A COMPARATIVE TABLE
OF THE MEANING PATTERNS
OF THE DERIVED FORMS
OF THE VERB IN ARABIC AND MALTESE

By David Barshall

The Semitic group of languages has received a distinct lack of attention from linguistic scholars; this neglect is the more deplorable when one realises how rich these languages -- and especially Arabic -- are, and what treasures are contained in their literatures. It is perhaps only now that they are receiving more study, although much more still remains to be done.

After many years of controversy, prejudice and error, it is now established beyond any doubt that the mother tongue of Maltese is Arabic. It is the intention of this article to compare briefly the derived forms of the verb in Arabic and Maltese, from the point of view of meaning patterns: the way in which the comparative derived forms are built up will not be dealt with, since there is ample information about this elsewhere.1

Before coming to the derived forms, a few words must be said about the most characteristic feature of Semitic languages, triliteralism: here, however, it will be applied only to Arabic and Maltese, with specific reference to the verb. By far the greatest majority of words are trilateral, being composed of three root letters. It is in these root letters that the basic meaning of the root lies: for example, the root letter .Protist = to break"; .Protist = to smash; .Protist = to cut; .Protist = to cut in pieces; .Protist = to kill; .Protist = to massacre; .Protist = to separate; .Protist = to disperse; .Protist = to break; .Protist = to break in pieces; .Protist = to kill; .Protist = to slaughter; .Protist = to tread on; .Protist = to trample.

Second, verbs which are stative or intransitive in the root form are made transitive in the 2nd, and verbs which are originally transitive may be made doubly transitive, or there may also be a causative or factitive signification. E.g. .Protist = to be near; .Protist = to bring/make near; .Protist = to be numerous; .Protist = to be glad; .Protist = to be weak; .Protist = to be strange; .Protist = to be laugh; .Protist = to make to laugh = to amuse; .Protist = to sleep; .Protist = to put to sleep; And: .Protist = to know; .Protist = to teach; .Protist = to mention; .Protist = to remind; .Protist = to study; .Protist = to change; .Protist = to become.


In neither language is there any verb root which has all the derived forms. Even excluding the very rare forms 11 to 15 in Arabic, only very few verbs have all the forms from 1 to 13. Five is a good average in Arabic, four in Maltese.
"to teach" صدر = "to go", proceed out"; حمل = "to carry"; حمل = "to make carry"; دُبّل = "to enter"; دُبّل = "to introduce, bring in"; دِعَاء = "to diminish, dismiss"; دُعَاء = "to lessen"; دعاء = "to approach"; دعاء = "to bring near"; عيدُ = "to come down"; عيدُ = "to bring down".

Form 2 is frequently denominative – i.e., derived from nouns – and expresses, with various modifications, the use of making, doing, or being occupied with the thing expressed by the noun from which it is derived; in other words, it puts into action the object which the noun signifies, e.g. حَمِيل = "type, kind", وَعَظِيَّ = "to compose, assemble", لَجْنَة = "skin, leather", جُلَّد = "to bind (a book)", خَلَّد = "text", خَلَّد = "to pitch a tent"; جَلَّد = "weapon", سَلَح = "arm", سَلَح = "sea", سَلَح = "to navigate"; سَلَح = "sail", سَلَح = "to announce"; سُيَّد = "cross", سُيَّد = "to crucify"; شُعُبَّ = "flame", شُعُبَّ = "to kindle".

Verbs of form 2 may also be derived from adjectives; such verbs have a causal force, and denote the production of the quality expressed by the adjective; e.g. مَرْضٌ = "sick", مَرْضٌ = "to render a.o. ill"; دِيَد = "new", دِيَد = "to renew"; دِيد = "new", دِيد = "to renew"; دمَّر = "fat", دمَّر = "fatten"; دمَّر = "short", دمَّر = "to shorten".

Finally, there is the meaning of estimation, or forming an opinion or making a statement about how someone or something performed the meaning of the root, e.g. دُرَّقُ = "to be sincere", دُرَّقُ = "to believe, consider sincere"; دُرَّقُ = "to lie", دُرَّقُ = "to consider someone a liar, accuse of lying"; دُرَّقُ = "to be able", دُرَّقُ = "to be (form an opinion about its ability or worth, =) estimate, appreciate"; دُرَّقُ = "to lie", دُرَّقُ = "to consider someone a liar". There is also the verb دُرَّقُ = "to consider someone a thief" which, though strictly a denominative verb from دُرَّقُ = "chief", falls within this last meaning category.

