غَيْب 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 غَيْب, 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 غَيْب. 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 غلب/*ghaleb* meaning 'to vanquish, overcome,' and the Arabic word has these same meanings in the Koran (2/250). The meaning of the Arabic word مَعْلَبُ, 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 غلبُ I, as remarked above, is 'to overcome, vanquish, dominate'. The Maltese word *gholob* corresponds to the Arabic word مَعْلَبُ, 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 مَعْلَبُ 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 مَعْلَبُ, 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 غلما /ghallem (recorded by Falzon) mean 'to know'. Thus not only is there a difference in the two languages between the meanings of علم and ghaliem, but whereas the meaning of the Arabic word fits in logically with the form of the word, the meaning of the Maltese word, regarding ghaliem 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 علم /ghalam, 'to teach', معلم /mghalam, the active participle, 'a teacher', and معلم /taghlim, the verbal noun, 'instruction'. The Maltese word ghaliem 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 ghalam (cp. DAHAK (dahtiek), 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، 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، which occurs in the Koran (25/5) with the same meaning. 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 قبس، meaning 'brand, firebrand, live coal'.

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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 *قَبِسَََََ*, meaning 'to obtain fire (from)'. Though there is a close relationship between the meanings of *qabbas* and *قَبِسََََ*, 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 *قَدَد* 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*/*qal* 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 *أَفْوَالُ*, the plural of *قُولُ*, likewise the verbal noun of *قَالَ* I. *قُولُ* 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 *قُولُ*, 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 *قُولُ* in Arabic. However, while *qwiel* means 'a proverb', the word *أَفْوَالُ* pl. *أَفْوَال* does not tend to have this meaning by itself: such a meaning may be rendered by the qualified noun, as *قُولُ مَأْثُورُ*, '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 *قَلَلَ* and *قَلَِّلَ*, 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 qarab 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 qarab, is 'inclement, bad', used only to describe the weather. The meaning of the Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, قَرَحَ, 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 qarab.

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

mqareb: 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 mqareb 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 قَارِبَ means 'to be the neighbour of, be approximate to, speak kindly to'. The active participle قَارِبَ, to which mqareb 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 mqareb 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 ụn-wa/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, ẓirra, 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 ụn-wa/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, ẓudduqa, 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 Dessoulay suggests as being comparable, both of which may bear an approximate similarity by association. The verbs رَضَف II and رَضَف I 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 رَشَف, then there has been a considerable attenuation of meaning, as well as a certain change.

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

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

**RAJJEBO**

**rajjeb**: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'doubt', رَجَب/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'. Dessoulay gives رَجَب II as an Arabic word to which *rajjeb* may be similar, (although رَجَب 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 رَجَب 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 رَجَب is رَجَب, and the Maltese word *rajjeb* would, in fact, seem to resemble this participial form more closely than it does the verb رَجَب.

**RANDAN**

**randan**: The meaning of the Maltese word *randan* is 'Lent'. The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent is رَمَضَان, meaning 'Ramaḍān, ninth Arabian month, fasting-month', and in the Koran (2/181) it means 'Ra-
maḏān'. 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 isṣawām al-khādir, '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, رقح، 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 مرنغ، the passive participle of رقح 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, رقح and رقح، both verbal nouns of رقح، 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', رَقَى 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 رَقَى, 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، رَقَى، the active participle of رَقَى، means 'throwing, thrower, marksman, calumniator, 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 طَرَح 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 أَرَجَع 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 (Φ. tela' - tiela').

SABB

sabb: The Arabic form I verb سَبَب means 'to pour out, be poured (liquid)', and it occurs in the Koran (89/12) meaning 'to pour'. One of its verbal
nouns is كُرُص. The Maltese word sabb, presumably the equivalent of كُرُص, has as one of its meanings 'a pouring', and in this respect agrees entirely with كُرُص. 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 صَحْب 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 صيّار, which means 'hunter, fisherman, shooter, sportsman', being the intensive active participle of the form I verb صَيَار, 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, مصيدة, 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 مصيدة 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 ُسَأَرُ /sar meaning 'to become'. ُسَأَرُ 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, ِسَأَرُ 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 ِسَأَرُ, 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 ُسَأَرُ, as ُسَأَرُ contains no such idea. Is it possible that the modified meaning of ِسَأَرُ 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 ِسَأَرُ?

