throw light on Maltese studies or on linguistic and folkloristic subjects of a kindred nature. We take this opportunity to call our readers' attention to Professor Arberry's A Maltese Anthology (O.U.P.) and a forthcoming book by the same distinguished author (C.U.P.) on our national poet Dan Xarm to such readers as wish to know more about the language and the literature of the Maltese people and to which we intend to devote some space in future issues of this review.

THE EDITOR

MALTESE METEOROLOGICAL AND AGRICULTURAL PROVERBS

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MALTESE METEOROLOGICAL AND AGRICULTURAL PROVERBS

MALTA and Gozo are still predominantly agricultural. It is only lately, especially since the last war, that urban industrial occupations are more than rivalling the earliest and most primitive occupation of the inhabitants of Malta and Gozo (Ghawdex). The Maltese bidui (peasant, farmer) in the course of centuries recorded his experiences in pithy proverbial sayings whereby he transmitted to his children his practical knowledge of weather-lore and landcraft collected from personal observation, by no means infallible though still a good guidance especially to the tillers of the land. The list of such proverbial sayings which I have grouped under various headings is the first of the kind collected from various authentic sources and from the living language — direct from the bidia, Classified under various headings they form the corpus of Maltese and Gozitan husbandry and weather-lore. Some of them, perhaps the larger portion, stand the test of scientific proof, while others are only approximate prognostications subject to the unpredictable variations of weather changes from one year to another. The Latin saying annus fructum fert non tellus is applicable to Maltese weather and husbandry lore, for the general experience is that the success, or failure, of the year’s crops depends on the various elements that affect and differentiate one year from the other, the seasons being to the bidui as like and as unlike as the brothers of the same family (ls-smin bhall-abwa ma fixABBux).

I have grouped the agricultural and weather-sayings under eleven headings, namely (1) the Sun, (2) the Moon, (3) the Stars (these three could be considered as one meteorological group), (4) Winds, (5) Clouds, (6) Rain (another meteorological group), (7) the Sea, (8) Land Cultivation, plants and fields, (9) Animals, (10) the Seasons, and (11) the Months — the last two divisions forming really one group. Together, as grouped and classified, they give us a set of guiding principles which govern Maltese agriculture — the wisdom of the centuries, very helpful in most cases but a stumbling block to further progress when tradition and scientific data clash. For the traditional bidui has greater belief and confidence in
ancestral experience than in what sounds to him the theoretical knowledge of people that read and write books but never handle a spade or a plough. I have not merely listed the sayings and grouped them but, as far as possible, I have compared the sayings with equivalents or approximate versions in other countries in order to throw light on the beginnings and earliest contacts of Maltese agriculture.

The first group is formed of sayings that fall under the heading Sun. There is no recorded folk story connected with this heavenly body except a suggestion of a fanciful belief that when the sun shines while it is raining (Cp. Proverb No. 62) — a rare event — it is a sure sign that a Turk, i.e. an unbeliever, is born or a Jew is being baptized. Children merely recite the following doggerel:

\[ \text{Inf xita u \#xixXA} \]
\[ \text{ln-namma tabt \#t\#t} \]

(It's raining, it's showering/grandmother under the mulberry tree)
or:

\[ \text{Inf xita u \#xemX} \]
\[ \text{ln-namma tabt Lawrenz} \]
\[ \text{Tlabba bica buia} \]
\[ \text{Tawi daggta ta' lembuba} \]

(It's raining, it's shining, grandmother under Lawrence/I asked her for a piece of fish/She stuck me with her rolling pin.)

According to a version recorded from Tarxien (Malta) by Mr. J. Cassar Pullicino, the rhyme runs as follows:

\[ \text{Inf xita u \#xemX} \]
\[ \text{ln-namma u San Lawrenz} \]
\[ \text{ln-nanu il-gibhab il-boċċi} \]
\[ \text{ln-nanna il-gibhab il-lewzi} \]

(It's raining, it's shining/grandmother and St. Lawrence/grandfather playing bowling/grandmother playing as almonds).

Mr. A. Cremona in his essay Weather and Husbandry Lore in the Isles of Malta (1922, p. 13) thinks that this doggerel reflects some faint common idea of the English saying: "If it rains whilst the sun is shining, the devil is beating his grandmother, he is laughing and she is crying." M. Cremona adds: "Curiously enough, the name of the grandmother, which is the Siculo-Maltese nanna, comes under this strange phenomenon to be the pet subject humourously spoken of in the choral mirth. The sporting theme characters cannot perhaps be better explained, but by some universally suggested belief which still predominates in the following Italian proverb.

\[ \text{Quando piove e luce il sole} \]
\[ \text{tutte le vecchie vanno in amore} \]

Grandmother's love affair is by Maltese children innocently changed into the funny sport of an old woman playing at bowls or beating the children with her rolling pin.'

The moon even more than the sun plays a great part in Maltese weatherlore. It is popularly associated with fertility both human and vegetational. Comparative remarks culled from Theophrastus (Concerning Weather Signs, Loeb, 1949) and Pliny (Natural History, Books I and II, Loeb, 1948) bring into relief common ancient observations and beliefs about the influence of this planet on human life and its plantations. On p. 349 of his book Pliny (23-79 A.D.) describes the moon as 'the star of breath that saturates the earth and fills bodies by its approach and empties them by its departure; and that consequently shells increase in size as the moon waxes.' Some sayings under this group agree with Theophrastus's belief (op. cit. p. 393) that 'most important of all are the signs taken from the sun and moon: for the moon is as it were a nocturnal sun... Wherefore anyone who desires to forecast the weather must pay especial heed to the character of the risings and settings of these luminaries.'

Stars no less are believed to influence human life and work. As pointed out by Pliny in the same book (p. 249) 'as the nature of the sun is understood to control the year's seasons, so each of the other stars also has a force of its own that creates effects corresponding to its particular nature'.

The Maltese names for the various stars are: Keukbta iż-Safar (lit. 'Travelers' Star'), the Polar Star; Keukbta fiż-żgħod, the Morning Star; Keukbta Fegha, wandering star (Cp. L. stella errans); Keukbta fiż-żgħaxija, also Żabrija, the Evening Star (in Morocco azzubra is the polar star); Keukbta bix-xuxxa or bid-denb, also recent loan-word kometa, comet (Cp. It. stella caudata or crinita; Sic. la stridda cu la cauda; L. stella comans); Triga ta' S. Anna (lit. St. Anne's Way), the Milky Way, Traifja (Ar. ١٣١٤٢٥٩٣٥١٦٧٢٥١٨٨٣٢٥١٩٧٢٧١٨٨٣٢٥١٩٧٢٧١٨٨٣٢ । Sic. lu triadi), three star group which appears in the East about 2 a.m. and Imbal- la a more numerous group of the Pleiades.

The designation bix-xuxxa, long-haired or long-maneled, goes back to the ancient Greeks who called stars that 'suddenly come to birth in the heaven itself'... 'comets',... 'long-haired stars' because they have a blood-red shock of what looks like shaggy hair at the top. The Greeks also gave the name of 'bearded stars' to those from whose lower part spreads a mane resembling a long beard' (Pliny, op. cit. p. 233).

A Maltese saying warns the people that when they see a shooting star they must turn their faces away and say: Nistrok bix tistorni, sakemm tiġi l-neve tigborni, I'll keep your secret so that you may keep mine till
death take me away'. Those that revealed the secret of the shooting star (the mere fact that they saw it fly by) suffered some supernatural punishment. According to Pliny, shooting stars 'portend the rise of a fierce hurricane from the same quarter' (p. 245). 'The old Doriens regarded a meteor as a portent of so ominous and threatening a kind that its appearance under certain circumstances justified and even required the deposition of their king. This exaggerated dread of so simple a natural phenomenon is shared by many savages at the present day'. (Frazer, The Golden Bough, 2nd ed. p. 19, Vol. II). A belief common to Sicily and Malta is that stars shooting through the heavens are human souls in flight. A. C. Ezemona (op. cit. p. 12) writes: 'An old superstition still clinging to the mind of the Maltese regards the shooting star as the substance of an errant soul (rub mittafa). Also in Sicily shooting stars, which in Morocco (Brunot: La Mer dans les Traditions et les Industries Indigenes a Rabat & Salé, Paris, 1920, p. 47) indicate the death of someone, are believed to be the souls of the dead, an ancient belief we find mentioned in Pliny, who writes that such stars 'do not each rise with their own human being, nor indicate by their fall that some one's life is being extinguished' (p. 189). 'A widespread superstition associates meteors or falling stars with the souls of the dead. Often they are believed to be the spirits of the departed on their way to the other world... In classical antiquity there was a popular notion that every human being had his own star in the sky, which shone bright or dim according to his good or evil fortune, and fell in the form of a meteor when he died. Ideas of the same sort are still commonly to be met with in Europe.' (Frazer, ibid., pp. 19 & 22, Vol. II).

The names of the main and secondary winds constitute a detailed description of their possible movements and veering carefully noted by our peasants (bdewa), fishermen (saqjieda) and sportsmen (kaccaur). Pliny in Book Two (chap. xiv) of his Natural History (Loeb, 1949) says that while 'the ancients noticed four winds in all, corresponding to the four quarters of the world (this is the season why even Homer mentions no more) ... the following age added eight—this system on the other hand was too subtle and meticulous 'nimis subtill atque concissa' (p. 261). Maltese wind-names, with the exception of rub fuj (upper wind) for 'the West-wind', or 'the North-west-wind' and rub isfel (the lower wind) for 'the East-wind' or 'the South-East-wind', evidently post-Arabic loans, are more carefully detailed and subdivided.

The four main wind-names (l-irjeb maggeri) are: Tramontana, North (It. Tramontana); Nofisinar, South (It. Midday, translation of It. Mezzo giorno); Pumen, West (It. Ponente) and Luvent, East (It. Levante). The secondary winds (nofs irjeb) are: Grigal, North East (It. Grecale); Maijistral, North West (It. Maestrale); Lbiè, South West (It. Libeccio); and lx-Xlork, Scirocco, South East (Sciroccu, Ar. ٥٥٢٥٥). From these derive other secondary winds: Tramontana Maijistral, N.W.W.; Maijistral ir-Tramontana, N.W.N.; Maijistral Pumen, N.W.W.; Pumen Maijistral, N.W.W.; Pumen il-Lbiè, W.S.W.; il-Lbiè Pumen, S.W.W.; il-Lbiè Nofsinar, S.W.S.; Nofsinar il-Lbiè, S.S.W.; Nofsinar ix-Xlork, S.S.E.; lx-Xlork Nofsinar, S.E.E.; lx-Xlork Luvent, S.E.E.; luvent lx-Xlork, E.S.E.; lvvent Grigal, E.N.E.; Grig il-Luvent, N.E.E.; Grig ir-Tramontana, N.E.N. and Tramontana il-Griqal, N.E.E.

Other terms describing the intensity, etc. of winds are: riefnu, a gale (Sic. rufulini); buffura, a gust of wind (It. bufala); burraxa, a storm (Sic. burrassa); tempesta, storm (It. and Sic. tempesta); zifza, breeze (Ar. ٥٥٥) coup de vent violent; refale — Beausou; ebreyeg, burning wind (Ar. ابليغ 'Combustion' — Beausou); rub furan, sea breeze lasting all the day (It. forano); rub tal-arte, land breeze lasting all the night; ruie, shade (Ar. ٥٥٥) air, vent; l. aura — Dozy); rub gibla, hot wind (Ar. ٥٥٥, South Wind), rarely used, describing a special hot wind, even hotter than the scirocco; rub proveniz, with which cp. Sic Provunizata: nome dato alla spruzzaglia, che entra nelle abitazioni quando il vento vi caccia la pioggia, o quando senza vento la pioggia percuote le parti sporgenti degli edifici (Mort.).

The winds which prevail most in Malta are the North East (Il-Grigal) and the South East (lx-Xlork). The strongest winds throughout the year are the North East (Il-Grigal) and the North (It-Tamuntana) in winter, the North West (Il-Maijistral) and the South East (lx-Xlork) in summer. The suffix-ata is added to the names of secondary winds, excepting Lbiè to indicate unchanging prevalence of the wind, e.g. grigalata, maijistralata and xlorkata.

There are no folk beliefs connected with the winds. The blessing of the winds on the Rogation Days (the 25th April and the three days preceding Ascension Day) is a universal practice found in Roman Catholic countries.

Weather-changes provide a set of rules on which our peasants, like other peasants elsewhere, base their weather forecasts. These rules are known as ruiegel, i.e. rules, the word being the broken plural of riegla, rule (Sic. regula, It. regola) or, less commonly, egheuged (Ar. ٥٥٥) plural of weglda, presage (Ar. ٥٥٥). These ruiegel are weather-forecasts based mainly on directions of prevailing winds and observation of the weather (cloudy, rainy, clear, etc.) between the 13th and the 24th of December, i.e. the ten days before the winter solstice and two days after. Each day, carefully observed morning, noon and evening, is considered by our peasants a safe indication of the kind of weather to be expected in the cor-
responder month of the ensuing year (13th December corresponds to January, 14th December to February, etc.) Our peasants calculate that a 24 hour day corresponds roughly to the monthly period, so that fair weather during the first two hours of December 13 would indicate the kind of fair weather to be expected roughly in the first three days of January. When the weather rules go wrong as in the case of heat or cold out of season, our peasants say Ghalita fis-xhur, 'We have miscalculated the months'.

This usage is known also in Sicily. (Pitré, Usi e Costumi, Vol. III, 1944, p. 103) gives the following saying: Di li caremetu si tiasosi l'annata – Li dedici misti di l'annu novu si cuniscica di li dedici jorna prima di Natalli. In Normandy it is believed that 'the temperature of the forthcoming year may be accurately gauged by noting that of the twelve days between Christmas and Epiphany (W. Branch Johnson, Folktales of Normandy). E. and M.A. Radford in their Encyclopaedia of Superstitions (1947, p. 252) write that 'in the Border Counties and the North it was held that the first twelve days of the new year epitomized the weather for the next twelve months'. It is said in Chios (prov. No. 22):

Τοῦ θείαν του φερίρην ον ολ ιερείς του κολής, δες του κολής, κα' ον ολ ιερείς του κολής, δες του κολής.
If February's three days are good, all are bad; and if three are bad, all are good. (Argenti – Rose, Vol. II, 1059).

Months' names are all of Sicilian or Italian origin. While Arabic month names, with exceptions like Jan for February and Jul for March, tend to show rather an indefinite season than a month of days, the Maltese months, like those of the Latin calendar, indicate definite calendar months, and the crop rotation, tillage, manuring, digging etc., briefly all work connected with the fields, are related to specific months of the year. In Malta and Gozo, among the peasants the months are better known by the Saints' names associated with them, and not a few of our peasants do not know the calendar names. The following is the alternative list: January – ix-xabar tal-Itirina. (The month of New Year gifts); Frar (February) – ix-xabar tal- San Paul (St. Paul's Month); Marzu (March) – ix-xabar tal- San Giuseppe. (St. Joseph's month); April (April) – ix-xabar tal- San Giorg (St. George's month); Meiij (May) – ix-xabar tal-Madonna (Our Lady's month); GĦajn (June) – ix-xabar tal- San Ġwann (St. John's month); Luja (July) – ix-xabar tal-Karmnu (Our Lady of Mt. Carmel month); Awass (August) – ix-xabar tal- Santa Marija (Our Lady's month); Settembru (September) – ix-xabar tal-Vitorja (Our Lady of Victory month); October (October) – ix-xabar tal-Rušarju (Our Lady of Rosary month); November (November) – ix-xabar tal-Qaddisin Kolha (All Saints' month) or ix-xabar tal-Erwine (All Souls' month) and December – ix-xabar tal-Milied (Christmas month). A similar usage occurs also among the Christian Arabs. Thus Crowfoot and Baldensperger in their book From Cedar to Hyssop (1932, p. 11) write that 'the name Shawr el Salih, Month of the Cross, comes from the Feast of the Cross on September 15th (Old Style), the day when the wood of the True Cross was placed in the Martyrion of Constantine at Jerusalem in the year 336 A.D.'

Some of the proverbs grouped under the twelve months are associated with a folk story or custom and in some cases with a riddle (baja mog-gaġa). The first of January introduces the new year to a world of sanguine expectations. According to a folk belief on that day the sultan whitewashes the threshold of the house for us to welcome the new year. The sultan, impersonated for the purpose by some needy person, asks for a favour in return – money or alms of some sort – to feed his children. The full folk-rhyme uttered by him while dispersing the threshold with lime runs thus:

L-għatba mbajda,
Bajjadielek is-Sultan;
Tib xi baja karita,
Hali jima 'l dawk it-tfal,
Flok ti ġiega tib dundam.

The threshold is whitewashed:
The Sultan whitewashed it for you;
 Give him something of your charity
So that he may feed his children.
Instead of a hen give him a turkey.

This custom is now discontinued but the Maltese author A. Cremona tells me that he remembers how, when he was still a boy, a man in Victoria (Rabat), Gozo (Ghaudex), called ᴶ-Sultan, used to carry a sack of lime which he smeared on the thresholds of the houses while he asked for some goodwill offer on the occasion of the New Year. The Sultan used to start his round early in the morning. The custom survives in some parts of Malta. Why the whitewashing? The white colour of the lime is pleasant to the eyes; it suggests happiness and joy to come. It is significant that in San Ċ to wish a man a happy journey, you tell him tarig bayda – triq bajda, as one would say in Maltese (See Ettore Rossi, L'Arabo parlato a San'â, Rome, 1939, p. 51).

The folk story connected with February is given under the Proverbs No. 200. The value of rain at the end of March and the beginning of April is compared to two chariots, one full of gold and another of silk (see Proverb No. 256). Fr. Magri traced the origin of this proverb to a folk-tale which tells how Solomon, anxious to find his brother who had run away from home because of some crime he had committed, devised a riddle and invited the people to explain it. The riddle wanted to know the worth of a chariot laden with silk and another laden with gold without weighing
their contents. Under this condition the people could not name the right price. An old man, however, said the two chariots were worth the value of rain at the end of March and the beginning of April. The man that gave the right answer was an old man who had got it from a lad who was no other than Solomon's run-away brother. The story is recorded by Justin (Liber XVIII of his Togri Pompei Fragmenta).

It will be noted that some of the proverbs are the summing-up or synthesis or the moral of a story with a purpose. It may also be that such a background story, lost in Maltese, as in the case of Proverb No. 303, may have survived in its place of origin, as one can see from the relevant folk-tale reported by Feghali under Proverb No. 2416 of his collection.

In my comparative study, I have followed the threefold method of: (i) translation of texts, with clarifications where necessary, (ii) comparisons, and (iii) etymological notes on words which belong generally to dialectal Arabic. In the comparisons one notes that a proverb may refer to different months in different places for obvious reasons of climate, but the main point is that such proverbs retain the basic structure and imagery. Every proverb has got its chief word printed in BOLD CAPITALS. Strictly speaking, it is not so much the subject-matter of the proverb as the word least subject to replacement or variation. Such words could be described as key-words because in the compilation they enabled me to bring together a number of proverbs of a kindred nature that would otherwise be scattered at odd places.

I have given the proverbs in the standard spelling of Maltese as written today. Those unacquainted with the written language should know that of the 24 consonants of Maltese only the following call for a phonetic explanation: č is pronounced like English ch in 'church'; ĝ like English j in 'jam'; ĝ like English y in 'yes'; w like English w in 'war'; x like English sh in 'ship'; z like English z in 'buzz'; ĥ like English th in 'bits'; and ħ like Az. ħ; f is unpronounced except in the villages. When silent it serves merely to lengthen the preceding and/or following vowel; likewise gh, now pronounced in limited areas, only when etymologically it corresponds to the voiced velar fricative of Arabic, g serves merely to lengthen and pharyngalize slightly the preceding and/or following vowel – that is (an inflection of a long a), always stressed, is pronounced approximately like English ere in 'here'. It should also be noted that Maltese ħ is a glottal stop and that Maltese has lost all the emphatics of Classical Arabic. The five Maltese vowels which can be long or short according to position and of which ħ becomes semi-vowel ħ and u semi-vowel w in diphthongs combinations with another following or preceding vowel, are pronounced roughly like the corresponding vowels of Italian.

I thank Mr J Cassar Pullicino A.L.A., the ex-Librarian of the Royal University of Malta, for the assistance he gave me in the compilation and classification of the proverbs.

THE SUN, THE MOON AND THE STARS

The Sun (Ix-Xemx)


'When the evening sky is red, get your horses ready for the race; when the morning sky is red, bring your horses from the field'.