Although there are slight connections in two of the uses of the 3rd form, there is not really any strong common meaning pattern at all between Arabic and Maltese. In Maltese this form occurs mainly in those verbs whose middle radical is glottal or the weak aspirate h. Such verbs are incapable of doubling the glottal or h, as would be necessary in the 2nd form. Thus the 3rd form is practically an extension of the 2nd, and so has similar meaning patterns. First, form 3 may have an intensive force, e.g. فَحَلَ = "to cause, constrain", فَحَلَ = "to induce, constrain"; فَحَلَ = "to criticize", فَحَلَ = "to vilify, scorn". It has also a causal force. e.g. بَيُّدَ = "distance", بَيُّدَ = "to remove, take out"; بَيُّدَ = "to understand", بَيُّدَ = "to make to understand"; بَيُّدَ = "to stand", بَيُّدَ = "to place". Finally, in Maltese, form 3 derives verbs from nouns. e.g. بَاَرَ = "blessing", بَأَرَ = "to bless"; بَرَ = "poease, rest", بَرَ = "to rest"; بَرَ = "to rest", بَرَ = "depart, exit"; بَرَ = "work"; بَرَ = "to employ, make busy". In Arabic also form 3 is sometimes denominative, but the idea of effort and reciprocity (to be mentioned below) is still to a certain extent implied, e.g. بَرَ = "like, equal", بَرَ = "to double"; بَرَ = "robust health", بَرَ = "to restore to health".

In Arabic alone the normal use of form 3 is to express the relation or application of the act of the root form to another person, or the doing of an action to someone. e.g. كَبُرُ = "to write", كَبُرُ = "to write to"; كَبُرُ = "to sit", كَبُرُ = "to sit with"; كَبُرُ = "to stand, get up", كَبُرُ = "to stand up to, oppose"; كَبُرُ = "to do", كَبُرُ = "to treat"; كَبُرُ = "to throw down", كَبُرُ = "to wrestle with"; كَبُرُ = "to say"; كَبُرُ = "to converse with".

Form 3 in Arabic also often expresses an idea of effort; when the root form denotes an act that immediately affects an object, form 3 expresses the effort or attempt to perform that act upon the object. e.g. يَذْلُ = "to kill", يَذْلُ = "to try to kill, fight against"; يَذْلُ = "to precede", يَذْلُ = "to try to precede, compete with, race against"; يَذْلُ = "to surpass in glory", يَذْلُ = "to vie with someone in rank and glory". One also occasionally finds verbs of this form which have no idea of reciprocity behind them, but the idea of effort is nevertheless apparent in them. e.g. يَذْلُ = "to travel", يَذْلُ = "to exaggerate". In Maltese, although this is far from being a normal meaning pattern, a trace of the conspectueus idea seems to be preserved in the verbs يتمُحُو/يُحُو = "to feed", يتمُحُو/يُحُو = "to make", and يتمُحُو/يُحُو = "to incite".

Form 4 in Maltese is virtually extinct, but there is a curious survival to be mentioned later. In Arabic, the principal significance of form 4 is factitive or causative; it makes intensive root form verbs transitive,
and makes those verbs transitive in the root form doubly transitive. e.g. حضر = 'to be present'; نصيصف = 'to cause to be present', برخ: = 'to separate oneself = to scatter'; شرف = 'to be reminted = to remember'; شرف = 'to have the honour'; قد = 'to be forward'; شرف = 'to make progress'; وابدأ = 'to bring in'; ركعت = 'to kneel'; دعوك = 'to invite oneself'; سدددك = 'to amuse oneself'; نتفك = 'to puff up'; نراجع = 'to blow oneself out, become proud'; بقلب = 'to be roused'; عبأ = 'to borrow', however, in Arabic, the idea of reflexiveness is often not very prominent, especially in such verbs as govern the accusative, e.g. نتتبع = 'to pursue step by step'; نتقن = 'to ascend for certain'. Form 5 has also a passive force, and indeed in English it must often be rendered by the passive, e.g. بذوكت = 'to alter'; بذوكت = 'to be altered'; كسر = 'to smash in pieces'; نكسر = 'to break in pieces'; خلق = 'to create'; تولى = 'to be afraid'; نولد = 'to generate'; نسج = 'to be generated, derived'; نجل = 'to be brought down'; نحنم = 'to baptize'; نحنم = 'to be baptized'; ندف = 'to distribute', ندف = 'to be distributed'. The third common meaning pattern, arising out of the original reflexive signification, and even more frequently used, is that of the effective force. The difference between the effective and the passive is that, whereas in the passive the subject of the verb is affected by the action of somebody or something else, in the effective the subject may be affected by somebody or something else or alternatively by himself, e.g. عزل = 'to separate', عزل = 'to become learned, lean', quite different from عزل (the passive of form 2), = 'to be taught'; عزل = 'to make clear, explain'; عزل = 'to appear clear, certain'; بحث = 'to prove', بحث = 'to become/prove to be the reality/fact'; بحث = 'to crumble (lit.); بحث = 'to go dirty', بحث = 'to make dirty'; بحث = 'to teach', بحث = 'to learn', بحث = 'to clean', بحث = 'to get clean'. In Arabic alone, form 5 may be used to form verbs from nouns, especially nouns of quality or state, e.g. موظف = 'to possess, own', موظف = 'to become a Christian', موظف = 'of Jews', موظف = 'to become a Jew'. Closely related to this meaning is that of thinking or representing oneself to have a certain quality or status, e.g. كبير = 'great'; كبير = 'to think oneself great, be proud'; نبي = 'prophet', نبي = 'to represent oneself to be a prophet'. Finally, form 5 has a further use in Maltese alone, that denoting reci-
precipity. e.g. be'waw = 'to kiss', ibewaw = 'to kiss another'; kel-lem = 'to speak to', kellem = 'to converse'; ghamma = 'to embrace'; tqa'amma = 'to embrace' (reciprocally).

