LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF FR. MAGRI'S FOLK-TALES

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

The following are the main printed sources:

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

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


X'Jgħeid il-Malti f'qida Dinju ta' Tabt u fuq ir-Riżeb, Malta, 1905 (in Mogħajrija tas-Zmien, No. 44).

Stummé, 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).


Galen, 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, Stummé and Bonelli make up a total of 102 tales, including variants and repetitions. Fr. Magri's collection, including 13 variants, totals 62, which is by far the greatest single...
collection available in Maltese. Stumme's collection, including variants, numbers 37 and forms an important addition. Stumme's texts deserve a separate study from a linguistic point of view, but unfortunately Ilg's collection of 139 tales and drolleries, being in German translation only, is of no linguistic interest and cannot therefore be considered in this study. For the same reason Bradley, Murray and Farini fall outside the purpose of this article, while Bonelli's texts are too few in number to provide sufficient data for a detailed study.

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

HREJJEFF MISSERIŻJEFTNA – L-Ewvel Ctieb (Our Fathers' Tales – Book One) [M.Ż. 15]

II. Ri' ċarvet l-ewwel dghajsa fak-Dinija (How the first boat in the world was made)

III. Il-Misel tal-Maltin (The Origin of the Maltese People)

IV. Il-Żewq Plierje bżn il-Babjar il-Ġewwieni u l-Babjar il-Braddani (The Two Pillars between the Internal and the External Seas)

V. Is-Serq ta' ħafna Rjus (The many-headed Serpent)

VI. Buftjes

VII. Il-Hila ta' Bin il-Mara l-Għarja (The Prowess of the Wise Woman's Son)
   (i) Bin il-Mara l-Għarja jgħoll il-Goflu (The Wise Woman's Son kills the 'Golfu')
   (ii) Bin il-Mara l-Għarja jgħ l-Għasfuw iż-żamb (The Wise Woman's Son brings the Singing Bird)
   (iii) Bin il-Mara l-Għarja jgħ is-Siġa tal-Għasfuw iż-żamb (The Wise Woman's Son brings the Tree of the Singing Bird)
   (iv) Bin il-Mara l-Għarja jgħ il-għadam tal-Ħimża biex is-Sultan jiżmi bibon 'madquis' (The Wise Woman's Son brings the elephants' bones with which the Sultan can build a Temple)
   (v) Bin il-Mara l-Għarja jgħ is-Xebba tal-Ħmiel (The Wise Woman's Son brings the Lady of Beauty)

VIII. Tiċċa jgħ il-Għasfur iż-żamb (A Girl brings the Singing Bird)

HREJJEFF MISSERIŻJEFTNA – Il-Tiei ꩙ Ctieb (Our Fathers' Tales – Book Two) [M.Ż. 18]

IX. Dak li jħobb 'l-Ommu, jew is-Sansun Malti (The Man that loves his Mother, or, The Maltese Samson)

X. Il-Ghaġeb tal-illusion (The Water Monster)
   (i) Dak li jagħmel il-Żid fak-Dinija jebles Xebba mill-Ghaġeb tal-
      Illna (He that does good in the World frees a Maiden from the
      Water Monster) [+variant]
   (ii) L-Erbu Snajfa (The Four Trades)

XI. Is-Tmienja jebles Bini is-Sultan mill-Dragun Dragant (The Eighth
    Son delivers the Sultan's Daughter from the Dragon)

XII. Is-sebda Tronqet Mewwaxja (The Seven Inhabited Citrons) [+var-
    iant]

HREJJEFF MISSERIŻJEFTNA – Il-Tielet Ctieb: Dawk li jagħmul l-Żid fak-
Dinija (Our Fathers' Tales – Book Three: Those that do good in the
World) [M.Ż. 29]

XIII. Is-Xini jumxi b-Art (The Land Ship) [+3 variants]

XIV. Balmies

XV. Misseriżjefna u l-Ġganti (Our Fathers and the Giants)
   (i) Butlettax (The Thirteenth Child)

HREJJEFF MISSERIŻJEFTNA – Il-Raba' Ctieb: Misseriżjefna u l-Ġganti
(Our Fathers' Tales – Book Four: Our Fathers and the Giants) [M.Ż. 38,
39]

(ii) Ulied il-Ġganta, jew, in-Nisel tal-Għasdux u tal-Mostin (The Children of the Giantess, or, the Origin of the people of Gozo and Mosta)

(iii) Il-Mara li ġerret il-Haġar kbir għall-bini fi Malta u Għaxdex
    (The Woman that carried huge stones for building in Malta and
    Gozo)

(iv) Il-Borg tal-Iramma (place-name in Gozo)

(v) Il-Karuma tal-Ġganti (The Crown of Giants – place-name in
    Gozo)

(vi) Is-Swar tal-Ġganti (The Giants' Bastions – place-name in
    Gozo)

(vii) Il-Ġemgha tal-Ġganti (The Giants' Gathering – place-name in
    Gozo)

(viii) Il-Ġgant u s-Sajjied il-Ghasafar (The Giant and the Bird Hun-
    ter) [+variant]

(ix) Il-Ġgant Għulija (The Giant Goliath)

(x) Tifel jeqred disa' Ġganti (A Boy destroys nine Giants) [+ var-
    iant]

1 M.Ż. stands for Mogħdiża tat-Zmien.
don't. And indeed his tales are a source of lasting wonder and pleasure to generations of children and of adults alike. Important considerations in this respect are: (i) the age in which Magri collected his fairy tales, (ii) the personal style of his informants, and (iii) whether Magri himself tampered with the oral texts.

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

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

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

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

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Magri’s Style and Sources

Magri’s literary style has been highly praised by Professor P. P. 5-wy-
perative, and especially so with regard to folktales recorded, say, within the last fifty years.

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

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

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

In his preface to X’ligib il-Malti fuq id-Dinjja ta’ Takt (1905) Magri explained his method of collecting and transcribing Maltese folk-tales. The following extract is relevant to our purpose:

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

This passage proves: (a) that Magri very rightly took great pains in collecting as many variants as possible before establishing the ‘definitive’ text of a particular folk-tale; (b) that he tried to substitute old-sounding, archaic words for comparatively recent loan-words whenever he felt justified in doing so.
In the same preface Magri went on to say: 'Therefore I do not invent anything in these stories and I confess that the modifications which I mentioned are very few and hardly worth mentioning. To make ourselves clearer, I must here point out that our village people, when we city people ask them something, try to speak differently and change the words, so to say, to speak as we do. Hence very often one can hardly know what they are saying and how they say it. To do so one must find them unprepared when they are talking among themselves; or after a long time they have made your acquaintance and realise that you don’t mean to poke fun at them, when they may tell you the thing as it is.'

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

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

**Initial Formulas**

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

(i) Formulas containing the clause kien benn (there was, also, there were), or its later developments darba kien benn (once upon a time) there was [were], darba wabda kien benn (there was [were] once), meli darba kien benn (well, there was [were] once), meli darba wabda kien benn (well, once upon a time there was [were]).

(ii) A direct statement plunging straight into the story: Ex. Is-Sultan Salaman kellu hub gharef wasiq (King Solomon had a very clever brother) [No. XIX].

(iii) An initial statement reported in speech: Ex. Ighidul li fis zmenniet l’inghodjita, metex-saj bi kienu jikbru bil-bosta... (It is said that in old times, when old people reached a very advanced age...) [No. XXII]. This type occurs only once in Magri’s tales.

Examples of variants of (i) above occur in various tales as follows:

(a) Meli darba kien benn ragel li... (Well, there was once a man who... [No. XX], (b) Kien benn zewg abwa, wiehed... (There were two brothers, one... [No. XXI], (c) Meli darba wabda kien benn zewg abwa; wiehed fiqir u... (Well, once upon a time there were two brothers: one poor and
African meaning of *Ar. darba* in the sense of 'fois' recorded by Beaussier and Kazimirski.  

**Closing Formulas**  

Both Ilg\(^9\) and Stumme\(^3\) in their collections paid special attention to this aspect of the technique of story telling. They both declared in their introductions that they were stimulated to do so by a publication on formular closings in fairy tales which was published a few years before they worked on the Maltese material, namely Robert Petesch, *Fornellhafte Schlüsse im Volkssprachen.*\(^8\) Magri was apparently unaware of this publication but nevertheless it is possible to glean some interesting material under this heading from his tales.

