Abstract: Hebrew and Maltese are obliquely related members of the Semitic language family. Past comparative research inspired by Bible translation highlighted in atomistic fashion a number of common traits in these two languages. The present research probes aspects of selected phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical traits in Biblical and Israeli Hebrew from the comparative perspective of contemporary Maltese. Given the fact that the latter may well retain substratal elements inherited from Phoenician and Punic, the parallels tentatively indicated here, particularly in the lexical domain, may provide the basis for a reconstruction of the earliest diachronic stage of the Maltese word stock. If on the mark, it also seriously calls into question claims advanced in recent historical work on Maltese to the effect that the Arab invasion of the Maltese Islands in the 9th century entailed the complete annihilation of the indigenous population thereby breaking the continuity with the linguistic heritage of pre-Arabic ancient Malta.

Keywords: comparative Semitics, Arabic dialectology, Phoenico-Punic substrata, lexical Aramaism, rural varieties of Maltese.

1. Introduction
Scholarly interest in comparative aspects of Hebrew and Maltese has usually devolved upon issues raised by two scholarly Bible translations into Maltese, the first undertaken by Pietru Pawl Saydon (1895–1971), and the second by the Ghaqda Bibliiska Maltija (The Maltese Bible Society, 1996). Saydon evinced profound interest in certain formal linguistic parallels between Hebrew and Maltese that had struck him as a Bible translator, and he devoted a number of studies to this topic (e.g., 1931, 1954, 1958, 1965, and 1966). Beyond the typological parallels obtaining between these two offshoots of Semitic, a compelling reason inviting comparative research on Maltese and Hebrew is the plausible hypothesis that, notwithstanding its genesis as an Arabic dialect, present-day Maltese may nonetheless harbour pre-Arabic Semitic traits inherited from a Phoenico-Punic substrate. Phoenician was genetically the closest congener to Hebrew within the Canaanite branch of Semitic; thus resort to the latter in comparative work on Maltese broadens the data base for diachronic work since the documentation of Phoenico-Punic is somewhat fragmentary.1

Hebrew and Maltese are obliquely related members of the Semitic language family, the genetic distance between them being a factor of the specific classification

1 “The only written documents of Phoenicians and Carthaginians are monumental inscriptions on stone, a few ephemeral letters or notes on pieces of broken pottery, and three fragmentary papyri” (Lipiński 1321–2).
adopted. An early classification of the Semitic languages, harking back to the 19th century adduced in König (1881:12), postulated a division into four subgroups comprising North Semitic (Aramaic), South Semitic (Arabic and Ethiopic), Central Semitic (Canaanite), and East Semitic (Akkadian). A slightly different classification adopted in Hommel (1883: 63 and 442) proposed a basic division of the Semitic language family into Eastern and Western branches. The former consisted of Akkadian while the latter was subdivided into a northern branch comprising Canaanite and Aramaic, and a southern one consisting of Arabic, South Arabian, and Ethiopic. This, in fact, became a widely accepted classification of the Semitic languages after its adoption in Nöldeke (1899:9) and Brockelmann (1908: 6) and is still adhered to by several contemporary scholars: Diem (1980), Zaborski (1994), (Ratcliffe 1998) and others.

For Hebrew and Maltese this division implied assignment to two distinct subdivisions of the Semitic language family, the former being grouped with N.W. Semitic within the Canaanite language group (i.e., Phoenician, Moabite, Edomite, Amorite, and Ammonite) along with Aramaic, whereas Maltese, having originated much later — following the Arab invasion of the Maltese Islands in the late ninth century (869–70 AD) — is commonly adjudged as a peripheral subvariety of vernacular Arabic (Stumme 1904; Nöldeke 1904), itself a branch of South Semitic along with South Arabian and Ethiopic (cf. Brockelmann 1908:6).

A different, more recent, classification of the Semitic languages originally proposed by Hetzron (1974) and subscribed to by Voigt (1987), Rodgers (1991), Faber (1997), and Lipiński (1997:46–49), among others, visualizes Arabic as a member of a so-called ‘Central Semitic group’, comprising Canaanite, North Arabian (Thamudic, Liyanite, and Safaitic), and Aramaic. This new classification postulating a closer genetic link between Arabic and Canaanite invites a probe into convergent and divergent trends actualized in individual members of these subgroups. Significantly, in this regard, Morag (1989) has shown that comparison of Hebrew with the modern Arabic vernaculars reveals in both languages a noteworthy evolutionary drift in closely analogous directions, with the latter often recapitulating formal changes that transpired much earlier in the history of ancient Hebrew.

Thus specific instances of structural convergence between Hebrew and Arabic merit individual study combining the objectives of typological research with those of traditional historical grammar. An arresting case of parallel development is that of the definite article — already well-established during the first millennium before our era (Lipiński 1997:68) — entailing, in both cases: (a) morphophonemic gemination of word-initial consonants (Ullendorff 1965; Voigt 1998): [Heb hab-bayit, Ar ad-daru ‘the house’], and (b) a virtually identical cognitive path in the grammaticalization of the definite article, for instance, development from a relative particle in pseudo-constructs, e.g., Biblical Heb yôm haš-šisṭi ‘the sixth day’ (Gen 1, 31; cf. Borg

For a critique of this theory, see Corriente (2003:187–194).
Hebrew and Maltese (2000) also common to vernacular Arabic (including Maltese; Borg 1986), Classical Arabic (Wright II, 232 D), and Punic (Friedrich 1951:140).

The present preliminary probe into specific comparative aspects of Maltese and Hebrew sets out to outline some formal parallels obtaining between these two languages from a panchronic perspective, i.e., comprising both ancient and contemporary stages of the latter. In view of the possibility, noted above, of the survival of pre-Arabic substratal features in Maltese (particularly in the realms of phonology and lexicon), considerable attention is here devoted to non-Arabic residual traces in Maltese, such as Aramaic and, possible Phoenico-Punic elements in the language (see sections II, V, and VI).

2. Phonology

2.1 Arabic *a > Maltese [ə, ɐ]

In his outline of analogous developments in the diachronic morphophonemics of the verb in Standard Maltese and Hebrew, Saydon (1958) focussed specifically on the diversification of the historical vocalic schemes actualized in both languages.¹ In fact, a salient and historically significant vocalic trait shared by Hebrew and Maltese—not dealt with by Saydon—is the shift of Common Semitic a > ə typifying rural vernaculars in both Malta and Gozo:


Historical stressed ə is mostly retained unchanged in Standard Maltese, especially in contact with historical emphatics and backed consonants:

Standard Maltese: sər 'he became' < OA sər | səb 'he found' < OA səb | rās 'head' < Ar rās | dār 'house' < Ar dār, etc. | əl 'he said' < Ar qal | əm 'he swam' < Ar 'am | əfī 'barefoot' < Ar əfin etc.

In historically unmarked consonantal environments, both Standard and rural varieties of Maltese ordinarily show the outcome of a fronting rule whereby OA stressed ə yields [r] or [ɛː], respectively: Stand Malt [kə:n] ~ rural Malt [kɛːn] 'he was' < OA kān.

Addressing the allophonic treatment of OA ə in the contemporary Arabic dialects, Cantineau (1960:100–1) characterized the tendency of backing the low vowel in contact with emphatic consonants as ‘un phénomène étroitement conditionné et assez fréquent’ and he distinguishes this allophonic shift from the phonetically sim-

¹ A closely similar but independent parallel was noted for Omani Arabic in Vollers (1895:501):("Während die Vocalefüllung uns an das Hebräische erinnert, ... ").
ilar outcome of the aforementioned more general paradigmatic sound change continuing a pre-Arabic linguistic stratum:

Le passage régulier de tous les anciens à longs à un timbre postérieur â est au contraire un fait rare. Il apparaît dans les parlers paysans de Malte; il apparaît aussi dans le Liban nord. Cela est dû sans doute à des influences de substrats: on sait que l'hébreu et le phénicien-punique faisaient passer à o, â les anciens à longs accentués: cela explique sans doute les faits relevés chez les paysans de Malte; on sait aussi qu'en araméen “occidental” ancien, en syriaque jacobite et dans le dialecte araméen moderne de Ma'lula les anciens â ont tendance à passer à â, ô; elle semble expliquer les prononciations telles que ḫān «langue», ẑdf «il à vu» qu'on rencontre par exemple dans la vallée de Qadiša (Liban nord).

Cantineau is here referring to the so-called Canaanite vowel-shift of Common Semitic *ā > ŏ that Garr (1985:31) has noted in Phoenician dialects, Ammonite, and Hebrew. However, it also shows up outside the N.W.Semitic group, its earliest traces occurring, according to Hallo and Tadmor (1977), in the Akkadian personal name ʾDUMU-ḥa-nu-ta, where the anthroponymic component ha-nu-ta stands for ʾanat, a variant of ʾanat. Addressing the geography and chronology of this shift, Zadok (1977:38f) adduces three further occurrences in texts from Mari in the first quarter of the second millennium B.C. and states 'that it is hard to find any area within the Fertile Crescent where this shift has not been attested in a certain period', adding that it also occurs in West Arabian, in the Hijaz, and Yemen, as well as in modern South Arabian.

In his historical survey of the Canaanite vowel systems, Lipiński (1997:157) stated:

The Phoenician vowel system can be partially reconstructed with the help of Assyro-Babylonian, Greek, and Latin transcriptions of Phoenician words and names. The many dialectal variations result from the geographic and chronological dispersion of the sources ... The impact of the Old Canaanite change ā > ŏ (e.g., maqom /maqôm/ < *maqôm 'place') becomes stronger in Phoenician after the accent shift to the last syllable and the lengthening of the stressed syllable, which created a new group of long ā vowels.

Harris (1936:25) adds a systemic dimension to the chronological perspective:

In the latest period of Phoenician and Punic a definite tendency toward the close pronunciation of at least the long vowels becomes apparent. The ē which had arisen from aj and from tone-lengthened i came to be pronounced ē, and the ŏ was pronounced ā. Thus sid represents ʾid < *ṣēd < sayd (ṣd): 'hunt', Mount is for earlier *mōt (mēt), sālus (5th century A.D.) is šâliš < šâlōs < ṣīlāt 'three'.

Thus the initial vocalic shift of ā > ŏ in Phoenician was followed by the further change of ŏ > ā in Punic [ʾtāpīt 'judge' > Phoen šōpeṭ > Pun šūfet; Lipiński 1997:211]. This later shift shows up in Latin and Greek texts citing inter alia Punic toponyms displaying a reflex of *r's 'head, headland; cape': Rusginiæ, Pōvōuĩæ, Rusazus, Rusatdr, Rusuccurru, Ruspina (Zylharz 1954:50). Several Punic placenames
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noted in the classical sources (Pliny, V: 20-5; etc.) have been identified in Krahmalkov (2000: 436–7):

Punic: Rūs addir 'Cape Grand' | Rūs 'esmūn 'Cape Esmun' (= classical Cape Apollo in Tunisia) | Rūs 'Az 'Cape Strong' (in Algeria) | Rūs Milqart 'Cape M.' (= Heraclea Minoa in Sicily), etc.

A formal trait that might initially obscure the substratal origin and chronology of the shift under study in a historical phonology of Maltese is the circumstance that whereas the Canaanite vowel shift replacing Common Semitic long ʾa by ə is ordinarily described as a general one apparently unaffected by the quality of adjacent segments, the rural Maltese reflex of historical *a in the Semitic lexical component of the language is mostly restricted to the adjacency of a historically velarized or backed consonant, for as noted above, OA *a generally undergoes systematic fronting in plain consonantal environments. Notable exceptions to this fronting rule is the masculine singular form of the demonstrative pronouns whose stem vowel is also subject to backing and rounding in Maltese rural idioms:

Mgarr village: [dōn] 'this m.sg.' and [dōk] 'that m.sg.' – Standard Malt dān, dāk.

The tendency in contemporary rural Maltese idioms to restrict backing and rounding of historical ʾa to its manifestations in formerly velarized consonantal environments would seem to have arisen via diachronic fusion of the backed allophones of the latter with the outcome of the Canaanite vowel shift.

In a survey of comparative aspects of long vowels in rural idioms spoken in Gozo, Borg (1976) exemplified inter alia the morphophonemic complementary distribution obtaining between ʾa and ə < OA ṣ in the context of morphological inflection:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural Maltese (Gozo)</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hayyūta, f. hayyūta</td>
<td>ʾayyāt(ah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>battūla, f. battūla</td>
<td>ʾat(ih)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rūs, rūseya</td>
<td>ṣās (&lt; raʾs), ṣāṣi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dūr, ḏūrat</td>
<td>ḏār(at)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṣūr, ṣūrat</td>
<td>ʾār(āt)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be inferred from these data, the distribution of the two rounded reflexes of *ā in several varieties of rural Maltese is determined by syllable structure: [ō] occurring in closed syllables, alternating with [ū] in open syllables. Thus Maltese, in effect, retains both ancient stages of the vocalic shift entailing backing and rounding of historical *ā. Whereas an impressionistic assessment of the morphophonemic treatment meted out to the reflexes of OA *a suggests that certain systemic traits pertaining to the distribution of the alternants [ō] and [ū] vary across the Maltese

1 These forms were provided by Dr. Antoinette Grima-Vella, a native speaker of this dialect.
dialect area, the main feature that impresses itself on the observer is the pervasive­ness of this sound shift in rural speech:


Interestingly, its highly paradigmatic character within the phonology of rural Maltese accents5 applies not only to native Arabic terms but also extends to integrated Romance loanwords, where it systematically replaces stressed historical [*ã] with the backed and rounded reflexes:


The preceding discussion relating to possible continuity in Maltese with the Canaanite vowel shift mediated by Phoenico-Punic represents, in fact, only one facet of a broader spectrum of phonological history pertaining to three types of phonetic boundaries relevant to the analysis of rural Maltese vocalic systems: syllabic, lexical, and pausal (cf. Borg 1996b:135f). Note, for instance, the alternating reflexes of OA *i in the following syllabically distinct morphophonemic contexts:


The sensitivity displayed here by the phonetic feature of vowel aperture to the factor of syllable structure — entailing the alternants [-ey] ~ [-i:] ~ [-u:] in rural Maltese speech — is an issue of considerable historical interest inasmuch as it appears to be unknown in the Maghreb. It invites comparison with closely analogous data reported for several Eastern Arabic vernaculars spoken across Greater Syria and Egypt:


As already noted in Nöldéke (1880:34) and Lewin (1969:23), the treatment meted out in Eastern Arabic out to vocalic nuclei under different syllabic conditions can be very plausibly attributed to Aramaic substratal influence.

5 This statement rests on the data provided in Stumme (1904) and Puech (1994).
The salience and historical implications of the shift of Ar ā > Malt ā and ő were insightfully recognized in Vassalli (1796: xviii), where the author suggestively attributed the trait to a substratal residue of Aramaic (Syriac, in his terms). In fact, backing and rounding of Semitic *a affected both ancient and modern varieties of Aramaic, e.g., classical Syriac and modern Central Aramaic:

Neo-Aramaic (Turoyo; S.E.Anatolia): ħmoro 'donkey' | ķtowo ‘book’ | sloço ‘prayer’ | gaboro ‘hero’ | biono ‘language’ (own observ.).

The thesis presented here adducing the agency of a Punic substrate in Maltese assumes the survival of this language in the Maltese Islands at the time of the Arab invasion in the late 9th century. Though external historical evidence to this effect is lacking, the rule requiring systematic backing and rounding of the stressed historical *[ā]—rare on this scale in the Arabic dialect area — not only confers plausibility to the the issue of continuity but also highlights a problem of considerable import to the internal evolution of Maltese, namely, the origin and chronology of what has come to be the most salient concomitant of the rural/urban split in language.

An additional and areally striking phonological trait distinguishing rural Maltese accents from Standard Maltese is the occurrence of pausal forms in the former. In most, if not all, varieties of rural Maltese, the context of pause is known to affect the surface realization of historically long word-final *i and *ū which ordinarily undergo automatic diphthongization in this position. Observe contextual ummi ‘my mother’ and marru ‘they went’ alternating with pausal ummiy and marrow, respectively, in the vernacular of the town of Rabat (on the island of Gozo).

Whereas pausal phenomena also appear to be completely unknown in N.African Arabic, pausally conditioned vocalic morphophonemics closely analogous with those noted for Maltese village dialects have been described for certain varieties of Eastern Arabic — significantly, from an areal standpoint — in Lebanese and North Palestinian Arabic vernaculars (cf. Fleisch 1974, Blanc 1953, 1974). This rarely noted areal link of Maltese with the specific internal history of the Arabic vernaculars of Greater Syria is, naturally, of considerable interest to an enquiry into formal tokens of continuity with putative substratal ancient Semitic, and highlights the desirability of a broader inquiry comprising, for instance, the Maltese lexicon (see §5 and §3; cf Borg 2000:198).