Variants:
(a) Il-hmura ta' fil-għaxja, lesti d-debbu għat-tigrija: Il-hmura ta' fil-ġodu, balti b-bejjjem joqoqbdu (or lesti b-bejjjem fejn joqoqbdu), 'When the evening sky is red, get your mare ready for the race; when the morning sky is red, let the beasts remain (in their fold)', i.e. don't take them out, the weather will be foul.
(b) Hmura ta' fil-għaxijia, lesti d-duweb għat-tigrija: Hmura ta' bbinhut, ħu ħwejjeq u mur id-da, 'When the evening sky is red, get the horses ready for the race; when the sky is red during the day, take your clothes and get you home'.
(c) Hmura ta' bi nba, ħgor ħwejjeq u mur id-da, hmura ta' fil-għaxija libbes id-debbu għat-tigrija, 'When the morning sky is red, collect your things and go home (i.e. bad weather); when the evening sky is red, equip the mare for the race (i.e. fair weather)'.
(d) Hmura ta' fil-għaxija, lesti b-bejjjem għat-tigrija, 'When the evening sky is red, prepare the beasts for the race'.
(e) Il-hmura ta' fil-ġodu, lesti d-banju wil-lassija, 'When the evening sky is red, prepare the bath and the soap', i.e. it will be a good day for washing.

Fils-hmura ta' fil-ġodu, dħabbal b-bejjjem, w erga lura, 'When the morning sky is red, get the beasts in and go back'.

(g) Il-hmura ta' fil-ġodu, ħgor ħwejjeq min-robu, 'When the morning sky is red, collect your things from the fields'.

(h) Il-hmura ta' fil-ġodu, aholes il-bagar balti jorqdu, 'When the morning sky is red, feed the cows and let them sleep'.

(i) Il-għodu skun il-hmura, marn fajj ħwejjeq ninni b-bbula, 'If the sky is red in the morning, take away the ropes from your roof', i.e. the
ropes on which washed clothes hang to dry, lest strong winds blow them away.

Theophrastus (On Weather Signs, Loeb, p. 397, par. 10) says: 'Now the signs of rain appear to be as follows: most unmistakable is that which occurs at dawn, when the sky has a reddish appearance before sunrise; for this usually indicates rain within three days, if not on that very day. Other signs point the same way: thus a red sky at sunset indicates rain within three days, if not before, though less certainly than a red sky at dawn'; St. Matthew (xvi. 2, 3) writes: 'But he answered and said to them (The Pharisees): "When it is evening, you say it will be fair weather, for the sky is red, and in the morning: Today there will be a storm, for the sky is red and lowering."'

'إذا الحِيَّة مَعِ العَشِيَة أَرْبَعُ حَمَارٌ لِلْعَشِيَة, وَإِذَا حِيَّة مَعِ السَّنَةِ أَرْبَعُ حَمَارِينَ لِمَرْحَبَة

'Lorsque le ciel devient rouge le soir, attache ton âne pour (la marche) partir (c'est-à-dire qu'il fera beau temps); et lorsqu'il devient rouge le matin, lâche ton âne pour qu'il se repose (il fera mauvais temps)' (MBCH, No. 34):

Quand le soir, tu vois du rouge dans le ciel, prépare ton cheval pour le marché; mais si, le matin, tu vois du rouge dans le ciel, lâche ton cheval dans le douar (tibid); L. 'Nocte rubens coelum cras indicat esse serenum'; Sic. 'Aria rossa, o acqua o vento; se non chiavi fa bon tempo: acqua o vento cu russura, celu russu signal de ventu'; It. 'Aria rossa di sera, buon tempo mena'; 'Rossi di sera, bel tempo s'ospira: rosso di mattina, la pioggia s'avvicina'; 'Sera rossa e nero mattino, rallegra il pellegrino'; 'Aria rossa, o piazza o soffia'; Abruzz, 'Rossu di sera, buon tempo mena: rosso di mattina, tiempu la tina'; Eng. 'An evening red and morning grey, will set the traveller on his way'; 'Evening red and morning grey, tokens of a bonny day'; 'An evening red and a morning grey are the two signs of a fine day'; 'If the sun in red should set, the next day surely will be wet'.

Hulme (Proverb Lore, p. 267) says: These two statements appear to directly contradict each other. On the other hand we are told that when the reverse happens: 'The evening grey and morning red make the shepherd hang his head', and 'If the sun should set in grey the next will be a rainy day'; Fr. 'Rouge au soir, blanc au matin, c'est le jour de pelerin'; Sp. 'Arebóles de la mañana, a la noche son agua, y arebóles de la noche a la mañana son soles'; Ger. 'Abendrot, gut Wetter bof; Morgenrot bringt Wind und Kote'.

Chios (prov. No. 21):

"Αν κα τα άργο ποτηρά, η λαμπρή μικ τα νεφώδα."

If Epiphany is bright,
Easter day will be wet.


Robu, m.n., now used, only in the sense of 'a fourth part of a cow's carcass, etc.; a big joint' (M. robu labam), in the context seems to mean 'a field, a measure (Ar. قَنْطُر)'. But cp. also, ḥerēṯ 'water-spring' and, in Syria, 'farmer, partner' (Hava).

2. In-nahr fidher mimm GHUDU, 'The day appears from the morning', i.e. from the morning you can judge the rest of the day (Cp. prov. No. 1). This proverb is also figuratively applied to early trends of events or a man's character which shows its first traits in early life.

Ct. It. 'Il buon giorno si conosce da la maestra'; Ger. 'Ein guter Tag flingt des Morgens an'.

3. XEMX baida tīqbed ix-xita, 'A white (pale) sun draws the rain'.

Cp. Sic. 'Quanu la luna è pàlita, havi a chioviz, e quanu è rusa li gran venti gridanu'.

4. IX-IXEMX ghandha l-ghalqa tahdimhba, 'The sun has got its field and works it'. The field is the halo round the sun which indicates coming rain or wind. Cp. Proverb No. 13.

'When the sun is in his house (halo) it will rain soon' (Zuni Indians - Inwards, p. 86)

Cp. 'A dark halo round the sun indicates rain, especially if it occurs in the afternoon (Theophrastus, 23); Sic.'La luna (sole) col circo (tunnu) cuorunu (Not.): da indizio di pioggia e di prossimo vento il quale sarà furioso da quella parte dove il circolo è spezzato' (Pitrè: Usi e Costumi, Vol. III, p. 32).

5. XEMX u xita Alla jaf meta, 'God only knows when the sun will shine or when it will rain'. The weather is unpredictable; so also are certain future hopes or events.

Cp. Eng. 'When God wills no wind but brings rain', Chile 'When God wills it rains with every wind' (Champion).

6. IX-IXEMX issaħalunan imma l-ebda borma ta għali, 'The sun heats but it does not make any pot boil! One cannot earn one's living if one does not work'.

7. Bix-xita u x-IXEMX, b-tūnna bit-ġerit ma ttekkennex, 'Thanks to the rain and the sun, the year's provision will not be easily finished'.

bit-ġerit, shortened into bi-ġeri, adv. and i-ġeri, adv., 'shortly, soon', used mainly in oplicative sentences, is made up of bi (b), 'with', + ġeri, v.n., 'running' (Ar. چر).

8. Nhar ta' Hamis, meta x-IXEMX ġünzel 10' XKORA, it tenna l-maltemp, 'On Thursday, when the sun goes down in a sack, expect bad (stormy) weather'.

14
Cp. Theophrastus (ibid, §11) 'If the sun sets in a cloud in winter or spring, this generally indicates rain within three days... Again, if, as the sun sinks, a cloud forms below it and this breaks up its rays, it is a sign of stormy weather'. Mancova: cp. Quando s'intabara gave (giogvedi) la domenica piove. (G. Tass., p. 54). Sic: ‘Quannu lu su li cuca ‘nasracatu (musa lu saccu), s’aspettanu li ventidi punenti’ (Pizèr, op.cit., p. 16); Eng. (S. Devon) 'On Thursday at three/Look out, and you'll see/What Friday will be'; Scot. (St. Andrews) 'Sun set in a clear/Easterly wind's near/Sun set in a bank/Westerly will not lack' (Inwards).

THE MOON (Il-Qamar)

10. Meta d-dinjha łmeghek f-fahhar il-qamar IŻIEGHDEK. 'When the world ill-treats you (lit. drags you along on the ground) at last the moon will give you abundance'. Though your business may be bad, one day the moon at the right time will redress the balance...

Mieghek for maqgehek(Ar. مِيْك) replaced by the third form because medial enqueue is phonetically incapable of reduplication in Maltese.

11. Il-QAMAR jiekol (jibla) kollon, 'The moon eats up (swallows) everything', i.e. when it shines full the clouds disappear.

Cp. Fr. 'La lune mange les nuages'; Eng. 'The full moon eats clouds' (nautical), 'The moon grows fat on clouds'. Inwards (p. 97) says: 'The normal eventide evaporations of clouds formed by diurnal heating is most noticeable during the first and second quarters of the moon, when the lunar disk is apparently growing larger night by night. Hence, probably, the primitive notion that the moon feeds on clouds'.

12. Min ghal-mul etta jknomar, jkfinolu x'IQAMMAR, 'He that wants to fish (lit. rolls up his trousers) for mullet has to wait for many moons', A fisherman's saying, based on close observation of the habits of mullets, which appear with the moon.

13. Meta l-qamar ikollu l-IGHALQA, lest biex tisma xi qarqa, 'When the moon has a halo round it, be prepared for news of someone drowned'. Cp. Proverb No. 4.

Theophrastus (ibid, §31) writes: 'A halo about the moon signifies wind more certainly than a halo about the sun (Cp. Proverb No. 4) but in either case, if there is a break in the halo, it indicates wind, which will come from the quarter in which the break is'. Cp. also Ar. proverb جُبْرٍ مِنْ هُوا هُوا فَهُوا مَرْضٍ . 'There is a circle (halo) around the moon. Rain is coming' (Frayha, No. 1486); Eng. 'When round the moon there is a brugh, the weather will be cold and rough (Lean).

14. Jekk thares lejn il-qamar u tmissi il-FLUS, tuį ghomrok daljem bus, 'If you look at the moon while touching money, you'll be kissing all your life'. According to an old belief, a girl that would marry a rich man is advised to stare at the moon holding a coin in her hand.

15. Tisibex il-qamar f-arat, ghas iljk niket u MARD, 'Don't curse the moon on earth lest you be affected with grief (melancholy) and diseases'. Regard the moon with great awe and don't provoke her malefic influences by your curses.

16. Tgħoddex il-gratet tal-qamar, ghas ma jħallikx TISTABAR, 'Don't count the lunar days, or you'll be restless'. Advice to a married woman not to worry about her menstrual.

17. Dawk il-kib il-qamar, b-ebda kwart ma jkollu SABAR, 'What you conceive in moonlight will find no rest during any quarter of the moon', i.e. the offspring of an intercourse which took place in moonlight will be subject to epilepsy.

THE STARS (Il-Kwiekeb)

18. Il-KWIEKEB lgħemej, għandu r-rith, 'When the stars wink, expect wind'..

Inwards (p. 98) says: 'Excessive twinkling of stars indicates heavy dews, rain and snow, or stormy weather in the near future... When stars flicker in a dark background, rain or snow follows soon'.

19. Il-qamar, il-KEWKBA win-newba, frq ir-raba' ma ħomm xlied sewba, 'The moon, the star(s) and their alternations cannot but produce a good harvest.

Sewba, f.n. In the context the lost M. meaning seems to be that of N. Afr. سِحْبُة abondance de productions de la terre. Récolte abondante . Mois. sun. Cp. ghn.eb maqa 'année fertile' and Blé fertile et bien fourni' (Beauss).

WINDS

(Rjetb)

20. Il-RJETJ imerxi l-bastimenti, imma bu ħgharrahbom, 'The wind drives ships but it also sinks them'. Said of something that can be both good and bad.

21. Il-RJETJ mhux tjetb, 'The wind is not fair weather'. Said of wind which blows when sunshine was expected to ripen the fruits.

Tjetb, v.m. 'fair weather, right time for cultivation'. Cp. Ar. المَسْحُومُ 'the
choicest of herbage', (Egypt).

22. Mill-kshiuh u n-Rih ḥalgeojel: mix-xemx u x-ita jistru n-halgeojel, 'From cold and wind come diseases; from sun and rain come harvests'. Note play on rhyme-word ḥalgeojel, pl. of ḥalla, 'disease' (Ar. ḥalāy) and of ḥalla, 'crops' (Ar. ḥallā).

23. Rih FUQ il-tajjar il-ghakur, 'The N.W. Wind dispels clamminess'. One feels brisker and livelier when this wind blows.

ghakur, v.n., 'oppression, clamminess' characteristic of Rih ḥalaf, fr. Ar. ḥakar 'wounding, biting (beast of prey)', and ḥaċkar 'wounded, stabbed, hooked, terror-stricken' but, perhaps, more likely from ḥakar 'to disturb, to grieve' (Hava).

24. TRAMUNTAWA mara tinxej il-mizwed u tghaqad il-qara': 'The North wind is a woman who dries the peascod and forms the pumpkin',

25. TRAMUNTAWA mara sewwa, imma fuqama torkool, 'The North wind is a good woman but you can't rely on her'. Var. Tramuntana isem ta' mara; meta taghmilba taghmilba, 'The North Wind is a woman's name; when it is cold (stormy) it is very cold (stormy). For the personification of the wind cp. the Orkney proverb 'The West Wind is a gentleman and goes to bed early' (Lean), and the wind-tales collected by Fr. Maggi in Xījahid il-Malti fuq id-Dina ta' Taht u fuq in-Rijeh (1905). Cp. also Maltese expression Tramuntana Dar il-Bard (Vass), The North Wind is the home of Cold'. Cp. also Chios (prov. No. 7).

"Orxan brēxie Borsevā, Then in truth it rains,

26. Rih ISFEL, meta tinjegh ē-lmar kemm jiżfen, 'When the wind blows in the South East, and you prick the donkey, how it will dance!' i.e. everybody feels irritable when the 'rih isfel' blows.

27. IL-PUNENT Italia' u jniżiej kull moment, 'The West wind raises (clouds) and lowers them all the time'. When the wind blows in the West, rain clouds keep rising all the time from that direction. Var. Il-Punent jisqimla ghajnma kull moment, 'The West wind pesters us all the time'.

28. IL-PUNENT inweghed u jaghi, 'The West wind promises and gives'. A wind blowing in the West brings rain with it.

29. IL-LVANT jimia l-vagant, 'The East wind fills the vacant spaces (with clouds)'.

Cp. Sic. 'U livanti, inci 'i vacanti. (Noto – Pizzi, op. cit. p. 44) vagant, m.adj., 'empty, vacant', from Sic. vacanti.'

30. Il-LBĪC rih jew xita żgur ċiżb, 'The South West wind is sure to bring either wind or rain'.

31. Rih il-LBĪC jiţehu w ma ċiżb, 'The South West wind takes but does not bring back'. When this wind blows the Gozo 'dghajjasas' (boats) manage to set off from the harbour, but will then be unable to return on account of the rough sea. Var. Rih il-Lbic, jiddi, ma ċiżb, 'The South West wind gives but does not bring (i.e. prevents ships, boats etc. from returning to harbour). According to Vass (No. 742) this refers to the harbour of Malta, but it is likewise applied by the Gozitans to their own harbour of Iżmir. (Ar. ċiżb 'torrent, current of water; Acala quoted by Dozy).

32. Il-LBĪC jeħel u l-Punent il-LBĪC jujghab, 'The South West wind sticks and the West South West plays about'. – The S.W. wind is clammy while the W.S.W. is always changing.

33. Kull GHASFUR imur mar-riħ, biss il-bies imur kontrieh, 'Every bird flies with the wind, only the hawk flies against it'.

34. IL-XLOKK wii-LBĪC l-aghaj kowgt ċiżeh, 'The South East wind and the South West wind are the worst winds'.

Cp. Sic. 'Di lu Scirocco e di lu Libbici, lu marinaru benu nni dici'.

The words ṛiḥ and xita appear together in the common expression għal ṛiḥ blā xita meaning 'uselessly', 'unprofitably'.

CLOUDS, LIGHTNING, THUNDER AND RAIN
(Shab, Beraq, Raghad u Xita)

Clouds (Is-Shab)

35. Shab mill-LBĪC illma żgur ċiżb, 'Clouds in the South West will certainly bring rain'.

36. L-ISWED ibażza'u l-abjad ixabb'ā, 'Black clouds [righten; white clouds satiate (the soil)]. Var. L-Iswed ide façu u ł xiβba', l-abjad ixabba u le jidejjaq, 'Black clouds oppress and do not slake (the thirst of the fields); white clouds satiate (the fields with rain) and do not oppress'. White clouds are believed to bring rain but not so black clouds.

Cp. Ar. 'A black cloud threatens, but a white cloud gives rain' (Champion).
37. RAFF bir-rius, raghad u beraq ikollina (stenna), 'When you see a cloud rack, expect thunder and lightning'.

Cp. It, 'Quando il cielo è a falde di lana, anche l'acqua è poco lontana'; Eng, 'A round-topped cloud with flattened base carries rainfai in its face'.

38. Sema NAQXET IL-FEKRUNA (manqaz il-fekruna), jew xita biqtaq jew rih fortuna, 'A tortoise-scaled sky (portends) either heavy rain or a gale'.

Cp. Ar, 'Feathery clouds in the sky mean imminent rain' (Frayha, No. 1609); Sic. Celu picurinu, acqua e ventu vicino'; Celu (arju) picurinu, s'un chiovi oj, chiovi a la matinu'; It, 'Cielo a pecorella, acqua a catinelle' Mantova. Cp. Quando al ciel l'è in lana, s'an picò inc, picò dentar la stamana. (G. Tass. p. 54) Eng, 'Mackerel sky and mares' tails/make lofty ships carry low sails'; 'Mackerel scales, furl your sails'; 'A mackerel sky, not twenty-four hours dry' (Inwards).

fekruna f.n. 'tortoise'. Cp. Ar, 'تحمر' 'torre' (M. Fekruma tal-babar 'turtle') and 'torre de la terre' (M. fekruna tal-art 'tortoise') mot d'origine berbère (Dozy).

LIGNING (Beraq) AND THUNDER (Raghad)

39. Meta fis-sajf tara beraq u TRAMUNTANA, jew xita qawwijaissetna jew kbara shuma, 'When in summer you see lightning in the North, expect either heavy rain or a great heat'. Var. Meta beraq u Tramuntana jkun seg il-maltemp, 'When lightning is in the North expect bad weather'.

Cp. Eng, 'Lightning in the North in summer is a sign of heat' (Inwards p. 169); It, 'Quando lampeggia di tramontana, è segno di caldanza'; Ger., 'The North wind doth blow and we shall have snow'.

40. Ma' i-ewwel BERQA, in-nanu jofgo il-mizinwed u n-nanu desti l-imsetka, 'With the first lightning grandpa shells the peaseed and grandma prepares the quills'. In the month of March when the first signs of lightning begin beans are prepared for sowing and reed quills for winding the weaver's thread.

41. Meta ibernaq u-PUNENT ahisbiu biex tkun lest, 'When it lightens in the West, get prepared for it'.

42. Il-bernaq il-L.BIC, ix-xita jelt, 'Lightning in the South West will bring rain'.

Inwards refers to a similar husbandmen's practice in England: 'If in a clear and starry night it lightens in the South East (M. Xlokk), it foretelleth great store of wind and rain to come from those parts; If from the South (M. Nofs inbar) or the West (M. Punent) it lightens expect both

South (M. Nofs inbar) or the West (M. Punent) it lightens expect both wind and rain from these parts' (p. 168)

43. IL-BERAQ dukkar tax-xita, 'Lightning is the producer (lit.,"the captificator") of rain'.

44. IL-BERAQ mhux holz, 'Lightning is not bread', i.e. it brings no good; is useless without rain.

45. Meta tara l-BERAQ, illesti l-jtma fejn tintebaq, 'When you see lightning, get the cottage ready where to shut yourself'. Illesti, imperative of lesti, v.t., 'to prepare, get ready', from It. allestire.

46. Wara l-BERAQ liji l-meraq, 'After lightning comes the juice (rain)'. In a derived sense it refers to the formation of juice in the pips of pomegranates, which occurs about September, when the first rains usually come.

Cp. L., 'After the clap there follows a heavy and abundant shower of rain' (C.E. Empson's translation of Lucretius, quoted by Inwards); 'Rain and wind increase after a thunderclap' (ibid, p. 169); It, 'Quando ha tuono to bisogna che piova'; Fr., 'After much thunder, much rain' (Inwards p. 169) Sp. 'Después de muchos truenos, viene una gran lluvia'.

47. Jekk ma JBERAQQX ma jmeraq, 'No rain without lightning'. Var. Mnejnberraq imeraq, 'Where it lightens it rains'.


RAIN (Xita)

49. IX-xita l-BIKRIJA tnseb il-żarqir, 'Early rain makes Spanish mustard sprout'. Żarqir, cp. ḥarqir names of various cresses.

50. Meta x-xita taghmel BIKRI, u tibqa sal-imwahhar, skollu x'jita l-bidwi, u x'jahzen sal-abhar, 'When it rains early and continues raining till late in the season, the peasant will have enough food to give and store till the last'.