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

(i) Exclamatory or interrogatory sentences: Exx. (a) *... l-imnieges titna l-brieges, kemm int blu melbil*! (lit. May the striped sparsus swallow up the learned rock-fish! How lacking in salt are you! Salt is wit, good sense) [No. XX]; (b) *Babnut ii int! Ma rajx li dawk buma x-xbur? Ghax magdar-bom?* (You big fool! Didn’t you notice those were the months? Why didn’t you revile them?) [No. XXIV].

(ii) Lesson or moral drawn from the story: Exx. (a) *Minn dak inhar koliox beda jaqum barq ir f’aqir smien gie ftieghbu* (Since then everything went smoothly and in a short time he recovered) [No. XXI]; (b) *Il-bidu baveg il-mijsiru mill-ghar u minn dak inhar badd / Malta ma ghalaq iktar figherrin il-mijsiru u l-ommu bajjem* (The peasant brought his husband out of the cave and since then no one in Malta shuts up his father and mother in the caves while still alive) [No. XXII].

(iii) Punishments and rewards to villains and/or heroes of story: Exx. (a) *Dabaw id-dars, sakkar il-bib bi-muftieb, u beda jaghtu jfj il-mara u t-tabib sakemm baghbagh tamidina loobra* (He went in, locked the door and began to beat his wife and doctor till he sent them to the other world) [No. VI]; (b) *Ix-Xebba tal-Gnimiei gqel its-Sultan. Int issir kelb, dak ta’ wajj isir qattus, u dak it-tiel niehdu b’garbus tiegh* (The Lady of Beauty told the Sultan: You will become a dog, the one next to you becomes a cat, and that young man I’ll take for a husband) [No. VII]; (c) *Biex ix-xibaa li ghall qitita bemma ti jg mhalssa, qaxxruha u l-glida tagha ghanhub baxhra* (So that the bag who shut her up be punished, she was skinned and her skin was turned into a door-mat) [No. VIII]; (d) *... taw in-naru bdeju jżjnu u jodqma l-plotti madwar il-gjinn sakemm inharau u ntemm gewwa* (They set fire and began to dance and play on the places round the giant till he was burned and consumed by the fire) [No. XV.I]; (e) *Lill-obraj is-Sultan staghnibom* (The Sultan enriched the others) [No. X.II]; (f) *Imbaghad ghamlu tmint jijem festi ghat-tieg taghom b warq għixix degjem għal qalbom* (Then they celebrated a week of festivities and lived happily ever after) [No. XII, var.].

(iv) Other characteristic formular endings: Exx. (a) *U sur it-tieg u ghammu u tghamar u spiccaw* (And the wedding took place, they lived together, had children and the story is finished) [No. XXVI]; (b) *U ghammu u tghamar u spiccalt* (They lived together, had children and the story is finished) [No. XII]; (c) *U kalbadd mar ghal xoglu* (And everyone went on his own) [No. X]; (d) *U baqa’ billi ha* (And he was left with what he had taken) [No. XXVII]; (e) *U n’fardu bis-slima* (And they separated amicably) [No. XIV]; (f) *U gie c-cief u kielu* (And the petrel came and ate him up) [No. XV].

Of the formular endings given by Stumme the following are examples that do not appear in any of Magri’s tales: (a) *Tombi tombi u spiediet/ Kwarra supen era’ haabbiet* (It’s over, it’s over and done/a quarter of a rotolo of soap is worth four grains!) [Stumme, No. X]; (b) *Tambo tambo u spidiet/ u kulbadd imur mal-wied* (It’s over, it’s over and done/And let everyone go away with the torrent!) [Stumme, No. XX]; (c) *Wże żewmel taw-sama’/ U b... a’uċec min qal u sama’* (And the horses are of wax/And to hell with those who have told and heard) [Stumme, No. XV].

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

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

**Djidjelli (Algeria)**

(i)... *u mōrtu m-māskīna žārbet ħq-qōwa b-la-sēkḵbā* (et sa malheureuse épouse but son petit café sans succe) [Marçais, No. 1];

(ii) *u-šl-haţâb tābēt brāh-sātā wa-ţāna šl ū-tīg-tīg* (Le conte, tout brulé, s’en est allé. Moi, promptement, suis arrivé) [Marçais, No. 2];

(iii) *žāt ʕa-nāmra, žābḥātū u-ḳūtū* (La panthère l’attrapa et le mangea) [Marçais, No. 4].
San'ā' (Yemen)

(i) ḍādā ḍāsānā wal-lāyi ḍānā (Questo abbiamo raccontato e la notte (ci) è arrivata) [Rossi, No. 4];
(ii) Mādik sā'ab taldūlamā ʿū-wuga ʿat mārateb, mārūt āz-zamān, lā ʿĪbrā ʿĪbrā ṣāḥib al-ṭamān (Allora si riunirono ed essa diventò sua moglie, moglie del tempo (durevole) non di un mese o di una settimana) [Rossi, No. 5];
(iii) Lāw biyyānā garbī, ʿū-ma-dānā ʿāzībī, ʿī-sālzārī ṣāḥibī, lā-dālī lōkum gūzālā ʿāzībī, wālītā tāmr nāʿānī (Se la nostra casa fosse vicina ed avessimo dello zibibbo, vi daremmo un paniere di zibibbo, oppure di datteri del Nagra) [Rossi, No. 7];
(iv) ʿerāhū lōkum wal-yahūdī ma zīd gē (e se ne andarono e l'Ebreo non venne più) [Rossi, No. 8];
(v) ʿin sadāynā, jas-sādīg Allāh; u-ʿin kūdābān, fa-ulāyynā la ʿnat Allāh. (Siamo stati detto la verità, io veritiero e Iddio; se abbiamo mentito, su di noi sia la maledizione di Dio). [Rossi, No. 9];

Egypt

(i) Wēqa ʿadum waṣṣa baʿād ḍālīmūn ʿabībāt (Eli e due figli) demeurèrent ensemble et eurent des fils et des filles) [Spitta-Bey, No. 1];
(ii) wēḥābā biḥyāda wēqaʿadum waṣṣa baʿād ʿiqkāram (Il l'embrasse, et ils demeurèrent ensemble en pleine harmonie) [Spitta-Bey, No. III];
(iii) wēḥādum elwāzy ḍäwā waṣṣa ḍāwā elma ʿaṣṣa et ḍāzī ʿfīṣṭāramūn tāṣālā tāṣālā ʿmār (Ils saisièrent le vêtement et le calfeutre, envoûtèrent chercher la vieille, les brûlèrent tous les trois dans le feu et les dispersèrent au vent) [Spitta-Bey, No. VI];
(iv) ʿālam enma elṭāṭab wē ṣāltāmūn el ʿagūze ṣāla wē ṣāltāmūn ʿmār (Les gens rassemblèrent du bois et du feu, et on jeta la vieille et sa fille dans le feu) [Spitta-Bey, No. VII];
(v) ʿšāma ḍābā biḥyāda ṣāltāmūn abād ṣāltāmūn ʿmār wē ṣāltāmūn ʿmār (Il ordonna d'amener le juif et la femme de son père, fit allumer un feu et les jeta dedans. Ils se consumèrent, et c'est fini [Spitta-Bey, No. XII].

Sicily:

(i) ... lu viddaun addivintu jennaru di Re, e Tuttu foru filici e cuntenti, E nuwātī semu ccà senza nenti. [Pitrè, No. I]


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(iii) ... Idadi arristaru filici e cuntenti E nuwātī ccà nni munnamu li dents [Pitrè, No. II]

(iii) ... Chidda murrī E lu cuunti finū [Pitrè, No. VI]

(iv) Idadi arristaru marinu e muggheri E nui seu comu li sumeri. [Pitrè, No. VIII]

(v) E campau filici e cuntenti E visse felice e contento, E niuari nenti, E niuari nenti, e niuari niente. 

'U cuunti è cunntu: Il conto è contato;
Nni mangiamu 'a pasta c'o stufatu mangiamo la pasta con lo stufato;
'u cuunti è dittu: il conto è detto, mangiamo il fegato fritto;
Mangiamini 'u fichitu frittu. [Pitrè, No. XV]

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

MAGRI NO. XXVI

... iżda bija webset rasba li ma tebux blief il dakk la jkollu l-bila għididiha li tlett 'Hwejji għ Mh ġa' għa li li ma tkunx tista' tţossir.

Safalhaħar wassal għand is-sultan u dana tagghub bil-fert.

MAGRI NO. X(i)

lx-xebba qalltu mill-bogħod: Tvarraż 'Jitivinni, no vi manca pura a vui stu 'nimali (cci rispunni idda).