2.2 Treatment of historical emphatics

Old Arabic and Ancient Hebrew displayed a set of emphatic consonants believed to have developed from earlier glottalized segments in Common Semitic (Dolgopolsky 1977). Whereas Arabic, with its strikingly conservative sound system, has retained distinct reflexes of the four Semitic emphatics distinguished by phonetic velarization (i.e., s, ḍ, ṭ and t), Ancient Hebrew had, like other varieties of Canaanite, only two emphatic phonemes: s and t, entailing reduction of the Old Semitic tripar-
tite opposition *s : *d : *n to the segment *s. Most Arabic dialects have also reduced the formal oppositions in the emphatic series by fusing *d and *n, the outcome being usually the voiced interdental, emphatic fricative n in vernaculars that have retained the interdental articulation, alternating with the emphatic voiced dental stop d in those which fuse interdentals with corresponding stops. Maltese, having evolved from an urban Arabic vernacular, continued the latter pattern.

In Modern Hebrew and Maltese, reflexes of all historical emphatic consonants underwent a further evolutionary stage: loss of the feature of velarization. Whereas modern reflexes of Hebrew /s/ (> Mod Heb c [ts]) has retained its formal distinctness by reason of its affricated character,6 historical t has been fused with its non-emphatic counterpart /l/. In Maltese, the historical emphatic consonants s, t, and secondary *d (< OA *d and *n) underwent fusion with their plain counterparts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OA</th>
<th>Maltese</th>
<th>Modern Hebrew</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ʃɪra</td>
<td>'form'</td>
<td>sɪra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dɑhɪka</td>
<td>'he laughed'</td>
<td>dɑḥa&lt;sup&gt;7&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dɪʃr</td>
<td>'fingernail'</td>
<td>dɪʃer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tɪn</td>
<td>'mud'</td>
<td>tayn&lt;sup&gt;8&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both languages, loss of emphasis is ascribable to foreign language contact, and derives from the speaker’s predisposition to attend to the secondary effects exercised by velarized segments on contiguous vowels and ignoring the actual acoustic differences between plain and velarized consonants themselves (cf. Cowell 1964:7 for Arabic); thus, loss of velarization is the outcome of the following factors: (a) the highly marked phonological character assigned to secondary articulation by speakers of languages lacking this feature; (b) the intrinsically vowel-like properties pertaining to certain types of secondary articulation, such as palatalization and velarization (Ladefoged 1975:207); (c) the fact that the short, high frequency noise of consonants is much less audible than the longer, lower-pitched vocalic formants; thus Obrecht (1968: 39f.) indicated that Arabic speakers themselves tend to rely heavily on F<sub>2</sub> transitions in their perception of velarization.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For the history of affrication in this sound, cf. Steiner (1982).
<sup>7</sup> The glottal reflex < *q < OA k presumably attests to a hypercorrect shift of *k > *q in Standard Maltese occasioned by the fusion of OA q and k in certain rural varieties of the language.
<sup>8</sup> In the early stage of Maltese, it seems that the velarized quality of *t in this word had the effect of lowering the onset of historical *l with the result that to a later generation of speakers, this syllable peak sounded like a diphthong, which eventually became the distinctive element keeping this word apart from Maltese tɪn 'figs'. Note the same treatment of the high front vowel in the Yemenite equivalent of this lexeme: Ar tɪn/tayn (Behnstedt, Bezüge 343) and in Tunisian Judeo-Arabic tayn 'argile', Mainz, Queiñes poësies 70, l. 11.
<sup>9</sup> Note, by way of contrast, the replacement of one form of secondary articulation by another, for instance, the substitution of 'labialized articulations for the corresponding pharyngealized consonants of Arabic words in the speech of Bantus and Uzbeks' (Jakobson/Fant/Halle 1969:31). Speakers
Highly significant, with regard to (c) are secondary reflexes of historical emphasis; observe, for instance, the diphthong [ay] in the aforementioned Maltese lexeme tajn ‘mud’ reflecting the historical speaker’s focus of attention away from the lowered second formant typifying emphatic consonants to the perceptually more salient ‘transitional glide’ concomitant with the realization of the following high vowel. Thus the outcome of these two independent historical processes affecting historical emphasis differs in one important respect: in Maltese, loss of the emphasis opposition in consonants occasioned a compensatory increase in vocalic contrasts; while in Modern Hebrew, it has produced no secondary reflexes. Divergent treatment of historical emphasis here reflects the different circumstances surrounding its loss in the two languages: in Maltese, phasing out of emphasis was presumably a gradual process; in Modern Hebrew, as mediated to its earliest speakers in the course of the revival in the late 19th century, emphasis appears to have been altogether absent from normative pronunciations based on East European and Sefardic phonetic norms of liturgical Hebrew.

2.3 Fusion of velar and pharyngeal fricatives
Another striking diachronic parallel with Ancient Hebrew in the Maltese sound system is its treatment of pharyngeal and velar fricatives, i.e., loss of the historical functional contrast between OA /ʕ/ and /ʕ/ paralleled by that obtaining between their voiceless equivalents /h/ and /x/, respectively:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Maltese</th>
<th>Biblical Hebrew</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'ayn</td>
<td>ayn</td>
<td>'ayn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garb 'west'</td>
<td>ārb (placename)</td>
<td>'ereb 'evening'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hasib</td>
<td>āseb</td>
<td>hāṣab 'he thought'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xamsa</td>
<td>hamsa</td>
<td>ḥāmiṣāh 'five'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maltese words deriving from Old Arabic etyma with /ʕ/ and /ʕ/ usually show vocalic length for both segments in stressed syllables, replicating a historical shift known from at least one variety of Neo-Aramaic: Arbel swāta 'satiety' < shāstā, and šāṭta 'lamp' < šāṭta 'lamp' < šragāta (Khan 1999:30). The Maltese orthography renders both historical sounds by means of the consonantal digraph ġḥ: ġhajn 'eye' < Ar 'ayn, ġhereq ['e:re] 'he drowned' < Ar ġgiriq ~ OA gariqa. A consonantal reflex of these two segments shows up exclusively in stem-final position before the 3rd person pronominal suffixes {-ha} (f. sg.), and {-hom} (pl.): [se'mahhom] 'he heard them’ < *samī'hum, and [ze'bahhom] ‘he painted them’ < *sabaghum. The morphophonemic behaviour of reflexes of /ʕ/ and /ʕ/ in contemporary Maltese amounts, in essence, to a historical fusion of these two sounds yielding in contemporary Maltese an abstract phoneme.

of Hausa tend to replace these Arabic sounds by ejective consonants; similarly, Chadic Arabic shows glottalized reflexes of OA emphatics (Greenberg 1947: 88).
Cantineau (1960:72) was inclined to attribute the historical treatment of the phoneme pairs /r/ and /g/ and of /h/ and /x/ to a Phoenico-Punic substrate; however, historical and comparative study of Maltese phonology in the light of the present-day village idioms spoken on the Maltese Islands suggests that present reflexes of Ar /r/ and /g/ in Maltese are the outcome of an independent internal shift (Borg 1978:45). Thus certain Maltese speakers on the linguistically more conservative island of Gozo — for example, in the villages of Gharb and Sannat (Puech 1994: 32) — still retain etymological /g/ as a voiced velar fricative: Gharb [gada] ‘tomorrow’, [gana] ‘vocal music; singing’ (= Standard Malt [a:da, a:na] < OA gadan, ginâ). 10

3. Morphology

3.1 Inalienable possession

Rosén (1977:149–160) made the interesting claim that Modern Hebrew distinguishes between alienable and inalienable possession; thus, in his terms, the expression sifr-i ‘my book’ showing direct annexation of the possessive pronominal suffix would denote ‘the book I wrote’ whereas the analytic genitive equivalent ha-sefer sel-i refers to ‘a book that I happen to own’. Casual observation of the speech habits of Modern Hebrew speakers suggests that the situation vis-à-vis the implementation of the genitive is not quite as clear-cut as Rosen intimates. Some speakers seem to generally avoid using the suffixed genitive in ordinary conversation and prefer the analytic genitive, for instance, in designating degrees of kinship: aba/ima seli ‘my father/ mother’ rather than ab-i / im-i, presumably because the suffixed forms are perceived as pertaining to a formal speech register.

Note, however, that the analytic genitive construction for degrees of kinship differs in an important respect from instantiations of this construction with ordinary nouns, i.e., omission of the definite article (cf. ha-xulca selô ‘his shirt’, ha-mix-nasâýim seli ‘my trousers’). Furthermore, speakers who make extensive use across the board of the analytic genitive often retain the suffixation of possessive endings with certain terms that qualify semantically to be included in an inalienable class: ba(c)al-i ‘my husband’, da(c)ati ‘my opinion’, zxuti ‘my prerogative’, le-dkarav ‘according to him’, etc. Thus stylistic variation across the Hebrew speech community in the surface implementation of possessive constructions somewhat blurs (without neutralizing) the formal distinction between the construct genitive and the analytical genitive.

In Maltese, the situation is much clearer though rarely adverted to in the literature. 11 Pronominal suffixation of nouns is restricted to a relatively closed list of terms denoting body parts:

10 A strikingly transparent instance of a substratally conditioned fusion of historical velar and pharyngeal fricatives occurs in Cypriot Maronite Arabic (Borg 1985:36).
11 The remark in Vella (1831:294) regarding ‘nouns to which pronouns cannot be affixed’ is one of the few statements in the literature on Maltese recognizing this trait.
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- ras 'head' | wicc | witts 'face' | widna 'ear' | halq 'mouth' | id 'hand' | qalb 'heart'
- degrees of kinship: 
  - omm 'mother' | iben 'son' | bint 'daughter of' | oht 'sister', mara 'wife', etc.
- immovable property: 
  - dan 'house' | twelid -> 'fatherland', etc.
- extensions of self:
  - lehni 'my voice'
  - tulu 'his height'
  - dehnha [de:na] 'her intelligence'
- material objects closely associated with the possessor: 
  - hwejjgu 'his clothes'

Interestingly, some Maltese nouns in the inalienable semantic category are inseparable from possessive suffixes; thus bint can only mean 'daughter of' never simply ‘girl' or 'daughter' as in most varieties of Arabic. The mandatory character of the possessive suffix with certain Maltese kinship terms is strikingly exemplified in the expression <Ghandi seba' huti> (lit. 'to-me seven my-siblings') = ‘I have five siblings’, where the ‘possessor’ is doubly marked.

Thus the majority of nouns in Maltese cannot take a pronominal suffix, and possessive constructions ordinarily require the genitive particle ta < băć < OA mata': il-kelb ta' Wenzu 'Lawrence's dog'. This situation is somewhat different from that obtaining in the majority of Arabic dialects, where the existence of analytic genitive particles (e.g., Palestinian Ar tabă'/šētī/šuğl, etc.) does not impinge on the distribution of the pronominal suffix, which appears to be virtually unrestricted: kalbi 'my dog', kābo 'his book', qalamha 'her pen', sayyārithum 'their car', etc.

In the interests of accuracy, it is worth stressing that wherever it exists, semantic marking for inalienability in colloquial Arabic often attaches to the iconicity of suffixation itself rather than to specific nouns: Egyptian Ar lāmī 'my flesh', as opposed to l-lāhm bītā'ī 'my meat'; cf. also the equivalent Jerusalem Arabic forms lāhmi: il-lāhmi tabā'/šētī.

On the basis of the foregoing comments, it can be said that that main difference between Maltese and Hebrew in their treatment of the semantic category of inalienable possession is that, in the former language, it functions as an overt grammatical category, whereas in the latter it approximates the status of a covert category in the sense of Whorf (1941) defining two abstract cognitive classes that do not appear to have stable formal correlates at surface level. In both languages, the inalienable category may well be ultimately a residual Aramaic trait.

12 For the grammar of designations for body parts in other languages, cf. Lavric (2001) and the bibliography cited there.

13 Similar restrictions on the distribution of personal suffixes occur in Cypriot Arabic (Borg 1985:59) where they conceivably continue a situation inherited from Aramaic. One factor that strongly argues for such an ascription is the existence in this vernacular of a special genitive construction exemplified in the expression spinu l-ipni 'my son's godfather', mpratu Z-<ammi 'my paternal uncle's wife', where the occurrence of a proleptic pronominal suffix carrying the gender and number marking of the following noun finds a parallel reflex in several varieties of Aramaic: bayyēh di ʿālahā 'the house of God' (Biblical Aramaic; Rosenthal 1974:25); breh d-aloḥā 'the Son of God' (Syriac: Noldéke 1904:163). Residual reflexes of this construction occur in Ṭuroyo abrē-d-ammi 'my cousin', baytē-d-babi 'my father's house', sīmē-d-lōḥī 'my sister's name', etc. (own observation); cf. Jastrow (1985: 44f.). On the inalienable category in Biblical Aramaic, see Garr (1990).
3.2 The pseudo-dual

Marçais (1955:345) characterized the general evolution of the dual in vernacular Arabic in the following terms: “L’opposition dualité/pluralité, qui existait dans la langue classique, tend à se perdre dans l’opposition plus générale unité/pluralité.” Blanc’s innovative 1970 analysis of the Arabic dual category spelled out some formal implications of this evolutionary process; whereas in Old Arabic, the dual morpheme encoded a syntactic concord category affecting several form classes: nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives and, as in Akkadian, continued the Old Semitic two-case system (comprising, in the nominal category, the nominative [-äni] and the oblique form [-ayni], in Hebrew and in the Arabic dialects (including Maltese), the dual morpheme represents an inflectional trait rather than a concord category.

The same source highlighted the most striking and far-reaching development of the ancient Semitic dual in Hebrew and vernacular Arabic, i.e., its functional split into dual and pseudo-dual allomorphs, the first conveying the meaning ‘two’ and the second functioning as a surrogate plural. Observe the following Biblical Hebrew and Maltese cognate dual forms:

- `yomayim ~ <jumejn> ‘two days’
- `smiitayim ~ <sentejn> ‘two years’
- `raglayims ~ <riglejn> ‘feet’
- `yadayim ~ <idejn> ‘hands’

In effect, both languages make very restricted use of the real dual, this being virtually limited to expressions of time and to measurements.

Gesenius-Kautsch-Cowley (1976: §88e), where no formal distinction is made between dual and pseudo-dual, states that outside the realm of numerals, use of the dual is restricted to paired parts of the body. Interestingly, a considerable degree of isomorphy with Hebrew obtains in the matter of Maltese designations of body parts taking the pseudo-dual:

- `enayim ~ <ghajnejn> ‘eyes’
- `oznayim ~ <widnejn> ‘ears’
- `safatayim ~ <xufftejn> ‘lips’
- `lehyayim ~ <haddejn> ‘cheeks’
- `katayim ~ <kitfejn> ‘shoulders’
- `yadayim ~ <idejn> ‘hands’
- `raglayims ~ <riglejn> ‘feet’
- `birkayim ~ <rkupptejn, sg. rkoppa > <knees’

Equally striking in Hebrew and Maltese is their extension of the pseudo-dual to certain non-paired body parts: Heb `ippornayim, `smayim ‘teeth’, me`ayim ‘intestines’, `motnayim ‘hips’, `ahorayim ‘backside’ and M `<subghajn> ‘fingers’ [~ Moroccan Ar `sba', pl `obr`in ‘doigt (de la main ou du pied)’ (Premare VIII, 17)], `<difrejn`.

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14 Many speakers here use the integrated Romance term `<spalltejn>, sg., `<spalla> <It spalla ‘shoulder’.
15 The singular is `<koxxa> <It koscia ‘thigh’; the term `<wirkejn, sg. `wirk> is still used in the literary register.
16 In a few cases, an Aramaic colouring can be plausibly suggested for unusual phonological forms of Maltese words, as in `<irkoppa> ‘knee’, cognate with Ar rukba; note, in this connection, JAram arkilbè ‘the knee and its surrounding parts’ (M.Jastrow 1886:121).
Hebrew and Maltese

'fingernails'. Dual forms for fingers and teeth presumably reflect the fact that two sets or rows of each are involved.

Some minor differences also merit notice: Maltese extends the pseudo-dual to arms 'dirghajn', whereas Hebrew, like Arabic, here prefers a plural: zaro'ot; on the other hand, Hebrew also extends the dual to items of footwear: garbayim 'socks' nacalayim 'sandals'.

The parallel lexification in both languages of the plural forms of 'cheeks', 'thighs', and 'shoulders' via pseudo-duals is noteworthy from the Maltese standpoint since Old Arabic and several Eastern Arabic dialects show ordinary plurals for these terms:

Old Arabic xadd, pl. xadūd 'cheek' | wirk, pl. awrāk 'thigh' | katis/kitt, pl. aktāf 'shoulder' || Jerusalem Ar īṣāf'lights', xlūd 'cheeks', ṭāf 'shoulders', ṭukāb 'knees'.