Form 6 has only one meaning pattern common to both Arabic and Maltese, it being properly the reflexive of form 3. The idea of effort and attempt, which is transitive in this latter form, becomes reflexive in the 6th. e.g. qa'alla = 'to fight', tqa'alla = 'to fight each other'; sana' = 'to cooperate with', tqa'ana' = 'to cooperate together'; wali = 'to agree with', tqa'alla = 'to agree together'; tar' = 'to oppose', tqa'alla = 'to oppose'; tqa'alla = 'to be in mutual opposition'; qas = 'to surprise', tqa'alla = 'to be off one's guard, neglect'; tqa'alla = 'to remove afar', tqa'alla = 'to go to a distance'; alba = 'to bear', alba = 'to support, take pains'; sirhel = 'to occupy with work', tqa'alla = 'to give attention to'; sirhel = 'to take into partnership', tqa'alla = 'to enter into partnership with'.

In Arabic, even more than 5, form 6 is used with the meaning of simulating a state or status, or representing oneself to have it. e.g. qabla = 'to precede', tqa'alla = 'to affect ignorance'; gham' = 'to be busy', tqa'alla = 'to pretend to be busy' (compare its meaning in Maltese in the previous paragraph).

Turning to Maltese alone we find that the 6th form sometimes has a passive force e.g. biek = 'to bless', biek = 'to be blessed'; biek = 'to observe, visit', thal = 'to be observed'; qidaq = 'to place', qidaq = 'to be placed'; qidaq = 'to be snatched', qidaq = 'to be snatched'. It may also denote reciprocal action of the 3rd form. e.g. fisheb = 'to make to understand', fisheb = 'to understand one another'; gheb = 'to provoke quarrels', gheb = 'to quarrel'; sirhel = 'to associate; alba = 'to occupy, keep busy'; alba = 'to be busy, work'; qabala = 'to separate' (tr.), qabala = 'to separate' (intr.); sirhel = 'to occupy, keep busy'; sirhel = 'to be necessary'.
which arises out of the reflexive use, is in fact common to this form with the 6th, e.g., قموم = 'to serve', قموم = 'to serve/dispute with one another'; ایستگم = 'to contribute towards, participate'; ایستگم = 'to resist another'; ایستگم = 'to fight one another'; ایستگم = 'to make to understand', ایستگم = 'to be in agreement'.

The original reflexive use of form 8 is developed into the passive, especially in verbs which do not have the 7th form, e.g., نمی‌گردد = 'to spread abroad', نمی‌گردد = 'to be spread abroad'; نمی‌گردد = 'to restrain, turn away'; نمی‌گردد = 'to be turned back'; نمی‌گردد = 'to assist, render victorious'; = 'to be helped by God, be victorious'; = 'to fill'; = 'to be full'; = 'to be burnt'; = 'to be burnt'; = 'to fill'; = 'to be filled'; = 'to be spread, intersecting'; = 'to be spent'; = 'to be conquered'; = 'to be conquered'; = 'to be forgotten', intersecting = 'to be forgotten'.

The final meaning pattern of form 8 occurs in Arabic alone, and it is that which has the sense of doing something for oneself, e.g., ایستگم = 'to acquire', ایستگم = 'to gain', ایستگم = 'to uncover', ایستگم = 'to discover', ایستگم = 'to initiate', ایستگم = 'to invent'.

Form 9 has 2 main patterns in both Arabic and Maltese, both of them common. The first of these is that used to express the acquisition of some colour, e.g., = 'black', = 'to become black'; = 'green', = 'to become green'; = 'red', = 'to become red, blush'; = 'yellow', = 'to become yellow'; = 'green', = 'to grow green'; = 'red', = 'to become red'; = 'brown', = 'to go brown'; = 'black', = 'to grow black'.