51. Meta Allia jita l-BQIJA tax-xita (or ix-xita tal-kumplament) iżbiej tas-sbil ift wal 'il fuq miż-komma, 'When God gives us the rest of the rain (the remaining part of the rainy season) the dress of the ear-corns grows higher than the elbow'. The last rain of the season helps the wheat harvest to grow.

52. Meta TIBTELL i-ghejebja, tibda teha l-bwejba, 'When the threshold gets wet, bread begins to taste sweet'. After the first rains the temperature gets cool and one's appetite becomes sharper – one begins to relish
food much more. The following is Vass’s explanation (No. 554): *Qui v’è ambiziono nel diminutivo Bujeba, che può signicare l’imposta dell’uscio e la mediglia del pane, che viene da Llibia, essendo detto ‘Il-bujeba’ invece di il-blueba, ove il Lam radicale manca. Il ritmo denota che dopo la prima pioggia la temperatura si rinfresca, e bagnata che sia la soggia, l’appetito, che il gran calore della sera avrà diminuito, rimetterà colta frescura.*

*Bujeba, f.n., dim. of *bieb* (door) (Ar. بِئْبَةَ) by suffixing a (cf. buta, ‘small pocket’, from but) and of *bieba*, ‘crumb (soft, inner part of bread)’, of which initial *b* is generally dropped in pronunciation (Ar. بِئْبَةَ, ‘fine flour’—(Hava); *moe de pain* (Beauss, Dozy). Beauss explains *كَوْر* (pl. *مَكَوْرُ* M. *giene*) grand naure (Beauss).

53. *Ix-xita bil-BOQQOQ xita dewwiema*, ‘Rain in bubbles is lasting rain’, i.e. rain that falls in bubbles penetrates the soil.

*Boqqoq, f.n., a mouthful of water; wine, etc.; bubble*; Cp. Ar. *بَوْقَة* (It. *bocca*), *bouche* (Dozy); *morsel, draught* (Hilleston). With M. *baqq*, ‘to irrigate’, and *xita tal-boqq*, ‘heavy rain which breaks into bubbles when it hits the ground’, cp. Ar. *بَوْقَةَ* to pour an abundant rain (cloud).

54. *In-NAMAR Aila jba‘za*, ‘God’s acts inspire fear’. Nammar Aila, as when it rains so heavily that you think the place is going to be inundated, etc. When there is a thundershorm church bells are rung, as if to scare evil spirits away, and the people utter the prayer: ‘Santa Barbara, la deni u langas bsara’, ‘St. Barbara, let there be neither evil nor harm’. St Nicholas in Malta, as in Sicily, is believed to ward off thunder and lightning. *Hobż ta’ San Nikola* (St. Nicholas’s Loaves), which are like small rolls, are reputed to protect the Saints’ devotees from the dangers of storms.


55. *In-NAR u l-ilma jba‘za*, ‘Fire and water (lightning and floods) frighten’. These two elements of Nature cause great damage.

56. *Meta tqattar ix-xita, Is-SAIDA ikun l’waqitha*, ‘With the first drops of rain coincides the right season for fishing’.

57. *SENA tax-xita, sena tal-maltemp*, ‘A rainy year, a year of storms’.

58. *Tal-WIED tal-wied*, ‘What belongs to the valley is carried away by rainwater’, i.e. do not cultivate land that may be washed away by the rains. Note play on the two meanings of wied, (i) valley and (ii) heavy rainwater.

59. *Meta jsaffru l-ijfien, ikunu lgaw il-WIDHEN*, ‘By the time the galleys blow their tritons (shell trumpets) the valleys will have overflowed (with rainwater)’. There is in this proverb an obscure historical allusion which I am unable to relate to the context. We know that galleys blew tritons as mist warnings, but I could not establish the relation with rainfall.

*faga*, int.v., ‘to choke’, from It. *afogare*, formed by analogy with *verba tertiiae radicalis* (Cp. M. *gara*, ‘to happen’ Ar. *كَحْلَانَ*).

*ijfien*, m.n. ‘battleship’, from Ar. *قَجْفَانِ (pl. *مَقْجَفْنَ* M. *gien*) grand naure (Beauss).

60. *L-eewwel XITA ikun ghar-raba’ u ghall-bjar/Jekk tissokta bil-ğld-timm-ir r-riżzet u d-djar*, ‘The first rain will be for the fields and the wells; if it continues it will fill farms and houses with abundance’.

*tissokta*, int.v., ‘to continue; carry on’, fr. Sic. *assicurarti* (also *siguitta*), from L. *secutus*, pp. of *sequi*.


61. *IX-XITA hdiel; kull taja mixet*, ‘The rain has stopped; every fowl has moved away’.

*beda*, int.v. ‘To cease’ fr. Ar. *بَدَأَ* ‘to be still, motionless; wind, storm (Hava).

62. *IX-XITA wix-xemx qed jiţhgammed Lhudi* (twieled Turk); ‘When it rains and the sun shines, a Jew is being baptized (a Turk is born)’. Rain and sunshine as simultaneous weather phenomena have been considered curious and unusual by several peoples.

Cp. It. ‘Quando piuove e luce il sole, tutte le vecchie vano in amore’; ‘Quando è sole e pioggia, il diavolo mena moglie’; Sp. Quando llueve y hace sol, sale el arco del Señor; also, Cuando llueve y hace sol se ríe Nuestro Señor; cuando llueve y hace luna, se ríe la Virgen pura. Ger. Quando piuove e splende il sole si fa nozze all’inferno (Straff).

63. *B-qamar ididamam, *

*B-kewkba goffa, *

*I-xemx demnija *

U dix-XITA mnejn il ġejja?*

‘The moon rumbles, /The star is a basket, /The sun is harmful, /And where is the rain coming from?’. Said of rain that falls out of season.

*denni*, tr.v., ‘to cause (a cut finger, etc.) to suppurate’. Cp. Ar. *كَحْلَانَ* ‘to be sickly’. For M. 2nd form cp. Ar. *حَلَّانَ* amāğīt (Dozy).

64. *XUXA mxewwxa tiblob ix-xita*, ‘Ruffled hair asks for rain’. Fr. Magri
65. Infetah il-VIT: issa ghal u gid, 'The tap has been unplugged, now (we'll) have fodder and wealth'. A spell of long bad weather is not good for the crop; but when it begins to rain heavily crops flourish.

THE SEA
(Il-Bahar)

66. IL-BAHAR sinjur, 'The sea is wealthy'. There are many treasures buried in it.

67. Bahar FIERAGH ghal Rith Isfei, Bahar mimli ghal Rith Fuq; B'riha ta' doliteh Il-bahar maltemp stenna minunufi.

'Sea at low ebb, wind in the South East; full sea, wind in the North West; when there is a flavour of water melons, expect a stormy sea to get stormy immediately'.

Theophrastus says that 'receding of the sea indicates a North wind: but its influx a South wind. This is written of Greece' (J.G. Wood's translation, quoted by Inwards, p. 153).

68. Meta il-blat jibjad, il-MELLIEHA jew jitta il-bahar ghailha jew tigi x-xita, 'When the rock becomes white, expect either the sea to spread over the salt pan or that it will rain.'

69. QAMAR riqed, bahar imqajjem, 'When the moon is asleep, the sea is awake'. Var. (i) Qamar wieqa, bahar bnaazzi, 'Standing moon, calm sea'; (ii) Qamar riqed, bahrin imqajm; qamar imqajjem, bahrin riqda. 'Moon asleep, sailors awake; Moon awake, sailors asleep'; (iii) Il-qamar riqed u il-kaptan imqajjem, 'The moon is asleep and the captain is awake'; (iv) Qamar wieqa, bahrin riqda, 'Standing moon, sailors asleep'.

Cp. Sic. 'Luna a l'addritta, marinaru curcatu', 'Luna curcata, marinaru a l'addritta'; Ven. 'Luna in pie e marinar senta'; 'Luna sentada e marinaret in pie' (Staf); Sp. 'Luna acostada, marinero en pie', i.e. enseña que cuando la luna se oculta es cuando el marinero debe tener más cuidado en el gobierno del buque' (Sbarbi). In Chios: (prov. No. 3):

70. Meta il-bahar juri QIEGHU, i-ajru (Il-maltemp) jaghmel tieghu (jerfa driequ), 'When the sea shows its bottom, the weather gives vent to a storm (raises its arm)'.

71. Il-bahar fis-safj XIII u fis-xitwa ġovni, 'The sea in summer is an old man and in winter a young man'. A sea-storm in summer does not last long; not so in winter:

babar xib, 'an old sea'. Cp. Sic. mar vecchius (It. mare vecchio), 'mareta, residuo di tempesta' (Mortillaro).

72. Il-bahar ZAUQU ratba u rasu felsa bhal stanga (hatba), 'The sea has a soft tummy and a head as hard as a staff'.

bhal (followed by a noun or pronomional suffixes) means 'like' 'as', for ex. bhal-i, -ek, etc., 'like me, like you, etc. ; bhal kelb, 'like a dog', lit. 'in the state or condition of'. Cp. Ar. الدخان في جواري, 'dans un état de' (Beauss.). With adv. bhalma, 'as', made up of bi, 'with', balma cp. Ar. ٌنا 'as soon as'.

LAND CULTIVATION, PLANTS AND FIELDS
(Xogbol is-Raba', Xitel u Gbelieqi)

73. ALLA jird jaghdi, mhux l-art (Agius De Soldanis; Domma), 'It is God and not the earth that gives'. Crops do not prosper without God's blessing.


74. L-ART taghti (taghmel) kemm taghmel magha: Gid, hena, u fuz kollox is-sahha.

'The land yields as much as you do for it: wealth, happiness and above all good health'.

hena, m.n. (sometimes used as fem.), 'joy, happiness, well-being', from Ar. السعدية 'enjoyment, good health' (dialect of Syria). With M. henna, 'to make happy' cp. بحمر 'to greet, to congratulate' and with M. thenna, 'to be happy' cp. Ar. يتمسك 'to be glad, happy' (Hava).

75. Jekk l-ART kienet taghti dejjem, il-bidwi qatt ma jfalli:

Metal l-art tongos, il-bidwi dejn ihalli.

'If the earth yielded always a good harvest, the peasant would never become bankrupt, / when the earth fails (him) the peasant runs into debits',

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the cost of the eggs goes up'.

85. **BRINGIELA fi zmienha, ghas-suq qatt ma tkun wisq ghammiela, 'An egg-plant in its season will never be in abundance for the market'. The first five or six egg-plants of the season are fine and big; when the number increases the quality decreases, and so does the market value.'

86. Meta d-DIEJJA tistabba, in-nies thosse il-bard hafna, 'When the vine conceals itself (i.e. sheds all its leaves), people begin to feel the cold very much.'

87. Meta d-DIEJJA tohroq ir-rimja, fidkarni il-Wijja, 'When the vine begins to sprout, it reminds us of the Show'. The proverb can't be very old, as the Agricultural Show referred to, held at Buskett on the Feast of St. Peter and Paul on the 29th June, was first held in 1854.

88. Aktar ma tkun IKKULTIVAT aktar tkun indannat, The better cultivated (i.e. well watered) it is, the more damned it is. Said of vines that grow better on rock than in irrigated soil. Figuratively, said of a person, well-fed, looked after, but ungrateful to those that love him.

89. **FARDGHALLA, gholi b'xoghiu, 'Fields which yield one crop a year only, are too expensive to till'. (i.e. leave no profit. Cp. prov. No. 110).

90. **Fardghalla, m.n., 'field that produces one crop a year only', made up of 'jard', single (Ar. NDP), 'ghalla', 'crop' (Ar. NDP). For syntactic usage of 'jard', see p. 860. 'Une seule fois' 'Franz Pongratz, 'borge'

91. Fejn tilil ir-rigel jobrom il-FIGIEL, 'Where your foot gets wet, radishes grow round'. Radishes grow in valleys where there is much water. Var. Ir-rabu' ghan-nisel ihaxcen il-figel, 'Down-sloping fields chicken the redishes'.

92. **FIL-FUL izirghu fid-tajj sa rubbtejuk, u onqgu fit-trab idur ghal ghanjejlik, 'Sow broad beans when the wet soil (lit. mud) reaches as high as your knees, and trim them when the dust flies to your eyes'. Sow beans when it rains heavily and trim them when it is very dry. 

Cp. L. 'Tritico luteum, hordei pulverem conferito'; Et. 'Semina la farva nel polvereccio, e il grano nel fanguicio'; Eng. 'Sow beans in the mud'; 'Sow beans in the wind'; 'Sow or set beans in Candlemas waddle'; Sp.'Si quieres coger habas muchas, las sembrarás por San Lucas; y si bien, por San Miguel'.

93. **FIL-FULA benna taghmel il-fatara qilla, 'Good beans make a heavy dinner'.

Meta i-FULU tibda inawwar, il-berghuda tfawwar, 'When the bean...
plant begins to blossom, the flea increases'.

_Folk-Beliefː_ Many of our peasants believe that beans grow in their shells in opposite direction from year to year — from left to right in one year and vice-versa in the following year and so on.

94. Ḍakar to bōrm il-ŪŻIMINA, 1-Gharbijja ghun-namra ġewna. 'When the jasmine plant begins to form its buds, the Arab girl begins to feel the urge of love'. It is believed that the jasmine plant was introduced into Malta from Tunis, hence the allusion to the Arab girl. It blooms between June and November.

95. ĠNIEN ġewna (Agius De Soldanis: Damm). A garden (orchard) is madness', i.e. its work leaves no profit. One cultivates a garden for pleasure not for business'. _Cp. prov. No. 118._

96. Min ikollu jqabel ĠNIEN iqabbli illi min hu haddiem, 'He that has an orchard to lease should allow it to a (diligent) workman. A lazy man would neglect it.'

97. Il-GABILLOTT duttur mill-bhajra dejjem żgur, 'The farmer that takes pride in his work is always sure of his crop of melons and water-melons'. This crop needs great attention.

_duttur_, m.n. and adj., 'doctor, scholar'; fig. 'one who takes pride in his work or is easily offended', from It. _dottore_.

_gabillott_, m.n., 'farmer', from Sic. _gabillotto_ (Med. L. _gabellarius_, _gabella_, from Ar. کبالة).

98. L-ilma tal-HABEL imur mal-habel, 'The water of the rope goes with the rope. There is an untranslatable play on words in this proverb: _habel_ in the sense of 'field' (Ar. حقل) _corde: mesure pour les terres_ (Beauss.) and _habel_ in the sense of 'rope' (Ar. كابل). As explained by V. Mifsud Bonnici, from whom I took the proverb, it is used by land cultivators to indicate how expensive and hardly work while irrigation of land is paid labour as compared with irrigation of land by spring water.

99. Fejn hemm il-ĦURA 'ssib l-ilma, 'Where there is greenery there is (lit. you'll find) water'.

_Sab_ (issib) t.v. 'To find' fr. _Ar. بحث, -يجترب_. _trouver_ (Beauss.).

100. Drabi s-sisija ahjar ml-ĦRIT biż-żewq fil-Ħemsija, 'Sometimes begging is better (more profitable) than ploughing by a pair of oxen at Hemsija'. _Hemsija_ lies in the Rabat area Malta.

101. L-sien il-MOHRUET fih il-ḡasel ḡar-raµa, 'The tip (lit. the tongue) of the plough contains honey for the fields'. No other agricultural implement does so much good to the fields as the plough.

_Cp. It. (also Sic.) 'La vagna ha la punta d'oro, la zappa d'argento, lo aratro di ferro'.

102. Il-KROMBA bla widek bhal widna bla wiånah, 'Colewort without fat (meat) is like an ear without wax'. You can't have a good kaulata ('a soup of vegetables'), made up of _It. cauvalata_ without fat meat in it:

_widek_, m.n., 'puss; any greasy substance', from Ar. غريب 'grease, gravy' (Hava).

_wideb_, m.n., 'grease of wool' (Hava). _Cp. Ar. حليب sant de la laine, ḏżu ਢज 'Désinter la laine (Beauss.). _Cp. also ḏžu 'to become fat (camel)' (Hava).

103. Āħjar KROMBA baghlijja minn mija saqwijja, 'Better a cabbage that grows in dry (lit. wild) soil than a hundred that grow irrigated soil'.

_baglijja_, fem. of _baglij_, m.adj., 'bastard' (in botany, nearly resembling another species). It describes also plants which grow in unwatered soil as opposed to _saqwij_, 'irrigated land'. _Cp. il-dżmū 'unwatered land or plant; or land, plant that is only watered by rain' (Hava), and _dżmū adj., qui rap porte, produit sans irrigation en été, qui n'est pas irrigable; terrain frais (Beauss.).

_saqwij_, m.adj., 'watered soil' (Ar. _湿润_ 'watered land', from _湿润 adj., terrain irrigable et qui ne reproduit de cultures d'été qu'avec irrigation' (Beauss.).

104. Ghadu il-MASRI fil-biedja u mpissa tithajjar ghaliḥ in-nissieža, 'The cotton is still in the fields and the weaver already has her eye on it'. A reference to the great demand for cotton when the weaving industry was more flourishing than it is now.

_masri_, m.adj., 'Egyptian' (Ar. مصري), in modern Maltese replaced by _Egzijan_ (It. Egiziano). It occurs as an adj. qualifying _kittien_, 'flax' (Ar. كتان used in a general sense for any lint or flax. In this context it obviously means 'cotton' (Ar. كتان). _Gossypium Barbendan L. Bedevia_.

_thajjar_, int.v., 'to be induced to accept; have a liking for', Vth form of obs. _har_, used transitively in the 2nd form _haqjar_, 'to induce; attract'. _Cp. Ar. کت 'to give one an option between', and _نكت 'to choose, to elect' (Hava).

105. In-NASILLA salet u 8ebwa tarat, 'The medlar fruit is ripe and the crow flew away'.


106. PATATA taht il-ħamrija tagħmel id-dar mimlija, 'Potato underground
fills the house'. A harvest of sown potatoes is usually abundant.

107. Mill-Fiddien il-QAMIL johør bi-kejiel u i-qqotn johør bi-wizzien. 'From Fiddien the wheat is collected (lit. comes out) in huge quantities and the cotton in great weights'. Var. Fiddien, ija Fiddien, Daka qamek il-kejiel / Daka qotnak il-wizzien. 'Fiddien, o Fiddien! / Your wheat in great measure / And your cotton in great weights'.

Fiddien, place-name of fertile fields in the outskirts of Rabat. Cp. Ar. johor 'sown field' (Hava); champ surtout de fèves; champ: Tunis (Beauss), kejiel, m. adj., 'grain-producing, especially of a large quantity of grain'. Cp. Ar. johor 'grain-measurer' (Hava), celui qui achète le ble (Dozy).

wizzien, adj., 'weighty'. Ar. adj., wizzien, 'weighty'.

108. QOTNA tal-mohriet aẖar minn ghaxrat-tal-bejiel. 'A cotton sown in a plough's furrow is better than ten set in holes (in the soil).

bejta, f.n., 'a bird's nest', fig., a whole hole dug into the soil in which beans, potato and other seedlings are placed, then covered up, a. fem. dim. for bej, 'roof', originally 'house, room' (Ar. bejta; cp. M. place-name in Tarxien Water i-Bjt). For a similar fem. dim. form cp. wizzien (piq. chambrette, cellule (Beauss). Ar. jiz ( 'nest' occurs in place-name Ghaxx il-Hda, 'Falcon's Nest'.

109. Il-QOTNA ma jibżax mix-xemx il-gawwija; jibża mid-qpar bosta u mid-middja. 'Cotton does not fear a very strong sun; / It fear thick mist and dampness.'

cpar, coll. m.n., 'thick mist', cp. Ar. jizz with b unvoiced by preceding voiceless consonant; contrary to the general rule which operates in opposite direction. The denominative quadriliteral cpar 'is obstinate', instead of regular hypothetical cappar suggests a non-Arabic origin, (cp. Sp. chaparrón, 'downpour rain').

110. RABA' li ma jrabbix ma jissiex xoghiu. 'Unproductive land is not worth its work'. Cp. prov. No. 89.

111. RABA’ xaghi u niggīmi fit xeraq jibqaghiek ghais-ghabus. 'Land full of rocks and dog-grass leaves you few leaves for the ewes'.

niggīmi, m. adj., 'abounding in couch grass (field) (L. Triticum repens), li. Ar. niggīm, (M. nīqīm).

ghabus, coll. m.n., 'ewes', obsolete. Cp. Ar. ghābus (pl. ghābusa) whence M. surname Ebejer. The current M. form is ghābura, 'a one year old goat', with which cp. Ar. grib (nu'ton', given by Schiaparelli in his Vocabularia in Arabice (Florence, 1871) and recorded by Dozy.