The analogous development of the Semitic pseudo-dual evinced in Hebrew and Maltese attests to a striking case of convergence between North West Semitic and Maghribi Arabic, possibly under the influence of Phoenico-Punic on the latter. At all events, the purely residual retention of the real dual in Biblical Hebrew and Maltese presents a notable contrast with the situation obtaining in the majority of dialects spoken in Greater Syria and Mesopotamia, where dual forms of nouns can be generated very freely (Blanc 1970a:44): Jerusalem bīnten 'two girls', ktāben 'two books', bētēn 'two houses', etc. Furthermore, as noted in this source, the Eastern Arabic vernaculars have not only retained a more lively use of the real dual, but have also accentuated the formal difference between the real dual and the pseudo-dual by creating innovative duals for certain body parts: Palestinian 'enēn 'eyes': 'entiūn 'two eyes' (Bauer 1957:31).

4. Syntax and Morphosyntax
4.1. Constituent order

Like Hebrew, Maltese displays two main types of declarative sentences: nominal and verbal sentences. Basic word order in nominal sentences requires the subject sentence-initially in both languages:

Biblical Hebrew: ṭattāh hā-ḇō (1 Samuel 12:7) 'Thou art the man'. | Malt ṭHiya tabib 'My brother is a doctor'.

The reversed constituent order is pragmatically marked by additional emphasis:

Biblical Hebrew: qāfār ṭattāh (Gen. 3:19) 'Dust thou art!' | Malt ṭajjeb da l-inbiid (lit. 'good this the-wine') 'This wine is really good!'

In verbal sentences, Ancient Hebrew word order was also rather flexible being sensitive to pragmatic factors; thus while the Biblical Hebrew basic constituent order is VSO (Gesenius-Kautsch-Cowley 1910:456), as in Classical Arabic:
Biblical Hebrew: wa-yəhārēk ʾēlōhīm ʾet-nōʾē h wō-ʾet-bānāw 'And God blessed Noah and his sons' (Gen IX, 1),

several other syntactic options also occur: SVO, OVS, SOV, VOS, and OSV. In Modern Hebrew and in most Arabic dialects, including Maltese, the unmarked word order in verbal sentences is SVO:

Modern Hebrew axi kanâ mexonlit = Palest Ar ʾaxūy štara sayyāra = Malt ʾHija xtara karozza. 'My brother bought a car'.

Though less frequent, VSO word order in Maltese is possible in narrative discourse; observe, for instance, the opening sentence of the book of Genesis:

<Fil-bidu halaq Alla s-sema u I-art.> 'In the beginning, God created heaven and earth'.

That the parallel with Hebrew here is not due to close translation of the original can be seen from other Maltese sentences recounting events in a narrative chain; these ordinarily begin with a verb:

<Instemghat is-serena u waqaf ix-xoghol.> 'The siren was sounded and the work stopped'.

In fact, isolated sentences drawing attention to recurring or expected events often begin with a verb in Maltese:

<Wasal ta’ l-posta.> 'The postman arrived'. | <Gie huk id-dar mix-xoghol. 'Your brother came home from work'. | <Bdiet niezla x-xita.> 'It started raining'.

Pragmatic constraints regulating the presentation of 'new' vs. 'old' information can also promote the VSO option in Maltese; thus, as in many Arabic colloquials, VSO is the unmarked word order in Maltese sentences with indefinite subjects:

<Gie wiehed jarab. 'Someone came to see you'. | <Waq a’ tifel go bir.> 'A boy fell into a well'. | <Cempillu xi hadd, qalet Lwiza.> (Sant 1996:16) 'Someone rang him up, said Louise'. | Palest Ar ʾażā wāḥad yisʿal ʿannak. 'Someone came inquiring about you'.

This word order in Maltese is also common after sentence-initial adverbs:

<Pit ilu mar id-dawl.> 'A short while ago, the electricity was cut'. | <Il-um tani ugih ta’ ras.> 'Today I had a headache'. | <Il-bierah qabditu s-sogha.> 'Yesterday he began to cough'.

In essence, such sentences presumably conform to the pragmatics of narration; thus topicalized objects also precede the verb in Maltese:

<Il-ktieb sibnieh taht is-sodda.> 'We found the book under the bed'.

In short, word order in Maltese is, as in Ancient Hebrew, quite flexible and allows in both languages a wide margin for pragmatic factors.
Closely analogous treatment of word order in Maltese and Hebrew declarative sentences occurs in the structure of the so-called 'subject-less sentence' described in detail for Modern Hebrew in Berman (1980:760) where it is stated that...

... such sentences typically lack an agent—either because the event in question is logically agentless, and the protagonist is an experiencer or a possessor, say, and no action is being performed: or because the speaker chooses, for some reason, to treat the event as not perpetrated by any specific individual or group of individuals.

This type of construction ordinarily encodes existentials, possessives, impersonals, modal expressions, obligations, experientials, and environmental comments, e.g., on the weather:

**Maltese:**
- **Existentials:** 「Hemm Alla wiehed biss.」 'There's only one God.'
- **Possessives:** 「Ghandi zewgt-idjar.」 'I own two houses'
- **Impersonals:** 「Ma jhallunix immu!」 'I'm not allowed to go'
- **Modal expressions:** 「Ta’ min imur jarah dal-film (lit. of whom he goes he sees this film)」 = 'This film is worth seeing'
- **Obligations:** 「Sa jkollok titlaq ghada.」 (lit. it-will-be-to-you you go tomorrow) = 'You'll have to leave tomorrow'
- **Experientials:** 「Ghandi l-ghatx.」 'I'm thirsty'
- **Environmental comments:** 「Il-hawn hames sight nitenna」 'I've been waiting here for five hours'
- 「Ilha marida」 'She's been sick for a long time'
- 「En-bard ilium」 'It's cold today'
- 「Sarli l-hin」 'My time is up'.

**4.2 Object marking**

Hebrew and Maltese both resort to mandatory formal marking of direct objects by means of a *nota accusativi*. In Hebrew the object-marking particle ordinarily has the form {et} and in Maltese {l(il)}: 'Yesterday I saw your brother' = Modern Hebrew *et mol ra’iti et ax sel’ka.* = Malt *Il-bierah rajt lil huk.*

In Maltese the particle occurs before Direct Objects that are definite and animate, the semantic category of animacy here comprising: (a) common nouns and pronouns referring to animate beings, i.e., humans; (b) proper nouns (anthroponyms and certain toponyms); (c) common nouns in the semantically inalienable class, irrespective of animacy. These three types of objects requiring a formal marker are exemplified in the following display:

(a) 「Il-bierah zorna lil missierek.」 'Yesterday we visited your father'
(b) 「Hiha jhobb lil ohtok.」 'My brother loves your sister'
(c) 「Lil min rajt il-bierah.」 'Whom did you see yesterday?'
(d) 「Il-gimgha l-ohra stidint il Marija biex naraw film.」 'Last week I invited Mary to a film show'
(e) 「Rajna lil Malta mill-ajruplan.」 'We saw Malta from the airplane'
(f) 「Jien inkattar fuq li inkattar lil nislek.」 'I shall greatly multiply thy offspring' (Gen XVI:10)
(g) 「Jithennew dawk li jhobbu ‘il ismek.」 'Those that love Thy name shall rejoice' (Ps. V,12)
(h) 「Ma rawx aktar ‘il darhom.」 'They never saw their home again' (Caruana 1989:59).

Object marking of type (c) in Maltese — here occurring with the nouns *nisel*, *isem*, and *dar* — appears to typify literary usage in a high register (e.g., Bible translation and *belles lettres*).
Concerning the distribution of object-marking in Biblical Hebrew, the grammar of Gesenius/Kautsch/Cowley (§117) states:

The simplest way in which a noun is subordinated to a verbal form is by the addition of an accusative of the object to a transitive verb. In the absence of case-endings, this accusative can now be recognized only from the context or by the particle 'et ...'.

However, 'et is virtually excluded in the poetry, and it co-occurs mostly with salient nominals, for instance, with the animate indefinite pronoun mi 'whom' (Isaiah 68:8; 37:23) but not before its inanimate equivalent mah 'what'. The marginal impact of animacy, among other factors conducive to use of Hebrew 'et, provides an interesting semantic parallel with Maltese. It is worth noting here that the animacy constraint in the Maltese version of object marking replicates an analogous situation obtaining in Chronicles (cf. Kropat 1909) showing the particle l- expressing 'an accusative, mostly personal, like Aramaic' (Gesenius/Kautsch/Cowley, 1910: §117; Brockelmann 1908–13: §95, etc.; Koehler/Baumgartner 1995:509–10). In view of the fact that Late Hebrew acquired the particle l- via contact with Aramaic, Late Hebrew and Maltese can be said to share a common genetic trait.

The Maltese parallel with object-marking in Biblical Hebrew is, however, only partial because, as already noted in Saydon (1964) and other studies, a close examination of Biblical usage reveals that the distribution of 'et does not entirely coincide with the object-marking function:

**Biblical Hebrew:** (i) wa-yitwaw ham-melek yofyel (Psalms 45, 12) 'So shall the king desire thy beauty' | (ii) wa-kit yigga yor 'et-is 'ot 'et-isshah (Exodus 21, 28) 'If an ox gore a man or a woman' | (iii) wa-yasem yohwah 'et-herel 'is ba-re'ehu (Judges 7, 22) 'And the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow' | (iv) wa-yitpasset yohonathan 'et-ham-mor 'And Yehonatan stripped himself of the robe' (I Samuel 18, 4) | (v) wa-yishe 'et-mo'eh wa-'et nahiron 'el-par'oh 'And Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh' (Exodus 10, 8).

Thus in (i) the expected object particle before yofyel 'thy beauty' does not materialize. In (ii) and (iii) it occurs before indefinite nouns and, in (iv) after a reflexive verb. In (v) it marks the patient of a passive verb.

Maltese can also additionally mark verbs by means of suffixed object pronouns but, in contrast with its use of the object particle [lil], the occurrence of these enclitics is not fully grammaticalized since they appear mostly as cataphoric adjuncts vested with pragmatic functions without being restricted to definite and animate direct objects, e.g., in: <raytu lil huk> 'I've seen your brother', and <sibthom il-kotba>

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17 Actually the object-marker [l-] is also used in late Hebrew; its functions may have been simply to enhance the status of the animacy constraint in object-marking blurred by the generality of 'et.
I found the books'. Thus these examples presuppose the questions: 'Have you seen my brother?' and 'Did you find the books?'

From the comparative and historical standpoints, object-marking in Maltese is highly intriguing since it is unknown among the Arabic dialects of North Africa with which it shares several salient areal traits. In Borg (1996:138), I characterized object-marking in Maltese as one of a cluster of isoglosses which it shares with the Eastern Arabic vernaculars.

Whereas Direct Object marking with {l-} in dialectal Arabic is ordinarily traced back to the substratal impact of Aramaic, the specific evolution of this particle in Maltese is obscured by the fact that object-marking by means of a dative particle is also widely represented in the Romance Sprachgebiet:

Dans les autres languages romanes, un nouveau système à marquage différentiel de l’objet s’est constitué sur les débris du système ancien. Ce nouveau système distingue les objets humains ou animés des objets non-humains ou inanimés par l’usage de certaines prépositions: le morphème le plus fréquent est a (du latin ad, avec peut-être des vestiges du latin ab). (Bossong 1998:219)18

Thus this formal trait could, theoretically, also have been contracted from Old Sicilian, as exemplified by Bossong (op. cit., 225): viditi vuy a sanctu Petru ‘you voyez Saint Pierre’.

Object-marking in Western Arabic is otherwise exclusively attested in Andalusí Arabic: teqci lal eerhuen ... teueyet lal garib ‘you shall cover the naked ... you shall lodge the stranger’ (cited from Doctrina Cristiana [Valencia, anno 1566] in Corriente 1977:126) where its source is assumed to hark back to the adstratal impact of the Spanish object marker a (cf. Reichenkron 1951; Isenberg 1968; Bossong 1998).

From the evolutionary standpoint then, Hebrew and Maltese can be said to stand along different points of the developmental continuum in that the former utilizes ‘et as a discourse marker highlighting salient arguments (animate, definite, etc.), whereas the latter, showing complete grammaticalization of this particle, would seem to represent a typologically later evolutionary stage. In view of the fact that Arabic dialects with a comparable particle (e.g., Galilean Arabic; Levin 1987; Iraqi Arabic; Blanc 1964:128f.)19 also appear to utilize it as a discourse trait, the situation of Maltese is highly distinctive.

If Object Marking in Maltese has been lineally inherited from Arabic, it can be said to constitute a feature that brings Hebrew and Maltese close to a genetic relationship via historical contact with Aramaic (indirect, in the case of Maltese). A

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18 The same source indicates (p. 220) the typological parallel obtaining here with certain Semitic languages that utilize a dative particle as a direct object marker: late Akkadian, certain varieties of Aramaic, and some Arabic dialects.

19 For early use of this particle in Christian Middle Arabic, see Blau (1983:142).
similar situation obtains with regard to an Aramaic lexical residue shared by both languages (see below).

4.3 Local prepositions
In Borg (2004) I suggested that the appeal, for the Semitist, of investigating the linguistic systems of peripheral vernaculars of Arabic stems in part from the circumstance that, though language is 'both imposed and constructed, both a set of constraints and a field of freedom' (Hagège 1993:38), peripheral, mostly unwritten, varieties of Arabic spoken by traditionally isolated rural communities, untrammelled by monolithic, artificial forms of societal monitoring (e.g., literary normativism, register stratification, etc.), approximate more closely than their mainstream congeners the ideal state of freely evolving systems. It may thus be meaningful to test out the hypothesis that such languages display, for instance, a freer constituent order in sentences, symptomatic of a discourse structure freely admitting pragmatic strategies rather than strictly syntactic organization.

One suggestive formal trait in this connection — incidentally, indicative of an archaic historical stage, relates to the grammar of stative verbs and verbs of motion with a following nominal designating a place. Whereas most modern Arabic colloquials insert a preposition after the verb in this context (cf. Palestinian \textit{Ar ruḥt ‘al-bēt} ‘I went home’), Maltese shows less explicit grammaticalization here and does not ordinarily admit prepositions, retaining what is, in essence, an erstwhile pragmatic encoding of this semantic relationship typified in several ancient Semitic languages:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{Maltese}: \textit{Wasalna Parigi fil-ghodu kmieni.} ‘We arrived in Paris in the early morning’
  \item \textit{Fittixtu d-dar imma ma sibtux.} ‘I looked for it at home but I didn’t find it’
  \item \textit{Il-bierah morna Ghawdex.} ‘Yesterday we went to Gozo’
  \item \textit{Ghexna Londr a hames snin.} ‘We lived in London for five years’
  \item \textit{Hija fetah hanut Ruma.} ‘My brother opened a shop in Rome’
  \item \textit{Xtara dar il-Belt.} ‘He bought a house in Valletta’
\end{itemize}

Old Semitic parallels occur in Hebrew, Old Arabic, in certain geographically isolated Arabic dialects, and in South Arabian (e.g., Mahri):

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{Biblical Hebrew}: \textit{nēṣē’ has-sādeh} ‘Let us go into the field!’
  \item \textit{lāleḵet taršīš} ‘to go to Tarshish’
  \item \textit{Old Arabic w sürū l-qaṣda} ‘Ich gehe auf das Ziel los’
  \item \textit{Najd ṯabbā ‘l Bahrēn} ‘Il se dirigea vers B’
  \item \textbf{Omani} \textit{ṭilh il-meydān} ‘Er betrat den Kampfplatz’
  \item \textbf{Cypriot Maronite Ar}: \textit{in-nes piruxu kull layke sala} ‘People go to church services every evening’
  \item \textit{ummi efket iO-OēS’a} ‘My mother stayed in the village’ (own observ.)
\end{itemize}

This construction is rare in mainstream Arabic; its occurrence in Cairene suggests the possibility that it once enjoyed a broader distribution in the colloquials. Spitta (1880:359) attributes its unmarked character here to its brevity, a factor which may be a more authentic formal explanation than according it the grammatical status of an accusative:
Verschieden von unserer Auffassung, aber in beschränkter Weise schon im altaraраб. gebräuchlich und häufiger im hebr. und aeth. werden im neuarabischen die Verben der Bewegung als einfach transitive angesehen und nehmen daher den Ort, nach welchem die Bewegung sich richtet im einfachen Accusativ zu sich. Der Kürze wegen ist diese Construction bei weitem gebräuchlicher als die mit der Praeposition ʿala oder ʿala, welche auch vorkommt.