Peppi pigghia li setti testi e li ddiwaca 'n terra; li japru tutti setti, e cci scippoi li luigui; pigghia un pezzo di carta e si li 'numugghià dda intra.

Dak bax.return il-maktur, fetbu, were liss-sultan l-ilsma.

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

MALTESE EQUIVALENT

Tistgħu tabsbu ma’ dan l-avviż kemm jew nies.

Wahbal f’rasu li ‘mu r bu.

Ikkurda’u, bil-patt li... minn’fok ma’ isib... isib...

ikel ‘vank

u kellha txaxxi rasba

Peppina gqbdet gbal għajn tazz-xemx

... jobro g’xabla u jaqqtgħli rasba.

Jimxu jimxu, u waslu...

meut b’meut, issa nasaffur

Peppi libes pulitu.

fẹn tghajjer wised, tghajjer tnejn.

... bniedem jaf b’seb’ingui.

ippruvu b’geb impingiut

b’fermeżija f’rasu.

beda jagħti b’rasu maħ-bajt

qaltlu car u tond

keltma g’geb ’il obha

ma kiexx benn pariġgobom.

Il-matrazz malajj malajj lestaj tewg imiterab.

qattgħub bieċċa bieċċa u mellhub go barmil.

Alla jagħti u Alla jiebu...

... u qiegħdu fuq l-inkwina.

mentri si custiunavu (p. 223)

waqt li kienu jikkustinjaw

cu putia aviri judici anni (p. 271)

li seta’ kellu tnax’il sena

Vocabulary

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

Magri’s texts make no appreciable addition to the Semitic Maltese lexicon. Most of the words making up the tales are still in current use; others are obsolescent, while a few are definitely archaic and provide material for interesting philological parallels, as may be seen from the notes provided by Professor J. Aquilina in a joint-article published in 1957. 14

In the Semitic section are listed (1) a few words or meanings given by Magri that are not recorded in Vassalli’s, Falzon’s and Caruana’s dictionaries 15 – though few in number, they provide an interesting addition to the known Semitic lexicon of Maltese; and (2) some of the lesser-known words and a few unrecorded secondary meanings with an indication, whenever possible, how the word has been replaced nowadays by a word of Romance origin or, sometimes, by another Semitic word.

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

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

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


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

(ii) Romance words recorded by Vassalli. 65 Romance words occurring in Magri's tales were recorded by Vassalli in 1796. There are far more Romance words in Vassalli's dictionary than one would suspect, and this historical approach will amply repay a more detailed study of the Romance element in his Lexicon. The words that had already crept into Maltese by 1796 may be classified under a variety of topics, such as (1) Geographical Terms, etc.: Exx. ajru 'air, atmosphere', fregu 'strait', xmarra 'river', (2) Dress and Costume, Exx. gsekk 'jacket', gitenzem 'tassels, puffs', kabolza 'a greatcoat with hood attached', naktur 'handkerchief'; (3) Family Relationship, Exx. barba 'uncle', famila 'family', nanum 'grandfather'; (4) Weights, Measures and Receptacles, Exx. kacce 'a little', gommata 'a pitcher', qarrta 'a big basket', goffta 'a basket', (5) Food and Drink, Exx. boggja 'a draught', plett 'place', raviul 'ravioli', ross 'rice'; (6) Money, Exx. borsa 'purse', dinier 'a small coin less than a grain'; (7) Law, Exx. pligg 'bail, security'; (8) Fauna, Exx. cieff 'cinerous petrel', samug 'a young rabbit'; (9) House and Home, Exx. kamra 'room', siqgju 'chair'; (10) Fruit, Exx. qastra 'chestnut', frot 'fruit'; (11) Trades, Exx. jurnar 'baker', lant 'place of work', mina 'tunnel', maramma 'a thick wall', taljola 'a pulley', and various others.

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

(iv) Words recorded by Falzon but not in Vassalli. Falzon has long been regarded as the best printed source for the Romance element of the Maltese vocabulary. The 144 words included under this heading show the extent to which the Maltese lexicon had been influenced by outside sources since Vassalli's time, although it is safe to state that many more Romance words had crept into Maltese by the 18th Century than were actually recorded by Vassalli, as may be seen from a perusal of Agius De Soldanis's Ms. dictionary at the Royal Malta Library.\(^\text{17}\) Only 20 years separated the issue of the second edition of Falzon's dictionary from the first tales published by Fr. Magri. Falzon may therefore be considered a safe check for the freshness of the language used by Magri's informants and it is significant that this section provides by far the largest number of words.

Some words included here replaced other words of Semitic origin. Falzon sometimes gives the Semitic equivalent in brackets showing how the new loan-words extended, modified or otherwise gave a more specific meaning than the original native word. The following are examples: R.M. gjurnata 'day', S.M. jum; R.M. granc 'crab', S.M. gibr; R.M. gvernatur 'governor', S.M. hakesm; R.M. kardaru 'boiler', S.M. hhasa; R.M. ikknanda 'to order', S.M. amar; R.M. kok 'cook', S.M. tebbih; R.M. kuruma 'crown', S.M. kilt; R.M. kustilja 'rib', S.M. dawajha; R.M. jum 'lion', S.M. dorbies; R.M. loppju 'opium', S.M. ghafisn; R.M. morca 'pus', S.M. widesk; R.M. ors 'beat', S.M. daeb; R.M. salla 'a shovel', S.M. shu; R.M. pinna 'feather', S.M. rix; R.M. sigul 'gift', S.M. mibba; R.M. salvagg 'savage', S.M. bari; xaqgri; R.M. stampa 'to print', S.M. tiba; R.M. tassa 'glass', S.M. kies; R.M. xkupa 'broom', R.M. ismelha.

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

**SEMITIC WORDS**

**WORDS OR MEANINGS UNRECORDED IN MALTESE DICTIONARIES**

**Duwil** (XVI, 13) plural. of dej 'skirt, short chemise'. Dijul, given in the Maltese dictionaries, is the regular plural form, duwil being the irregular plural figuring only in the text of this folk-tale.

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

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

\(^{17}\) R.M. Ms. 143a: Damma tal Kliem Kartaginis mscerred fel fom tal Maltin u Ghauca...
forms are built by analogy with *tegqaf* 'stop', and it is found on analysis that the form is only taken by verbs that are irregular and with *w* as first radical (weak), e.g. *(w)akal* 'he ate', *(w)aqaf* 'he stopped' and *(w)had* 'he took'. *Kul* and *hu* were probably developed later, as *iekol* and *iebu* are the correct forms required by Maltese grammar in building the Imperfect Tense, which is formed by prefixing *n* to the Imperative, e.g. *n + iekol* = *niekol* 'I eat', *n + iebo* = *niebu* 'I take'.

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

META JANNAR TARAH LIEWIeni
Ma tarax il-bidwli tant hieni.

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

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

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

Hanini ma Buqibda
Imnej ma jiġi medba

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

*Ghulija* (XV, ix, 37) invariably occurs with *ggant* as *GGant* Ghulija in Maltese folk-tales. This leads one to suspect a direct Biblical influence through the David and Goliath (M. *Guliya* story, with which this and other Maltese tales share several motifs. *Nama Ghula* figures as a wicked old hag in a few tales not included in Magri's collection. Magni explains in a note (p. 44) that M. *ggant* Ghulija is identical with the Lebanese *Gul*, a devilish spirit that devoured people. *Gul* is explained as 'desert wild beast' by Caruana. The suggestion is here made that Ghulija may have supplanted the older *gul* under the influence of the Biblical story when *ghul* became less known.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kien ilbieh, kien lewiemes, *He was yesterday, he was the day before yesterday*, fore yesterday, / But today he lies in the grave

*Gergha* (XII, 54) noun of unity from *gera* 'he digested, swallowed up at one draught', used in the tale in conjunction with second derived form *gerra* in the phrase *kont in gerghbik* *gergha* 'I would have swallowed you at one gulp'. This second form is still used both in its original sense 'to digest', as in *dan l-ikel ma ngerghbx* 'I can't digest this food', and in its figurative sense 'to stand (a person)', as in *dak il-
Mewwiija (XI, 53) 'inhabited, full'. Caruana and Falzon write this word with an N, i.e. *Newwiija*, while Vassalli gives both forms, *Mewwiija* and *Newwiija* (p. 626, s.v. Xaghra). All three dictionaries record the word as a place-name, alone or as *Xaghret Mewwiija*, denoting a portion of the site where Valletta is built. In a long note, Fr. Magri (p. 67) says that the word is often corrupted to *miwilija* 'twisted', but his informant, who would have been 115 years old at the time of publication of the tale in question, always used *mewwiija*. The meaning of 'inhabited' fits in with the sense required by the tale, as each of the seven citrus had a girl inside. Abela in his *Descrittione di Malta* (1664) wrongly explains *Mewwiija* in place-name *Xaghret Mewwiija* as an Arab's name. He records the saying, which Magri reproduces in his note, *Xaghret Mewwiija ghad ji:j zaman* (sic) *li kull xiber jiswa mijra* 'On the plain Mewwiija a time will come when each span (of land) will be worth a hundred' - a sort of prophecy attributed to the Saint Corrado who, according to tradition, had been forced to leave Malta by the intrigues of the people of Mosta.