112. Ir-RABA’ ruq jixba’ mill-imla u jinxef bid-dawi tal-qamar. 'Fielder

having thin soil are cloyed with water and get dry with moonlight', i.e. rain-water easily saturates thin soil and moonlight dries it up.

nixeʃ, int.v., 'to dry up'. Cp. Ar. bi’d-ṣer' 'water-tank (Hava). But for M. meaning cp. Ar. bi’d-ṣer' (Beauss).

113. Ir-RABA’ ta’ l-ixxut bhal-leja ta’ l-utut. 'Fields situated near the seaside are like the beards of billy-goats', i.e. they are practically useless. Var. ir-xaghi wix-xutu lejjet l-utut. 'Rocky and seaside soil is like the beards of billy-goats.

utut, pl. of wott, beard of billy-goats, an onomatopoetic formation with which cp. Ar. johor, also johor (Kaz.), 'coo of the male dove', johor to creak (load); to cry out (child); to screech (bat'), and johor, 'to speak quickly (cp. M. x’ini twatwat? 'What are you whispering about?'), johor 'large bar' (Hava), birotelle (Kaz).

114. L-ESFIQA fi-but tajba. 'Fullness is good only in one's pocket'. This is one of the sayings difficult to translate into English. There is a play on the word xeqa which is the key word. It can mean 'denseness', that is, of very close planting or sowing; and 'fullness in the sense of abundance', i.e. a lot of money in one's pocket.

115. Ir-SILLA kibret, wil-brar tiegħi ma jsibb jirgħa. 'The sula has grown but my donkey finds nothing to graze'. A figurative application. Dearth or privation amidst plenty.

116. Ir-TOMNJA ta’ disat ftiem aẖar mill-obra biz-xita fi-timiq. 'The nine days' late sowing is better than the other with rain at the end'. A. Cremona in his Weather and Husbandry Lore in the Isles of Malta (1922), p. 23, says that this Maltese adage "teaches that sowing spring wheat during the nine days between Xmas Eve and the end of December is better than sowing it in the last days of Winter (March). Sowing depends on local climatic conditions and therefore is performed during the time best suited to guarantee a good harvest'.

tomnja, f.n., 'wheat sown in March', explained by A. E. Caruana 'product that si puo conservare sotterra; nell'uso, il grano seminato in Marzo perche' secco e forte riece piu' d'altra qualita' adatto ad essere riposto e conservato sotterra, nelle fosse e nei granai. Qamb tat-tomnja, grano di Marzo, buono per conservarsi'. For Sic, meaning of tomnja, cp. the following: 'Tumminia rara e tardia, fora di la mia'. Pitre says that 'il frumento o grainum è marmogliou'.

117. Fix-XAGĦRA xejn ma jejxien u kollos xagħar johor. 'Where the soil is rocky nothing grows thicker than hair – Where there is not enough soil you can't have good products.'
118. Ḷgien taẓ-ZAHAR ahjar minn mifwah tal-ward, 'Better an orchard of orange blossoms than a garden of fragrant flowers'. Cp. prov. No. 95. mifwah, m.n., 'redolent place, garden', local mimated form from fab, 'to be fragrant', Ar. كاَفُ. 

119. Iż-ZAHAR fil-berwieq u t-tewm blu tahsir, 
Tama gawwija li l-biedja tkun blu ebdam titkixir.

'When asphodels are in blossom and garlic free of rot, there is good cause for hope that the year’s harvest will suffer no blight.'

tama, f.n., 'hope', from Ar. تراَضُ، covetousness, ambition. 
berwieq, m.n., 'asphodel' Ar. بَرْوِيْقاَ،
titkixir, v.n., 'damage, blight, plant disease'. Word of dubious origin. 
Magri, who gives it, queries the reading. For possible connection of common roots تَكُرُ، تَكُرُ، تَكُرُ, s.m. Chawre, Hachib, chawre indien, cannavi indice' (Beauss.).

120. ĠżERA fil-tieb (taljeb) u fil-waqt blex ma jibdielek qatt, 'Sow when the weather is fair and in time, and you'll never regret it'. 
Cp. It. 'Chi semina nella mota, racolta vuota; chi semina una buon ora qualche volta falla; e chi semina tardi, falla quasi sempre.

AMNALS
(Bbejjem)

121. ĠLWETT bil-gzieg, xita blu qies, 'Larks in abundance, abundance of rain'. Larks appear most at the height of a rainy season.

122. BAJDA tas-serduk 
Ngra nagra iehlina jašir mahmuq. 

'The voice of the hatching egg little by little gets hoarse'. The egg placed under a brooding hen gradually loses its original sound as it changes into a chick.

123. BAJDA biq-tebgha hamra tkun ghaddiet milli-wied tan-namra, 'An egg with a red spot has passed through the valley of love'. The blood spot in the yolk of an egg is believed to indicate fertilization of the hen by the cock.

124. Qabli Il-BAGHAL 
Jidher meta hu ta' debbat jew ta' bmar.

'Of the equine species you can always tell whether it is the offspring of a mare of or a she-donkey'. The qualities of good breeding are easily noticed.

125. Il-BAQRA tfaqqs (tehdd) il-madmad minn ghonqha gha ma tridx thawrat, 'The cow shakes the yoke off her neck because she does not want to plough'. The cow is not a suitable animal for ploughing; figuratively the saying may apply to a person that does not brook tyranny. Cp. 141.

126. IL-BIEJjem ta' filghodh bu tibna ha joghodu, 'Give the animals straw in the morning and that will be enough'.

127. IL-BHIMA tar-refsha hija nofs ill-merhla, 'The stud bull is half the flock (herd)'.

128. Meta tisma' il-BUKAGHWAR ighajjat saffar lis-summienna, 'When you hear the black beetle, whistle for the quail'.

129. IL-FART li simen jew biżbugh jew ogghu, 'When the bull has grown fat sell it or kill it'. Var. il-fart, li jismen ogghu, 'When the bull gets fat, kill it', i.e. after that it will be sheer waste of money to feed it.

fart, m.n. 'bull'; 'ox'. Cp. Ar. بَعْضٍ boesf; animal, brute, butor, bète (Beauss.).

130. FART mezmiez li ughgu jew jaghtnek, 'If the bull does not eat with an appetite, kill it or it will kill you', i.e. such animals do not grow fat and therefore will not leave you enough profit for your trouble. Var. Fart li jismen mez, 'A bull which does not eat with a good appetite will not grow fat'. Figuratively said of a person who does not eat what you give him.

mezmeż, int.v., 'to feel squeamish about something; to resent'. Cp. Ar. يَكُرُ, to be shaken' (Hava).

131. IL-FART li jiekoi il-widna jaghmel il-żaham bil-wiżna, 'Cattle which feed on prickly caterpillar will put on flesh by the wiżna (5 rotoni)', i.e. will grow fat in a short time.

widna, f.n., 'an ear'. Cp. Ar. وزن corresponding to M. wizn. For sing. fem. form, cp. وزن. nom d'unité de وزن. With M. wizn, 'prickly caterpillar' cp. Ar. جَذِبَة au Magreb, le nom de sempervivum maurus (Dozy) جذبة 'caterpillar, scorpion grass; Scorpiusus sulcata L. (Bedevian).

wiżna, f.n., 'a Maltese weight consisting of five rotoni (31 lbs.), from Ar. وزن, 'weight, gold or silver talent equal to 369 English pounds'. (Hava).

132. Meta FART jiekoi ix-xienen u n-nilfal 
Il-mohriet urajh erhilu jindifer,

'When the bull eats trefoil and lucern medic, let the plough behind him bury itself deep'. The best time for ploughing is when these plants flourish.

133. PENKA mghammra tagħdik ghal fuq il-ġamra, 'A pregnant rabbit will provide (rabbits) for the roaster.'
134. Bibex trabbik ili-FLIELES tirid it-liileles, 'To rear chickens you need sacks (of chicken feed)'.

 *liileles, pl. of *fellus, 'chicken', from L. *pullus. Cp. Berber *fellus, 'cock' (Dest.).

 tlleles, pl. of *telliesa, 'sack'. Cp. *telliesa, 'sack' (Dest.).

 grand sac double en tissu de laine et poill pour mettre les grains' (Beauss).

 Meta ili-FELLUS jongob qabel fi-zmien
 Hajfu ma ihilex ziimem.

 'When a chick hatches before its time, its life has no end'. The premature-
latched chicken does not live long.

 136. GENDUS rasu sewda, zomm mieghu, 'If the ox has its head black, consider it of good breed'.

gendus, m.n., 'ox', from Berber ayenduz, *veau (Dest.).

 137. Meta ili-GRU jghaddi fil-gholi ikun gej il-maltemp, 'When the crane flies high, expect bad weather'.

 Cp. Sic. 'Quanun passa lu groi, acqua o prima o poi'.

 gru, m.n., 'crane', from Li. *gru.

 138. Dar u HAMIEM, farag bia zniem, 'One's home and pigeons are endless consolation'. So they were to the village peasant before a higher cost of living destroyed such simple pleasures.

 139. HANZIR Ghawdxi, baghal Malti, (Agius De Soldanis: Damma) 'A (good) pig from Gozo, and a (good) mule from Malta'.

 Cp. L. 'Aur porcus Umber, aut obsesus Etruscus' (given by Agius).

 140. Ii-HMAR jinghab metak gej il-maltemp, 'When the weather is going to be foul, the donkey returns to its stall'.

 For proverbs referring to the donkey's sensitivity to atmospheric changes Cp. Eng. 'If asses hang their ears downwards and forward, and rub against walls, rain is approaching'; 'Young asses rolling and rubbing their backs on the ground indicate heavy showers'; Switzerland (1543) 'If asses bray more frequently than usual, it foreshadows rain' (Inwards p. 180).

 141. Hrit ili-HMAR ma jaghtik sandar: hrit il-baqar jimla'il-andar, 'Ploughing by donkey is profitless; ploughing by cows fills the threshing floor (with sheaves of corn)'. Var. Min jabra bil-hmir ma jilux qoton (ot ma jehsax jurajna) 'He who ploughs by donkeys will not have any cotton (or won't reap animal fodder).

 Cp. Sp. 'Burros para la arada no valen nada; "Quien con burros ara, la terna araña", 'Ara con bueyes si quieres enriquecer'.

sandar, m.n., occurring in the expression qata' sandar, 'he made a good bargain (ironically)', from Ar. *sandaw, 'sandalwood, bois de sandal' (Beauss).

 142. Meta tarra ili-HUTTAF ikun gejila x-xita, 'When you see swallows, expect rain'. 'If swallows touch the water as they fly, rain approaches' (Inwards p. 195).

 143. Meta jikhaghrun ili-KLIEB ikun gej il-maltemp, 'When dogs roll on the ground, expect bad weather'.

 144. Meta ili-KELB jitmieghek u l-hmar jimrah, Jew il-rwienfe ittena, Jew bix-xita ghandek tifrah.

 'When the dog rolls on the ground and the donkey runs about, expect either high winds (gales), or rain to gladden you'.

 merab, int.v., 'to wander about; frisk, gambol'. Cp. Ar. *rub 'to be lively, cheerful' (Havy).

 rwiefen, pl. of riefm, m.n., 'gale', from Calabrian réfalu, whence M. sumame Refalo colpo di vento breve ma impetuoso (Marzano).

 145. LAMPUKA mixwija tfkkrek bil-kia xitwija (Bormla) 'A grilled lampuka reminds you of a good meal in Winter'. Lampuki abound in October and that is the time when you can buy them cheap. The lampuka is a Mediterranean fish, Coryphaena hippurus, Linn.

 146. Fejn tqram il-MOGHZA, jihset, 'Where the goat crops destruction follows'. Goats eat away grass and plants.

 147. NAGHGA biz izghar, naddaf it-turtieru u qabbad in-nar, 'When you have a ewe with lambs, clean the dish and light the fire'. Cooked lambs make a very good dish. The favourite dish of the Maltese is baruf il-form.

 148. NAGHGA li ma tqatx bi smienha ma tahlbeb, 'A sheep that does not cut with its teeth (i.e. does not eat grass, etc.) does not yield milk'.

 Figuratively said of a person who does not make an effort to get things done; to improve his condition, etc.

 149. NAGHGA li ma ddurx ma tirghax, 'A sheep that does not wander about does not graze'. Figuratively said of a person who stays at home, therefore misses good opportunities.

 150. Meta johrog in-NEMEL tal-gwienah ikun gejila x-xita, 'When emmets (lit. winged ants) come out it is going to rain'.
151. Meta figu i-PLUVIERI jiği l-maltemp, 'When plovers come bad weather comes too'.

Pluviera, L.g. pi. pluvier, 'plovers', from archaic It. pluvero (Fr. pluvier, O.F. plouier, from L.L. pluvius, derivatives of pluvia 'rain').

152. Meta QATTUS iku jittieghok, nur ghail-kabozza gax ikun gekji xita kbira, u hudha mieghek, 'When the cat rolls about go and fetch the cloak for it is going to rain very heavily and take it with you'.

Cp. 'When the cat in February lies in the sun, she will creep behind the stove in March'. 'When the North Wind does not blow in February, it will surely come in March'. (Inwards p. 41).

153. Meta QATTUS tara f-xi galiarja, ghid li hierga, xemx, 'When you see a cat on a balcony, say that the sun is coming out'.

154. Ġej il-maltemp jew mill-poppa jew mill-pruwa meta jisgho (jaghtas) il-QATTUS, 'When the cat coughs (sneeze), bad weather is coming either from the stern or from the prow', i.e. from the direction of its tail or head.

Cp. It, 'Quando il tempo si muta, la bestia stamuta'. Mantova. Cp. Quando il gatt pasa l'orèccia co la sanìa, a völ plövi in abondansa. (G. Tass., p. 55)

155. Il-QATTUS jahseil wiċċu lejn jejn ikun ġej ir-rih, 'The cat washes its face in the direction of the wind'.

Cp. Sic. 'Quannu la gatta si lava la facci, signu ch'avi a chiviri (o d'acqua)'; Quannu la gatta crippia, malu rempu, with variants in Saledegna, Bergamo, Venice. Pirè (op.cit., Vol. 3, p. 458) writes: 'Vari presagi si traggono da' gatti. Quando essi fanno la fusa, cioè si bagnano la faccia con lo zampino, prenunziano ordinarismemente pioggia; ma qualche volta anche regalo ai padroni di casa'.

Quando hanno il Russo (lu trippu) e saletello, prossima tempesta'.

In Greece they say that if a cat licks herself with her face turned towards the north, the wind will soon blow from that dangerous quarter' (Lean).

156. Ir-RAGHA fi-gbiż ma jsemmix, 'Grazing in fallow land does not fatten (the cattle)'

Gbiż, coll.n., 'stubble', Cp. Ar. 'żub pus, pain sec; pain azyme' (Kaz).

157. Ikun se jdur ir-rih, meta jiddnu s-SRIEDAQ, 'When cocks crow expect the wind to change'.

158. Meta tisma' jghajjar il-WERZIEQ, lista' tmur ghall-gheneb u t-tiniel, 'When you hear the cricket chirping you can go and pick grapes and figs', Var. Il-werzieg isajjar it-tin, 'The cricket ripens figs'.

Cp. Chios (prov. 47).

If the grasshopper does not chirp (lit. talk), it is not summer.


werzieg, m.m.; grasshopper, cricket, from werzag, 'to scream; trotter shilll cries', seemingly made up of base wer (cp. first base of Ar. 'ẓag to walk, 'ẓajq, (cp. 'ẓug) to shriek'). Therefore werzag (whence werzieg).

159. Il-trill (or il-majjal) ixtrih fix-XHUR ta' l-ere, 'Buy red mullets (or pork) in the months containing the letter R'. In the other hot months red mullets and pork begin to stink. Cp. Lat. Mensis cum habet R, noli comedere cancer'. German has also this proverb.

160. Tfalja li titwieled nhar ta' ĠIMGHA

Fi-istess jun il-kelb jiggimha,

'A girl that is born on a Friday on that same day shall be bitten by a dog. Friday is a day of ill-omen'.

Folk-Belief: Animals. A. Cremona (op.cit., p. 18) says that 'it is a common belief in Malta that when pigeons are chirping in the pigeon-house or the peacock calling loudly a storm will soon follow'. Cp. It. 'Quando il gatto canta il pollaio aspetta l'acqua sotto il grandajo' and Egg. 'When the peacock loudly calls/Soon we'll have both rain and squalls'.

THE SEASONS

(L-istaguni, L-Erbat Iżma)

161. SENA ghammiela thallas il-qhiela, 'A fruitful year pays the rent'. When the harvest is good the peasants can afford to pay the rent.

162. Is-SNIN bhall-ahwa, ma jixxibhux, 'Years like brothers are not alike'.

The weather in one year (season) is not usually like that in another; hence all meteorological proverbs are often no more than plausible guesses.

Cp. Lettish 'No year is the next year's brother'; Silesian 'All days are brothers, but one seldom resembles the other'; Swiss German 'One day can be compared with the day that has gone by'. (Champion)
163. Ir-REBBIEGHA hija s-sebb tas-sena, is-Sajf nafsinar, il-Harifa l-gharb w ix-Xitwa l-lejl, 'Spring is the dawn of the year, Summer its noon, Autumn its sunset (lit. 'West') and Winter its night'.

164. 'Ghar-REBBIEGHA n-nahla tkum festa ghali-gharusija', 'In Spring, the bee is ready for courting'.

165. Ix-xemx tar-REBBIEGHA tibba bhul belliegha, 'The sun of Spring swallows like a whirlpool'. Generally in the months of March and April the sun is so pleasant that one does not notice its harmful effects and, basking in the sunshine, one easily gets a sunstroke.

Cp. Sp. 'Sol de marzo hiero con mazo'.

Rebbiegha, f.m., 'Spring', from Ar. ربيع bellegha, 'Spring, Autumn', and Beus - Cps. M. Rebbiegha.

belliegha, f.n., 'a vortex, whirlpool' fr. Ar. سطح 'drain; sewer (Hava) Tourbillon dans une rivière, gouffre (Beauss). In a figurative sense beliegha means also sudden ill-luck; misfortune after a good luck.

166. Il-BNAZZI jikxej il-kaxxi, 'Fine weather uncovers the flower-boxes'. I am not quite sure of the meaning which may possibly be that fine weather brings out the flowers from the wooden boxes used as flower-pots.

167. Kif tibba l-hdura n-nies tibba sssebbeh il-BHURA, 'As soon as verdure appears, people begin to embellish the sea-coasts', i.e. soon after Spring people begin to swim or go picknicking near the sea side.

bhura, obs. pl. form of babar (Ar. بحر 'sea', pl. بحار For similar pl. pattern cp. bula, 'rope', (Ar. عرب 'pl. of bale (Ar. مركب)

168. Is-sajf il-mahruq jinqala il-HRUG, 'Burning summer is time for going out'. When it is hot people go to the seaside or for a holiday abroad.

SUMMER (Sajj)

169. Is-SAJF kabozza (kapott) tal-fair, 'Summer is (comparable to) a cloak for the poor man'.

Cp. Ar. Bsit el qaf wasic. 'The carpet of summer is wide' (Crowfoot - Baldr., p. 1).

'Le tapis de l’été est large' (Fegh., No. 2347 and R.P. p. 33); It. 'L’estate è la madre dei poveri'.

kabozza, f.m., 'capote', from Is. cappuccia. For change of It. p to b in Maltese cp. M. kaboccia, 'a cabbage', from Sic. cappuccio (lt. cappuccio) epiteto di cavolo di color bianco, che fa il suo cesto sodo e raccolto come una palla (Mort). Barbera gives Sic. capozza.

kapott, m.m., 'capote', from Sic. cappottu, Il mantello dei marinai e dei soldati per lo più, che copre loro la vita e la testa (Mort.), or It. cappotto, sec. XVI mantello invernale; prima del Novecento era avolto a più giri e prima ancora era un tipico indumento militare. (Diz. Et. It.). Cp. also Fr. capote.

170. SAJF immiddi, harja mimilja, 'A wet summer, a full window silt'.

171. Is-SAJF jiexxel tieghu: imsejken min ma jikpoq xoitt min tiegha. 'When summer is at its worst, woe to him that has no fruit of his own'.

172. Meta s-SHANA tagmel bina, in-naghha tita piha, 'When the heat becomes unbearable, the sheep gives us her wool'. Sheep are shorn about the month of June.

173. Ix-XEMX bdiet kiera, wil-gavott ma jdoqq isjzed ċifra, 'The sun began to blaze cruelly, and the gavotte-man will not play his fife'; i.e. there will be no reason to fear storms or very bad weather. My informant tells me that in the old days the ugliest sailor on board a ship as soon as he noticed the first signs of coming bad weather, was required to go ashore in the Three Cities (Bormla, L-Isla and Birgu) and play the fife as a warning against the coming storm. This sailor was known as the gavott, which corresponds to Eng. gavotte the name of a minuet dance.

gavott, m.m., 'gavotte', from Fr. gavotte, name of a dance from Provençal gavot (Gavo, native of Alps).