The rule requiring omission of the preposition in Maltese tends to be required whenever the place in question occupies a high hierarchical position in the speaker’s consciousness (home, church, school, hospital, work-place, etc.):

Maltese: Ommi ʿd-dar ʿMy mother is at home’ | Hijja (qiegħed) l-iṣpat ʿMy brother is in hospital’ | Ġanni (qiegħed) l-iskola ʿJohn is at school’ | Missieri (qiegħed) ix-xoghol ʿMy father is at work’ | Oħti qegħda il-knisja ʿMy sister is in church’.

Less salient destinations (one’s room, the garden, other people’s homes, etc.) require a preposition:

Maltese: Mxejt sa l-kamra tiegħi ʿI walked up to my room’ | Qghadna bil-qiegħda fil-gnien ʿWe sat in the garden’ | Rqadna ghand il-girien ʿWe slept at the neighbours’.

Modern Hebrew ordinarily requires a preposition in this context, but a residue of the older usage occurs with points of the compass and the notion ‘home’: nasaʾ(ʾ)nu daroma ʿwe travelled south’; xazarnu ha-bayta ʿwe returned home’, etc.

4.4 Pseudo-constructs

Maltese literary usage and, occasionally, the spoken language, retain a residue of a rarely discussed type of nominal construct consisting of [noun + definite article + adjective] — here referred to as a ‘pseudo-construct’. A striking formal trait calling for comment in nominal structures of this kind is the fact that whereas the adjective and the noun agree in gender and number, they differ in definiteness marking, the former being undefined and the latter defined. As already noted, this construction is well attested in Arabic and Canaanite:

Cl Ar yawma s-sāḥī ʿon the seventh day’, baytu l-muqaddasi ʿthe Holy Temple’ (Wright 2:232–33) | Biblical Hebrew yōm ha-šāḥi (Genesis 1,31; Leviticus 19,6) | Mishnaic Hebrew kneset ha-gadolāḥ ʿthe Great Synagogue’ (Abot 1,1; Brockelmann 1913:209) | Punic ym h'rby ʿder vierte Tag’ (Friedrich 1951:140).

In Borg (1989) I identified this structure in Maltese and traced its origin in Arabic, pointing out its ancient character suggested by its incidence in other Semitic languages. In a sequel to this study concentrating specifically on the occurrence of this structure in the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls, I was able to demonstrate the close formal analogies obtaining between Hebrew and Arabic with respect to the surface forms generated by this noun phrase type. The pseudo-construct was shown to generate three types of noun phrases encoding the following semantic
classes: (a) spatial designations, (b) temporal expressions, and (c) a closed list of stock phrases lexifying salient cultural concepts.

Several features pertaining to the history of this construction emerged with clarity from these studies. Firstly, the diachronic data adduced from Classical Arabic, different evolutionary stages of Hebrew, and from a wide range of Arabic vernaculars spoken across the entire Arabic speech area leaves no room for doubting that the pseudo-construct is very old. This construction’s syntactic opacity and semantic transparency have tended to cause its formal restructuring via insertion of the initial definite article. The tendency to ‘correct’ this construction, bringing it in line with regular syntax, may account for its marginality in Biblical Hebrew and Classical Arabic.

Whereas previous analytical approaches since the Middle Ages have tended to assume that the pseudo-construct was a subcase of *status constructus* (cf. Borg 2000: 39), I set out to show that the principle function of this structure was to provide a nominal compounding device eliminating sublexical complexity through the morpholexical fusion of its constituents. As noted in §1 above, this construction would seem to constitute crucial historical evidence of the parallel emergence of the definite article in both Arabic and ancient Hebrew.

Secondly, this construction, marginal in Classical Arabic and Biblical Hebrew, is fairly common in later, e.g., Mishnaic, Hebrew and, especially, in the Arabic vernaculars; this suggests that it pertained primarily to the spoken register. Thirdly, in all these language varieties, the pseudo-construct, unlike *status constructus*, encodes a closed list of noun phrases that are, nonetheless, recognized as a covert class throughout the speech community.

In Borg (2000), I demonstrated that the three aforementioned semantic classes encoded by the pseudo-construct exist both in Hebrew and Arabic:

(i) Biblical Hebrew: *ḥāṣer hag-gadolāh* (1 Kgs 7:12) ‘the great court’ | *ḥārīm hag-gāḇohim* ‘the high hills’ (Ps 104:18) | *ḇōr hag-gāḏōl* ‘the great pit’ (1 Sam 19:22) | CI Ar *baytu l-muqaddasi* ‘the Holy Temple (i.e., Jerusalem)’ | *babu š-sāʿirī* ‘the little gate (as a name)’ (Wright II, 232 D) — (ii) Biblical Hebrew *miy-yom ha-riṣon ‘ad yom ha-šābir* ‘from the first day until the seventh day’ (Ex 12:15) | CI Ar *ʾāmu l-awwali* ‘last year’ | *yawma s-šābir* ‘on the seventh day’ (Wright, loc. cit.) — (iii) Biblical Hebrew *rū‘ hārātāb* ‘the evil spirit’ (1 Sam 16:23) | *yayin hat-ḥob* ‘the good wine’ (Cant. 7:10) | Mishnaic Hebrew *dām hay-yārōq* ‘lit. green (= infected) blood’ (m. *Ed. 5.6*) | *ṭādāšim ham-misriyyōt* ‘Egyptian lentils’ (m. *Maas. 5.8*) | CI Ar *ʾinda sidrat al-muntahā* ‘by the Lote-tree of the Boundary’ (Quran 53, 14) | Lebanese Ar *ard el-bayda* ‘la terre argileuse’ | *el-fargha* ‘une maine vide’ (Feghali 1938:68, 84).

In the Arabic dialects, pseudo-constructs encoding rubric (iii) are very common in designations of religious festivals:

Aleppo *ʿid al-kbir as in yom ʿid al-kbīr ‘la fête de Pâques’ (Barthélémy 564) ~ Damascus *ʿid likbir* ‘Easter’ (Cowell 1964:385) | Baghdad (Blanc 1964:126f.): *ʿid el-ţebir ‘the Great Feast (Feast of the Sacrifice) on the seventh day’ | Lebanese Ar *hadd ej-jidī* ‘Le Nouveau Dimanche’
In Maltese, as in vernacular Arabic, the most common reflexes of this structure occur in the class of toponyms:


The Maltese examples are here adduced in context since contemporary speakers tend to 'correct' these expressions by inserting an initial article. Thus, for instance, the Maltese term for 'Easter' is today invariably realized as l-Ghid il-Kbir, though Aquilina (1990:1000) has noted that the dictionaries by A.M. Caruana and Falzon omit the initial article altogether, presumably reflecting rural speech. Vella (1831:302), purporting to describe the standard language of his time, inserts the article. Biblical Hebrew and Maltese here concur in relegating this archaic construction to marginal status, under the levelling impact of standard syntax, which in both languages requires definiteness concord between nouns and qualifying adjectives. Interestingly, in both Modern Hebrew and Maltese, the archaic stylistic flavour of the pseudo-construct has sometimes been cultivated for literary effect:


despite the fact that in both languages it tends to be frowned upon by purists (Rosen 1977:191; Saydon 1936:18).20

5. The Lexicon

5.1. Stratification of the early Maltese word stock

The Maltese Islands constitute, from the theoretical perspective of areal linguistics, a textbook case of a relic area. Given the conservative character of linguistic relic areas, the lineally inherited word stock in Maltese would seem to constitute a repository of Semitic and general Sprachgut liable to shed important light not only

20 The pseudo-construct is also productive in Modern Hebrew, where it also implements a lexica­lization process: yam ha-tixon 'the Mediterranean', vrad ha-perel 'the working committee', etc.
on the linguistic and cultural history of Malta itself but also on that of the North African littoral and the Central Mediterranean. Note, for instance, the radiation of Doric Greek from Sicily reflected in the residual Maltese term *tames, pl twames* 'the ventricle of a lamb containing rennet used for curdling milk, turning it into fresh cheese' (Aquilina II, 1393) continuing the Greek lexeme *támisos* 'rennet' (Liddell / Scott 1996:1755), as in Theocritus’ expression *dérma néas tamísioio potósdon* (Idyll VII, 16) ‘a goathide still reeking of rennet’. The Sicilian Italian cognate *tumazzu* ‘il latte delle pecore, capre, bufale, etc.’ cited by Aquilina (loc. cit.) would seem to confirm this term’s areal source; the Maltese lexeme is, interestingly, formally closer to the Greek etymon than its Sicilian cognate.

Some Latinisms mediated by Berber to N.African Arabic also show up in Maltese: *fellus* ‘chick’ < *pullus* ‘poulé’, *qattus* ‘cat’ < *cattus* ‘chat’ (Gaffiot 1934:1276, 276). However, Malt *gawwija* ‘seagull’ < *Latgauia* ‘moette’ (Gaffiot 1934:705) appears to be unattested in Arabic. These residual Latinisms in Maltese plausibly harking back to ancient Greek or Latin are suggestive in historical research on ancient substrata in this language since they underscore the need for a systematic probe into parallel traces of putative ancient Semitic elements. Thus an archaic layer of Arabic survives in some commonly used terms:

*gebel, u.n. gebla* ‘stone’ — Old and dialectal Ar *gabal* ‘mountain; ... sometimes it means stone’ (Lane 376) | *seta*, yista’ ‘be able’ < *istá:a, yastí:u* (Lane 1891) | *gagal* [gáal] ‘he obliged (s.o. to do s.th.)’ < *gálal* ‘he put’ (Hava 92) | *mindu* ‘since’ < OA *mínũ* (< Cl Ar *munũ* ~ mud, Wright 1988:174; W-D. Fischer 1972:142) | *iva* – *iwa* ‘yes’ (continuing the high vowel *i*) < OA *i-wallah* ‘yea, by God!’ (Lane 132; Wright l:285) | *bosta* ‘many’ < OA *basta* (Lane 113) | *sa* ‘until, up to’; *sa l-hamsa* ‘until five o’clock’ – (?) N Yem *s* ‘nach’ as in *s* *tál* ‘nach unten’ (downwards) (Behnstedt 1987:92) | *miera, imieri* ‘contradict’ < OA *mard* (Hava 717) | *bosta* ‘many’ < OA *basta* (Lane 113) | *qatt* ‘never’ < OA *qattu*, etc.

5.2 Historical aspects of the Semitic Maltese lexicon
Despite the mutual genetic distance obtaining between them, Maltese and Hebrew show a fair degree of convergence in their respective lineally inherited lexical inventories. This can be illustrated by reference to the nomenclature of body parts, much of which pertains to the realm of basic lexicon. In the following display, the first lexeme of each pair of cognates represents Maltese, and the second, Modern Hebrew:

‘head’ <ras ~ roš | ‘eye’ *ghajn* ~ *‘ayin | ‘ear’ *widna* ~ *ozen | ‘hair’ *xaghar* ~ *še‘ar | ‘lip’ *xoffa* ~ *šafa | ‘tooth’ *sinna* ~ *šen | ‘tongue’ *šičen* ~ *lušon | ‘mouth’ *fomm* ~ *pe | ‘arm’ *driegh* ~ *zro‘i | ‘shoulders’ *kitfejm ~ *ktefayim | ‘hand’ *id` ~ *yad | ‘fingernails’ *difrejm ~ *cipornayim | ‘foot’ * rigs ~ *regef | ‘leg (between knee and ankle)’ *sieq ~ *šok | ‘finger’ *seba‘ ~ *ebeb | ‘thigh’ *wirk ~ *yereš | ‘heel’ *gharqub ~ *‘akeb (< *aqeb), etc.

21 Maltese *fomm* ‘mouth’ — OA *fam* pertains to literary usage; the parallel term *halq* is more common in spoken usage.
22 Note also Maltese *jedd* ‘right, prerogative’ < dialectal Ar *yudd* ‘hand’ — OA *yud*. 

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Within the specific ambit of the Arabic dialect continuum, Maltese has, nonetheless, achieved a striking degree of originality, not least, on account of unusual lexical-semantic patterns setting it apart from most mainstream dialects of Arabic. The semantic domain of body parts reflects some of these proclivities; note the following Maltese terms, their etymologies, and their most common Arabic equivalents,

(i) <halq> 'mouth' - OA halq 'throat, gullet' — fumm
(ii) <geddum> 'chin' — OA ziqq 'wineskin' — baten
(iii) <zaqq> 'belly' — OA zokra 'small wine or vinegar skin'
(iv) <minkeb> 'elbow' — OA mankib 'shoulder'
(v) <rkoppa> 'knee' — rukba
(vi) <qurriegha> 'cranium'
(vii) <zokra> 'navel'
(viii) <gharqub> 'heel'

Most of the Maltese lexemes cited here have cognates in literary or some form of colloquial Arabic. Dialectal Arabic terms for 'mouth', 'chin', and 'belly', usually include derivatives of the roots {fmm}, {dqn}, and {btn}, respectively, as in Moroccan jomm, dqen and kerSlbten (Sobleman/Harrell 1963:127, 33, 21). Allowing for shifts in meaning, lexemes (i), (ii), and (iii) exist in Classical Arabic; (vi) and (vii) are well known exclusively from vernaculars of Eastern Arabic:

Cairo qurrâet ir-râs 'skull' (Spiro 1895:483) — Lebanese zokre 'nombril' (Denizeau 1960: 223) — Syrian Ar zukra 'nombril' (Muhlt in Dozy I, 597) — North Palest Ar zukra (Kufr Yasif, Dâlyat il-Karmil, Saxnin, Rami, etc.; pers. obs.),

Malt <gharqub> 'heel' represents a distinctly archaizing trend in the lineally inherited component of the Maltese lexicon, being paralleled mostly by dialectal Arabic ka'b in the Levant but by gdem in Morocco; it has cognates in Yemenite, Andalusí Arabic, Mauritania, and several Bedouin vernaculars:

Yemen 'argâb/arkûb 'Ferse' (Behnstedt, Glossar II, 815) — Mauritania 'argûb 'le pied (d'une montagne)' (Pierret 1948:141) — Andalusí Ar 'urqûb/argûb 'heel(bone)' (Corriente 1997: 351) — Negev Bedouin 'argûb, pl 'arâqîb 'hock', etc.,

this being but one of several lexical isoglosses that Malta and Al-Andalus acquired via historical contact with Arabian dialects, Yemenite in particular (cf. Behnstedt 2003).

Cf. however, Baghdad halq, pl blâg 'mouth' (Clarity/Stowasser/Wolfe 1964:116). The Maltese lexeme <fomm> occurs mainly in a literary register. North African Arabic also has derivatives of dqm: Tangiers dqum 'bouche; employé à côté de fumm' (Marçais 1911:300) — Yemen duqm/dugm 'Mund, Schnabel' (Behnstedt 2003:351; Piamenta I, 154).

The lexical impact of Greek medical jargon on the Arabic lexicon plausibly accounts for the origin of this Maltese semantic pattern, cf. the Classical Arabic expression istsiqât 'ziqqpy 'Asîtes, dropsy of the belly' (Hava 291) calquing Gk askitês 'id.' < askos 'wineskin.'
Whereas the lexical and semantic transfer in (iii) may well be a local development, the semantic pattern of Malt ǧhaksi 'ankle' finds no exact parallel in literary or vernacular Arabic, since cognates of this term in Arabic colloquial usage refer to the elbow or other parts of the body:

Aleppo ʿaks, pl ʿkas 'coude' (Barthélemy 543) ~ Palmyra ʿakos, pl ʿakūs 'coude' (Cantineau 1934:II:1) ~ Egyptian Ar ʿaks 'coude' (Bocthor in Dozy II, 156) ~ Yemenite ʾegās 'penis' (Informant) ~ Andalusī Ar ʿaksah 'plait of a woman's hair' (Corriente 1997:361) || Cl Ar ʿakasa l-baʿār 'he tied the camel's neck to one of his fore legs' (Lane 2121).

The aforementioned comparative observations relating to the composition of the Maltese lexicon would seem to suggest that its areally syncretic nature is a by-product of a multiple historical stratification plausibly ascribable to contactual factors concomitant with the Maltese Islands' settlement history.

The following remarks will attempt to reconstruct the earliest linguistic layers of the Maltese word stock with the aim of identifying in a tentative fashion putative Phoenico-Punic substrata, and surveying other non-Arabic (mainly Aramaic) substrata, either unique to Maltese (and, possibly, also inherited with Phoenico-Punic) or shared with Levantine colloquial Arabic.