Mindil (XXIV, 85) As used in Magri's tale, *mindil tal-bobż* the word means 'a napkin', but outside this context it may also mean 'the omenum'. For etymology see Aquilina (op.cit., p. 17) under *inklele*.

Mizruktin (XVI, i, 17) The word occurs in the tale in the expression *miżruktin bil-berb*. Magri explains in a note (p. 34): 'This word is not heard nowadays, except in the nickname Ta' Żerrek and in the name Iż-Tieqa ż-Zerka. Żerekk or Żarak, jiżrekk means 'he filled, to fill', hence *miżruktin* bil-berb means 'filled with happiness'. Of the M. dictionaries only Vassalli gives *żrekk, jiżrekk, but in the sense 'ad Venere incito, pec. matrem ad coitum venerum invitam femina'.

Mniżges (XX, 15) Magri writes *mniżges*, but Falzon gives *mnijges*, pl. of *mngus* 'striped sparus' (fish), which fits in with the sense required by the text, *b-inmiżges tibla* b-biżeg uz taput in the rockfish*. Caruana derives the word from *niżga*, and writes *mngaz, mniżges*.

Imrasi (XI, 19) Pl. of *marsa* 'haven, sea-port, harbour, gulf or baż' (Falzon). The pl. form is given by Vassalli and Falzon, but not by Caruana. Apart from place-names, such as *Marsa, Marsaxlokk, *Marsalforn, *Marsaxlokk*, the word is no longer used, *port or bażja* being used instead.

Mażella (XV, 63) 'broom'. Caruana does not give this word in his dictionary. Nowadays the word, still current in Gozo, in Malta is largely replaced by *xkupa* 'it, scope, or, in its more polite form, ziża'.

Ghaqż (XIII, 30) 'decrepit, worn out with age' (Falzon). The word figures
as a family name, written Agius. The fem. form, ghaqqua, means both 'lobster, sea fish' and 'decrepit old woman', as in the proverb ghal-bokk l-ghaqqua ma triax tnut, ghaq ikkur ma tikker isjed titghalllem 'that is why the decrepit old woman doesn't want to die, because the older she gets the wiser she becomes!'. Its denominative verbal form ghaqqiż is still occasionally heard, as in iż-smiż iżgħażż 'time makes (one) grow old'. Otherwise the word has gone out of currency, xib or xiha ghaqka being used with the same meaning. In M. folklore we find the belief that the oldest woman living in the parish, called l-Ghaqqa, is thrown from the church steeple on Thursday, in the middle of Lent.

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

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

Għarxa (XV, vi, 47) m. aghrax 'lame, cripple'. In Modern Maltese zopp (f., zoppa) < It. zoppo, has gained general use, with its derivatives izzoppja or iżzoppaj 'he grew lame', and zoppaj 'he limped'. Cf. It. zoppicare.

Għelien (XV, xii, 67) pl. of għielim 'sign, mark'. The verbal derivative is still used, ghallem il-bob 'he marked the bread'.

Għewar (XXII, 84) pl. of għa, 'shame'. The word is given in the tale in the proverb Fis-xixia ta' Prej jinkissfu l-egħwar 'With the sins of February all secrets are out' i.e. hidden roots sprout. For etymology see Aquilina (op.cit., p. 21).

Għwiebb (XV, xii, 73) pl. of għarreb 'an angular stone used in building' (Falzon). Vassalli does not give this word, which survives in the building trade.

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

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

Ixiri l-qawqama u l-qawqam..."

The sense required by the text is 'catlle'. Vassalli gives this word without, however, giving its meaning. Instead he notes that qaqqam is the form given by Agius, but he himself had heard qaqqam. I have recently heard qaqqam used in a version of the same tale by a 99-year old woman at Tas-Salib, in the limits of Rabat, in Malta.

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

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

Rehba (XXII, 30) 'mercy'. The word occurs in the hortatory il-bniena u r-rehma tas-sultan 'May I implore the clemency and mercy of the sultan' Vassalli says that in his day the word was very commonly used in prayers, such as Allā jaghti r-rehma u l-jenna li il-qrabna 'May God grant mercy and Heaven to us and our relatives'. Nowadays this word is hardly ever used, but it survives in its derived verbal form rahba 'he implored mercy'.

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

Silf (XIV, 49) 'the husband of the wife's sister; the wife of the wife's brother; brother-in-law' (Falzon). The word is still used. The definition of brother-in-law (Falzon) or cognato (Vassalli) does not convey the exact relationship conveyed by silf (pl. slejjet).

Swejda (XII, li, 65) diminutive of sweda, fem. of Iswed 'black'. The word occurs in the following rhyme, placed in the mouth of the talking bird in the tale:

Girlingtirija – swejda Gharbija,
Mihehe il-langassa – xutfirija il-legenija!

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

Trajb (XI, 42) is used by Magri in the sense of 'little baby', as a diminutive form of tarbijja 'baby'. Vassalli, followed by Falzon, distinguishes between trajb 'a dol, a little girl's puppet or baby' and traťbja, diminutive of tarbijja 'a little boy, baby or infant'. In an interesting note Vassalli records the very ancient Maltese custom of preparing rag dolls or puppets which children, especially girls, throw over the flames of the bonfire on St. John's Eve. Vassalli hints at a possible Phoeni-
Cian influence, relating to the sacrifice of children to the Phoenician god Molok. He then gives details of the custom as surviving in his day: 'Oggì però questa superstiziosa cerimonia è variato di molto, ed i fanciulli sogliono farla nella vigilia di S. Giovanni Battista in occasione dei gran-fuochi che si fanno. Ella al presente consiste nel passare per tre volte sul fuoco il fanciullo e fingendo di batterezzarlo s'immerga il nome di S. Giovanni. Se mai caderà sul fuoco o intorno nel passarlo, allora si ripete la cerimonia. The custom survived, in modified form, up to within living memory. The word tradjba nowadays also denotes the lace pillow used in the manufacture of Malta lace.

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

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

Xorka (XXII, 44) pl. of xrik 'partner'. Ixrika is sometimes used instead of xorka. Caruana gives the proverb bormet ix-xorka qatt ma ssir sevwa equivalent to Eng. 'too many cooks spoil the broth'.

ROMANCE WORDS

I. WORDS RECORDED BY MAGRI BUT NOT IN MALTESE DICTIONARIES

Ammòta (XXVII, 147) 'year, yearly crop', dialectal variation of annàta < Sic. and It. annata.

Bando (XIII, 3) 'proclamation'. Cp. It. bandò (DEI, xiii variation) and Sic. bandu. Before and throughout the rule of the Knights (1530-1798), and for some years later, bando were read by the town-criers (banditori). Harej bandu 'a proclamation was issued', is still heard in some villages.

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

Basta (IX, 77) 'so long as, provided that', as in the present context basta nara 'l'omni mefjga 'so long as I see my mother cured'. The meaning differs from that of Sic. basta 'verbo usato in forza di avverbia per imminente termine, basti, non più' (Mort.) or of It. basta 'enough' (DEI).

Baxx (XXIV, 83) in ogghod baxx 'sit down, be seated', still used in Gozo. In Malta one is more likely to hear instead ogghod bil-qieghda, while ogghod baxx means 'Silence! Be quiet'. The M. sense here does not agree with that of Sic. bassu or It. basso.

Bravu (VI, 37) meaning (i) 'well done, good', as in bravu ghalik and (ii) 'intelligent, learned' as in dak bravu hafna 'that man is very learned'. Cp. Sic. bravu, It. bravu.

Bukkekk (XIV, 43) 'bunch of flowers' < Fr. Bouquet.

Butazzza (XVI, 24) 'a cask of wine'. Cp. Sic. buttazzu 'piccola botte' (Mort.), It. bottaccio 'barilotto' (DEI).

Ezerjitu (XIII, 8) 'army', < Sic. esercitu (Mort).