AUTUMN (Harija)

174. Fil-HARIFA l-mara tieisti l-qalib bil-ghajna u thawwad il-brejma binnnejma, 'In Autumn the wife fills the cheese-form with curdled milk and stirs the baby's or child's soup in the little pot'.

175. Il-HARIFA tiehjel il-arja, u l-haliib jijda il-ajru, 'Autumn changes the air, and the (price of milk) soars in the air'. As milk gets scarcer in Autumn it gets also dearer.

176. Ghomma l-HARIFA, bard fis-xitwa, 'Heat in Autumn, cold in Winter'.

177. Kif titbiddel in-NATURA inti tilbes xi karkura, 'As soon the weather (lit. Nature) changes, you'll put on your slippers'. When it begins to get cold, it is advisable not to go about barefoot.

178. Is-SAIBRA twila ghal spiċċat il-qarqha twila, 'The working night is long because the long pumpkins (trumpet gourds) have come to an end',

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i.e. trumpet gourds (long pumpkins) grow in summer when the nights are at their shortest.

179. Meta jibda qaqa’ l-WERQA, ix-xemx taraha bis-serqa, ‘When leaves (lit. the leaf – sing.) begin to fall, you’ll see the sun stealthily (very rarely), i.e. when Autumn begins the sky is generally overcast.

180. Kif jibda jaqqa’ l-WERQA jisreg il-beraq, ‘Once leaves begin to fall, lightning begins to flash’, i.e. when Autumn sets in, lightning begins to flash.


181. Meta jibda jaqqa’ l-WERQA nistennew ir-raqhad u il-beraq, ‘When leaves begin to fall, we expect thunder and lightning’.

WINTER (Xitwa)

182. Bnazzi tax-XITWA, trott ta’ baghla xiha u kappei ta’ mignun, qatt liżomm maghhom, ‘Never trust fair weather in winter, the trotting of an old she-mule and the hat of a lunatic’, i.e. you can no more rely on fair weather in winter than you can rely on an old she-mule keeping up her canter and the madman his hat on. Cp. Fl. ‘Il n’y a d’assurance au temps non plus qu’à la femme’.

183. Fix-XITWA minn nofs inhar ‘il quddiem ir-raqej jaghmel imirta wilmar taqghmel fiitra, ‘In Winter from noon onwards the husband makes a furrow in the ground, and the wife a cheese-bun’. The husband ploughs his field and his wife bakes him a cheese or anchovy flat bun with rolled edges called fiitra (Ar. فلتره) generally, unlike Italian pizza, made of unleavened bread.

imirta, f.n., ‘a furrow or other mark made in the ground, to regulate the sowing to make sure that no space is left unsprinkled with seed; it is said likewise of the interval between furrows’ (Falzon). Cp. Ar. ُ_recommendation, pl. مзамرة.

Peur morçeau de terrain. Carreau tracé pour labourer. Carreau, espace de terre carré planté de légumes’ (Beauss.)

184. IX-XITWA mara sewwa, is-sajf raqei xalatur, ‘Winter is a good woman, Summer is a spendthrift’.

xalatur, m.n., ‘a toisterer’, from It. ‘scialatore’.

185. Mulejja, fix-XITWA aqhtina xitwina u fis-sajf aqhtina sajftina, ‘O Lord, in Winter time give us our winter and in summer time give us our summer’, We must thank God for the right weather at the right time.

186. IX-XITWA taqghmel taghba; imsejfen min ma skollux biex ilqaggha, ‘When winter is very severe; alas for him that is not well-provided against it’.

THE MONTHS

(Jan-Xbur)

JANUARY

187. Il-BARD ta’ Jannar ilqaxxaar gild (dahar) ta’ bmar, ‘The cold of January nips the hide (the back) of the donkey’. It is so cold that even a donkey feels it.

188. Meta Jannar tarah lewimenti (lewimenti), ma tarax il-BIDWI tant hieni, ‘When you see that January is raining frequently you won’t see the peasant (farmer) so happy’.

lewimenti, adj. m., ‘watery, rainy’, a local formation from ilma, ‘water’.

lewimenti, adj. m., local variant of lewimenti, In the sense of ‘one who is fond of quarreling’, from liem (Ar. لم) cp. Ar. ُ ‘censor, criticiser’.

Cp. Ger. ‘Se pieve molto di gennaio, non fa bene ai frutti’ (Straft.)


Cp. Sic. ‘Ginnàru siccu, burgisi (massaru) riccu’; Tus. ‘Gennaro secco, lo villan ricco’ with variants at Lecce and Venice; Sard. ‘Martu siccu, massaju riccu’.


191. DEHXA ta’ Jannar, fawra mill-iem in-nar, ‘Measles in January, a rush of spots of the colour of fire’.

Dehxa, literally ‘a shock’ or ‘bewilderment’ (Ar. ُ) was also a name for ‘measles’ (M. ُ, Ar. ُ ‘scarlet fever’) perhaps because the disease was believed to be the result of a shock. Chicken-pox (jidri r-rub) was called dehxa ta’ lilm, because the spots take the form of raised pimples, which develop a watery head.

192. F’Jannar il-ţidra aghtiha l-ĦMAR, ‘In January give the kohl-rabi
(turnips) to the donkey. Var. il- gidra ta' Jannar u l-kaboċċi aġribhom il-hmar, 'In January give turnips and cabbages to the donkey'; i.e. in January they are so fibrous that they are good only as animal fodder. Cp. Proverb No. 244.

Cp. Sic. 'Cavuli di jinnaru, jetali, a lu munnizzanu'.

193. Wara l-HAMIEM ilżu' ghai-ar, ghax it-taħhik igibilha bosta marż. 'After Epiphany spare the land; pounding (with feet) causes it many a disease'.

Hamiem short for 'Ghid il-Hamiem', 'Epiphany' literally 'The Feast of Pigeons' so called because our Lady offered her gifts of pigeons to the Temple after the birth of her Son.

194. Min ma JARATX f'Jannar, fitq qoton idahhaj id-dar, 'He who does not plough in January will gather little cotton'.

195. JANNAR ghandu minn kołix, 'January has something of everything', i.e. in January we often witness alternations of fine and bad weather.

196. JANNAR il-jałtar ghajnejn il-far, 'In January, prickly pears are (the size of) a rat's eye'.

197. Eżna l-KEMMUN f'Jannar u bighu bi-qantar, 'Sow common in January and (you'll) see in centners (1 qantar = 100 rotoli)'.

198. Jannar jekk isib li-gżira (l-ari) LIIEBSA jneżżaghba, jekk isibba mneżżgha jibbirsha, 'January if he finds the island (soil) clothed with under-dress it; if he finds it unclad will clothe it'. January weather destroys existing vegetation but its rainfall may also produce a growth of new vegetation.

199. Jannar idahhib fil-GHAR, 'January drives you into the cave'. Cp. Proverb No. 190 above. Var. Jannar idahhaj gol-ghar, 'January drives (the cattle) into the cave'. Said of a cold or rainy January when we have to remain indoors.

Cp. Ar, 'Fi kanun kina' and 'ahlak ya'mjinn'. 'In January stay at home, mad one!' (Crowfoot-Bald. p. 5).

200. Jannar gharraq (gha'ająq) in-naghb fil-GHAR, 'January drowned (shut) the sheep in the cave'.

Cp. Ar, 'Maris biex rżgħu l-kifir fil-marż'. 'Mars, the master of shaking, leaves the cattle in their pens' (it is also a rainy month - Westermarck, Andria No. 1921). Eng. 'February, an ye be fair'/The hogs (year old unshorn sheep) 'll mend, and naething pair (lessen).'/February, an ye be foul/'The hogs 'll die in ilka pool' (Tweedside - Inwards p. 39). The Maltese saying links with the idea explained by the following rhythm.

Qożżoż, qożżoţ ghalik, Jannar! Fie, fie on you January!
Ghaddejt bil-bard bla xita You passed (along) with cold but no rain
U hallejtni bin-naghb fil-għar Leaving me with the sheep in the cave.

(Agius De Soldanis: Damma), 'Fie on you, fie on you, January! I and the ewes had to lie down in the cave'.

According to folk-tradition, these words were uttered by an angry shepherd who was very disappointed because January had been so rainless and therefore 'grassless' that he had to keep his sheep in the cave. January was so annoyed that he borrowed two days from his brother February and in these two days it rained so heavily that the shepherd and his flock were drowned in the cave. Cp. Proverb No. 199.

For a similar motif transferred to later months cp. the following Sicilian folk story: 'Marzu cci dissi ad Aprilili: Mprestani tri jorni, quantu a sta vecchia la fazzu mariru'; and also

'Marzu si fici 'mpristari tri jorna d'Aprili prìa vecchia farì mariru'.
'Dice Marzu ad Aprili': prestem un di.
Se 'n te ne basta uno,
Te ne prestèrò due e anche tre,
Ma el primo el vujo per me,
E sei prestentàri non ce presta,
Tutto l'anno ce molestà' (Marchigiano).

The following story is told in Artas, (Palestine): 'The old wife was sitting in the wadi, minding her sheep and spinning. Now the end of February was near and little rain had fallen. The Beduins said to her: 'Come out from the wadi, for the rain may come and sweep you away'. She would not listen to them and mocked, at the month of February. 'O February, you wild fellow, that on your hand, meaning a blow with her spindle, February in a rage cried to his cousin March, 'O my cousin, help me, lend me, lend me three of your days of rain.'

'Three of yours and four of mine.
And we will make the wadi sing'.

So March lent February three days' rain, and they flooded the valley and swept the old wife away with her spindle and her sheep, right down to the Dead Sea'. The Jerusalem variant of this story runs as follows: 'The old wife (el 'ajusa) was content that February was at an end,because she had burnt all her wood except her bobbin winder and her spindle. She
cried, 'Go away, February, we will beat you with the washing bat', and, saving your presence, she added remarks much ruder than these. February was angry and he had yet three days to run. So he cried to his cousin, March 'O son of my uncle, four of thine and three of mine, and we'll burn up the old wife's winder'. March gave February four days' rain and the old wife burnt up her bobbin winder and her spindle and still she couldn't keep warm. On the third day she died of the cold' (Crowfoot and Baldensperger: cp.cit., p. 6-7)

(R. Tresse on pp. 18-19) of his Usages Saisonniers et Dictions sur le Temps dans la Region de Damas gives the following version: Février et mars conspirent contre elle. Février s'adresse à mars:

àdâr ya ben 'ammi tlâtête mennak u arba'a men;
 u îâ n'halâl dîlbâ el 'agaût tânâmî.
'Mars, mon cousin, trois (jours de toi et quatre (jours) de moi), et nous ne laisserons pas chanter le rouer de la vieille femme'.

Une autre version termine ainsi:

nâgbô el 'agaût tâdôª
'et nous ferçerons la vieille à pêter'.

Une troisième version plus courte encore:

dahßô bô aâbô el mehabô âdâr; yâ ben 'ammi tlâtète mennak u arba'a menni bihaïtî l'agaût bâra.;

Nous avons poussé dans son cul le manche du battin, alors, mars, à mon cousin, trois jours de toi et quatre de moi, et nous jeterons dehors la vieille femme'.

Une autre dicton montre au contraire la vieille expulsant février:

halasna men sâhr u 'ala mehabô.
'Nous en avons fini avec février en lui assenant un coup de battoir'.

L'on représente aussi février sollicitant quatre jours de mars afin de chasser la vieille. Ces (jours) empruntés, el mesta' tâdôª, sont marqués par de grands vents froids. On les appelle aussi les journées des vieilles, car elles leur sont funestes.

Mars surprend les novices par ses briques élévations diurnes de la température, suivies de basses températures nocturnes, aussi compréhensifs-nous vues ce sage conseil:

âbbi qâjmâa el khâr la 'ammak âdâr
'Cache (dans le sens de garder) tes gros morceaux de charbon (de bois) pour ton oncle mars'.

\footnote{excl. known in the above context only meaning 'Pie seems to}

link up with At. \textit{za} 'to loathe, shrink from' (Hava) whence also M. \textit{tqa-zez} 'to feel, be affected with, nausea, to reject food'.

\textit{qiel}, int. v., 'to lie down'. Cp. Ar. \textit{Jaka} 'to make a siesta' (Hava).

201. Qamar Jannar (ix-xenn ta' Jannar) johroq (tohroq) ix-xebbiêt (ilt-\textit{tfajjiet}) mill-GHAR. hasbuh bi nhar, 'The moon (sun) of January brings the young women out of their caves: they thought it was daylight'. Var. Qamar Jannar \textit{hareg il-bniyet mill-ghar} (Agius De Soldanias: Dammâ), 'The moon of January brought the young women out of their homes'. Said of a clear full moon in January. \textit{Cp.} M. expression \textit{dauel ta' qamar tara' habba}. Cave dwellers in Malta were not uncommon in the XV-XVIIth centuries, when the islands were exposed to frequent raids by pirates and corsairs.

\textit{Cp.} Tusc. Aprilie esce la vecchia dal covile; e la giovine non vuoleuscire'; Ven. 'April, cova la vecia dal covil'; Leccle 'Abtile, tie zitella lassa la camera e tie ecchia lu facuilere'; Pitre (op.cit., p. 30) gives the following variants: 'La luna di Jinnaru luci comu jornu chiosu' and 'La luna di Jinnaru scopri 'n terra un tridinnaru'. Chios (prov. No. 4).

\textit{The January moon}

\textit{Nearly resembles day.}

\textit{Argenti-Rose, vol. II, p. 1056}

202. Jannar il-QASBA imiddha il-art, 'January lays down the cane on the ground'. January is the month when reeds are cut.

203. Jannar (u Frar) ma jhalix (jhalux) QATTUSA d-dar, 'January (and February) does not (do not) leave a cat in the house'. In January cats are generally on the heat and the nights are filled with their erotic meowing.

\textit{Cp.} It. 'Ogni gatta ha il suo gennaio'; 'Il mese di gennaio non lascia gallina a pollaio'; Sic. 'Lu misi di Jinnaru non lassa gaddina 'ntra lu pudddaru'.

204. Is-SAJF ta' Jannar, ghana tal-bidwi u tal-fgar, 'January summer (i.e. fair warm weather in January), brings wealth to the peasant and the poor'. \textit{Cp.} Prover. No. 189.

205. Nhar San Pawl il-TEMP ibiddel (iqalleb) seba darbiet, 'On St. Paul's Day (25th January) the weather changes seven times'. As pointed out by Fr. Magri (X\textit{îghid il-Malti}, p. 154) \textit{seba} (seven) here means just 'many'.

\textit{Cp.} Ger. 'Alla conversione di San Paolo, l'inverso si volge mezzo qui e mezzo là'; 'A San Paolo il tempo cambia' (Staff).

206. TWELID il-eewel ta' Jannar, Itakkrek dhi kull kampanar.

'When a birth takes place on the first of January every belfry reminds
you of it'. The very bells that ring in the New Year seem to ring in also the new born child. The parish churches celebrate the New Year with special functions and bell-ringing.

207. Meta x-XEMX issahihan f‘Jannar ikkolok biex fis-sajf timla d-dar, ‘When the sun is warm in January, you’ll have enough (wheat) to fill the house in summer’.


208. 1x-XEMX ta’ Jannar ahjar il-bard mimna, ‘Better cold than the sun of January’. Var. Xemx li ma ssahhax ahjar il-bard ta’ Jannar mimna, ‘Better the cold of January than sun that doesn’t warm’. In January it’s so cold – at least it often is – that the sun does not make much difference. This proverb has given rise to the idiom ahjar il-bard ta’ Jannar mimneh! ‘Better (I prefer) the cold of January than (to you)’.

209. 1x-XITA f‘Jannar troxx il-bzar, ‘January rain sprinkles pepper (euphemism for ‘manure’), i.e. is very beneficial to the fields.

210. Meta tkun 1x-XITA f‘Jannar ghandek il-goton id-dar (Agius De Soldanis, Dammu), ‘When it rains in January you’ll have cotton in the house’. Var. 1x-xita ta’ Jannar tajba biex tbadem hadma r-raba’ tal-goton, ‘Rain in January is good for tilling the land for cotton’.

211. Titloxx XITA f‘Jannar ghax jaghlichek js-silg ‘Don’t ask for rain in January lest it will snow’. Var. La sehjajbx (titloxx, tghajajtx) xita f‘Jannag ‘Do not call for rain in January’. Don’t provoke trouble lest you have more than you expect; don’t ask for something unpleasant at a time when it may very well happen, as rain in January.

212. Qabel Jannar la XITWA u lanquas bard, ‘Before January neither rain nor cold’.

213. F‘Jannar 1x-XITWA taghmel taghba: Alla hares ma ikkolokx fejn tilqagha, ‘In January Winter is very severe; it will be very bad for you (lit. God forbid) if you won’t have a place where to take shelter from it’. taghmel taghba, lit. ‘does its (worse work)’, ‘to grow severe’. Cp. It. ‘Sta facendo una delle sue’.

February


Crowfoot and Baldensperger say that in Palestine ‘February has the reputation of a wild and stormy month. ‘February, the striker, no bonds hold (Shbat el khbabat ma ‘aleh rabbat, p. 6).

girej, tr.v., ‘to scratch’, fig. ‘to take away stealthily’. Cp. Ar. ٌنْيَفْ to sweep away’ (Hava); ‘enlever, emporter tout, en balayant, d’un coup de balai’ (Kaz). But for a closer meaning cp. ٌنْيَفْ ‘to pare off the scar of (a wound)’, Hava.

215. Meta Frar ikun FAWWAR, t-daqqqal biedja tmur il-libjar, ‘When February rains heavily, all the cultivation suddenly goes down the wells (i.e. is ruined)’.

216. Frar FAWWAR, jelek ma totnogix ix-xemx il-ghodu totnog wara nofs inhur, ‘In February, the month of heavy rain, if the sun does not come out in the morning it will come out in the afternoon’. Cp. Proverb No. 254 under March.

217. Frar FAWWAR, tal-bidwi ghana fid-dar, ‘A flooded February enriches the farmer’s house’.


218. Frar FAWWAR, itella’ l-fwar, ‘Heavily raining February raises vapour (steam, the humours of the earth)’. Vass. (No. 274) gives the following explanation: ‘In questo mese si provano quasi tutti gli effetti atmosferici, e la terra comincia a fermentarsi, onde muovere il seco dei vegetali per fatti germogliare nell’imminente primavera’.

fwar, m.n. ‘vapour, steam’. Cp. Ar. ٌنْيَفْ ‘vapeur’ (Beauss).

219. Frar FAWWAR, kull xital (haxixa, ghadira, laqxa) bin-nwar, ‘In heavily-raining February, every plant (blade of grass, pool, chip of stone) is in blossom’. Var. Frar faawwar, kull haxix totnog mim al-bitlan, ‘In heavily-raining February every plant (blade of grass) comes out of the walls’.

If on Candlemas day it be shower and rain, winter is here, and will not come again; 'St. Swithin’s Day (July 15) if thou dost rain, for forty it will remain; St. Swithin’s day, if thou be fair, for forty days 'twill rain na mair'; Ger. ‘let’s zu Lichtmess hell und rein, wird ein langer Winter sein; Wenn es aber stürmt und schneit, Ist der Frühling nicht mehr weit’.

*vora* (for *vora*, Gozitan or Maltese village dialect), v.t. *to launch*, from It. *varare*, *to launch*.

*vora* (dialectal, also *vora*), *outside away*, from Sicilian *fora*. The word is not otherwise used in Maltese.

Nahr il-GANDLORA hohg l-ors jekk isib l-art imxarrba, jew rigej jinghbu nixfa, i għid: ix-xitwa ġejja; jekk isibba nixfa i għid: ix-xitwa ghaddiet. "On Candlemas the bear comes out; if he finds the ground wet, or his legs remain dry, he says: 'Winter is coming'; if he finds it dry he says: 'Winter is over'. One should note that in Sicily and elsewhere the bear is not a constant element. In Calabria, for instance, it is sometimes the bear, sometimes the wolf and sometimes the lion. In Maltese it can also be the *Gaugaw*, a curious word of uncertain meaning (See under Prov. No. 391). A very interesting paper on the subject is L’Orso della Candela, by Raffaele Corso (FP Communications, No. 153, Helsinki 1945).

Fix-xahar ta’ Frar il-izza, saqqi u baqqi l-HABAQ għazzi, *In February sow, water and sprinkle the basil bush*. Parents who had girls to give in marriage used to place pots of basil on the window sill.

*babaq għazzi*, m.n. *bush (common) basil*, fr. Ar. بَابَاق + جَعْلَة the latter occurring in *babbaqżż*, *edible cyperus*, fr. Ar. جَعْلَة Cyperus esculentus – plant (Hava).

*Meta jiżi *ADD IL-BLUBY, ix-xita tibda tluh, ‘When Carnival (lit. Fools’ Sunday) comes, rain begins to get scarce’. Carnival in Malta takes place on the three days preceding Lent.