Punic is believed to have survived in North Africa until the Arab invasion of the 6th century. A hypothesis postulating a Phoenico-Punic lexical stratum in Maltese entails the assumption that Punic speech survived in the Maltese Islands at least until the 9th century. The historical background to this linguistic situation has yet to be elaborated. Commenting on the general and linguistic acculturation of the Maltese Islands under Roman rule, Bonanno (1992:14) states:

In the first place, after its conquest by the Romans Malta was not Romanised overnight. For a couple of centuries the Punic substratum can be detected surviving in the forms and production techniques of the ceramic repertoire. The survival of the Punic religious cults is documented by several inscriptions. The Punic language seems to have survived even longer, at least for a further century, till the coming of the Apostle Paul to the island in AD 60. On this occasion Luke, the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, describing the Maltese barbaroi, clearly showed the extraneousness of their language to Greek and Latin with which he and Paul were familiar.27

Unfortunately, no later reference to the linguistic situation of the Maltese Islands occurs in the classical sources. However, the lack of an explicit historical record attesting to the continuity of Punic until the arrival of Arabic-speaking settlers in Malta should not be too readily be invoked as implying the obsolescence of Punic at the time.28 Malta's insular habitat no doubt slowed down its cultural momentum in relation to its adjacent mainland; thus Ashby (1915) remarked that

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27 The reference here is to Acts XXVIII:1–11.

28 Analogous situations have existed in the history of the Semitic languages; thus Akkadian is now known to have survived until the Christian era, and Aramaic, long presumed dead, was re-discovered in the 19th century.
the Neolithic period of the Maltese Islands lasted longer than it did in other parts of the Mediterranean.

Above all, in view of the fact that the phonological traits etched in §2.1 do not lend themselves to a satisfactory explanation within the bounds of the historical phonology of Arabic, Jean Cantineau’s assumption of a Punic substratum in Maltese would seem to make good sense. Reviewing the chronology of late Punic, Lipiński (1997:60) has stated:

As far as our information goes, Neo-Punic continued to be spoken in North Africa until the 5th century A.D., perhaps down to the 11th century A.D. at Surt, in Libya …

In this respect, the situation of Maltese bears close comparison with another traditionally well-sheltered peripheral offshoot of colloquial Arabic, i.e., Cypriot Maronite Arabic, since this special Arabic vernacular retains not only clear stratal elements of Aramaic studied in Borg (2004:36–59), but also residual links with Phoenician and Ugaritic that appear to be unique in the Arabic dialect area:

**Cypriot Maronite Arabic**

1. *'afra* 'devil' < Phoenician *prt* 'infernales partes' (Krahmalkov 2000:384) | 2. *tarra, pi'arri* 'empty out; exhaust, consume' – Phoenician *ry* 'empty out' (Krahmalkov 2000:387) | 3. *'prt* 'be consumed' (Del Olmo/Sanmartin 2003:1, 185) | 4. *'prt* 'ausleeren' (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:617) | 5. *'prt* 'empty out' (Krahmalkov 2000:387) – Late Hebrew *'prt* 'ausleeren' (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:617) | 6. Ugaritic *

Apart from possible residues of Phoenico-Punic, Maltese occasionally displays strikingly archaic lexifications and semantic patterns sometimes harking back to early Semitic: *'tarbija* 'baby' – Assyrian *tarbittu* 'rearling, offspring' (CAD XVIII, 223). Particularly noteworthy is the fact that, lexical conservatism aside, Maltese often retains within its lineally inherited Arabic word stock meaning patterns closer to those of cognate forms in other Semitic languages:

**Malt** *xela, jixli* 'accuse' – Ar *šaša (i)* 'ala ‘médire de (qqn)’ (Aleppo; Barthélémy 406) | Akkadian *šalatu* 'sully s.o. with accusation' (Black et al. 2000:313) | Malt *farrak* 'crumble, smash, shatter' – Ar *farrak* 'rub, crumble' – Babylonian Aramaic *prk* 'break, shatter' (Sokoloff 2000:447) | Malt *qilla* 'severity, harshness' – Ar *qilla* 'paucity' – Punic *qilh* 'curse' (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:II, 1011) | Malt *felli* 'slice' – Ar *fly* 'delouse, scrutinize' – Neo-Aramaic *pâša* 'slice' (Maclean 1854:252).

The following section will attempt to identify some possible Phoenico-Punic substratal elements in present-day Maltese.

**5.3 Reflexes of putative Phoenico-Punic terms in Maltese**

Given the fragmentary attestation of the Phoenico-Punic lexicon, consisting largely of epigraphic material culled from funerary texts, inscriptions, etc., the material at the researcher’s disposal comprises often items of basic lexicon shared with other
Semitic languages. However, proceeding via a process of elimination, it is possible to arrive at a small kernel of Semitic lexical components in Maltese untypical of literary or vernacular Arabic and, at the same time, attested in some form of Phoenico-Punic and or Hebrew, its closest congener. This screening process yields the following set of lexemes:


Each lexieme cited here merits an individual word study assessing its specific comparative profile from a Maltese perspective. Short of a systematic study of this kind, I shall here limit myself to casual remarks on salient points of interest.

Maltese <gerrex> 'drive away' is phonologically marked by the initial voiced velar stop [g] which deviates from the expected affricated, palatal rendition of OA g̪m, as in Malt ġera 'he ran', rīgel 'leg', etc. The Cairene cognate karās, yuṣkuš 'drive away, hurry' (Badawi/Hinds 1986:743) is no doubt relevant here but, since (a) it is apparently rare outside Egyptian and Yemenite Arabic, and (b) lacks the support of a clear Old Arabic etymon, the Maltese term is conceivably more closely related to the Phoenico-Punic form. Significantly, the Arabic forms have no Old Arabic cognates and are probably themselves loans from Aramaic. Highly intriguing, from the chronological viewpoint here, is the semantic correspondence obtaining between Yemenite Arabic and Accadian:

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28 The cognate term mukhtar 'iron rod holding the wooden roller of a water hoist' was presumably acquired via Aramaic. On the Aramaic lexical component in Bedouin Arabic, see Borg (to appear).

29 Note the parallel case of Maltese <gidi-'kid' ~ OA gady ~ Heb god. Cantineau (1960) visualizes here a case of deaffrication (g < > g in the context of [d]), however, since this lexeme seems to be the only instance of such a shift in the language, it my be simpler to account for it as a residual trait.
Hebrew and Maltese


Tomback (1984:158) has insightfully drawn attention to the Maltese subordinating conjunction *li rna* 'lest' as a possible continuation of Canaanite {lm} 'lest' attested in Biblical and Qumran Hebrew, Phoenician, and in Aramaic. In colloquial Maltese usage, this expression often introduces clauses preceded by a command:

Maltese: <Zommli idi li ma tizloqx u tikser sieqek!> 'Hold my hand lest you slip and break a leg!' | <Sakkar il-bieb li ma jidholx xi halliel!> 'Lock the door lest some burglar or other breaks in!' || Punic: ... *lm ysgrnm *lnm hqdsm *lnm hqm h' wh'dmm hmt wzr'm *lm* '... lest these holy gods shut them up and cut off that person of royal lineage or those commoners and their descendants forever' (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:1, 256).

In the literary register, it is not uncommon in utterances of a proverbial character, as in the following Biblical passages:

Maltese (*Book of Wisdom*): <Kien biex jiftakru fi kliemek *li* gew migduma, u minnufih imfejja, *li ma* jinorrux jinsew ghalkollux u jwarrbu hseibhom mill-gid li ghamiltihom> (16, 11) 'Ainsi tes oracles leurs étaient rappelés par des coups d'aiguillon, bien vite guéris, de peur que, tombés dans un profond oubli, ils ne fussent exclus de ta bienfaisance' || (Ben Sira): <Tehodiex rna' bniedel1l b'sahhtu, *li* rna tmurx tigi fidejh> (8, 1) 'Ne lutte pas avec un grand, de peur de tomber entre ses mains' | <Tmrxr *ma* mara zienja, *li ma* tmurx taqa' fix-xbiek taghha> (9, 3) 'Ne vas pas au-devant une courtisane, tu pourrais tomber dans ses pièges' | <Tersaqx il-quddiem *li ma* tintefax lura> (13, 10) 'Ne te précipite pas, de peur d'être repoussé' ||

The Maltese particle *li* here should not be confused with the homophonous relative pronoun *li* < colloquial Ar *illi* continuing OA *allādī*.

Particularly striking, as a possible relic from Phoenician is the Maltese lexeme <saghan, jisghon> 'lean against' as in <jisghon mal-hajt> 'he leans against the wall' (Aquilina II, 1268) since it has only one formally and semantically transparent cognate: Hebrew ṣn 'sich stützen, lehnen' (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:853) as in

<hoy hay-yordlm mişrayim la‘ezrah ‘al-sūsim yišša‘ēnū> 'Woe to them that go down to M. for help and depend on horses!' (Is. 31, 1).\(^{32}\)

Equally arresting is the semantic pattern of Maltese *qilla* 'severity, harshness' which retains no nuance of the fairly general cross-linguistic meaning attested, for instance, in Cl Ar *qilal* 'paucity, smallness, rarity' (Hava 622), also reflected in Biblical Hebrew *niqla* 'gering geschatzt, geschimpft' (Gesenius/Buhl 1954: 714), Syriac *agell* 'to hold in light esteem' (J. Payne Smith 1903:506), etc. This meaning is also...
pan-dialectal in colloquial Arabic. The Maltese form rather approximates the connotations conveyed by Punic *qlh* ‘curse’ (Hoftijzer / Jongeling 1995: II, 1011), Akkadian *qalalu* ‘come to shame’ (CAD XIII, 99, 57), etc. It is thus reasonable to suppose that this Maltese lexeme with its cognates retains a pre-Arabic semantic colouring.

5.4 Aramaisms in Maltese

The Semitic-based lexicon of Maltese is principally of Arabic provenance but, as intimated above and in Borg (2004:61f.), alongside cognates of commonly used terms familiar from the Arabic vernaculars, Maltese sometimes retains (a) rare Old Arabic lexemes today associated mostly or exclusively with literary Arabic usage; and (b) a considerable number of terms of patently Semitic non-Arabic origin, with cognates in Aramaic and other N.W. Semitic languages. Highly interesting and instructive, in this respect, is the fact that Maltese occasionally retains lexical doublets, that is, twin reflexes of the same lexeme in its Aramaic and Arabic forms, such as *šelėl* ‘baste’, and *msella* ‘large needle’ < *šlīl* and *šlīm*, respectively.

Lexical Aramaisms noted in Maltese can be classified into two groups: (a) lexemes otherwise unknown in the lineally inherited word stock of Arabic, and (b) terms with cognates in the Arabic vernaculars, often typically attested in the levantine dialect area. The following Aramaisms appear to be unken in Arabic:

1. Malt *ixandar*, *ixandar* 'broadcast (e.g., the word of God); on radio, television; divulge' ~ *Aramaic saddar* 'send' > Modern Hebrew *sider* 'to broadcast' ~ Official Aramaic *šdr* 'envoyer un message à' ~ Syriac *šaddar* 'dimisit, misit, emisit verba' > Chr Middle Arabic *šdr* 'senden' ~ *Turoyo gomṣader* 'er wird schicken' ~ *Mat'ūla Aramaic šattar* 'schicken' ~ Azerbaijan Aramaic *šdr* 'send'35 || (2) Malt *felli, pl *fleli* 'slice (of melon); segment (of a fruit, orange)' ~ Qumran Aramaic *pły* 'be removed, separated' ~ Chr Neo-Aramaic (Kurdistan) *pālā* 'a piece, part, slice' ~ Jewish Aramaic *πλασθά* 'spalten' || (3) Malt *berghen* 'be inflamed with anger' ~ Syriac *ēḥarrar* 'to grow wild, fierce, cruel; to rage' || (4) Malt *bhehen, ībehen* 'to patrol (shores)' ~ Heb *bāḥan* 'examine' ~ Jewish Aramaic *bhan* 'examine, test' ~ Syriac *bhar* 'examine, observe' || (5) Malt *barra minn* 'except' ~ Jewish Aramaic *bar min* 'id.' ~ Mandaic *elbar* 'ausgenommen, ohne, außerhalb'.

Highly intriguing with respect to these Aramaisms is the diffusional channel along which they infiltrated Maltese and their relative chronology. Being unattested in their present form in either literary or vernacular varieties of Arabic, these lexemes

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33 Lexicographic work on the language has identified much of the core lexicon in the Arabic component of Maltese, but there still remains a fairly extensive of commonly used terms of ostensibly Semitic structure whose origin has yet to be clarified: *izda* 'but', *zerniq* 'dawn', *caghak* 'pebbles', *zonqor* 'a type of very hard stone', etc.

34 Bibliographical details relating to comparative material cited in this section will be found in the glossary.

35 Note also the modern parallel Malt *šandīr* ~ Mod Hebrew *šidār* 'broadcasting'.
Hebrew and Maltese may well have been transmitted in its entirety via Phoenician which, like Hebrew itself, had inevitably interacted with the Aramaic lingua franca.

Eminently striking, from the historical and areal viewpoint, is Mfellī ‘segment (of fruit)’, with its close cognate in the Christian Aramaic of Kurdistan attesting inter alia to the sometimes diffuse spatial relationships of Maltese within the Semitic Sprachraum. This topic has been addressed in Borg (2004: 53f.) where a further lexical isogloss with a similarly broad trajectory was discussed.

Another intriguing Maltese Aramaism that should probably be included in the aforementioned list of Aramaisms is Maltese ṣṭār ‘heavy stick, cudgel’ unrecorded in both Maghribī and Eastern Arabic colloquial Arabic outside the Rwala Bedouin form mxṭār ‘iron rod holding the wooden roller of a water hoist’ (Musil 1928:339) and is itself evidently a loanword.

Harris (1936:69), echoing Bauer (1926:801), recognized the fact that in ‘the Phoenician which remained, in the coastal cities, a few forms are found which had been borrowed from Aramaic’. More recent assessments of the Pheno-Punic lexicon also recognize the presence of Aramaisms, e.g., in the Phoenician inscription from Zincirli (Segert 1976:31). Krahmalkov (2000) lists the following Aramaic lexemes including some high frequency nouns, adjectives, and function words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aramaic</th>
<th>Syriac</th>
<th>Biblical Hebrew</th>
<th>Berber</th>
<th>Moroccan</th>
<th>Andalusian</th>
<th>Negev Bedouin</th>
<th>Rwala Bedouin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bgw ‘in(side)’</td>
<td>Aramaic bégā36 (p. 97)</td>
<td>Hbr. ḫnt, pl ḫnyt</td>
<td>Aramaic kynt</td>
<td>Māribī mxṭār ‘press it thoroughly’ (Musil 1928:408)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hzr ‘cup’</td>
<td>Syriac ḥṣr (p. 180)</td>
<td>Aramaic kbēn</td>
<td>Marazig Bedouin mxṭār ‘serum de lait’ (Boris 1958: 595)</td>
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<tr>
<td>bnt, pl ḫnyt</td>
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<td>Aramaic ḥnt, pl ḫnyt</td>
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<tr>
<td>ḫn</td>
<td>Aramaic kē’an (p. 238)</td>
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The presence of Aramaisms in the Western Mediterranean, completely overlooked in previous work, however, raises the question of relative chronology pertaining to these Aramaic strata. In Borg (2004:41), I suggested that a survey of Aramaisms in colloquial Arabic should extend beyond the Syro-Mesopotamian heartland of Aramaic to the periphery of its diffusional outreach where, according to the logic of the Age-and-Area hypothesis, early Aramaic lexical strata are likely to occur. A clear instance of this scenario is provided by N.African Arabic cognates of the JAram m-w-s ‘saugen’ > Hebrew mīṣ ‘Saft’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:420); mīṣāh ‘that which is squeezed in’ occurring in the Biblical Hebrew passage: mīṣ ḥālāḥ yōšı̇p hemāh ‘Surely the wringing of milk brings forth curd’ (Prov 30: 33):


59 Cf. Malt [g] as in [g∂d-d∂r] ‘in the house’ < *gawwa d-dār. Since the Arabic adverb gawwa (like barra) is of Aramaic origin, the proclitic contraction of the full Maltese form gawwa is noteworthy since many Arabic dialects tend to expand this term: Palestinian gawwat il-bēt ‘innerhalb des Hauses’ (Bauer, Wörterbuch 164); cf. Neo-Aram ga ‘in, into, inside’ (Mutzafi 2004:223).
Related ultimately to Classical Ar mass ‘to suck’ — this lexeme’s wide distribution in the East, not excluding Bedouin Arabic, would seem to indicate that it pertains to a very early lexical layer harking back to Pre-Islamic Arabia.

Some Aramaisms in Maghribi Arabic, however, seem to be special to this region, and could therefore hark back to Phoenico-Punic influences on N.African Arabic. Observe, for instance, reflexes of Aram iddar ‘threshing place, barn’ (M.Jastrow 1886:18) yielding Maghribi Arabic root {ndr}:


The usual correlate of this lexeme in the Eastern Arabic colloquials is a reflex of the cognate form baydar < Aram *bay(t) iddar:

Palestinian Ar bēdar, pl bayādir ‘Tenne’ (Bauer, Wörterbuch 300) ~ Baghdad bēdar, pl bayādir ‘threshing-floor, pile, heap’, etc.