Fatta (XVI, 7) 'a sort of', in common use, as in the expression bhal fatta ma ridix 'I sort of did not want'; also nies ta' dì-fatta 'people of this sort'. The text of the rale requires the meaning 'shaped like... ...i.e. fatta ta' barga, 'shaped like a cow'. Cp. Sic. fata 'specie, sorta, gene-

Fond (XV, xi, 49) a household occupation for ladies, unspecified by Magri; cp. It. fondo with different meaning.

Fumarija (XXIX, 47) 'infirmary'. The expression tabib tal-fumarija 'infirmary (House) doctor', may still be heard. The Hospital of the Knights of St. John was known as the Sagra Infirmita, whence this word passed into Maltese. Cp. Sic. Fumaria 'luogo o stanza dove si curano gli infermi' (Mort).

Golfu (VII, 39) explained by Magri as 'a bird that prowl by night, eats other birds, and, according to the beliefs of our forefathers, exerts extraordinary influence on human beings'. Magri tries to identify this bird with the white or barn owl (M. ba-ba-gam), and, amongst other sug-

Golinda (XV, xi, 49) like fond, (q.v.) left unexplained by Magri, but very likely stands for girlanda (diadematic form gordiana). Cp. It. ghirlanda 'garland'.

Grazzja (VIII, 56, XVI, 10) in ha grazzja maghba 'he had a liking for her; he was fond of her; he was in love with her'. This meaning is purely local and is neither It. nor Sic. grazia.

Gżatu (XVIII, 50) 'she accused him' < Sic. accusari, It. accusare.

Gżikkjet (XVI, 8) pl. of gżik < Eng. jack (mechanical term).

Gżanżaturi (X, ii, 29) 'joiners', verbal noun of agent from gżanja 'to join' < Sic. aggianciri.

Gilhjetta (XV, ix, 39; VII, iv, 48) 'a small cistern or tank'. A word in common

Gostra (XIV, 44) nowadays used in the sense of ‘greasy pole’ – a summer sports popular at seaside resorts on special occasions, such as the feast of the patron saint, etc. In its wider meaning, as in the tale where it occurs, it means ‘tournement, joust’. Cp. It. giorstra. Sic. giuglia ‘l’armeggiar con lance a cavallo, correndo l’un cavaliere contro l’altro colla mira di scavalzarli’ (Mort).

Iddubba (XY, xii, 54) ‘they obtained, they acquired’. The word iddubba has a variety of meanings: (i) he just managed e.g. kemm iddubba ‘just enough’, (ii) ‘you’ve had it’, e.g. iddubbata, and (iii) it has passed into a proverb Budobba billi kellu ddbba ‘Budobba (fictional rhyme-name of person) had to make with what he had’ i.e. addobbare ‘to decorate, to furnish’ is far removed in meaning. Much closer is the Sic. addubbari ‘rimedio o riparo:... raccomandare, ridurre, rimettere in buon essere le cose guaste’ (Mort).

Kap (XXIII, 40) ‘chief’, < Sic. capu, It. capo.


Kumpliment (XXIV, 90) ‘the remainder’. Falzon and Busuttil give only kompla ‘he accomplished’, he finished’. Note the distinction between kumpliment and kumplimentum ‘compliment’, Cp. Sic. kumplimentu ‘complimento; cosa finita; assolutamente, complimento’ (Mort).

Ikorda (XVI, 9) ‘he came to an agreement’ < Sic. accordari (Mort).

Iluggia (XIV, 50) used in the sense of ‘he vomited’, as explained by Magri. The Maltese word may derive from Sic. alluggiari ‘albergare’ with the meaning of its antonym sluggiari ‘diloggiare, abbandonare un’abitazione’ (Mort).

Imanval (XVIII, 73) ‘he assists in masonry work, etc.’. Denominative verb from manwil ‘a mason’s labourer, a bricklayer’s man’ (Falzon), pl. mnuwul, or monwal (Vassalli). The verb form is not given in Maltese dictionaries. Cp. Sic. manuali ‘colui che serve al muratore’ (Mort).

Jimpesta (X, 23) ‘he sullies or dirties’, fg. ‘he badgers’ < Sic. mpistari.


Lagrimani (XI, 39) ‘weeping, tearful’, occurs only in the following rhyme:

Dr. Dragon Draganti. (O dragon, dragon, I am Peter
Jien huwa Pietru the Tearful One; in the con-
ll-Lagrimani. text ‘The Child of Tears’)


Immarinaha (XVI, 10) meaning ‘he deceived her’ according to Magri’s ex-
plation. The Maltese meaning is far removed from that of Sic. ammarinari ‘metter dell’aceto sul pesce frito, o sopra altri cibi per conservarli’ (Cp. M. immarina). For the idea of cheating. Cp. It. marinara ‘la scuola ‘to play truant’.

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

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


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

Ptena (XV, 61) ‘pain’, < Sic. or It. pena.


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

Serpettin (X, 26) ‘sea serpent’ according to the context in which it occurs. Serp ‘snake’, serpettin ‘sea serpent’, galfu ‘a prowling bird’, dragan ‘dragon’ are among the mysterious animals that figure and often substitute one another in Maltese folk-tales. Cp. Sic. sirpentti ‘serpe grande, serpente di mare’ (Mort), It. serpente.

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

Skarta (XVIII, 43) occurring in the context ir-rib skatrakom, explained by Magri as ‘the wind drove them on to the land’. Outside this context
skarta may mean 'to discard, to set aside, to reject' (Falzon) or 'to play truant' as in tiskartà l-iskola, with which cp. It. *scattare* and Sic. *scartari*. The Maltese sense in the tale may be remotely connected with that of Sic. *scortari* 'guide' (Mort). It. *scortare* 'to escort'.

**Temp** (XIII, 5) *In ragel ta temp* 'advanced in years'. Cp. It. *antenato*.

**Nittradri** (IX, 11) 'I betray you'. Busuttil gives verbal noun *tridment* only, meaning ' treachery, breach of faith, fidelity or trust'. He also gives an interesting extension of this meaning, in *l-eiskettà kinet fuq it-tridment* 'the gun was at full cock'. Cp. Sic. *tradiri*, It. *tradire*.

**Tratt** (XVIII, 73) used in the quarry trade. The meaning of *tratt*, or Sic. *trattu* 'spazio, distanza' (Mort) has no connection with quarrying.  

**Itturuntat** (XV:iv, 60) 'exiled'. Romance Past Participle from Sen. *tarfen* 'exile'. Busuttil records the word in explaining *tarjaf*, but omits it in the main sequence of his dictionary. One also hears sometimes *turunment* 'exile'.

II. **ROMANCE WORDS RECORDED BY VASSALLI**

**Ajrū** (X.ii, 30) 'air, atmosphere' cf. Sic. and It. *aria*.

**Balša** (XIV, 46) 'ball' also, as recorded by Vassalli 'quantitá di roba messa insieme' < Sic. *balla* 'quantitá di roba messa insieme e rivolta in rela o simile materia per trasportarci da luogo a luogo' (Mort); *Barba* (XI, 37) 'uncle' < It. *bara* 'zio'; v. spec. it. *settu*, ma che ricompere nel romanzo di Terra d'Otranto e nel territorio di Taranto e di Bari (DEI) – not recorded by Mortillaro; *Bata* (XII.II, 65; VII.II, 43) 'he suffered' < Sic. *patiri*, It. *patire*; *Betjeż* (VI, 36) pl. of *biča* 'piece' < Sic. *picca*, or *pezza* 'un poco di pannicello' (Mort); *Biskilia* (XV.xii, 53) 'a wicker basket', also figuring in place-name *Bir Biskill*, at Tarxien < It. *fiscella*; *Boppa* (XXIV, 86) 'a draught – wine, etc.' cf. It. *bocca*, Sic. *vucceta*, *Borza* (XII, 62), 'a purse' < It. *borsa*, Sic. *burza*.

**Čajt** (XXIII, 49) 'joke, idle talk' < Sic. *chita*, *Cakkar* (XXIII, 45) 'a countryman, a clown' given by Vassalli as *cakkli*, cf. Sic. *ciaccari* meaning, among other things, 'lavorare il terreno per la prima volta' (Mort), whence possibly the idea of countryman inexperienced in the ways of the city; Sp. *chacarero* 'field labourer'; *Cappa* (XI, 42) 'a mass' < Sic. and It. *ciappa*; *Chekkean* (XIII, 4) 'a little, younger child' < Sp. *pequeño* through Arabic; *Ċurnta* (XVIII, 54) 'a bag, packet, satchel' also 'pouch, knapsack' (Falzon) < It. *cateria* 'xiv sec.' 'tasca per la selvaggina' (DEI).