The second use of form 9 is the specification of physical characteristics or qualities. In Arabic, these are defective qualities, in Maltese they may be desirable or undesirable, e.g., = 'fat', = 'to become fat, something'; = 'squint', = 'squint'; = 'foolish', = 'to grow foolish'; = 'bad', = 'to be bad'; = 'ugly', = 'to become ugly'; = 'beautiful', = 'to become beautiful'; = 'small', = 'to grow small'.

It should be noted that in Arabic form 11 may also be used to express the acquisition of a colour of defect. As far as the distinction between the two forms is concerned, some grammarians argue that the 9th indicates colours of defects of a permanent nature, the 11th those that are of a temporary or mutable nature.

It should also be noted that the 9th form in Maltese, with its long vowel, may be regarded as being morphologically closer to the 11th form in Arabic than to the 9th, e.g., حمام = 'to be closer to' = 'to be closer to', حمام = 'to be closer to', حمام = 'to be closer to'.

In origin form 10 appears to have been the reflexive of the 4th or passive form; it converts the passive signification of the latter into the reflexive or middle, e.g., = 'to let loose, send'; = 'her hair hang loose'; = 'to prepare, get ready'; = 'to prepare', (int.), = 'to give oneself ready'; = 'to give oneself ready'.

A very common use of this form is that of estimating signification, usually from intransitive verbs. It indicates that a person thinks that a certain thing possesses with reference to himself or for his benefit, the quality signifies by the root form, in Maltese, the opinion or reaction expressed is usually of an unfavourable nature, e.g., = 'to be beautiful'.

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mission', 'غفر' - 'to forgive', 'عرض' - 'to ask forgiveness'; 'عرض' - 'to show', 'عرض' - 'to be asked, review'; 'غلط' - 'to help', 'استفاده' - 'to call for help'.

This form may be causative, e.g. قبل = 'to serve', قبل = 'to witness', قبل = 'to call to witness (cause to witness)'.

It is also frequently denominative, in which case it unites the factitive and collective senses. e.g. قبل = 'to make oneself master of, take possession of'; قبل = 'to appoint one as deputy'; قبل = 'to appoint as judge'.

Finally, this form is rich in various extensions of meaning from the root, which cannot be classified under specific patterns. e.g. قبل = 'to do'; قبل = 'to be, become true/certain'; قبل = 'to deserve, merit'; قبل = 'to receive'; قبل = 'to welcome/receive a person'.

From the foregoing comparative table it can be seen how close in many respects are the meaning patterns of the derived forms of the verb in Arabic and Maltese, the parent and offspring languages. Naturally there are some discrepancies, but this is not at all surprising when one is dealing with two living languages, of which the offspring has been cut off from the parent for almost 900 years, during which time it has developed along independent lines to become a language in its own right.

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THE DISTRIBUTION OF SURNAMES IN MALTA IN 1419 AND THE 1480S

By GODFREY NETTINGER

The following analysis of the distribution of surnames in Malta in the fiftteenth century is based on two undated and largely ignored lists of names preserved in the Cathedral Archives, Mdina.1 The first, a militia roll of the XIII Indiction, contains the names, among others, of practically all those Maltese who were present in the Town Council of the island when Don Antonio Cardona, through his representative, took an oath on 11 February 1421 (XIV Indiction) to respect the privileges of the Maltese. The nearest Indiction-year numbered XIII is 1419-20. As the next nearest years with the same Indictional Number are 1404-05 and 1434-35, both too distant for such a perfect correlation of names to have been possible, it must be taken that the XIII Indiction mentioned in the document belongs to the year 1419-20. In addition, Ludovico de Plussaco, who is mentioned in the list as Sisner Luisi, was already dead by 1429.2

The second list cannot be dated so exactly, because it lacks any record of the Indictional Number, owing to the disappearance of the title page. However the names in it contain a possibly in the 1480s. It consists of a list of names of men divided by day of the week and subdivided by name of village. It must be a roster for work on the bastions of Mdina or some other unpaid public work of that nature - an angara roster, in fact. Had it, instead, belonged to the militia it would have included Sundays, which it does not do.

Neither list contains any names of the inhabitants of Gozo or Birgu. The angara roster, in addition, lacks names of people from Zejtun, Arzax, and Zabbar and the other small villages nearby. The militia list contained originally 1870 names, fifty-seven of which belonged to the Jewish community of Malta. The angara roster contained some 1465 Christians.

1 Archives of the Cathedral, Mdina, Università, Quaderni Diversi, No. 3: "Quatercento facite et ordinato per il nobis capitano et justitiarius comandante per la guardia de la isola de Malta anno XIII Indictionis", and No. 7, which is unsigned. It is hoped to publish the former in full in the next issue of Rettie Historicae.
3 Royal Malta Library, MS 1365, p. 251: entry concerning the marriage of Plussaco's widow on 25 May 1429 to Simone de Menezzo.