Egyptian Arabic and a few other vernaculars here commonly retain a reflex of *gurn continuing lexical usage attested in ancient West Semitic spreading thence to Assyrian:


A formal trait in the aforementioned Aramaisms in Maltese meriting special attention here is the phonetic dissimilation of medial Aram [dd] > [nd] in M ɑ̄ndar ‘to broadcast’ also exemplified in M ɑ̄ndar ‘threshing-floor’ continuing an oft-discussed feature of ancient Aramaic.37 The nasal substitution rule replacing geminated stops into clusters of [nasal + homorganic stop] (Geminatendissimilation) applied symmetrically across the occlusive series also affecting *pp, *bb and *kk. Interestingly, this dissimilatory shift is paralleled in the class of geminated labials: Mandaic ɑ̄umba ‘bosom’ (Drower/Macuch 1963: 344) < *ūbbā and Aram šānpīr [ʃāmpir] < šāppīr ‘schön’ (Donner/Röllig 1964: 44); note also kinkār ‘Talent’ < kikkār (Leander 1928:17–18). Interestingly, occasional reflexes of this trend occur in Maltese outside its Aramaic component, e.g., ċamfar ‘rebuke’ < Ar šaffar, nambi ‘I need’ < *nabbi < *nabbi (cf. bağā ‘covet, desire’).

Salient Aramaicisms that are also well attested in vernacular Arabic, significantly within the Levantine dialect area, include the following:

1. Malt akelwah [sawlal] 'throw; dress poorly' - Christian Arabic alh 'ausziehen' - Lebanese saleh 'jeter' - Assyrian salatu 'sully s.o. with accusation'
2. Malt xewlah [sawlal] 'ausziehen' - Lebanese saleh 'jeter' - Assyrian salatu 'sully s.o. with accusation'
3. Malt lahlah 'rinse' - Palestinian Ar lahad 'rinse'
4. Malt xewlah [sawlal] 'ausziehen' - Lebanese saleh 'jeter' - Assyrian salatu 'sully s.o. with accusation'
5. Malt xewlah [sawlal] 'ausziehen' - Lebanese saleh 'jeter' - Assyrian salatu 'sully s.o. with accusation'
6. Malt xewlah [sawlal] 'ausziehen' - Lebanese saleh 'jeter' - Assyrian salatu 'sully s.o. with accusation'
7. Malt xewlah [sawlal] 'ausziehen' - Lebanese saleh 'jeter' - Assyrian salatu 'sully s.o. with accusation'
8. Malt xewlah [sawlal] 'ausziehen' - Lebanese saleh 'jeter' - Assyrian salatu 'sully s.o. with accusation'
9. Malt xewlah [sawlal] 'ausziehen' - Lebanese saleh 'jeter' - Assyrian salatu 'sully s.o. with accusation'
10. Malt xewlah [sawlal] 'ausziehen' - Lebanese saleh 'jeter' - Assyrian salatu 'sully s.o. with accusation'

This Aramaic lexical stratum in Maltese was plausibly acquired via contact with some variety of Eastern Arabic along with other well-known levantine non-lexical features noted in Stumme (1904, passim) and Borg (1996). In the absence of external historical evidence attesting to direct contact with speakers of levantine varieties of sedentary Arabic, the linguistic data itself remains the only factual basis for reconstructing the settlement patterns of the Maltese Islands for the Arab period of Maltese history.

6. The glossary

36 Indications of sources cited here are given in the glossary.
In a recent study addressing another peripheral variety of Arabic—the special Arabic vernacular of the Cypriot Maronites of Kormakiti (Borg 2004)—I endeavoured to exemplify *inter alia* the diachronic significance of peripheral Arabic for research in a global Semitic comparative framework, specifically on the lexical and semantic profiles of mainstream varieties of Arabic. Linguistic study in this modality can sometimes reveal in dialectal subvarieties located along the periphery of the Arabic Sprachraum unexpected latent traces of older and even ancient Semitic usage of notable interest to the diachronist, such as suggestive patterns of lexification and semantic categorization harking back, for instance, to Canaanite and Akkadian.

This selective glossary goes beyond the immediate requirements of the foregoing comments and comprises Semitic lexemes of historical interest to a comparative and etymological dictionary of Maltese; mainly Aramaisms, Aramaized Arabic terms, putative Phoenico-Punic lexemes, etc.

\[\text{\textcircled{d-r}}\]

*\(\text{\textcircled{d-r}}\)‘threshing-floor’ || Jewish Aramaic *iddar/iiddarā ‘a place cut off, circle (cf. zirāḥ) whence threshing place, barn; also the grain piled up on the barn for threshing’ (M.Jastrow 18) || Syriac *edad/edrā ‘a threshing-floor, granary’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:4) || Ar *andar (Fraenkel 1886:136) || Assyrian adru ‘threshing floor’ (CAD I/1:129), cf. also magranu ‘grain pile’ and magrattu (≈ *mograntu, pl magranattu) ‘threshing floor’ (CAD X/1:46) || Ci Ar *gurn (pl aqrān) and gārtn (Hava 87) || Ugaritic grn ‘threshing floor’ (Olmo Letelier Sanmartín I, 308) || Biblical Hebrew *goren ‘threshing floor’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:148) || Cl Ar *gurn (pl aqrān) and gārtn (Hava 87);

\sim Tlemcen nāder ‘tas de blé ou d’orge’ (W.Martins 1902:316) \sim Andalusi Ar *andar, pl anādir ‘threshing floor’ (Corriente 1997:524) \sim Tunisian Ar *mandara, pl. manādir ‘aire’ (Dozy II, 660) \sim Palest Ar *bēdar, pl *bayādir ‘Tenne’ (Bauer 300) \sim Baghdad bēdar, pl bayādir ‘threshing-floor, pile, heap’ \sim Cairo *gurn ‘threshing floor’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:157) \sim Upper Egypt *gurn/mgrn/gurn/gārtn/gurn, etc. ‘Dreschplatz’ (Behnstedt/Woidich 1999:198) \sim Cairo *gurn ‘threshing floor’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:157).

[Neo-Aramaic (jubb’adin) *ētā Tenne’ (Arnold 1990:28). *Ar baydar is also an Aramaism; cf. *Ar ‘bey dārey’ and *iiddarā ‘Schueer’ (Levy I, 214).]

\[\text{\textcircled{b-h-n}}\]

*\(\text{\textcircled{b-h-n}}\) ‘patrol (shores)’; *baghtu kemm-il *xwieni jbehhnu d-dwar: ‘Time and again they sent galleys to scour the coasts’ (Caruana 1898:102) || Biblical Hebrew *bahān ‘Warturm’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:91) || Jewish Aramaic *bēhan ‘examine, test’ (Klein 69) || Syriac *bēhan ‘test (metal), try; examine, dispute’ / *bēhar ‘examine, observe’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:41) || Cl Ar *mahana (a) ‘prove a.th.; examine’ (Hava 710);

\sim Palest Ar *bahhar ‘sehen’ (Bauer 1957:271).
33

b-h-r

- bera, jibri: 'shine (eyes, stars); stare': ghajnejn Pawlu bdew jibru fuqhom: 'Paul's eyes began to stare fixedly at them' (Caruana 1898:5) // nonclass Am abhar: 'dazzle a.o. (the sun)' (Hava 49) // Biblical Hebrew bâhar, Jewish Aramaic bhar 'hell, burn,发光' (Levy I, 197) // Syriac bhar: 'to shine, bahrâ' 'dawn, twilight' (J. Payne Smith 1903:36-7).

[Note the parallel elision of root-medial [h] in ['nîfmu] 'we understand' < *nîfmu; the present etymology visualizes the possibility of a back formation from *yibhru > yibru with concomitant reconstruction of the root as finally weak.]

~ Cairo bâhar: 'dazzle the eyes' (Badawi/Hinds 1986:109) // Baghdad buhar (u) 'dazzle': ǧuwa ž-sams buhar 'dni 'The sunlight dazzles me' (Woodhead/Beene 46).

b-w-q

- bewwaq: 'make hollow' (Aquilina I, 108) // Biblical Hebrew buqâh: 'Leere, Öde' (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:89) // Latin bucca (applied to anything hollow; a cavity in the knee-joint; the cavity formed by the shell of the nauplius, ochina/buccina 'a curved trumpet or horn' (OLD 244);

~ Cairo būr, pl abwār: 'trumpet': 'id al-abwār Rosh Hashanah; Jewish New Year' (Badawi/Hinds 113).

b-c-r

- berghem: 'incite s.o. to anger' // Biblical Hebrew bâcar: 'it burned, blazed; it was consumed' (Klein 79) // Phoen b-c-r piel (?) 'set on fire' (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:121) // Syriac ebfhrr 'grow wild, fierce, cruel; rage' (J. Payne Smith 1903:51) // Ugaritic br'r 'ignite, burn; scorch the earth; destroy' (Olmo Lette/Sanmartin 2003:1212) // Cl Ar bagara (a) 'to drink without quenching its thirst (camel)', waḡara, yagiru 'be intensely hot (summer-noon); burn with anger against' (Hava 40, 882).

[No relevant cognates have been noted in colloquial Arabic.]

b-r-r

- barra minn: 'except': barra minni: 'except for me' // barra minn fuqek! 'May such a thing not happen to you!' // Jewish Aramaic bar min 'except' (Nöldeke 1875, §101; Barth 1894:47), bar min 'except' (M. Jastrow 188, 189).

[No parallels have been noted in colloquial Aranic. Cf. Mandaic elbar 'ausgenommen, ohne, außerhalb' (Macuch 1993:400).]

g-l-g-l

'gullet' (?) (CAD V, 9) || Anc Gk gargarēōn 'uvula' (Liddell/Scott 1996:339) ~ Latin gurgulium 'gullet, throat'; OLD 778; [cf. Eng gurgle / Gm Gurgel]  
[Cf. Mandaic gagarēthu 'throat' (Drower/Macuch 1963:523). On the impact of the classical languages on Bedouin Arabic, see Borg (forthcoming).]

~ Negev Bedouin ġargūr 'throat' (Inform) ~ Rwala Bedouin ġargūr 'throat, chin' (Musil 1928:115).

g-r-s

<gerrex> 'drive away (usually animals)' || Phoenician grās (Tomback 1984:68): ngrē hō bārdān 'It was driven out of Sardinia' (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:1, 144) || Moab grās (Tomback loc. cit.) || Biblical Hebrew girres 'vertreiben' (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:149) || Ugaritic grēs 'eject, drive out, cast out' (Del Olmo Lete/Santmartín 309) || Syriac garrēš 'drive out' (J. Payne Smith 1903:79) || Samaritan Aramaic grēs 'expel' (Tal 2000: I, 160) || Assyrian garrāšu 'to copulate' (CAD V, 49);  
~ Cairo karaš, yuukraš 'drive away, hurry' and karrās 'dismiss, fire, expel'; 'ikkaras/-ikkaras 'be driven away, dismissed, expelled' (Badawi/Hinds 1986:743) ~ Yemenite karaš, yikrus 'coire; hinauswerfen', karsah 'coitus' (Belmstedt 2006: 1064).
[Colloquial Ar karai 'drive away' — lacking a cognate in literary Arabic — may well be a loan. Note the semantic parallel between Yemenite Ar karaš and Assyrian garrāš suggesting that the rare reflexes of Ar krā continue a substratum.]

g-w-l

<GHawdex> 'Gozo' || Gk gaũlos 'round-built Phoenician merchant vessel' ~ gaũlos 'any round vessel, drinking-bowl' (Liddell/Scott 1996:339) || Latin Gaudōs 'île de la Méditerranée', Gaulōs 'île de la mer de Sicile' (Gaffiot 1934:705), gaulus 'a pail or bucket; a kind of ship' (OLD 755), 'genus nauigii paene rotundum' (Paul Festschrift, p. 96 M) || Punic 'm gwl 'the people of Gaulos (i.e., Gozo)' (Donner/Röllig 1966, no. 62) || Ugaritic gl 'cup' (del Olmo Lete/Santmartín 297) || Akkadian gullu(m) 'eine Schale, Becken' (Soden 1965, I).
[The Maltese placename <GHawdex> continues Gk Gaudōs, a Hellenized term ultimately borrowed from N.W.Semitic. Note here the spirantized reflex of Gk y ( > Malt *g) which is already attested in Ancient Greek dialects (Buck 1928:58-59) becoming general in the Greek koine (Lejeune 1955:52).]

~ Cairo gulla 'shot (athl)' (Badawi/Hinds 167) ~ Dathina gulla 'boule' (Landberg 1920:291)

d-w-d


d-l-l

<dlieb> 'long flowing hair': < holl dliebek u gib iz-zejt: 'Loosen your hair and bring oil!' (pop. saying) || Biblical Hebrew dallīh 'das (herabwallende) Haupthaar; Aufzugsfäden, Kette (eines Webstuhls)', dālīl 'Gewinde', dsbālāh 'herabwallenge Locke' (Judges 16, 4.6.10.12.f.18.) || Cl Ar tadaldala / noncl tadandala 'dangle, swing' (Hava 213);
Hebrew and Maltese

Palex Ar dandal 'herabhängen (meist von Füßen)' (Bauer 1957:153) ~ Cairo daldil 'dangle', 'itdalili 'dangle; hang limply' (Badawi/Hinds 1986:299) ~ Baghdad dandal 'lower, let down, dangle', dandil 'something dangling; pendant' (Woodhead/Beene 1964:166) ~ East Arabian dandān, pl. dandātin 'pendant earring' (Holes 2001:182) ~ Malt dandel 'hang (coat, etc.)'.

[This Maltese lexeme is not to be confused with dliel 'easy circumstances' ~ Cairo dallil 'spoil, pamper' (Badawi/Hinds 1986:301) ~ OA dall 'good manners' (Hava 213) as in ma' kemm rabbiik fid-dliel u fil-ghozza (Caruana 1898:95) 'I realize with what blandishments and loving care he brought you up'. Also worth noting is the link between Ar [dly] and Semitic [dll]: cf. Ar daliya 'vine' ~ Assyrian tillatu 'grapevine, vine' (CAD XVIII, 408).]

h-r-r

dherra ['e:rral 'gruffness in speech': < Kellmitu bil-herra 'She addressed him sharply'
][ Cl Ar harr, yahirru 'to howl, to whine from cold (dog)', harir 'snarl of a dog; ill temper' (Hava 822–3) ][ Syriac harārā 'quarrelsome, contentious' (J. Payne Smith 1903:107).

z-k-r

zokra, 'navel' ~ Lebanese zakre 'nombril' (Denizeau 1960:223) ~ Syrian Ar zukra 'nombril' (Muhīf in Dozy I, 597) ~ Palest Ar zukra (Kufr Yasīf, Dālīyat il-Karmīl and other Galilean villages).

[This lexeme has no clear cognates in Old Arabic or other Semitic languages.]

z-m-r

zabar, jizbor (v) 'prune trees' | Biblical Hebrew zmr 'cut, prune, trim' (Klein 200)
| Galilean Aram zmr/zbr (v) 'trim, prune' (Sokoloff 1990:172, 179);
~ Iraqi Ar zabbar 'prune' (Renfroe 1992:161) ~ Andalus Ar zbr 'tailler, émonder la vigne' (Dozy I, 578).

h-b-b (< h-b-b)

hobb, 'bosom; space between chest and shirt' | Biblical Hebrew hob 'bosom' (Job 31, 33)
| Jewish Aram hubbâ 'Busen' (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:209) | Jewish Palestinian Aramaic hubba/ 'ubbâ (Koehler/Baumgartner 284) | OA 'ubb 'the base (asl) of the sleeve ... or the fore part of the sleeve of the shirt ... but it is a vulgar word' (Lane 1931) | Syriac 'ubbâ (Feghali 1918:44)
| MLA 'ubb/hobb 'breast pocket' (Wehr 684);
~ Aleppo 'ubb, pl. 'ubb 'cavité en forme de poche, entre le gilet ou la chemise d’une part et le qambzû de l’autre, au dessus de la ceinture' (Barthélemy 507) ~ Lebanese 'ebb 'sein, partie flottante qui va du cou à la ceinture, entre la peau et les vêtements ...' (Feghali 1935:175, fn. 1)

[Cognates also occur in Neo-Aramaic vernaculars: Ma'lūla 'oppa 'tasche' (Bergsträßer 1921:1) ~ Turoyo 'ebo 'Brusttasche' (Jastrow 1985:178) ~ Fellīḥī 'ubbā 'tasche' (Sachau 1895:22) ~ Mandaic 'umma 'bosom' (Drower/Macuch 1963:344). The shift of ' > b in this lexeme appears to have been a
Western Aramaic isogloss which today extends to S.E. Anatolian Arabic in the area of Central Aramaic; Turoyo, however, retains the voiced pharyngeal spirant.