**Dinier** (XXIII, 51) 'a small coin less than a grain', pl. *dwenner*, < Sic. *dinar* 'moneta della minor valuta, che è la sesta parte del grano' (Mort); *Domna* (XXVI, 113) 'medal, a charm or amulet worn by Catholics', pl.

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

**Familja** (VIII, 60) 'family' < It. *famiglia*; *Farda* (XV.xii, 57) 'a horse or saddle cloth' < Sic. *farda* 'prop. pezzo di tessuto di più maniere, o sia par parte di che compongonos, cucendola con altri somiglianti, vestiti, colti, e cosa simile, ed è per la più della lunghezza della cosa, che compone; telo' (Mort); *Forn* (XIII, 5) 'bakehouse, oven' and *Fumar* (XXVI, 110) 'baker' < It. *forno*, *fornaro*, Sic. *furnu*, *furnaru*; *Frigiu* (IV, 24) 'strait; a narrow pass or path' (Falzon) cp. It. *pelago*; *Frott* (XXVII, 186) 'fruit' < It. *frutto*, Sic. *frutti*.

**Glēkki** (XXIII, 44) 'a jacket' < Sic. *gleccu*, It. *gilet*, *gilenen* (XXIII, 45) pl. of *gammiena* 'a tassel, a puff' (Falzon) cf. Sic. *gimmunni*; *Gabadoli* (XIV, 50) 'a kind of shark' cf. It. *capodoglio*, Sic. *capidolìa*; *Gabija* (XVI, 8) explained by Vassalli as 'castello o macchina fabbricata per tirare su pesi' and by Falzon 'a top' (mar.) < It. *gabbia*.

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

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

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


**Nannuh** (XXIII, 47) 'his grandfather' < Sic. *nannu* It. *nemno* – one of the few words denoting relationship that, although Romance in origin, take
the Semitic pronominal suffixes, thus nanu + wi, k, h, na, kom, bon, like zieju 'uncle', parrinu 'godfather' and kunjatu 'brother-in-law'; Nokdra (XVI, 7) 'to keep or preserve, to guard, to watch over' (Falzon) < Sic. nduchirari, nduchirari (Barbera), 19 aducchirari (Mort).

Papa (XVII, 48) 'Pope' < Sic. and It. Papa; Picxun (XVI, 25) the calf of the leg' < Sic. piscitum; Platt (XIV, 65) 'a dish, plate' < It. piatto, Sic. piatto; Plekk (XXV, 107) 'bail, security, surety, bondman, guaranttee' (Falzon) < Sic. pleggia; Pieleri (IV, 24) 'obelisks, pillars' < Sic. pileri 'posteriore di confine, pilastro da ponte' (Mort) < It. piliere.

Qanata (XV, 48) 'a pitcher, an ewer, water-pot' < Sic. cannata; Qanqiena (V, 27) 'bell' < It. and Sic. campana; Qartallas (XIV, 48) 'a big basket' < Sic. cartella; Qastna (VIII, 55) 'chestnut' < It. and Sic. castagna; Qutar (XI, 42) pl. of qantar 'a weight of 100 Rotoli' < It. cantaro, Sic. cantara; Qoffa (XV, 57) 'a basket' < It. and Sic. cofa.

Ravijna (VIII, 56) 'a kind of dish composed of paste, cheese and eggs' (Falzon), given by Vassalli with w instead of v i.e., ravijal, < It. ravoli, Sic. ravola 'vivanda in pezzi di pezzetti, farina d'erbetta con cacio, uova, ricotta ed altro, ravvolto in pasta' (Mort); Ross (XXIV, 86) 'rice', given by Vassalli as rozz, cp. Sic. ruzz, It. riso.

Sapuna (IX, 7) 'soap', pl. sapunan, < Sic. sapuni; Sieda (XXIV, 88) and pl. siwaj it. a little cord, a line' (Falzon) < It. sagola; Siggia (XVIII, 107) 'a chair' < It. seggio, Sic. seggia; Skola (XV, 42) 'school' pl. sketel, or, as given by Vassalli, also skoli, < It. scuola.

Taljola (XVI, 38) 'a pulley wherein a cord or rope runs to draw water or anything else' (Falzon) < It. tagliola; Tagbiola (XVII, 46) 'to swing' < Sic. pinmuliari, or pandubliari; Tnabu (XVI, 27) or tnuar, pl. of tamburo 'drum' < It. tamburo, Sic. tamburu.

Xmara (X, 23) 'river' < Sic. scimara or ciurara 'cours largo di acqua' (Mort); Xorta (IX, 10) 'sort, kind, species' < It. sorta, Sic. sorti; Xorti (VIII, 43) 'chance, fate, destiny, also luck', < It. sorte, Sic. sorti.

Zjajjaw (XIV, 46) 'to reproach' (Falzon) < Sic. sgjari, Zjameg (XXV, 11) pl. of zamug 'a young rabbit', cp. Sic. carmucciu 'coniglio giovane' (Mort).

III. ROMANCE WORDS IN MAGRI'S TALES RECORD BY BUSUTTIL ONLY

Anglu (XXVII, 147) 'angel' < Sic. ancilu: It. angelo; Armi tan-Nar (XVI, 19) 'fire arms' cp. it. armi da fuoco, Sic. armi di focu.

Bottu (XXV, 71) 'pot, tin' cp. It. botte 'cask'.


Dajna (XVI, 16) explained as 'a fierce beast; also a fat woman, dirty and wearing her dresses short' by Magri (op.cit., p. 34) who excluded any relation to Provencal daina, but cp. It. daino, Sic. addumia.

Gardinu (XIV, 43) 'gardener', < Sic. jardinaru, It. giardiniere.

Karjjet (XIX, 11) pl. of karu 'chariot, waggon' < Sic. carru, It. carro.

Lok (VIII, 59) 'place, spot, situation, station, position, site, room, seat, residence, mansion, post, ground' (Bus.) occurring in the expression 'lok blu nies in an uninhabited place'; used in Gozo in the sense of 'house', but very rarely so in Malta, < Sic. locu.

Manku (XI, 42) 'a handle, a haft' < Sic. manicu, It. manico; Mod (XV, xiii, 69) in bil-mod 'slowly, gently, softly', < Sic. modu, It. modo.

Poqga (XIV, 83) 'to lay, to put, to lean against'; also, as in the present context 'he became one's companion' in poqga miegha < It. poggiare, Sic. appjarari.

Sult (VII, iii, 47 and XII, 65) occurring here in ta = salt 'he darted at', but meaning also 'assault, a furious attack, an onset' < It. assalto, Sic. assalta; Skond (XI, 37) 'accord' < It. secondo, Sic. secunnu; Sjid (VII, 40) 'coin equivalent to 20 pence', historically used in Malta for many centuries < It. scudo, Sic. scutu; Spicca (VIII, 56) 'he finished' also 'hedied' < Sic. spicciari 'sibqarsi, spacciarsi, far presto' (Mort).

Tant (XXIII, 44) in tant u tant 'so much, an unspecified sum of money' < It. tanto, Sic. tantu; Tersz (XXIII, 46) 'a third' also 'a measure of wine' cp. Sic. terzu 'terza parte del, quartuccio, misura di capacità per fluidi' (Mort); Tiggota (XVI, 25) 'to bail, to clear a boat, etc. of water', but explained by Magri in the tale as 'to vomit' < It. gotta [Lat. gutta] (Dei); Torni (XI, 36) 'towers' < Sic. torri, It. torre; Trajditura (XVI, 22) fem. of trajditur 'traitor' < Sic. traditura, It. traditora – for inclusion of j in words similarly of Romance origin cp. trubnal, tot tribunal < It. tribunal, occurring in Maltese folk-plays; ajkl'a 'eagle' < It. aquila, Ajkaluna for surname Aquilina, ajlu 'air, weather' < It. aria, but note that other forms derived from same source traidur conform to the usual pattern of Romance loanwords, e.g. itttrajdejmi not itttrajdejmi, traidiment not traidiment.

Veljilet (VII, v, 52) pl. of velu 'veil' < Sic. velu, It. velo; Virgl (XV, xii, 69) 'rods, canes' < It. verga, Sic. virga.

Xkaffa (IX, 9) 'shelf, a ledge', given by Vassalli, without however, defining its meaning, which may explain why Falzon left it out of his dictionary, < It. and Sic. scaffa.