228. Frar it-tigieq dafjim ġol-ĦARI, 'In February hens are always in the
cave'.

229. Fi Frar (Fil-xahar ta’ Frar) jinkixfu ġ-GHAWAR, 'February reveals
defects'. In this month our peasants can tell whether they are going to
have a good or bad harvest. Cp. No. 233.

aghwar, pl. m.m., 'defects', from Ar. کَفْرَةٌ pl. of كَفْرٍ (M. ġhar) 'shame,
disgrace, vice' (Hava).

Cp. It. 'A primavera vengono fuori tutte le magaghe'.

229. Il-twil setfur tal-QASIR, 'The tall one (March) is the servant of the
short one (February)'. Var. Frar if-titex setfura ġafjar. 'February seeks a
better maid (servant)'. In Maltese Folklore March is nicknamed 'the tall
one'.

Cp. Eng. 'While the tall maid is stooping, the little one hath swept the
house'.

230. RAS IR-RANDAN ras il-maltosso, 'The beginning of Lent is the
beginning of bad weather'.

Cp. Fr. 'De carême haute de froid n’aura faute'.

231. Meta Frar ifkalou n-SLEJJEF, ġafjar il-bidwi joggħod mal-gwejjef.
'When, in a bissextile year, February takes a day or more on loan, it’s bet-
ter for the farmer to stay with the idle. If he works it will be practically
all wasted. It is a popular belief that a leap-year is unlucky and dangerous
to the harvest (A. Cremona, op.cit., p. 14).

Bonelli explains the proverb thus: 'Quando febbraio abbia i suoi cognati
(sia bisestile) meglìo è per il contadino di starsene a sedere coi poltronii
(ogni sua fatica sarebbe vana, l’anno bisestile essendo forse tenuto per
infausto). Crowfoot and Baldensperger on p. 6 of their book From Cedar
to Hyssop: a study in the folklore of plants in Palestine say that 'in spite of
the flowers and occasional blazes of sunshine the last days of February and
the first days of March have a special reputation for stormsiness. They
are called the 'Borrowed Days' (Cp. M. slejjef), Cp. Proverb No. 200.

232. San Mattija, liza’ t-TOMNIBA, la mwahha lanaq brkijia, 'On the
day of St. Matthias (24th February), sow the wheat neither too late nor too
early'. Var. (i) San Mattija, zriegħ it-tomnija, 'On St. Matthias’ day, sow
wheat'; (ii) San Mattija, l-arènelli fil-lobnija, 'On St. Matthias’ day the
streaked sparrows are in the pan'.

Cp. Sp. 'Por San Marcos (in April) bogas a sacos'.

arzëll, coll.n., 'streaked sparrows', fr. It. asello (L. asellus, dim. of
asinus, 'come calco del óuòsco, 'o连云 che indica lo stesso pesce'
(Diz. Et. It.) The M. word seems to derive from dim. form asinella, 'small
donkey', whence arznell with insertion of r.

lenbjia, pl. lnjebli, generally pronounced without l, f.n., 'a large earth-
enware basin'. Also 'a basin in which dough is kneaded', wrongly derived
fr. Ar. خَزَيْةٌ 'leathern vessel for milking' by Barbera and fremiš-ụm
bluq śuqām, water spring, streamlet as Desolsoni, is more commonly believ-
ed to derive from Greek (koç) λυμφή (ξαγ) 'a baptismal font' koljubluq, 'holy
water stoup (Du Cange), whence dialectal It. and Calabrian limbus (Scic.
limbus)', 'a basin (earthware) from L. limbus, through Gr. λέμβος 'a
small light ship'.

233. Il-Wiċċ kif īħallih Frar issibu fil-ħamar, 'At harvest time you’ll
find the crop as February left it'. Cp. Proverb No. 228.

234. Fi Frar ix-XITA bil-lejli u xogħol (taħdem) bi nhar, 'In February the
rain falls by night and the work is done by day'. As the rain which falls
during the night is generally absorbed, the peasant can till the field during
the day.

Cp. Sp. 'Marzo marceador, de noche llueve y de día hace sol'.

235. 'Isbel', ġigdiċu Frar,
'Ma niflaxx', iwiegħu ĠŻARA;
'Ibgq' melia kif int,
Għaxżiżjen ġida ma hemmex wara'.

'Run to seed', says (lit. tells him) February, 'I haven’t got the strength',
answers the corn; 'Therefore remain where you are, because there is
no more time left after this.' Cp. March Proverb No. 252.

MARCH

236. Meta jidher il-busuf, u l-farfett jibda jittajjar
L’ART (kum saħet u l-ucb taqbeż kolliha nwaqjar).
'When the hairy beetle comes out and the butterfly begins to fly about,
know then that the earth has grown warm and the crops will all burst into
blossoms'.

busuf, m.n., 'a kind of hairy beetle', a word made up of bu (Ar. Ƅ ﻏ) and
suf, 'wool' (Ar. ﺳﻮﻗ). učb, m.n., pl. of wiċċ, 'face' Ar. ۋ with w unvoiced by s in Mal-
tese in the plural form and final radical replaced by lengthening of c.

237. Marzu r-rebħiegħa tal-BIEJJEJEM, 'March is the Spring of beasts'.
This is the time when the well-fed sheep, goats, cattle etc. yield a great
deal of milk.

238. F’Marzu kull TAJR ibid, 'In March every fowl lays its eggs'. Cp.
239. 'Marzu marzolu, ogni gaddina fa l'ovu'; 'La cchiù tinta gaddina a Marzu grapi'.

240. 'Marzu, il-FLISSONJIEJET komuni bħax-xebbiet', 'In March 'bus are as common as young women'. This proverb is evidently of recent formation.

241. Marzu MARZELLU Jabraq il-moxt u r-ristellu, 'March, dear March, burns the stay (of the weaver's loom) and the flax comb'. Var. Marzu Marzellello (in-nanna tabrąq), jabraq ix-xatba (il-bait) u r-ristellu, 'March little March (the old woman) burns the gate (the thread) and the flax comb'. For the dim. cp. Sic. equivalents and similar usage in Spanish as in 'Feverillo (from febrero) el corto, un día peor que otro'.

242. Marzu MARZELLU, ittajjar ix-xebbiet b'dellu, 'March, dear March, with its shadow lures the girls away from their homes', i.e. courting time for young ladies.

243. Marzu MARZELLU, (Marzellello), bil-kabozza u bil-kappell, 'March, dear March, with the (weans) great coat and a hat'. In March sometimes it rains or is cold, and sometimes the sun is very hot.

244. NIHAR San Girgor, il-kaboċi tiha l-hmar, 'On St. Gregory's Day (12th March), give cabbages to the donkey', i.e. by this time it is no longer good to cook. Note dialectal pronunciation of hmar corresponding to vocalic sequence. Cp. Proverb No. 192.

245. NIHAR San Tumas, il-jumāttitwa pass ta' hmar gamsas, 'On St. Thomas's day (7th March) the day grows longer by the pace of a kicking donkey'.

246. 'F' Marzu kull GĦASFUR (ta'aj) littix (tingabbar ma', jaqbad) il-martu, 'In March every bird looks for (seeks, finds) his wife'. March is the mating season for birds.

247. Marzu, il-fart ihossu (iboss il-hard) f' QARNU, 'In March the pax feels the cold in his homes'. Var. Meta Marzu jahqama, il-baqla turina b'qamha, 'When March oppresses us (with cold) the cow points her horns at us', i.e. she shakes her head with cold.

248. 'F' Marzu aqla e'miehrub u QARTSU, 'In March pull out your nose and wrap it up'. Var. Marzu qala e'miehrub u qartsu, 'March pulled off its nose and wrapped it up', i.e. to prevent its falling off on account of the very sharp cold.

249. Marzu ittambur u QARTSU, 'March beats the drum and wraps it up (his nose)'. Cp. Proverb No. 248.

250. Meta Marzu jistikgis, SENA ħażina, 'When March shows signs of decay, expect a bad year (poor harvest)'.

251. Ibo'za mis-SOKOR ta' Marzu, 'Beware of the drunkenness of March', i.e. heavy or frequent rain in March damages the crops.

Cp. Sic., 'Si `ntra Marzu ce'è acquazzina, è annata di risina' i.e. la rugiada (acquazzina) in Marzo è funesta a cereali, i quali vengono presi della ruggine (risina).' (Pitrè)


sibbel, also sebbel, int. v., 'to put out ears (corn)' corresponding to Ar. sibbel, fig. it also means 'to lose one's temper' with which cp. Ar. sibbel 'to revile'.

253. Marzu bi-ilma xebghan, italiæ `gbira, u gods ikbar ikun tal-TGHAM, 'March, water-sated, raises a collection (of rain) and the pile (stack) of grain will be larger'.

`gbira, f.n., 'a collection', local formation from gabar, (q.v., under Proverb No. 246 above).

gods, m.n., 'a heap or pile of', whence godesse, Ar. `god, `to heap up spikes' (Hava); r.v. `to pile or heap up', from Ar. `god, `heap of herbage'.

The change of k to g seems to be the effect of regressive-voiced assimilation.

254. FMarzu jekk ix-EMX ma laqhis fil-għoħu laqhis fil-għaxija, 'In March, if the sun does not come out in the morning, it will come out in the evening'. Cp. Proverb No. 216 under 'February'.

255. FMarzu x-XITA tibda tuh, 'In March rain begins to grow scarce'.

thub from jub (Ar. `thub) 'to emit a pleasant odour'; fig. 'to become rare'.

256. XITA huq Marzu u dhuq April, karu dehbe, fehar barar, (karu dehbe u gawbar fil), 'Rain at the end of March and the beginning of April is like two chariots, one full of gold and the other of silk (precious stones). Yaq. ix-xita fi huq Marzu-dhuq April, afbar minn mitt karu dehbe fil, 'Rain at the end of March and the beginning of April is better than a hundred coins'. Cp. Proverb No. 275.

Cp. Sic., 'Quanto va l'acqua di Marzu (o di Maju) e d'Aprili, 'Un va la caru cu tutti li vii'; 'Vecchierella di Menfi: Quanto va l'acqua di Marzu e d'Aprili? Nun va Re Caru cu tutti l'eviri (cu lu so aviri); 'Quanto va 'n acqua ni Marzu e n' Aprili? Nun ci va 'nu varca di zicchini (cu li so vidiri); Modica 'Quanto va un'acqua di Marzu e d'Aprili? Nun cci va un caru cu chissi dei vii', it., 'Val più un'acqua tra aprile e maggio che i buoi con il carro'; 'La prima acqua d'Aprile vale un carro d'oro con tutto l'assile'; Sp., 'aguade enere, cada gata vale un dinero (different month but similar image); 'lluvia de abril, hinche el rey el carro y el carril' with variants in Pontevedra and Catalonian.

For usefulness of March and April rain Cp. also Chios, (prov. No. 33).

'If March has two rains
And April yet another,
You will see the bread baskets
Full of fine flour.'


A. Cremona (op.cit. p. 15-6) says: 'All these proverbs have derived their shape and meaning from a Biblical legend which is traditionally known in the Maltese folk-lore by the name es-sultan Salamun u Hub (King Solomon and his brother, See Magri's X'ghid il-Malti, p.60) and in the Sicilian folk-tales under the heading Salamuni e Marcoru (See Pitrè, Piane e Leggende, No. XXI). In both Sicilian and Maltese legends the sharp cleverness and identity of Solomon's brother is tested and brought to light through the King sproposed riddle and prize offered for any one who might guess the value of two carts or of a wagon drawn by oxen, which in the Maltese version were supposed to contain a load of gold and silk, and in the Sicilian legend Solomon himself with his mistress. The lively explanation or witty estimate given by Marcoru of the King's device has traditionally been responsible for the great value which a full of rain in the end of March or at the beginning of April has on agriculture for the the Spring harvest. Such a proverbial answer to Solomon's riddle is still recited and preserved in the various maxims which before the Christian era might have been primitively derived from some Phoenician sources.

A similar legend is claimed by Magri as being written by Justin on the Phoenicians (Liber XVIII of his Trogi Pompei Fragmenta).

karin, m.n., 'name of an old coin', linking up with karlin, 'the name of another old coin (= ghassu habbi, ten grains)'. Cp. It. calino, 'antica moneta napoletana fatta coniare nel 1278 da Carlo d'Angiò, nome passato poi a monete papali e sabauda (fino al 1786)... Anche antiche monete redescate (Baviera, Brunswick) portavano il nome di Karl, e monete francesi quello di carolus'. (Diz. Et. It.).

257. Marzu t-twil gieb (for gieb-bi, lit. 'came with') = ix-XKORRAT-t-qamh, 'Tall March brought the sack of corn'. This saying evidently refers to a Maltese folk-story given by Fr. Magri (op.cit., p. 14). March is tall (long) as compared with February, which a Spanish proverb describes as Febretillo el corto (un dia peor que otro).

258. Marzu, is-ZARA' his-abwila f'ma'qu, 'In March the wheat has got the corn ear in its mouth'.
267. F'April, il-hobż wasal l'MINDIL. 'In April bread arrives in the table cloth'. Var. April, irid hobża twila (kbira) l'mindil, 'In April you want a large loaf in the napkin'. The reference here is to the ripeness of corn, which by this month begins to fill; also, to the fact that in April, as the day gets longer, more bread is eaten. The fifth line of a months' verse in Artas referring to March says: 'O mistress, make my loaves larger' (See Crowfoot and Baldensperger: op.cit. p.8)

268. F'April arfa' l-MOHRJET, minn halq il-wied, 'In April take away the plough from the valley'.

269. Mela n-NAHLA taraha fuq il-fjur, taḥṣir ma jkun hemmx żgur, 'When you see the bee on the flower, that's a sure sign there is no rot'.

270. Ja ghasfur, thabbaħ u nfeľa; 'O bird, wash and clean yourself;
         Waslet ghall ir-REBBIEGHΑ, for your Spring has now arrived since
         La darba ṣart ix-xghir melha, the corn-ears in the field have filled
         out'.

271. Bil-kumplantament tağżej t'April, l-UCUB kollha taqbez u tif, 'With the rest (of the fair weather) of April, the crops look as if they would jump up and fly away (i.e. burst with mellowing maturity). Rain is not good after April 25th. Cp. Prov. No. 273. 

272. Ix-XITA ta' San Ġorġ meghuda, 'Rain on St. George's Day is by appointment (i.e. to be expected as if promised)' Var. Ix-xita tal-qigħan meghuda, 'Rain at the time of the threshing floors, i.e. June, is by appointment'. The following excerpt from From Cedar to Hyssope by Crowfoot and Baldensperger (p.3) indicates a common belief and also perhaps a common explanation, though the time is differently placed due to two different climates. 'Id Lidd, (Feast of Lydda, the Feast of St. George, November 3-16). If the rain comes several days earlier or later it is good and welcome, but if it comes on or near the Feast itself then indeed 'the rain comes right'. The Feast of Lydda is the feast of St. George himself, the dragon slayer, who is now regarded as a rain-bringer. Cp. Proverb No. 309.
273. **Nhar San Mark ix-XITA nar fl-art.** "On St. Mark’s Day (25th April) rain is (like) fire on earth," variant Wara San Mark, min jilob ix-xita jkun jistiq in-nar fl-art. "After St. Mark’s day, he that prays for rain, wishes fire on earth."

274. **Bix-XITA f’Marzu u April tingabar i-annata.** "Rain in March and April makes the year’s crop possible." The two lines are the last two in a folk quintain collected by Mr. J. Cassar-Pullicino from Ghasri in Gozo which runs as follows:

- L-għażuża għarg tghanni
- Bli-imqazel u l-loqqa;
- Bix-xita f’Marzu u April
- Tingabar i-annata
- Makes the year’s crop possible.

275. **Qatra XITA f’April tiswa daga kamu dehel fiu.** "A drop of rain in April is worth a chaise of fine gold." Cp. Proverb No. 256.

277. **MEJU mirjieh u l-BAHAR jistennih.** "May is windy and the sea waits for it."

278. **Il-BAHAR ta’ MEJU jgharrqek u jhallik.** "The sea of May drowns you and then leaves you. The sea in May gets stormy all of a sudden and as suddenly calms down.

279. **META l-JUTA tawwar, il-GERHUDA tibda tawwar.** "When the broad beans begin to blossom, the flax begins to abound."

280. **META d-dolliegħa tonaħ, il-GERHUDA tibda tonaħ.** "When the water melon begins to fill out, the flax begins to sob."

281. **MEJU kuli ma fiq, jiwrina il-BTIEH.** "The month of May and all it brings with it ruins the courtyards." Our peasants breed rabbits, hens, sheep etc., in the courtyard (tiebk) of their houses. If it rains in the month of May, there will be no fodder for them. For contrast see prov. No. 234, and for comparison see proverbs nos. 239, 249.

282. **MEJU x-xarab (tqil) tad-DISGRAZZII.** "May is the (heavy) month of misfortunes." Cp. Proverb No. 292.

283. **MEJU zmien il-ghanum u zmien id-DRIS, u fis-soddah tboss il-qis (it-tinikzi).** "May is singing time and threshing time, when in bed you’ll feel the bites (picks of fleas)."

284. **MEJU xarab il-fjuri, fis-il-GHOMMA tibda turi.** "May is the month of flowers, and the time when heat (hot weather) makes itself felt."

285. Meju HOBŻ u sikkina gluex minn kull gid (minn kollos) jibda jaghtina, 'In May (get your) loaf and knife, for it will give us all sorts of things (largesse)', May is a month of abundance.

286. Meju l-jleb l'ommu, 'May is his mother's naughty child (lit. his mothers' fool). At this time of the year the weather is generally inconstant.

287. Meju bil-KABOZZA u bil-kappell, 'May with the great coat and a hat', i.e. it can be cold (bil-kabozza) and sunny (bil-kappell). Var. (i) Meju bil-mingel u bil-kabozza, 'May with the scythe and the great coat'; (ii) Meju jisib il-mingel, il-kabozza u l-kappell, 'May brings the scythe, the hooded coat and the hat'; (iii) Meju bil-kabozza jisib il-qar, 'May with the hooded cloak sells the (last) drops (of rain)'. May is reaping time (Cp. Proverb No. 290); it is also a month of rain - hence the kabozza, and much sun - hence the kappell. According to Magri (op.cit., p. 18) the scythe (il-mingel) symbolizes also the destruction of death, May being the month of misfortunes. Cp. Proverb No. 282.

288. Min ommu thoba, taghmilu KABOZZA l'Meju, 'The mother that loves her son makes him a great coat in May', i.e. May is not yet the time to wear lighter clothes (Cp. Proverb No. 302 under June).

Cp. Sic, 'La matri chi voli a lu fighiolu, a Maju cci criscili rubbo-lu (lu trubolu) (Mazzara)'; 'Nta Maju nun livari, nna sittemmunn nun mettiri'. Pirè explains the word rubbolu as 'roba, abitu' and adds: 'La madre che ama il suo bambino non si lascia illudere da teepori di Maggio, anzi gli cresce le vesti.'

289. Meju jimilena bil-KAPPAR, 'May gives us large quantities of (lit. fills us with) caper.'

290. Flet lat? - li-żara' jghid Meju, Għax naħsad sejjer, imqar kont ghadek PLIEJU.

'How big have you grown? says May to the corn; for I am going to reap even if you are still (no bigger than) penny royal mint'. Var. (i) F'Meuju ahsad imqar kien (qasir dags) il-plieju, 'In May reap, even if it were (as short as) royal mint'; (ii) Meju jinixxel (sahrag) il-plieju, 'May dries (burns) the penny royal mint'. (iii) Wasal ix-xabar ta' Meju, kebbe inmar u abrag il-plieju, 'The month of May has arrived, kindle the fire and burn the penny royal mint'. This proverb is applicable mainly to barley (xghir) and plants left over from April. Corn is reaped in June.

Cp. Ar. (Andria), 'May is to be penny royal'. (West., No., No. 1931); 'It rains in May, even if it be penny royal' (West., No., No. 1932); 'If rain falls in May, the crops and its wheat are spoil'.

291. Mejjir l-mirjieh, b'kull deni stennieh, 'Expect May, the windy month, to bring with it all sorts of misfortunes.' Var. (i) Meju l-mirjieh, deni stennia b'kull, 'From windy May expect all kinds of misfortunes'; (ii) Meju bir-rib u bid-deni stennieb, 'Expect May to be windy and full of misfortunes'. Cp. Proverb No. 282.

292. Meju bla RIH, il-biedja bla tifrīgh, 'A windless May means a stunted (?) harvest'. Should tifrīgh be spelled tifrīh, verbal noun of tibr, Ar. 'it rained'. If so, bla tifrīh, should be translated 'joyless, windless May; joyless harvest'.