\(h-t-r\)

\(\text{ḥātar} \) 'heavy stick; cudgel' || Phoenician \(htr\) 'rod (to punish a son); twig shoot; shepherd's crook; sceptre' (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:1, 364–5): \(\text{ḥstp htr mšpht} \) 'may the sceptre of his rule be removed' (Tomback 1984:102) || Biblical Hebrew \(ḥ̱ṯēr\) 'Zweig, Reis' (Gesenius/Buhl 225) || Syriac \(ḥ̱trā\) 'a staff, rod, sceptre' (J.Payne Smith 1903:131) || OA \(xiṭr\) 'branch' (Hava 175; Lane 764) || Assyrian \(ḫuṭaru/ ḥuṭartu/ḫuṭīru\) 'branch, stick, staff' (Black et al. 2000:123) || Akkadian \(ḥuṭtu\) 'scepter, staff, stick, branch, twig' (CAD VI, 153);

[This lexeme is very rare in Arabic; Aramaic cognates commonly occur in modern Aramaic vernaculars: Kurdistan \(x̄t̄r̄\) 'stick, staff, rod, sceptre' (Maclean 1854:94), Mandaic \(atra\) 'Staff' (Macuch 1982:13). Since the Maltese meaning is already attested for Aramaic, it seems vacuous to derive the Maltese form from OA \(xiṭr\) 'branch' which appears to be an isolated lexeme in Arabic and plausibly itself a loan from Aramaic.]

~ Rwala Bedouin \(muxṭar\) 'iron rod holding the wooden roller of a water hoist' (Musil 1928:339).

\(x-r-t\)

\(\text{xārtār}\) solely in the expression \(\text{daqqa ta’ harta} \) 'slap on the face' || Cl Ar \(x̣araṭa (u)\) 'beat off the (leaves of a tree)' (Hava 163), Ar \(x̣irta\) 'tranche' (Muh/t , Dozy 1,363) || Syriac \(ḥrāt\) 'scrape, scratch' (J.Payne Smith 157) || Heb \(ḥaṭā\) 'scrape, chisel' (M.Jastrow 501);

~ Pal Ar \(x̣arato kaff’he\) slapped him' (Informant; Baqah al-Gharbiyya).

[The basic meaning of Pal Ar \(x̣arāt\) (u) is 'harvesting fruit in a traditional manner', i.e., by knocking down the olives, fruit, etc. by means of a long stick.]

\(h-n-t\)

\(\text{ḥanut} \) 'shop' || Cl Ar \(ḥ̱nūt\) 'a shop; particularly the house [or shop] of a vintner, in which wine is sold' (Lane 661) || Punic \(hnt,\) pl \(hnyt\) 'tent' (Krahmalkov 2000:191) || Jewish Aramaic \(ḥ̱nūtā\) 'Kramladen, Kaufhalle' (Levy II, 80) || Biblical Hebrew \(ḥnūt\) 'Gewölbe des Kaufmanns' (Gesenius/ Buhl 1954:244);

~ Cairo \(dukkān,\) pl \(dakākīn\) m. 'small shop' (Badawi/Hinds 1986:299) – Damascus \(dakkān,\) pl \(dakākīn\) m. 'shop' (Stowasser/Ani 1964:208) – Aleppo \(ḍakkān,\) pl \(ḍekīn\) f. 'boutique' (Barthélémy 246) – Palest Ar \(dukkān/diċēān,\) pl \(dakākīn\) 'Kaufladen' (Bauer 186) – Algiers \(ḥ̱nūt\) 'boutique' (Tapiéro 1971:134) – Dji djelli \(ḥ̱nūt\) 'boutique' (Marçais 1955:328).

\(t-g-n\)

\(\text{ṭaġen, pl. twaġen} [\text{ṭaġen, pl. twaġen}] \) 'frying pan' || Judaeo-Arabic \(ṭ̱ajîn\) 'frying pan' (Diem/Radenberg 133) < Ar \(ṭ̱ajîn – ṯajîn\) (Dozy II, 28) || Galilean Aramaic \(ṭ̱γ̱n\) 'frying pan', ultimately from Greek (Sokoloff 1990:223) || Syriac \(ṭaggen\) 'broil' (J.Payne Smith 1903:167);
Hebrew and Maltese

~ Mor Ar ṯāḏēn/ṯāḏīn/ṯāḏēn 'large poelon circulaire' (Premare VIII, 362) ~ JTrip ṯaḏin, pl ṯwaḏon 'pot' (Yoda 342) ~ Cypriot Ar tayţen, pl tveţen 'frying pan' (Borg 2004:321) ~ Egyptian Ar tājīn pl tawājīn 'Melktöpfe aus gebranntem Ton' (Behnstedt/Woidich 1987:139) ~ Yem tāqṭan 'fry' (Piamenta II, 300).

ṯ-r-š

truṣ 'deaf' || Cl Ar ṭ(a)trāš/ṭutrubš/ṭutrubš 'heavy, or dull of hearing' ("not genuine Arabic"; Lane 1841) || Jewish Aramaic ṭaşša 'deafness' (M.Jastrow 558; Vollers 1897:292) || Mandaic trūš 'тауб' (Nöldeke 1875:§101; J.Barth 1894:47), ṭarūš(a) 'тауб' (Macuch 1965:499).

[Both the root ṭrš and the nominal scheme of this lexeme have been adopted from Aramaic; in fact, the Old Arabic form of this lexeme was characterized by the medieval grammarians as 'not genuine Arabic'; the native Arabic equivalent for 'deaf' is ṣammūm, ṣammā, pl summā.]

k-d

<katusa> 'water pipe' || Biblical Hebrew kad 'kleiner Krug' (Gesenius/Buhl 335) || Ugaritic kd 'jar' (Olmo Lette/Sammartin II, 429) || Gk kádos 'jar or vessel for water or wine' (Liddell/Scott 1996:848) || subcl Ar qādūš, pl qawādīš 'trough of a water-wheel' (Hava 592);

~ Upper Egypt qādūš 'Tonröhre als Bienenstock' (Behnstedt/Woidich 1994:252), 'feeder tunnel by which the grain is introduced between the stones of a mill' (Davies 1981:442) ~ Marazig Bedouin qādūš, pl qawādīš 'godet de noria' (Boris 513) ~ Helān (N. Syria) qādūš 'ein grosser Zuber' (Dalman VI, 52).

l-h-l-h

<lahlah> 'rinse in water' || Punic lh 'moist' (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:1, 570) || Samaritan Aramaic lh 'sap' ~ lhī 'moisture' (Tal II, 432) || Cl Ar alahha 'give continuous rain (cloud)'

~ Palest Ar lahlah 'rinse' (Informant).

l-m

<lm> 'lest': Ahjar nmorru d-dar li ma jīgix huk u ma jīsbniex hemm! 'It's best for us to go home lest your brother should come and not find us there!' || Phoenician ... lm ysgnm ḫnum ḫqāṣm 'wṣyqṣn ḫmnkt ḫw ḫdmm hmt wṣrṣm ḫlm '... lest these holy gods shut them up and cut off that person of royal lineage or those commoners and their descendants forever' (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:1, 256) || Biblical Hebrew lmḥ (Tomback 1984:158) || Aramaic ḫmā (Krahmalkov 2001:256).

l-q-t

<laqat, jolqot> 'hit': tefaghlu ḡebla u laqtu 'He hurled a stone at him and hit him' || noncl literary Ar laqqt 'throw (coins) at' (Hava 794), naqat, pl nuqāt 'pièces de monnaie qu’on jette ou qu’on donne aux musiciens dans une fête, à la mariée dans une noce' (Dozy II, 722) || Babylonian Aramaic nāt 'take a certain direction' (Sokoloff 2002:774);
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[Most Arabic vernaculars retain lqt 'gather'; highly striking here is the semantic correspondence of Malt lqt with Lebanese, Egyptian, and S.E.Anatolian cognates, ultimately continuing an Aramaic substrate.]

(?) *m-l-t

<Malta> [malta] (toponym) || Biblical Hebrew nimlat 'entschlüpfen, entkommen' (Gesenius/Buhl 428) || Gk Melite || Latin Melita 'ile de Malte' (Gaffiot 962) : Transit Melitam Romanus insulam integram; Urit populatur vastat, rem hostium concinnat 'The Roman crosses over to Malta, an island unimpaired; he lays it waste by fire and slaughter, and finishes the affairs of the enemy' (Cnaevius Naevius [c 264–221 B.C.], Bellum Punicum sive Carmen Belli Poenici, Liber IV, 31–32 ; ed. and trans., Warmington II: 1936).

[The derivation of Malta's name from W.Semitic [mlt] has often been suggested in light of the perception of Diodorus Siculus who states: 'The island is a colony planted by the Phoenicians, who, as they extended their trade to the western ocean, found in it a place of safe retreat, since it was well supplied with harbours and lay in the open sea' (emphasis added). Subsequent writers have always highlighted this facet of the Maltese Islands, e.g., 'ein vorzüglich geeigneter Ort für Zuflucht und Rast mitten im hohen Meer' (Meltzer 1879, I:29). Another possibility suggested in Moscati (1968:193) is that the word ñn- on "coins which Malta started to strike shortly before the Roman occupation ... was probably the Phoenician name of the island'.]

n-y-r

<nir tan-newl, pl njar> 'heddle, warp-cord attached to the beam of the loom' (Aquilina II, 914) || Cl Ar nira 'ornamental border of a piece of cloth; ... the woof of a piece of cloth; cane-roll on which the warp is rolled when put into the loom' (Lane 2870–71) || Syriac nira 'a yoke of oxen; the beam of the weaver’s loom, the weft' (J.Payne Smith 1903:339) || Jewish Aramaic nira 'yoke; cross-beam of the loom' (Sokoloff 1990:350; M.Jastrow 909) || Assyrian niru 'yoke, crosspiece' (CAD XI, pt. 2:260);

~ Cairo nîr, pl nîyar 'heddle-wire', nöl, pl 'anwal 'loom' (Badawi/Hinds 1986:894, 892) ~ Damascus nöl, pl mwal 'loom' (Stowasser/Ani 142) ~ Negev Bedouin nûrih 'the transverse wooden stick of the loom' (own observ.) ~ Rwala Bedouin nîra 'id' (Musil 1928:68) ~ Kuwait minyar 'wooden rod holding up threads (of loom)' (Dickson 1949:98) ~ Palmyra nîre 'joug (du métier à tisser)' (Cantineau II, 29, 25).

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<saghon, jisghon> 'lean against': <jisghon mal-hajt> 'he leans against the wall' (Aquilina II, 1268) || Biblical Hebrew šn 'sich stützen, lehnen' (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:853); hoy hay-yordlm mi$rayim b'ezrah 'al-sūsim yiššar'ēnū 'Woe to them that go down to M. for help and depend on horses!' (Is. 31,1);

[Cl Ar su'nah, pl su'an 'pavilion' (Hava 322) is completely isolated in Arabic and presumably a loan. This lexeme is otherwise unattested in Aramaic or in vernacular Arabic; cf. Damascus lā tadddalā onn šībābāk 'Don't lean out of the window!' (Stowasser/Ani 1964:135) ~ Baghdad tāčča/ričča/sinad 'lean' (Clarity/Stowasser/Wolfe 1964:102).

<sakkar> 'lock (door)', <sokra> 'doorlock' || nond Ar sakkar 'bolt a door' (Hava 328) || Babylonian Aram sukra 'bolt of a door' (Rossell 141) || Syr sokar 'shut up' (J.Payne Smith 378) || Hebrew yissaker 'be shut, be closed (of sources of flood waters)' (Clines 2007: V1,157) || Jaram sukra 'Riegel, Verschluss' (Levy III 529) || Assyrian sekera 'dam up, close, clog (a canal, a water course)' (CAD XV, 210);

~ Moroccan Ar ṣedd 'shut' (Sobleman/Harrell 1963:178) ~ Cairo a'fal 'shut' (Badawi/Hinds 711) ~ Palest Ar sakkar 'zumachen ohne Schlüssel', sukka(a) 'Türschloß' (Bauer, Wörterbuch 261) ~ Damascus sakkar 'shut (door)' (Stowasser/Ani 210) ~ Aleppo sakkar 'fermer (une porte)'; sukka(a) 'serrure de bois' (Barthélemy 349) ~ Baghdad sadd 'shut (door)' (Clarity/Stowasser/Wolfe 1964:160).

[Note that Maltese here shares the Aramaism skr 'shut' with the Arabic vernaculars of Greater Syria.]

<ghaksa [ta] s-sieq], 'ankle' || Cl Ar 'ikās al-bar' Fussfessel des Kamels' (Fraenkel 188), 'aeks 'inversion, reversal', 'aqāša (u) 'bend (wood)' (Hava 491, 488) || Syriac 'qas curvavit' ~ Chald 'aqaš (R.Payne Smith 2967) || Biblical Hebrew 'ēqēs, pl 'ēqāsim 'anklet' (Isaiah 3, 18; Prov 7, 22);

~ Aleppo 'aeks, pl 'kās 'croupe' (Barthélemy 543) ~ Egyptian Ar 'aks 'croupe' (Bothor in Dozy II, 156) ~ Cairo 'uks 'joints (of an animal)' (Badawi/Hinds 1986:591) ~ Baghdad 'ikis, pl 'kās 'elbow, elbow joint' (Woodhead/Beene 1964:483) ~ Yemenite Ar 'ēqas 'penis' (Infor) ~ Andalusī Ar 'ukżah 'plait of a woman's hair' (Corriere 1997:361).

<ghaqqux> 'intrigue; imbroglio, impiccio; perverso, malvagio' (Aquilina II, 972) || Phoenician 'qē falsehood' (Krahmalkov 2001:385) || Biblical Hebrew 'aqāš 'verdrehen', 'aqašā 'krummhändig', 'aqēš šēṭāw 'pervasive in his lips' (Prov 19:1) || Cl Ar 'aqāša (u) 'bend (wood)', 'aqasat (i) 'twist her hair (woman)', 'aqqāša 'entangle (an affair)' (Hava 488) || Syriac 'aqēṣa (adj.) 'twisted, bent, crooked' (J.Payne Smith 1903:425);

~ Palest Ar haqqās 'malign, defame; break (sticks)' (inform.; Bāqah al-garbīyya).
(Historical interaction between [t] and [h] has also been suggested vis-à-vis Palestinian Arabic šā'lab 'in Flammen gehen' ~ šā'lab (Schmidt/Kahle 1918:76*). Note, in relation to the present Maltese lexeme, the metathesized form of this term in Maltese slang: ɡ'hasxaq 'spoil, ruin s.th.]

**p-s-q**

'fisqija' 'swaddling clothes', 'fessaq' 'swaddle (baby)' || Cl Ar fāṣiqiyah 'way of wearing a turban' (Hava 562) || Late Hebrew psyqyā/psaqyā (Krauss 1899:433, 472) < Gk faskia 'bandage' (Liddell/Scott 1918) < Latin fascia 'swaddling band (for a baby)' (OLD 677) || Syriac pesqātī 'fasciae, quibus mortuos involvunt' (Brockelmann 1966:585) || Galilean Aram psyqal/psaqyā, etc. 'Binde am Busen (der Frauen)' (Krauss 1898:472);
~ Kfar 'Abīda ḥāṣṣiyē 'langes, maillot pour attacher l’enfant dans le berceau' (Feghali 1918:64) ~ Andalusī Ar fāṣiqīyya, pl. fāṣāqīl (Dozy II:271) ~ Cypriot Ar faskiē 'swaddling band' (< ṣaq).

**p-l-y**

'fellī, pl fliēli: slice (melon); segment (of a fruit, orange)' || Qumran Aramaic ply 'be removed, separated' (Greenfield/Sokoloff 1992:91) || Jewish Aramaic pōlah 'split, cut open' (M. Jastrow 1181): qā' ṭīmāmā 'er spaltet einen Granatapfel' (Levy IV, 51) (Frayh s.v.).
[Christian Neo-Aram (Kurdistan) pīlā 'a piece, part, slice' (Maclean 1854:252).