SERH

serh: The meaning of the Maltese word serh is 'rest'. The meaning of the Arabic word to which it is ostensibly equivalent, َسَرُحُ, the verbal noun of form I, is 'a flock pasturing freely, pasturage'. It is the verbal noun of َسَرُحُ I, which means 'to drive (a flock) to pasture, go alone, send away'. Although the meanings of َسَرُحُ 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, َسَرُحُ 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.

tisrīh: The meaning of the Maltese word tisrīh, the verbal noun of serrah II, is 'repose'. The meaning of the Arabic word تَسْرِيح, 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 ...:..:.., 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 لا ...:..:.. 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.

SRĀB

srāb: The meaning of the Maltese word srāb is 'a dazzling'. The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent is ضَرَّب, 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.

STAMAT

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 ضَمَت II and أمَّت IV, and ضَمَت I, سَمَت II and أمَّت 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 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 X, 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, the passive participle of X, 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 /stienes, 'to grow familiar, get accustomed to'. In the respective passive participles the meanings differ. X means 'accustomed, familiar', while mistienes (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon) means 'accompanied'. It is of interest to note that 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 *w-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 نامب، meaning 'to stab, thrust, pierce, spear', and in the Koran (9/12) it means 'to fight, assail, 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, جرية, meaning 'a deposit', and نتيمكة, 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 هوفرع is connected with the idea of 'putting', and the root هوفرع-ر 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, دب 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 لا-ب-ل 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 *āṭil*.

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 *‘āṭil* III, meaning ‘to be assiduous to’.

**WEIGEB**

*wiegeb*: The meaning of the Maltese word *wiegeb* (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon) is ‘becoming, convenient, decent, right’. It is the equivalent of the Arabic word *‘āṭil*, the active participle of the form I verb *‘āṭil*, 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.

**WEIGEB**

*twegīb*: The Maltese verb *wiegeb* III is the equivalent, with metathesis, of the Arabic verb *‘āṭil*, both having the identical meaning of ‘to answer’. The Maltese word *twegīb* means ‘an answer’. Dessoulay gives it as the equivalent of the Arabic word *‘āṭil* (again with metathesis). *‘āṭil*, however, is the verbal noun of the form I verb *‘āṭil*, 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 *twegīb* is not the equivalent of *‘āṭil*, and it can probably be said that there is no word in Arabic of which it is the equivalent in form. First, long *a* (I') in Arabic does not change to long *i* in Maltese, but only to long *a* or *ie*: thus *‘āṭil* would not become *twegīb*. Second, *twegīb* is really a local formation of the verbal noun of form III, despite the prefixed *t*. (Other examples are *tweżin*, from *wieżen* III, ‘to support’, *twegihir*, from *wieghir* III, ‘to make difficult and precarious’, and *twelid*, from *wieled* III, ‘to give birth to’). If *twegīb* really is therefore the verbal noun of form III, then its meaning is absolutely logical since, as was remarked above, the form III verbs *‘āṭil*/wiegeb 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, *مَلِيَّد*, 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 الـمِلْيَّد*.

**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 َشَهِر, the form III verb َشَاهِر 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 *h* and *gh* do not exist in form II, and usually have to change to form III, since *h* 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 bib*. 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 *h*, *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 َشَائِب* III and َشَابِ* 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: xebh is the equivalent of ذهب, and mxiebba (recorded by Falzon) of مسابقة. The word كمی 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 mxiebba is even more interesting, since the Arabic word مسابقة, 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 ذهب going straight into Maltese, form IV in Maltese being virtually non-existent. This raises the further interesting point about mxiebba once again: if xebab should be the adopted and adapted equivalent of ذهب 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 nunciation of the تصب (usually called nowadays the accusative or adverbial case by Western writers), it being the equivalent of كینا, the تصب of كینه. The Arabic word كینه 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 ghandi xejn, 'I do not have anything'. ma qaltlu xejn, 'She did not say anything to him/she said nothing to him'. The Arabic word كینه 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 ḫaġa. This is the equivalent of the Arabic word حاكة, meaning 'a want, need'.

xejjen: The meaning of the Maltese form II verb xejjen is 'to reduce to
nothing'. Dessoulavy gives the Arabic word ﺞـ ﺔـ as the word of which he regards xeijjen 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 xeijjen 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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