Zjarg (XII, 65) 'sure' < Sic. sicura, It. sicuro.
IV. WORDS RECORDED BY BALZON BUT NOT IN VASSALLI

Ajkl (XVII, 63) pl. of ajka 'eagle'; <It. and Sic. aquila, (Mort.); Anakra (XVIII, 47) 'anchor'; <It. and Sic. ancora; Arloaggi (V, 27) pl. of arloaggi 'clock, watch'; <It. orologio, Sic. orologio; Amaw (XIX, 11) 'they armed, furnished or fitted up'; <Sic. armato meaning 'fornire'; (Mort.); Avolja (XXI, 20) 'even though, notwithstanding' <Sic. avvuggia; Avukat (XXXI, 45) 'advocate, lawyer'; <It. avvocato, Sic. avvocato; Azzarin (XVI, 7) 'rife, gun' <Sic. azzarrino, It. azzurro.

Baćir (XV, 53) 'lock' <It. bacile 'xii sec., bacino, vassoio'; (DEI); Sic. bacili; Bic (XVII, 43) for Lbic, 'South West Wind' <Sic. Libici; It. libeccio; Biljard (XXV, 105) 'billiards', included in the 1st ed. of Falzon's dictionary (1845) and rather out of place in Magri's tale <It. bigliardo, unrecorded by Mort; Biskuttin (XVI, 56) 'biscuit' <Sic. biscottino, It. biscotto; Bnazz (XXVII, 148) 'a calm, calmaess'; <Sic. bunzza, It. bononcita, c.; 1215 (DEI); Bosk (IX, 11) 'wood' <It. bosco, Sic. bosco; Bronz (XIII, 36) 'bronze' <It. bronzo, Sic. bronzu, Bukkapt (IX, 3) 'hatchway' <It. boccaporto, Sic. buccaporta; Bzonz (XI, 42) 'need' <It. bisogno, Sic. bisognu.

Čerit (XXVII, 147) 'chick peas' <Sic. cicita, It. cecie, Čürkett (XXV, 107) 'a ring' <It. cerebietto, Sic. cerebeddu (Mort.);

Damas (XVII, 46) 'damask' <It. damasco, Sic. damascu; Djamanti (XVIII, 34) 'diamond' <It. diamante, Sic. diamant; Dragun (XII, 30) 'a dragon'; <It. drago, Sic. dragun; Dublum (XXIV, 89) 'a double, a coin' according to Busuttil, equivalent to 40 scrudi <Sic. dubluni, It. dubbione

Festi (XII, 66) pl. of festa 'feast' <It. and Sic. festa; Fidi (XXVII, 147) 'faith' <Sic. fidu, It. fede; Forka (XXVII, 114) 'gallows' <It. forca, Sic. forza; Fors in bis-fors (XIV, 39) 'compulsory, by force' <It. and Sic. forza; Fossa (VII, 51) 'a gom, a jewel' - sense unrecorded in Italian and Sicilian by DEI and Mort; Friskatur (IX, 7) 'a basin, a washhand basin', as distinct from Sic. friscaturi 'colui che frisca, fischiare' (Mort.);

Gigant (XV, 61) 'giant' <It. gigante, Sic. gigante - in Gozo often pronounced gigi; Gumata pl. of gumara (XXV, 85) 'a day' <It. giorno; Sic. juruna; Gulet (XIV, 13, 37) 'sea biscuits or biscuits' <It. and Sic. galletta; Gażba (VI, 35) 'misfortune, a roguish trick', explained by Aquilina as a Romance formation, ultimately from Ar. Kataba 'to lie'; Granč (XVIII, 48) 'a crab' <Sic. granciu, It. granchio; Gambien (XVIII, 30) 'sesame' <Sic. giuggiulena; Giagga (VIII, 44) 'a cage' <Sic. gaggia, It. gabbia; Gvenatur (XVIII, 49) 'governor' <It. governatore, Sic. guvernaturi; Gwerra (XVI, 15) 'war' <It. and Sic. guerra.

Ibbaxxa (XV, 71) 'to pull or bring down, to lower, to humble or abase oneself' (Falzon) <Sic. abbassieri, It. abbassarsi; Imbarumbara (XV, 34), more commonly heard as hambara, 'pigeon house' <Sic. palum mara 'stanza dove stanno a covare i colombi' (Mort); Infern (XVI, 11) 'Hell' <It. inferno, Sic. inferno.

Kacča (XXIII, 44) 'hunting, shooting, chase' <It. and Sic. caccia; Kackatur (XXVII, 110) 'hunter' <It. cacciatore, Sic. cacciatori; Kalzeti (XI, 34) 'stockings' <It. calzetta, not in Mort; Kammir (XXIII, 45) 'a valet de chambre' <It. cameriere, Sic. cammareri; Kanun (XVI, 23) 'a quadrangular building stone' <It. cantone, but contrast Sic. cantoni 'sorta di stipo situato negli angoli delle mura' (Mort); Kann (XVIII, 50) 'cannon' <Sic. cannone, It. cannone; Karkamus <It. coperchio, Sic. carrat; Karruzzo (XXIII, 51) pl. karex unrecorded in M. dictionaries, a coach, a carriage' <It. carrozza; Katalina (XV, 63) 'chain' <Sic. catina, It. catena; Kellina (XVII, 48) 'kitchen' <It. and Sic. cucina; Kikunda (VIII, 59) 'to command' <It. comandare, Sic. zummanac; Kok (XV, 52) 'cook' <It. cuoco, Sic. cuc. Kulp (XVI, 8) a 'blow' in the expression kulp 'at one blow, suddenly', more commonly heard in Gozo <It. colpo, Sic. corp, cp. It. un colpo, Sic. un toro; Korja (XIV, 60) 'anger' <It. collera, Sic. cora or colura (Mort); Inkorda (XII, 66) 'to get angry, to fall in a passion, to rage'; Koska (XXIV, 50) 'a specials, Sic. cosciac; Kuttar (VII, 52) 'a soup spoon, a ladle' <Sic. cucchiari, It. cucchiato, Kuttur (VIII, 56) 'a coachman' <Sic. cucchiere, Sic. cocchiere; Kuntj (XXVIII, 46) 'a small bottle, a phial' <Sic. cucchlent (Lat. cumus); (DEI); Kuntenta (VIII, 57) 'content, joyful, pleased' <Sic. cuntenta, It. contenta; Kurna (XV, 34, XII, 8) 'a crown' <Sic. corona, It. corona; Kustlij (II, 19) 'ribs' <It. costa, Sic. cuttiglia.

Linterna (XVIII, 55) or, more commonly, lanterna 'lantern' <It. and Sic. Lantern; Lint (XVI, 26) 'pounds sterling' <It. and Sic. lira; Ljum (IX, 8) 'lion' <Sic. ljumi, It. leone; Ljumin (VII, 48) 'elephant' <It. elefante, Sic. liumanti; Loppju (XVIII, 58) 'pupum', made up of article l-oppju, whence iloppju 'to give opium, to anaesthetise' <Sic. loppju (Mort); oppio, Lukanda (XXIII, 45) 'an inn, lodging' <It. locanda, Sic. lucanna; Luvant (XV, 34) 'East, the Levant' <Sic. Livant, It. Levante.

Majjistran (XVIII, 43) or, more commonly, Majjistral, 'North West Wind' <Sic. maistral; It. maestrale; Marta (XII, 55) 'pax, a fat or greasy substance in general' <Sic. marcia; Martell (XI, 42) 'hammer' <It. martello, Sic. martedda; Mazzamorra (XIV, 37) 'crumbs of sea biscuits' which, according to Magri, are used as bait in fishing <It. mazzamuro.
'xvi sec; tritumè di bissotto; v. usata in marina' <Sic. mazzamuru 'esca da pigliar pesci' (DEI); Mnanar (XIII, 48) pl. of mnnara 'an axe, a hatchet' <Sic. mnnara (Mort.), It. mannaia; Muntun (XIV, 39) 'a ram' <Sic. muntun, It. montone.

Namar (XII, 40) 'hobby' and, outside this context, meaning also 'love, inclination, passion' <It. timanmore, Sic. mnamuru; Infoska (VIII, 56) 'he grew angry, vexed or annoyed' <It. infoscuro 'to become dark, to darken', Sic. nusceari 'conturbarsi' (Mort.); Ingwanta (XVIII, 47) 'a glove' <Sic. ngunata, It. guant.

Ordin (XXIII, 46; XI, 42) 'order' <Sic. ordin, It. ordine; Ors (IX, 9) 'a bear' <It. orso, Sic. ursu.