**p-q-d**

'faqad/ftaqad' 'inspect', 'fqad, pl fqud' [pād/pād] 'Official inspector' [Old title of a dignitary known as sindaco, mayor, dating from before the time of the Order of St. John whose duty was to visit and inspect towers and castles]'; 'tifiqid' [tif'qd] 'inspection' (Aquiliña I, 304), 'ťaqad' 'accuratius inspicio, inquirio, exploror; esplorare diligentemente, visitare per indagare, etc.', 'ťaqid' 'inquisitio, etc.', 'ťaqd' 'pubblico esploratore o spione, visitatore, inquisitore, ricercatore; sindico delle guardie, colui che va a visitare la guardie delle città, castelli, fortezze, torri, campi, od altre sentinelle' (Vassalli 1796:185–86) || Cl Ar faqada (i) 'lose/miss a.th.; want a.th.; be deprived of' (Hava 570) || Biblical Hebrew pāqād 'angestellt' (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:656), ṭāqād 'watch, guard' (M. Jastrow 1207), miṯqad 'tower' (Neh 3:31) || Syriac pqad 'command, order' (J. Payne Smith 1903:454) || Phoenician pqd 'admindister, oversee', mpqd 'administrator' (Krahmalkov 2001:302) || Ugaritic pqd 'to command' (Olmo Lete/Sanmartín 677) || Assyrian pqādu 'deputy, bailiff', pāqādu 'overseer, caretaker' (CAD XII, 135, 137);
~ Andalusī Ar atafaqqadu 'to inspect' (Corriente 1997:403) ~ Palest Ar faqad 'Mut, jemanden durch den Tod verlieren' (Bauer 1957:335), 'supervise; look after, e.g., one's dependents (walāyā); tfaqqad ḡyābo 'look in one's pockets'; n. tfiqqid 'care (of one's property, herds, etc.)' ~ Cairo itfqaqad 'inspect, check upon', iftaqad (Chr.) 'visit and encourage (lapsed Church members)' (Badawi/Hinds 1986:664) ~ Baghdad tfqaqad 'keep up with, keep tabs on, show concern for' (Woodhead/Beene 1964:357).
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[Neo-Aramaic: Kurdistan (Chr.) paqid 'agent'. paqüdä 'an officer, overseer' (Maclean 1854:255). Significantly, Maltese has retained nothing of the Arabic basic meaning 'to lose' but, like several Eastern Arabic vernaculars, displays meaning patterns close to those of the Aramaic cognates.]

p-r-k

-farrak, ifarrak 'crumble; break s.th. into pieces violently, smash, shatter': (Tefghu bomba u farrket biini 'A bomb was dropped and it smashed a building') || Cl Ar faraka 'pick out, husk (grain, corn) between the fingers; rub a. th. with the hand' (Hava 559) || Official Aramaic prk 'break, damage' (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:II, 938) || Syriac prak 'rub, bruise' (J.Payne Smith 1903:460) || Babylonian Aramaic prk 'break, shatter' (Sokoloff 2000:447) || Assyrian parâku 'Gewalt verüben' (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:659);

- Cairo farrak 'rub, crumble' (Badawi/Hinds 1986/653) ~ Baghdad farak 'rub, massage' (Woodhead/Beene 1964:351).

[Maltese here retains alongside the Arabic meaning semantic patterns closer to Aramaic and Assyrian.]

p-š-k-l

-fixkel, ifixkel 'he confused' || Syriac paškel 'twist, twine, spin' (J. Payne Smith 1903:468);


q-l-l

-qall, jqill 'insolesco, arrogans insolens procax protervus petulansve fio' (Vassalli 1796:401) || qell, jqell 'become grave or serious': 'Ghall-ewwel il-marda ma dehretx qalila, imma xar x hamest tisalat tqell u thassibni 'Initially the illness didn’t seem grave, but after about five days it began to worry me' (anno 1936; Saydon 1972:74) || Biblical Hebrew qâêtel 'to curse', qlalah 'curse' (M.Jastrow 1377) || Official Aramaic yql smk qdmyhm 'Let not your name be lightly esteemed before them (i.e., according to their opinion)' (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:II, 1011–2) || Cl Ar qâll (i) 'be few in number, small in quantity; be rare' (Hava 621) || Assyrian qalâlu 'come to shame', q/gullalu 'to discredit' (CAD XIII, 99f, 57), ya-qî-il-li-ni 'The king despised me' (Sivan 1984:176);

- Djidjelli qell 'devenir faible, rare' (Ph.Marçais 1955:160) ~ Cairo qall, yiqill 'decrease, diminish, be scarce' (Spiro 1946) ~ Palest Ar qâll (i) 'sich vermindern' (Bauer 336).

-qâllî 'harsh, severe; rigorous': qalîla kienet il-gwerra kontra l-Filistin 'Harsh was the war against the Philistines' (I Samuel 14, 52) || Official Aramaic qâlî 'lerger' > méprise: nsâyît hîvt tęnt mlîh 'tyty mlîh wîl 'tyty zy qâlî mm twîb Ahiq. 112: 'j'ai soulevé du sable et j'ai porté du sel, mais il n'est pas de chose plus légère (i.e. plus méprisable) qu'un métèque' (Jean/Hoftijzer 1965:254).
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«qilla» 'protervia, petulantia, ferocitas, saevitia, nec non perfidia' (Vassalli 1796:418), 'harshness, severity, rigour': «Erodi kien sultan tal-Lhudija maghruf ghall-qilla u l-kefrija tieghu» (Serracino-Inglott 3ed34II, 161) 'Herod was king of Judea and known for his harshness and cruelty' || Punic qlh 'curse' (Hoiftijzer/Jongeling 1995: II, 1011) || Babylonian Aram qll 'type of demon' (Sokoloff 2002:1020);

∼ Cairo qilla 'scarcity, scantiness' (Badawi/Hinds 715) ∼ Damascus qille 'scarcity' (Stowasser/Ani 200) ∼ Palest Ar qille 'Mangel' (Bauer 199) ∼ Baghdad qilla 'shortage, scarcity, lack' (Woodhead/Beene 378).

q-r-q

«qorq» 'sandals' || Jewish Aram qurqa 'a shoe made entirely of goats' hair or of cloth, a slipper' (M. Jastrow 1344) || Syriac qarqo 'thin sandals' (J. Payne Smith 1903:521);

∼ Takrouna gurg 'pair of sandals faytes d'une semelle de peau non tannée ...' (Marçais/Guiga 3176).

q-r-q-s

«qarqac, iqarqac» 'make a cracking sound' || nonclass Ar qarqas 'gnaw hard bread' (Hava 601) || Syriac qarqes 'clash, rattle, rustle' (J. Payne Smith 1903:521) || Qumran Aramaic qarqêš 'klingeln mit etwas' (Beyer 524) || Jaram qarqêš 'to knock, clap, ring' (M.Jastrow 1427);

∼ Palest Ar qarqis 'zerknirschen' (Bauer 1957:374).

q-s-s

«qassis, pl qassisin' 'priest' || Cl Ar qass/qissîs, vulgo qassîs, pl qusîs/qissîs/qassîs 'the head or chief of the Christians, in knowledge or science' (Lane 2571) || Qumran Aram qasîs / qass 'Presbyter' (Beyer 1984:755) || Syriac qaṣṣîš 'oldest; presbyter, priest' (J. Payne Smith 1903:522);


r-k-b

«irkoppa» 'knee' || Jewish Aramaic arkûhî 'the knee and its surrounding parts' (M. Jastrow 121) ∼ Ma’lula Aram rkoppta 'Knie' (Spitaler 1938:9) || Cl Ar rukba 'knee' (Hava 267).
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r-š

<reghex, jirghex> (v/t) 'cause to tremble': <kellimni fit-триq bil-herra, treghexni hekk quddiem missieri u omnii 'You address me rudely on the street and cause me to blush before my father and mother' (Caruana 1898:44) || Jewish Aramaic r'äs - Biblical Hebrew rāśāš 'tremble, be in commotion' (M.Jastrow 1489) || Syriac r'āś 'rend, trample as a wild beast, convulse as a demon', raśās 'bruised, shattered' (J.Payne Smith 1903:547) || CL Ar ra'as/ra'āš 'tremble, walk sluggishly' (Hava 257).

[The phonological free variation of the Classical Arabic forms suggests that the lexeme is of Aramaic provenance.]

~ Cairo ra'āš (i) 'cause to tremble or shiver; frighten' (Badawi/Hinds 341).

š-b-n

<sbīn> 'companion; godfather, groom's man' || OA šabīnīshīn, pl ašābīn 'groom's man' (Hava 350) || Syriac šawalbīnā 'socius' (Brockelmann 766) || Galilean Aramaic šēlyyn 'bridegroom's attendant' (Sokoloff 1990:542) || Assyrian susapinnu 'friend of the bridegroom participating in the wedding ceremony' (CAD 15:416).

š-h-t

<xtehet, jixhet> 'throw' || Syriac šatāt (Manna 781:781; Barthelemy 380; cf. al-Asadi 1988, V: 35; David 1887:170) || Assyrian šāḥātu(m) II 'tear away, off, down; cast off; remove' (Black et al. 2000:347);

~ Aleppo šatāt 'chasser, expulser' (Barthélémy 380) ~ Damascus šatāt (a) 'drag' (Stowasser/Ani 71) ~ Mardin šatāt 'verscheuchen, verjagen, wegtreiben' (Vocke/Waldner 1982: 199) ~ Mosul šatāt = 'axāḏa yazīfu wa-huwa ġālis 'alā ālyatīhi mustar'inan bi-kaffayh' (al-Bakri 1972:284) ~ Lebanese Ar ḥasāt 'wegwerfen' (Bauer 1957:356) ~ Kfar 'Abīda šāḇeṭ 'il trains par terre, etc ... ' avec infixation de r après la première radicale pour marquer la nuance de fréquence, d'intensité' (Feghali 1918:193) ~ Bišmizzīn li-nwayy tawiyīn — šāṭṭir ir-rās 'das Wasser war stark — riß die Strömung den Kopf mit sich' (Jiha 1964:74) ~ Palest Ar šāṭat (a) 'schleppen' (Bauer 1957:260) ~ Cairo šatāt 'drag' (Badawi/Hinds 1986:453) ~ rural Egyptian Ar šāṭah 'werfen', šāṭar 'etwas auf dem Boden schmeißen, zu Boden werfen' (Behnstedt/Woidich 1994:228) ~ Oman (Khabūra) šatăt (a) 'tighten' (Brockett 1985:131) ~ Cypriot Ar šaṭsat, pišaxxt (v/t) 'expel, throw out'.

[Neo-Aram: Ma'āšāla ilḥat, yisḥah 'ziehen (Schwert); zu Boden reißen, am Boden hinzerrren' (Arnold 1989:88; Spitaler 1957:337).]

š-l-h

<xewlah> [šewlah] 'gettar con violenza, tirar con impeto, vibrare, lanciare, etc.' (Vassalli 1796:639), 'buttar via, scaraventare—accezione prettamente siriana' (Barbera 1939–40: 1142) || Christian Ar šlḥ 'ausziehen' (Graf 1905:102) || Jewish Aramaic šlāḥ 'ablegen, ausziehen, enthäuten' (Dalman 1967:424);

~ Lebanese šālah 'jeter' (Feghali 1938:786) ~ Damascus šalah 'ausziehen', laḥas, yulḥas/i yolhoš 'werfen, hinwerfen, zu werfen (Grotfeld 1965:161, 167) ~ Aleppo šsheh/išalah, yoshlah
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'retrier, ôter, enlever (ses vêtements, ses chaussures, sa coiffure, sa chemise)' (Barthélémy 1904) ~ Anatolian Ar šalah, yššlah/šalle, yššalleh 'ausziehen (Kleidungsstück)' (Vocke/Waldner 1982:230) ~ Palest Ar š-l-h 'er zieht aus' (Kleid) (Kampffmeyer 1936:37) ~ Palmyra ošleh, yššlah 'se déshabiller' (Cantineau 1934:32) ~ Cairo šalah, yššlah 'to undress'; šalahu el qassīs 'they unfrocked the priest' (Spiro 1973:321).

(The native OA cognate is šex: salax (u) 'he stripped of the hide or skin of a sheep or goat' (Lane) > Malt selah 'to scrape off skin'; cf. Bibl Hebrew šalah 'das Fell abziehen' (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:831–32).]

§-l-l

šellel, ixellel [šellel, yššelle] 'to baste' (Borg 1997:144) || Jewish Aram šlāl 'heften (das gerissene Zeg), weite Stichen nähen' (Levy 1924:563);

~ Aleppo šall, yššill, inf. šall - šelle 'coudre en faisant des points de fonce' (Barthélémy 1905) ~ Cairo šallī ṣ 'to baste' (Badawi/Hinds 1986:476) ~ Anatolian Ar msallē 'Sacknadel' (Vocke/Waldner 1982:205) ~ Palest Ar msallē 'Packnadel' (Kampffmeyer 1936:33) ~ Malt msella 'large needle'.

[Maltese here retains this lexeme in its Aramaic and Arabic forms, i.e., ʾill and ʾil, respectively (cf. Schulthess 1903). Cf. Neo-Aramaic: Urmī (C) šālād 'woollen thread' (Maclean 1972:307) ~ Koy Sanjaq šallolē 'baste' (inf) (H. Mutzafti, p.c.), are probably secondary loans from Arabic. The native Arabic cognate is šlā; Cl Ar msallā, pl msallā 'large needle' (Lane 1998).]

§-l-p

šellef [ʾšellef] 'to blunt (knife, blade, sharp point)’ || Syriac in šelpo, šulpo ‘lamina cultrī’ (Brockelmann 1928:784);

~ Aleppo šalf 'stylet' (Barthélémy 1905) ~ Syrian Ar šilf 'Pflugschar' (Behnstedt 1997:119) ~ South Palestinian Bedouin šalfe 'Lanzenspitze' (Littmann 1908:24).

[Neo-Aramaic: Kurdistan šilpā 'a knife-blade; the head of an axe' (Maclean 1854:307). As already noted in Borg (2004:37), the meanings 'ploughshare' and 'blade' designated by this root in the dialects of Greater Syria is suggestively paralleled by Syrian Ar šēf 'Pflugschar, Schwert' (Arnold/Behnstedt 144–5), ultimately continuing a semantic field defined in (Isaiah II, 4 and Joel 4, 10 and Micah 4, 3).

šellef 'fishing tackle' || Jewish Aramaic šlap 'herausziehen, abziehen' || Biblical Hebrew šalap 'ausziehen, abziehen' (Levy IV 565).

§-l-s-l

šarcar, šcarcar 'spill, shed (liquid, blood); stream down, trickle' (Aquilina I, 166), ṣar-xar 'effundo sanguinem, aquam; versare, spargere' (Vassalli 1796:227, 627) || Cl Ar šalšala 'drip (blood, water)' (Hava 375) || Biblical Hebrew šilšel, Jewish Aramaic ššēl 'let down, lower, chain down, couple; relax, loosen the bowels, have diarrhea' (M.Jastrow 1589, 1590) || Galilean Aramaic šilši 'let down (garment)' (Sokoloff 1990:555) || Jewish Aramaic šōlaš 'foot chain' (M.Jastrow 1534);

~ Aleppo šaršar, yššaršer 'dégoutter (vêtements ou linges mouillés); suinter (vase poreux), etc.' (Barthélémy 386) ~ Palest Ar šaršar, yššaršir 'leak (vessel); urinate' (Galilee;

[Note the probable link with Malt 'xixelx' 'loose ends hanging down' and its cognates: Cairo šanšīl, tišansīl 'pass a handkerchief behind one's neck and hold the ends one in each hand (in wailing for the dead)' (Spiro 324) - East Arabian sīmsīl/šamsīl 'loin-cloth reaching the floor; a woman's long white cotton dress' (Holes 2001:280).]

š-l-y

<xela, jixli> 'accuse; esplorare, spiare, rapportare', <xellej, 'spia, spione, denunziatore, relatore' (Aquilina II:1559; Vassalli 1796:635, 643) || Punic dy 'to depreciate' (uncert.) (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995 II, 787) || Biblical Hebrew sīl 'verschmähen, verwerfen' <šalātī kōl sōgūm mē-huqqeqēb 'toss aside, make light of' (Ps 119, 118) || Jewish Aramaic šāl II 'verachten, verschmähen' (Levy III, 530), 'asālē, 'asālā 'throw away, despise, reject' (M.Jastrow 994) || Syriac šāla 'despise, reject' (J.Payne Smith 1903:378) || Akkadian salā'u 'sprinkle, slander; sully s.o. with accusation' (Black et al. 2000:313);

~ Aleppo šala (i) 'ala 'médire de (qqn)' (Barthélémy 406) ~ Djidjelli tṣelya 'fait d’exciter contre' (Ph.Marcais 1955:230).

š-n-d-r

<xandar> ['sandar] 'to divulge, broadcast (originally, the word of God)' || Official Aram šdr 'envoyer un message à' (Jean/Hoftijzer 1965:292) || Syriac saddar 'dimisit, misit, emisit verba' (Brun 1911:659) > Christian Middle Ar sdr 'senden' (Graf 1905:96) || Jewish Aramaic šadar 'schicken, senden' (Levy IV, 513) || Modern Hebrew šider 'to broadcast (on radio, television)'; lexeme introduced by Eliezer Ben Yehuda (Thesaurus totius hebraitatis, vol. 14); note also Modern Hebrew sidur, Malt šandir 'radio, TV broadcasting'.


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