293. Minamm Mejju, ma jghaddix wiehed li ma jghmilx XITA, 'Of a hundred Mays not one passes without rain', May is known to be a windy month; but occasional showers are not unusual.

294. WARDA ta' Mejju u nhuq ta' qal il-plieju, 'Pick a rose of May and not one among the penny royal mint'. This proverb, figuratively used, means marry a young woman when she is still young and not when she has passed the prime of her life.

JUNE

296. I-ANDAR bil-halel khar jaghdi lla-nies u lill-hmar, 'The threshing-floor with its big stacks of corn sheaves provides sustenance (lit. gives) to men and the donkey', i.e. to the peasants it gives threshed com from which they get flour for bread, to donkeys and other animals it gives tibem, threshed straw.

balla, l.m., 'hay or corn stack'. Cp. Ar. حسب 'large basket made of reeds' and الش 'set of clothes' (Hava).

297. GĦUAR xahar tad-DRIS, fis-sodda thoss il-gris, 'June is the month for threshing and the time when you begin to feel pricks in bed', i.e. it is the
302. Qabel il-HŒJJEĜ la thiddix hwejeg, 'Do not change your clothes before the bonfires'. Var (i) Qabel nhar il-hœjejeg, la fitœneh s-sul, la jisbiddul il-hwejeg, 'Before the bonfires (on St. John's Eve) do not take off your wooly clothes and do not change your clothes'; (ii) Mal-hœjejeg jinbidden il-hwejeg, 'At the time of the bonfires clothes are changed'; (iii) Min ommu thobbu, qabel il-hœjejeg ma thiddilux il-hwejeg, Cp. Proverb No. 288 under May. 'The mother that loves her son does not make him change his clothes before the bonfires'; (iv) Min ommu thobbu hwejeg, ghall-bagjege man nebibi-bomlu, 'The mother that loves her son takes off her son's clothes at the time of the bonfires'; (v) Qabel jiği San Ġammar, inebhih is-sul mim faqeg, 'Don't take off your wooly clothes before St. John's Day'.

Cp. It. 'Prima di San Giovanni non si cambiano i panni'; Eng. 'Cast not a clout till May is out'.

303. Tghidix tieghek il-HLEWWA qabel ma tkun ġewwa, 'Don't consider the unsetseed yours before you have gathered it in'. The crop is not safe so long as it is still in the fields. Figuratively, the proverb is a warning not to count one's chickens before they are hatched.

Cp. Ar. نم عهد چرخه الکاد عکیسل 'Ne dis pas "mes fèves", avant de les avoir dans le boisseau' (Fegh., No. 2416); Sp. 'Tirgo no melames, hasta que me tengan bajo llaves'.

304. Meta jidhoi Ġunju, tieqibix il-art tri-MOHIET, Bixi il-grass taghba x-xemx ma tebdiniex.

'When June enters; do not turn the soil with the plough, lest the sun takes away its juices'.

305. Tidrix f-ENTRIEQ, bixi il-liben ma jinheliex, 'Do not thresh the wheat when the entrieq (i.e. hot wind) is blowing, so that you won't waste the straw'.

entrieq, m.n., 'burning wind', morphologically the verbal noun of the VIIIth form of haraq. Ar. يرد to burn, whence M. hieraq to kindle or burn (Falzoni) so that Cp. , to burn, take fire, be on fire' (Elias); 3 f. 's.m. Combustion, adustion, confagration, déflagration, concentration (par le feu); crénation; action d'être brulé' (Beauss). It is also an astronomical word used 'quand le soleil et un planète se trouvent dans le même degré du zodiaque' (Dozy).

306. Nhar il-DMARRJA l-bajd ittr b-arja, 'At the time of the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul (29th June) the price of eggs soars in the air', i.e. eggs become scarce and dearer.

307. Rih ta' siegħa jnaddaf QIEGHA, 'An hour's wind clears the threshing
308. **F'aSan ġwann tidħol il-GHASSA**, 'In the month of St. John there is a change of guard', i.e. 'Spring ends and Summer begins'.

ghassα, f.m., 'watch; guard', fr. N.Afr. Ar. عَمَّ (M. ghases) garde, faction'. (Beauss).


qiegħa, f.m., 'threshing floor, floor, ground'. Cp. Ar. قائمة 'paved court' (Hava); 'le plancher, le carreau, le sol' (Beauss).

310. **Meta l'ŻARA jorqod**, sidu jgum, 'When the wheat hangs down, its master gets up'.

Cp. It. 'Quando il grano ricasca, il contadino rizza'.

### JULY

311. **Lulju xahar id-DRIS**, 'July is the month of threshing'.

312. **Lulju, il-HAJJATIN jibdew jaqlidha xi karlin**, 'July is the month when the siolars begin to earn some karlins', i.e. it is the best time for their business, when they really begin to make some money. But cp. Proverb No. 324 under August.

313. **HRIT il-hmar ma jagħix sandar**, Bi hrit il-baqar timla' l-landar.

'Ploughing by donkey leaves no profit, ploughing by cows fills the threshing-floor'.

Cp. It. 'Chi lavora la terra colla vacca, va al mulino colla pulladra (colle somare)'. Sp. Aran con mulos, poco más que nada, arar con bueyes, plata quebrada.

314. **Ix-xita għal SANT' ANNA biktija**, Jekk tagħmel, beraq u sujetti jkun ifha.

'Rain on or about St. Anne’s Day (26th July) is early rain; when it rains it is accompanied with lightning and thunderbolts'.

Cp. Ven. 'Se piove il df de Sant’Anna, piove un mese e una settimana'; Pol. 'A Sant’Anna, mattini freddi' (Strafa).

315. **It-tin bejn SANT' ANNA u SAN ĠAKBU (jbdha) jbexqaq fommu**, 'Between St. Anne’s Day (26th July) and St. James’ (25th July) figs begin to open their mouths (i.e. show signs of over-ripeness?'. Var. Bejn Sant’Anna u Santa Vendra it-tin jibdha jbexxaq fommu, 'Between St. Anne and St. 

Vennera ġīgs begin to open their mouths. (The latter's feast falls on July 26th if it is a Sunday; if not, the following Sunday.)

Cp. Sic. 'Sant'Anna, la racina si manna', Pirre says: 'A 26 luglio l'uva gia in via di maturazione a metà di luglio entra in maturità, e però si può raccoglierne, e si manda in regalo come cosa nuova'. Ligur. 'A Sant’Anna, a figa (il fico) a l’è in scià cana'; 'A Sant’Ana, a figa a l’è manà (Strafa). Ven. Se piove il di di Sant’Ana, piove un mese e una settimana (Strafa).

bexxaq, tr.v., 'to leave ajar', (doors, windows). Cp. t-tiega bix-xaqq. 'to tear off clothes' (Hava). The M. verb is unrecorded in the Ar. dictionaries. It can be originally a denominative formation from *bi* (Ar. بَيْنَ ) + *xaqq*, 'opening'; assure (Ar. خَيْرٍ, 'chink'). Halli t-tiega bix-xaqq. 'Leave the window with an opening (ajar)', whence bexxaq.

316. **Aħjar SBULA minn għenba**, 'Better a corn-ear than a grape'. Bread as a staple food is indispensable; not so wine.

317. **FELLUSU ta' Lulju jik bṣadła f’San Pubbju**, 'A July chicken gives you an egg on St. Publius Day'. Hens hatched in this month lay eggs late in the season. The best are those hatched in January, March, August and September.

### AUGUST

318. **AWISSU qatt ma ħamel ilu mtīsu**, 'August never had any love for itself'. It is a cruelly hot month, the time when everyone begins to complain of the heat and blame the month for it.

319. **F’Awissu l-BAHAR tisma’ hissu**, 'In August you (begin to) hear the sound of the sea'. This is when the sea begins to become rough and choppy.

320. **Ittendi ghall-BIKKU u ghall-bikrijja, ghax bhalhom tkun il-bqija**, 'Watch out for the early fruit, for the rest will be of similar quality'.

321. **Sligra FROTTATA aħjar minn platt kawla ta**, 'Better a tree laden with fruit than a plateful of cauliflower mess'.

322. **FROTT taqleb, suq hażin**, 'Good fruit, bad market'.

323. **Meta l-ġewna tal-GRILLU jaqbiż isir l-ġeneb**, 'When the cricket is over-weighted by its wing, grapes grow ripe'. By the time the cricket which is believed to ripen grapes has grown very big, grapes must be ripe.

324. 'Awissu tal-HAJJATA l-iswed, 'August is the black month for tailors', i.e. the time when they have little work to do. Cp. Prov. No. 312.

325. 1x-xahar t-‘Awissu s-sinjur u l-fqr HISSU, 'The rich and the poor alike feel the month of August'.
   Cp. Sic. 'Agustu lu càdu è destinu (faradiddio)'; Tusc. 'Il sol d'agosto inganna la massa la norto'.

326. ‘Awissu jahbat (isawwalt) il-MARTU kemm (kif) imissu, 'August gives his wife a sound threshing'. Fr. Magri (op.cit., p. 54) has the following note: 'On ancient Maltese coins Osiris figures always with a cane (M. ssawt) in hand. Therefore Osiris (the sun) canes and strikes his wife; the wife of Osiris is Isis and Isis is the earth'.

327. Meta t-IGHANSAJ tafmel il-ward t-‘Awissu, ix-xita tkum bikrijja, 'When the squills bloom in August, there will be early rain'.

328. Meta t-IGHANSAJ itiella l-bonn imghawreg, annata hażina; meta itiella l-bonn dritt, annata ta’ba, 'When the squill's stem grows crooked, the year's harvest will be bad, when the squill's stem grows straight, the year's harvest will be good'.
   bonn, m.n., for boni, from Ar. bann, 'cordon (tresse, ruban); Courroie pour chaussures. (Deyz)', whence the M. figurative meaning stem'. M. bonna, 'to form the stem, onion, tulip is its denom. verb, With M. bonna, 'swelling in the groin' (Falzòn fig. 'tough guy'; cp. it. buono, 'swelling'.

329. SAN BARTILOMÈW (also Sen Bart for short) ghandu-l-muttieh tax-xita, 'St. Bartholomew (24th August) has got the keys of the rain'.
   Cp. Sp. 'Por San Barcolome (24 de agosto) la aqas primeras'; Ger. 'Se piove il df di San Bartolomeo, buon autunno' (Straf.).

330. SAN LAWRENZ, ix-xahar tas-shana, 'The month of St. Lawrence (10th August) is the month of heat.'
   Cp. Sic. 'San Lorenzo la gran calura; San’t’Antonio la gran freddura, l’una e l’altra pocu dura'; It. 'San Lorenzo, gran calura, San’t’Antonio, gran freddura; l’uno e l’altro poco dura' (Straf.), with variance in several parts of Italy.

331. SANTA MARIJA l’nofs Awissu, u kulhadd jieltu li jmittsu, 'St. Mary’s Feast (15th August) falls in the middle of August, when everyone takes what is due to him'. This is the time when peasants pay and landowners receive the year’s rent for the fields.

332. SANTA MARIJA, żirgh it-tomnija, 'St. Mary’s Day is the time for sowing late corn'.

333. F’Awissu, kull TIN tibda tmissu, 'In August you can begin to taste (lit.; to touch) every kind of figs'. Var. F’awissu t-tin imissu, 'August begins to touch (i.e. to ripen) figs'; also F’Awissu l-gheneb iballik tmissu, 'In August grapes let you touch them'.

334. TWELID F’Santa Marija, jik mesejjah ghal-UBRIGIA, 'He that is born on St. Mary’s Day (15th August) will be called to become a jockey. On the feast of St. Mary in Gozo races are held, Maltese jockeys take part in races held in Gozo; races in Malta are held on the day after St. Mary which is the feast of St. Roque.'

335. Meta tisna’ jghajjal il-WERŻEQ, tista’ tmur ghal-gheneb u t-tiniet, 'When you hear the cricket chirp, you can go for grapes and figs', i.e. are sure to find them ripe.

336. Awissu, ix-XEMX tahraru u x-xita tmissu, 'August is burst by the sun and touched by the rain', i.e. it is a very hot month when we have the first showers.

337. Kif TIZRA tahsah, 'As you sow, so will you reap'.
   Cp. It. 'Come seminari, così raccolgerai'; 'Si raccolgile quel che si semina' (widespread); L. 'Quae enim seminaverit homo, haec et meret'; Fr. 'Chacun recueillera qu’il a semé'; Sp. 'Como sembrare los cogedores'. Ger. 'Was der Mensch sät, das wird er ernten'; Eng. 'As they sow, so let them reap'.

338. GHŻAŻ-ZIEGH bikri iki; ghal-imwahharikolik tbaħħar, 'For early sowing you can rent (a barn); for late sowing you'll have to fumigate' i.e. to propitiate the Deity to give you a good crop. Var. iz-zież bikri ghalib iki, u l-balla tal-imwahhar mbaruq, 'When you sow early you can rent (a place where to store the crops), while the stock of late sowing is good for burning (i.e. useless)'. Early sowing is recommended for an abundant harvest. A Cremona says: 'Some of our old farmers call in the good man of the village and ask him to bless their cows or breeding mare by fumigating them with the burning of holy leaves (of the wild olive tree which has been blessed in Holy Week)' Cp. Proverbo No. 355 under October.
   Cp. Sic. 'Presto per natura, tardi per vintura'; It. 'Presto per natura e tardì per ventura'.
Mattose of the 1st September, 1856.)

Bżar, coll.m.u.p., polite word for demel (Ar. دمبل) 'Manure for agricultural use', but literally 'pepper', Ar. پَرَس, pl. of پَرَس 'spices, seasoning' (Hava). For literary M. meaning cp. Ar. ضَرَس 's. coll. poivre noir' (Beauss). M. fig. meaning links up with the meaning of sowing (Ar. زَرَب) which follows manuring. Cp. also Sp. busara, 'dung'.

340. | Kullma tara b'għajnejk hu kollu ġej mill-ART,
    Min għalhekk jahdimba tjejeb, ma jbatix u l-aħħ u l-aħad.
    'Whatever you see with your eyes comes from the earth;/ who therefore tills it carefully will suffer neither hunger nor cold.'

341. | Ir-rimi tal-BERWIEQ wit-tewm safi f'werqa, 'The sprouts of a spade, and garlic plants with clear leaves (grow in September). This is the explanation given by Bonelli in Il Dialetto Maltese.

342. | Xahar ta' l-GHENEB,
    Xahar tar-rith isfel,
    L-għassara jitbolgu għalih.
    'The month of grapes/ (is) the month of the south-east wind./ The grape-vines and salsify plants pray for it. September is the best time for pressing grapes when the south-east wind blows.'

343. | QAMAR Settembru tnejhed sibga warajh, 'The moon of September draws seven others after her'. Var. jekk il-qamar ta' Settembru jinxix xlokk, jagħmel il-xlokk sibxa xbur tas-sefa, 'If the moon of September waxes when the wind blows from the South East, there will be seven months of South East wind during the year.'

344. | Settembru settembrina, jibdilina s-SALA maq-kantina, 'September, dear little September, makes us change (move from) the drawing room for (to) the cellar'. Var. Settembru set jagħmiha, s-sala fil-kantina, 'September is going to give us the hall in the cellar'. In September the Scirocco (South East wind) is so oppressive that to get away from it we prefer the cool cellar to the hot parlour.

345. | F' Settembru, ghas-SALARJU jnur kull membru, 'In September every member goes to collect his salary'. Meaning obscure.

346. | SAN MATTEW, żrigh it-tewm, qilq il-rummien, 'St. Matthew's Day (21st September) is the right time for sowing garlic and for cutting pomegranates'. Var. (i) Għal San Mattew agtix r-rummien u ġra' t-tewm, 'About St. Matthew's time cut the pomegranates and sow garlic'; (ii) San Mattew żrigh it-tewm, 'On St. Matthew's Day sow garlic'.
    Cp. Ger. 'A San Matteo va e semina' (Straff).

347. | SAN MIKIEL żrigh il-rummien, 'St. Michael's Day (29th September) is the time for sowing pomegranates'.

348. | Għal SAN MIKIEL lesti l-gandlier, 'About St. Michael’s Day get the candlestick ready'. Var. F'San Mikiel jibdew il-baddiem (il-mastranz), jixegbu l-gandlier (il-musbieb), 'On St. Michael’s Day the workmen begin to light the candlestick (the oil lamp)'. Agius De-Soldanis (Damma, l. 347, v.), gives the following explanation: 'È costume dei maestri e professori delle arti che tengono bottega di lavoro di vegliare dando principio dalla sera della veglia di San Michele'. St.Michael's Day falls on the 29th September.

349. | KONZ ta’ SETTEMBRU jagħmel bil-gżeż, / Konz ta’ Diċembru wsiq bil-giżej, 'A September fishing-line catches large numbers (lit. heaps of fish); a December fishing-line very small quantities. September is the season for a good catch of 'lampuki'.

350. | F'tal-VITORJA l-bahar jitra ft-għolja, 'On the Day of our Lady of Victory (8th September) the sea rises high', i.e. begins to be rough.

351. | Nhar il-VITORJA a-nies kollha ibies u borja, 'On the Day of our Lady of Victory people wear their best dress and show off'. This proverb seems to apply to the people of Senglea (L-Isla), whose parish church is dedicated to our Lady of Victory and who are reputed to be very vain and showy.

352. | XEMX ta’ Settembru tiftah il-biblen tar-rixtellu, 'The sun of September...
354. La jidhol ix-xabrer tar-Rusarju, AHRAT u temni biex int u tahsad dejjem tghammi, 'When the month of the Rosary (i.e. October) begins, plough and plough again, so that when the time for reaping comes, you'll always sing (i.e. be pleased with the harvest)'.

355. Tal-abhar IBAAHAR, 'The last one will have to fumigate (the crops). According to Proverb No. 338 - early sowing yields good crops and the peasant must hire a place where to store the crops, but crops of late sowing are not likely to be prosperous. The fumigation may therefore be an act of propitiation to ensure a good harvest.'

356. Il-BIGILLA sarel, wil-wett tal-ghalqa bdaret, 'Bigilla is being cooked (again), and now the fields are green'. About October bigilla is still popular in some towns or villages of Malta, but unknown in Gozo.

bigilla, f.m., 'cooked beans'. According to Domenico Magri (Hierolexicon sive Sacri Dictionarii..., Ottawa Edizione, Venezia, 1788, s.v. exsequiae this word is derived from Turkish begala 'fabaie' but cp.; Az. بئگلا 'beans' (Lane).

357. Tal-BIGILLA ma qal xejn, u xebr taghna ghadu jiei, 'The 'bigilla' man hasn't said anything yet, our luck is still to come', i.e. we are near October but rain hasn't started yet.

358. In-NEJJA rekkhej jiet, u l-fawwara ghoddha mitlet, 'Raw chestnuts are back (on the market again) and the spring is nearly filled'. By the time chestnuts begin to sell again the rainy season has already started.

359. F'SAN LUQA iz-zara tinheba fi l-ghattuqa, (Agius De Soldanis, Damma) 'By St. Luke's Day (18th October) the wheat is tall enough to hide a young hen'. Var. Hu tajjeb li f' 'San Luqa tghib fi-zara' ghattuqa, 'It is a good thing that on St. Luke's Day a young hen disappears amidst the wheat'.

Cp. Sic., 'San Luca simenza minuta, su nnu 'e nata, 'e siminata'; Eng. 'When St. George (23rd April) rye will hide a crow, a good harvest may be expected'.

ghattuqa, f.m., 'a young hen that has not yet laid eggs'. Cp. attuqa, pl. attuqqat, 'poule qui n'a jamais pondu; le mot ne se trouve, à ma connaissance, en Algerie qu'au Souf, mais il est connu du tunisien, du tripolitain et du maltais' (W. Marçais: Textes Arabes de Tanger, Paris, 1911).

zara, coll. m., 'standing corn; that which is sown; hence crop of wheat, barley or other grain' (Falzon). Cp. ذرة 's.m. zarga. Fruits de la terre, grains, céréales, récoltes. Champ de céréales — Tunis (Beaus).

360. Meta tkol it-tamna, ghall-KACC tibda n-namra, 'When you (begin to) eat dates the craze for game-hunting begins.'

361. Nhar SANXMUN iżra, 'alexfel jew mlbit, 'On (or about) St. Simon's Day sow whether the soil is dry or wet'. St. Simon's Day falls on the 28th October.

Cp. It. 'O molle o asciutto per San Luca (18th October) semina'.

362. Ottobru jidhol u johhog fil-TUBRU, 'October gets into the coffin and out of it'. Quite a number of invalids die (or at least used to) during this month. This is Magri's explanation (op.cit., p. 58).

363. F'Ottobru i-gheneb ġewwa t-TUBRU jithassar u jmut, 'In October grapes lie in the coffin, rot off and die'. Grapes are gathered in September. Those that are not gathered in this month decay very quickly.