Pala (XV, xi, 51) 'a shovel, a baker's shovel' <It. and Sic. pala; Palazz (XIX, 11) 'a palace' <It. palazzo, Sic. palazzu; Palijet (XVI, 8) pl. of pòl 'a pale, a stake of wood' <It. and Sic. palu, Passej (VII, v, 51) 'his steps', made up of dual passajin 'two steps', from passaj, a pron. suffix b (3rd pers. masc.) resulting in elision of n <It. pasco, Sic. passu.

Patt (XI, 36; XXVI, 113) 'agreement, covenant, condition, bargain, compact' <It. patto, Sic. pattu; Paxutu (XI, 39) 'fed, nourished, contented, pleased' <It. pascituo, Sic. pasctitù; Pesta (XIV, 44) 'plague, pestilence' <Sic. pestà o peści, It. pesto, Pinna (XV, xi, 54) 'feather' <Sic. pinna, It. penna; Pitelli (XXIV, 86) 'common pean' <It. pisello, Sic. pisidda; Pliaja (XV, ix, 38) 'littoral, shore, bank or coast' <Sic. praja 'lido che scende dolcemente nel mare, piaggia' (Mort.); Polz (XXIII, 48) 'pulse' <It. polo; Poni (XV, xi, 63) 'a pony' <Eng. pony; Ponn (XI, 38) 'a first' <It. pugno, Sic. pugnu; Ponta (IX, i, 62) 'a point, a sore' <It. and Sic. puntu; Poisi (VIII, 59) 'site, post, stand' <It. posto, Sic. postu; Pronzu (VI, v, 52, XXIII, 46) 'a dinner' <Sic. pranzu, It. pranzo.

Principi (XXV, 105) pl. of principe 'prince' <It. principe, Sic. principi, Pumeti (XIV, 36) 'West' <It. Pumeti, Sic. Ponte.

Rama (XXIII, 46) in the context rama jidëk gong ì-x-wëbbà, meaning 'he set to, he started to massage the girl's neck', meaning different from It. armare or Sic. amare; Razzettu (XV, vi, 34) pl. rizset (XXI, 20) 'a cow house' <It. ricetto, Sic. ricetto, or rissettu; Rigul (XII, 26) 'a present, gift' <Sic. rigulu, It. regalo; Ritrat (XXVI, 113) 'portrait, likeness' <It. ritratto, Sic. ritrattu; Rol (XII, i, 9) pl. of rota 'wheel' <Sic. rota, It. rotta; Robol (XV, xi, 56) 'rosolio, a kind of liquor' <It. rosolìo, Sic. rosolìu.

Sajettu (XIII, 6) pl. of sajetta 'a thunderbolt' <It. saetta, Sic. saetta; Salu (XXIII, 47) 'hospital ward' in this context, but otherwise 'a hall' <It. and Sic. sala; Salva (XI, 35) 'savage, wild', It. selvaggio, Sic. salvaggio; Sangristia (XVIII, 73) or, more commonly, sagristia 'sacristy or vestry' <Sic. sagristia, It. sagrestia or sacrestia; Setù (VIII, 60) pl. of setù 'servant' <It. servitore, Sic. servitù; Sensja (XXII, 29) explained by Falzon as 'permission, licence', and bissensja 'which survives in Gozo, 'with your leave', which fulfills the sense required by the context in this tale, though it is more commonly used to mean 'discharged from work', especially in the Dockyard area. Sensja 'probably derives from It. licenza with initial syllable li dropped, and the c changed to s under the influence of English pronunciation licence; Sep (V, 27) 'a serpent' <It. serpe, Sic. seppi; Servjent (XXIII, 48) 'hospital attendant'; Servjentone, Sic. servjenti but not in the Maltese sense; Servizz (XXIII, 47) in ir-gel tas-servizz, 'servicemen' <It. servizio, Sic. servizj; Setta (XV, xi, 70) in tas-setta, literally 'of the Sect', i.e. the Freemasons, believed to fly through the air with music <It. and Sic. setta; Siffjum (XIV, 50) 'wigeon or whim' (Falzon), but in the context of this tale denoting a big fish, cp. It. silfo 'xvi sec. spirito dell' aria, risale al Lat. silphus; Sylphes (nel testo tedesco) di Paracelso (1451-1527), spiriti dell' aria simili agli uomini che abitano le foreste' (DEI); Sinjurt (XII, 9) 'Lord, gentleman, master, sir' (Falzon), also 'rich' <Sic. signuri, It. signore; for association of idea of wealth cp. It. farla da signore 'to roll in wealth'; Siëtt (XXIV, 85) 'a dish', surviving in Gozo and, as a family nickname Tas-Sjettu, in Malta <Fr. assiette; Skalora (XIV, 42) 'panich grass, canary grass, birds' seed' <It. scagnèlùa, Sic. scagnibòla; Sjapun (XVI, 11) 'shoe maker' <Sic. scognibù, scarbac; Sjoli (XVIII, 36) 'a rock' <It. scoglio; Skorma (XIV, 50) 'sea scorpon' <It. scorfano (DEI), Sic. scorfama 'sorta di pesce' (Mort.); Spalìa (VI, 35; IX, 4) 'shoulder' <It. spalla, Sic. spadda; Spag (XVII, 6) 'pack thread' <It. spago, Sic. spaghe; Nispara (XIII, 6) 'I fire', from spara 'he fired' <It. sparare, Sic. sparari; Spiewej (VIII, i, 46) 'charge of spiga' <Sic. spisa, It. spesa; Spuling (XII, 58) 'a large pin' <Sic. spigulani, (Mort.); sjimpakon (XIV, 47) from stampa 'he printed, imprinted' <It. stampare, Sic. stampari; Stunja (XV, xi, 49) 'a coffee-pot, a tin-pot' <It. e stagnata; Sudi (XI, 42) 'soldiers' <Sic. sudà, It. soldato.

Ta (XII, i, 59) short for tata, 'child's name for father' <Sic. tata; Tartu (XI, 42) given by Falzon as tavarn, 'arsenal, dockyard' <It. through Sic. darina; Tazza (XI, 41) 'a drinking glass' <It. and Sic. tazza, 'mug, cup'; Tementina (XV, xii, 69) or, as given by Falzon, tementina, It. tementina, Sic. timenti; Tir (XIV, 33) 'shoe' <It. tiru, Sic. tiru; Tuñu (XIII, ii, 9) 'helmet, sunder' <Sic. timuni, It. timone; Tosku (XXVI, 110) 'poison' <Sic. tossicu, It. tossico.

Vjoln (XXV, 105) 'violon' <It. violino, Sic. violiniu; Xabia (X, 25) 'sabre
THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE MALTESE VERB

By A. Cremona

In the Arabic morphology the classification of the verb has been one of the topics which, owing to different linguistic shades and peculiarities in the various dialects, has given to grammarians the opportunity to express a variety of views which differ in some particular details from the classical standard system of the classification of the verb.

Such a variety in the methods of classification is also noticed in some grammars and treatises on the Maltese Language of which the morphological verbal forms are, in a general sense, identical to the Arabic, and in some peculiarities widely differing from the classical Arabic, in the same way as the dialects of the latter, from the Syrian territories along the coast-land of North Africa as far as Morocco, seem also to differ a good deal.

In order to appreciate these discrepancies it would be necessary to make a comparative analysis of the various methods of the classification of the verb of Arabic dialects which are akin to the Maltese Language in their morphological aspects as the offshoots of the standard classification of the verb in classical Arabic.

Classical Arabic divides the Verb the Perfect and Imperfect the Perfect comprising those disyllabic verbs of which the radicals are all strong or sound letters — not including the bemsz (in the surds), the Imperfect comprising those verbs which are either bemzated or surds, or verbs containing one or more weak letters.

The Imperfect is moreover subdivided into strong or sound and weak ; it is sound if the stem does not contain any weak letters (the waw or the ya), and weak if it contains one or more weak letters (the waw or the ya). The Imperfect, if strong, may thus be either surd of which the last radical, being identical to the second, is contracted, or bemzated, having a bemsz among the radicals. Ex: Qara, (he read); sal, (to ask), abad, (to take). The Imperfect, if weak, is subdivided into Assimilative having a first weak radical, Ex: kadd (to promise); bish, (to bear children); biss, (to be dry); Hollow having for its middle radical a weak letter. Ex: kar (to sell); ma, (to say), and the Defective having for its third radical a weak letter; ya or waw. Ex: krees (to throw). Such verbs may contain two weak letters which are subdivided into two kinds of such verbs: defective verb having