364. Jekk taghmel ix-XITA nhar tar-Rusarju filghodu, tkun bikrijjan, jekk taghelm minn nifs inhar 'il gadium, tkun imwahra, 'If it rains on the morning of the day of the Holy Rosary (i.e. the first Sunday in October) rain will come early; if it rains from midday onwards, rain will be late'.

365. Fir-raba' hamri ĠŻRA' kmieni, imwaharu fil-bajjad, 'In red soil sow early, in white soil late'.

hamri, m., adj., 'reddish'. Used also as a noun to indicate 'reddish soil (tal-hamri)', whence fem. adj. hamrija, 'reddish', used also as a noun to indicate 'arable soil used for growing vegetables'. Cp. hamrija, 's. coll. Terres rouges férugineuses; on dit aussi (Beaus).
Feast of the Immaculate Conception on the 8th December. Yar. Jokh tob-roq is-setfura, tob-roq is-sinjura, 'If (the statue of the) the handmaid comes out, (the statue of) the mistress will also come out'.

Setfura, f.m., 'maid servant', fr. Sic. servituri, final i replaced by fem. a in Maltese; whence servitura (cp. Old It. servidora, XVth cent.) servitura > se(r)ritura.

Kuncizjoni, l.p.n., from Sic. concizjoni (It. concezione, Eng. Conception). As in Sicilian and Italian short for 'Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God', indicating also the day (8th December) on which the feast is celebrated, whence proper name Kuncetta (Sic. Cuncetta; It. Concetta) and Ėtta for short.

373. SANTA KATARINA, festi x-xtieh ghal goli-kantina, 'On St. Catherine's Day put the net in the cellar'. The peak of song-bird catching is over - it is at its peak on All Saints' Day (1st November) and by the 25th of November the hunting season is over.

374. SANTA KATARINA, fora gallina, 'On St. Catherine's Day the woodcock goes away'. For explanation of fora, 'away', see under February Proverb No. 222.

375. Iżra l-bi nhar SANTA KATRINI, biex jaghum bi feni, 'Sow beans on St. Catherine's Day and the yield will be beyond counting'.

Feni, m.n., 'end, aim' (It. fine, Sic. fimi). Bia fimi, 'endless, innumerable', also 'aimless(ly), unintentionally(ly)' according to context.

376. Il-gamh (ix-xahar) ta' SANTA KATRINI, it-tiben wi-tagham jaghimi, 'The corn (month) of St. Catherine gives me wheat and straw'.

377. Ix-XAHAR TA' I-ERWIEH, xoghol, galbu u frieh, 'The month of All Souls is the month of work, ordinariness and lambkins'. In the month of November (All Souls, 1st of Nov.) the peasant works till late in the evening and his wife finds much to keep her busy at home.

378. SANTA KATARINI, il-Miied jibqagħu xahar gentili, 'From St. Catherine's Day to Christmas there is a 'gentle' (courtesy) month left'.

Cp. Sic. 'Santa Catarina a Natali: Sunnu un misi, e nun cuntu'; Abruz. 'Santa Caterina, Natale treanta die; Tusc. 'Da Santa Catarina a Natale, un mese reale'; Marchigiano 'Santa Catarina a Natale, un mese uguale'; Genoa 'De Santa Cattarina a Dēnī ghe un mese inga'; Eng. 'St Andrew the King three weeks and three days before Christmas comes in'.
day the rain waters the fig-trees.

380. SAN MARTINEK tajeb; aghmel tiltek; (tweigiba) bieix il-lant il-kunlek tajeb, 'A happy St. Martin to you; do your best (reply) so that your business may prosper.' Var. SAN Martin ii-tajeb bieix il-miskin /kun tajeb, 'A good St. Martin so that the business of the unlucky man may prosper.'

Note in the first part of the first version play on the word SAN Martin which in quick speech may be heard as samna: tiltek 'nail your buttocks' (coarse humour); erna, lit. figuratively meaning 'arse.'

381. F' SAN MARTIN jittgħu i-xbliek fuq in-nwel, 'On (or about) St. Martin's Day the nets are put aside on the loom. About this time ends the migration of quails over Malta.'

382. Is-saif ta' SAN MARTIN, il-biedja tifrah bih, 'St. Martin's Summer gladdens the fields (agriculture).'

Cp. Ir. 'A San Martin, la semente del povertin.'

Saif ta' San Martin, 'St. Martin's Summer,' translation of Ir. easride di San Martinus. Cp. Eng. St. Luke's little summer, (18th October) 'There is often about this time a spell of fine, dry weather, and this has received the name of St. Luke's little Summer' (Inwards p. 64). In Palestine (also Damascus) they say. 'Ben Tishrin w Tishrin fi sef tan,' i.e. Between October and November there is another summer, as it were 'St. Martin's little Summer' (Crowfoot and Baldensperger op. cit., p. 11). Cp. also Chios (prov. No. 48):

'T' Ἀγίου Δημητρίου το καλοκαίριν.
The little summer of St. Demetrius.

The festival of St. Demetrius falls on October, 26.

biedja, also bida, f.n., 'agriculture.' Cp. Eng. pr. pl. byzantina /zantina, 'Campainge, champs, par opp. à ville. في الترابية 'en pleine campagne'.

383. F' SAN MARTIN bl-marzeli inkissu l-iewż / U bl-Milled il-lewż naqsmuh mal-bews, 'On St. Martin's Day we break walnuts with a hammer and in Christmas we share nuts with kisses.' Note the play on the two meanings of qassam 'to divide' or 'to share'. On St. Martin's Day we give walnuts to children; on Christmas day at home we eat nuts, kiss one another and make merry because it is a day of love.

384. F'SAN MARTIN jitbu t-tin u l-imbid, 'On St. Martin's Day (11th November) figs and wine are opened.'

385. Meta tisma' l-QERD IN-NAHAL, / Erfa' x-xbliek, mur lejn ir-rihal, 'When you hear the bee-eaters, lift the net and go to the village.'

386. Min JISRA' in-niexel u ma janaq xil-mibul, hatal ikollu u jikker bosta s-sbul, 'He that sows in dry soil and does not root up weeds when it is wet, will have (a lot of) wood and the ears of com will grow bigger.'

DECEMBER

387. Fil-Milled, iz-ZIEMEL fejn il-żamra jsahhan wirkih, 'At Christmas time the horse stays near the fire warming his thighs.' Heating the stable of horses in Winter was once a more common practice.

388. Sal-Milled, la BAR (brud) u lansas xwieh (ksieh), 'Till Christmas neither cold (chill) nor hunger' (cold).

Cp. Sic. 'Avanti Natali, né freddo né fame; doppu Natali lu friddu e la fami'; Tus. 'Avanti Natali, né freddo né fame; da Natala in là, il freddo se ne va', with variants in Marchigiano, Abruzzese, Veneziano.

brud, obsolete local pl. pf bard (Ar. ٢), 'cold.' The Ar. pl. ٢ is given by KJ, with a different meaning, 'vêtements et étoffe rayée.'

Maltese has also bruda 'cold, affecting the stomach as when one hiccoughs,' with which cp. ٢ 'coldness, coolness' (Haya).

xwieh, obsolete local pl. form of gub, 'hunger,' Ar. ٢.

389. Mill-Milled 'il fuq iz-bnien jibda jaghtu bil-BUQ, 'From Christmas onwards time begins to strike with a rod,' i.e. a hard time (cold, hunger, etc.) begins for the poor.

buq, m.n., 'trumpet, bugle,' Ar. ٢, 'trumpet' and ٢ 'calamity.'

390. DIEMBRU jilqha fl-sala membru, 'December becomes a member of the assembly hall (of the months).' The Romance words, as pointed out by Fr. Magri (op.cit., p. 74), may very well be a modern replacement of Semitic ones. His explanation is that December becomes a member of the Month's Assembly Hall because it is the month which provides the rules (M. rwiegel) of weather laws.

391. IL-GAWGA jokħ il-lejlet il-Milled f'nos il-les; jekk isib mustaqqit mibula ighid 'lx-xitwa ghadda tjej', 'Jekk isibhom nekk innig idid 'lx-xitwa ghadha bjejja', 'The 'Gawgaw' comes out on the eve of Christmas at midnight; if he finds his moustache wet he says: 'Winter is over'; if he finds it dry, he says: 'Winter is still coming.' Cp. Proverb No. 223 under February.

Gawgaw. According to Fr. Magri (op.cit., p. 76) it is believed that it is a phantom (M. dell) which appears on the eve of Christmas and that a
person born at midnight on Christmas Eve is also known as Gauqu or Gauqew. Fr. Magri interprets Maltese Gauqaw as the Phoenician deity Ashur and Vassalli in his Lexicon (1796) as Syro-Chaldaic hoggo, meaning 'phantom', while A. Ċremona identifies it with babau (it. babau), an imaginary monster for frightening children, — an onomatopoeic word imitating the dog's bark, with which cp. Gr. baubau and L. baubari. I suggest that M. Gauqaw, also pronounced kaukau, which is formed of duplicated base kau, may have some connection with kaukau in the composite Norman word quauquemaire, whence Fr. cauchemar, meaning 'nightmare'. Proverb No. 522 attributes the same gift of weather forecast to the bear.

392. Il-Mi-lied iż żil il-HELU, 'Christmas brings sweets'. It is a happy day for children who love sweets.

393. Mill-Kienizzjoni sal-MILIEd erva' l-mobiżiet mim balq il-wied u qiegħed l-xkubetta fuq l-utied. 'From the day of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (8th December) till Christmas, take away the plough from the mouth of the valley, and put the fowling piece on the peg'. Var. Bejn ta' Qala u l-Mi-lied erva' l-mobiżiet mim balq il-wied, esxebi xkubettiek fuq l-utied. 'Between the Feast of Qala in Gozo (i.e. of the Immaculate Conception) and Christmas take away the plough from the mouth of the valley and hang your fowling pieces on the pegs'. balq (il-wied), m. q. 'the mouth (of the valley)', cp. Ar. یلأ 'throat, gullet, stream valley' (Hava), 'gorge, gosier' (Beauss.). xkubetta, f.m., 'gun'. Cp. Sic. 'scupetta', which in Maltese phonetically should give xkupetta. For voicing of p. cp. Sp. escobeta.

394. La jiż il-MI-liEd erva' xkubettiek fuq il-farsa t-tieb. 'When you place your fowling piece on the door shelf, i.e. the game (birds') season is over.

395. Il-MI-liED bil-kappeI u l-GhId bil-manTaR
In-mies tiekol tajżeB u l-bhejżem ñxtar ahar.

'Christmas with a hat on and Easter with a cloak (mantle); the people eat well and the cattle chew better'. Var. (i) Il-Mi-liED bil-kappeI u l-GhId bil-manTaR, u aktar sistenna xita u bard, 'Christmas with the hat on, Easter with a mantle, very likely there will be rain and cold'; (ii) ir-raba'. irid il-Mi-liED bil-kappeI u l-GhId bil-manTaR, 'Fields want Christmas with a hat on and Easter with a mantle' (Calypso, No. 8) A sunny Christmas and a wintry Easter mean a prosperous year. Fr. Magri (op. cit., p. 78) explains bil-mantar 'with a mantle' worn by men and women alike as a protection against cold and rain.

Cp. It. 'Chi fa il ceppo (Natale) al sole, fa la Pasqua al fuoco'; 'Da Natale al giuoco, da Pasqua al fuoco'; Mantova Cq. Nadal solon, Pasqua stison; Nadal stison, Pasqua solon, also Mantova Cq. Bel Nadal, brut Caruval (G. Tassoni, p. 68) Fr. 'A Noël a son pignon et Pâques à son tison'; 'A Noël au balcon, à Pâques au tison'; Qui est à Noël a son perru, il est à Pâques à son tison'; 'A Noël les moucheron, à Pâques les glosans'; Ger. 'Grüne Weihnachten, weiße Ostern'; 'Weihnachten im Kleie, Ostern im Schnee'; Eng. 'Christmas in mud, Easter in Snow'; 'Green Christmas brings white Easter'.

396. \[\text{Meta l-MI-liEd tatt il-bejż, il-GhId fuq il-bejż;}\]
\[\text{Meta l-MI-liEd fuq il-bejż, il-GhId tatt il-bejż.}\]

'When (you spend) Christmas under the roof, (you'll spend) Easter on the roof; Christmas on the roof, Easter under the roof'. Under the roof means indoors, i.e. a cold Christmas means a warm Easter and vice-versa. Var. (i) Il-Mi-liEd tatt il-bejż, il-GhId fuq il-bejż, 'Christmas close to (lit. under) the wall, Easter on the roof'. The bejż-bejż rhyme reveals the Gozitan origin (perhaps Xaghra or Xewkija) of this variant, (ii) Il-Mi-liEd tatt ħwejt, u l-GhId fuq ħwejt, 'Christmas close to (lit. under) the small wall, and Easter on the small roof. Ħwejta and ħwejta in the form of this variant given by A. E. Caruana in his Dictionary under Mi-lied are diminutive forms of ħaż, 'wall' and bejż, 'roof'.

397. Il-MI-liEd fil-kCina, Il-GhId taz-żina,
Il-Mi-liEd taz-żina, il-GhId fil-kCina.

'Christmas in the kitchen, fair Easter; fair Christmas, Easter in the kitchen'.

Cp. Sic. 'Natali a lu focu, Pasqua a lu jocu', 'Natali a lu suli, e Pasqua c' lu tizzuni; chissa a la vera staciuin', with many other variants in various parts of Italy; Fr. 'Noël au feu, Pâques au feu'; Sp. 'La de Navidad; al sol, y la florida al tison'.

398. \[\text{Meta jalal il-MI-liED/ il-omm timA' il-platt bil-fiqt;}\] \[\text{U l-missier ir-rabbid il-mi-liED.}\]

'When Christmas arrives mummy fills the plate with bread-slices; and father lights (his pipe by striking) the flint. When Christmas arrives one wants warm food and the pleasure of smoking one's pipe to keep warm.'

399. \[\text{Min johroġ fil-lejl tal-MI-liED/ irid jiekol djejet darbiet.}\]

'That goes
out on Christmas must eat three times', that is, he eats after the mass, at mid-day and in the evening.

400. Mincsoskejlet il-MILLED imt bhall-klied. 'He that does not fast on Christmas eve, shall die a dog's death'.

401. Gabel il-ghajna tal-MILLED il-Gurdan ma jiddo fiż-żmied. 'Before the end (late disappearance) of Christmas, Gurdan does not increase the quantity of flint'. Gurdan was the name of a flint-seller who lived at Zebbug. Flint was formerly used for lighting one's pipe. The idea is that up to Christmas it is not usually very cold and we need not puff at a pipe to keep warm.

402. SANTA BARBARA, la dem i lantqs hsra. 'St. Barbara, pray we suffer neither evil nor harm'. Var. Santa Barbara la tisma' u la tara, 'St. Barbara neither hears nor sees', or optatively, 'May St. Barbara neither hear nor see'. St. Barbara's Day falls on the 4th December. The saint usually invoked in Sicily is St. John, but St. Barbara is invoked also in Giarre, Monreale, Butera, Nicosia and Nossoria. The Saint's name occurs in a few place-names of Western Palestine.

Cp. Ar. (Jerusalem) 'Daiman bija shita 'ala lād Barbāţa, 'Always there is rain on the Feast of St. Barbara' (Crowfoot and Baldensperger, op.cit., p. 4); also 'ič Barbāţa titla elo miya min aţqul el-fara', 'At the Feast of St. Barbara water rises in the mouse's hole'. But for origin of M. custom, Cp. Sic. 'Santa Barbara, vardati a chiidu di dentra e di fora'; 'Santa Barbara mia, auta quanta la cruna di Maria; faciti cadiri li trona lontanu di casa mia' (Giarre Sp. 'Nadie se acuerda da Santa Barbara hasta que truena'.

403. Nhar SANTA BARBARA ż-xara' jikber ghabara. (Agius De Soldanis, Damma) 'On (about) St. Barbara's Feast the wheat will have reached its fullest growth'.

ghabara, l.n., an old Maltese measure equivalent to 10 kejlett (Ar. كيلو) which equal a siegh (Ar. مثقال 'measure for grain'), six of which make a tomna (Ar. طن 'measure': pl. tmuna 'mesure capacité pour le son et les céréales équivalente à un 8e de mudd' (W. Marçais ibid., p. 247) equivalent to 1 rood, 4 square poles, 13 sq. yards, 3.9 sq. feet. Cp. Ar. في نصف اي 'poids pour peser' (Beauss), 'Nombreux, en parlent d'un peuple, d'une assemblée, etc.'


Cp. 'lq. 'Di Santa Lucia a Natali allonga un passu di cani'; It. 'Da Santa Lucia a Natale, il di allunga un passo di cane' with variants in Marchigian, Genovese, Comasco, Bergamasco, Veneziano, Triestino. Cp. Sardinian. 'A Santa Lucia i giorni crescono un passo di gallinetta'; Fr. 'À la Sainte-Luce, le jour croit le saut d'une puce'; Port. 'Da Santa Lucia a Natale il di cresce d'una spanna' (Strafi); Sp. 'Por Santa Lucia acorta el paso (menga) la noche y alarga (crece) el dia'; 'En llegando Santa Lucia un palmo crece el día'. The metaphor pass ta' tarbijja is local.

405. Il-QASTANIJA tajba, u x-xemx dejjem mghajba.

'Christmas treacle ring-cakes are good, (but) the sky is always overcast'. In December the sun generally shines behind thick rainy clouds. Il-qastanija, composition of fine flour and treacle of a chestnut colour is used in the confection of Christmas cakes (Falzon). For the form Cp. Gr. xoστανια whence Lat. castanea (nux). With M. qaṣtan, cp. It. castagno 'chestnut tree', and with M. qaṣtna 'a chestnut'.

406. Marret is-SENA, u l-żidda ghoddha mibdija, Nizzużir 'Ala u li kulhadd kbira themmiża.

'The year is gone and the new one is nearly begun, let us thank God and wish everyone great happiness'.

ADDENDA

(Proverbs collected after the above classification was completed)

1. Il-BAHAR sinjur 1xed mill-urt u jekk l-urt tkum sinjura 1xed mill-bahar, il-bahar jilia' ghaliha u jiblagha. 'The sea is richer than the earth, and if the earth were to be richer, it would rise (over it) and swallow it up'. Cp. proverb No. 66.

2. Ix-xahar tai-Vitorja, il-HALIB ittu fl-ôrja (arja), 'In the month of our Lady of Victory milk goes up in the air'. At this time the milk-yield becomes scarce. Cp. proverbs Nos. 175, 350.


4. HARIFA bit-tjieb/ zwieiem u dwieb, 'Good weather in Autumn prepare horses and mares (for outings etc)'.
5. Meta jidher il-MAWKAW rih nosinhar, 'When the kaukaw (stars) appears, expect the wind to blow from the South'. Kaukaw was described to me by a fisherman of Marsalforn (Gozo) as the name of two stars of the shape of a pea-nut which appear in the South in the month of November. For use of kaukaw in another context, cp. proverb No. 391.

6. Fil-KLOMI stenna xi haqa, 'When it is perfect calm except something to happen. When the day is windless, hot and sultry, one expects earthquakes etc.

7. Il-MALVIZZ izekzek (bi-lejj), rih nosinhar, 'When the songthrush chirps, expect the wind to blow from the South'.

8. X’hin jasal il-MILLED il-heggtax-xitwa tkun diga b’diet, 'By the time Christmas arrives, the enthusiasm for Winter will be already over'. This proverb contradicts Proverb No. 388. I suspect that for b’diet 'ceased' one should read b’diet 'began', and thus get an agreement in sense between the two proverbs.

9. Nagha wara l-MGHED ‘k tara l-bottot taghez il-hult, 'After Easter when an ewe sees a ram, she will leap over the wall'. Easter time is not the right time for mating of sheep.

10. Xarba tar-RIH / il-witc ilgi f’sesseech, 'Wind with rain restores the harvest'. The explanation given to me is that rain accompanied with wind revives the drooping harvest.

11. Ahjar PONN ta’ bittieh taqba minn bittieha haqna, 'Better a melon (even) as small as a fist than a bad melon'. It is the flavour and not the size of a melon that one must look for.

12. Rihg ir-RIH kaqta fi-glegh, 'High wind, the hunting season at its end'. April is the month of high winds and the time when the hunting season is over.

LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF FR. MAGRI’S FOLK-TALES

By J. CASSAR-PULCICINO

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

The following are the main printed sources:

Bonelli, L., Saggi del Folk-tore dell’isola di Malta, Palermo, 1895. (Contains, inter alia, summaries in Italian of twelve Maltese tales)

Three tales, with Italian translation, in 'Il Dialetto Maltese', published in Archivio Glottologico Italiano (Suppl. Period. IV, 1897, pp. 87-98).


X’jghid il-Malti fuq id-Dinja ta’ Tabt u fuq ir-Riżeb. Malta, 1905 (in Moghdija taż-Zmien, No. 44).

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


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


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