A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
SOME SEMANTIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
MALTESE AND KORANIC ARABIC

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Living languages are constantly changing and developing, sometimes almost imperceptibly, sometimes more rapidly. These changes occur not only in the morphology of the language, although it is here that they are perhaps most noticeable, particularly in the case of those languages which formerly may have had a high degree of inflection, but also in its semantics. The purpose of this article is to examine some of the more interesting and obvious semantic changes which have occurred in Maltese, showing the difference between the meanings of certain equivalent or corresponding words in Arabic and Maltese.

Maltese is a living branch of the Semitic group of languages, and its major parent language is Arabic. However, the direct link between the parent and offspring languages was severed almost 900 years ago. The Arabs ruled Malta for a little over two centuries, from 870 to 1090, during which time they imposed their language on the existing native population, although it probably underwent certain phonetic changes at that time. As the native population absorbed the language they probably forced certain phonetic changes to occur on account of the difficulty they may have found in pronouncing certain Arabic sounds. After the severance of the direct link the offspring language then continued to develop into a separate language in its own right. Had Malta remained in direct contact with the Arabic language, then Maltese may have developed in the same way as other Arabic dialects. As it was cut off, however, the language was subjected to other external influences by non-Semitic tongues, mainly of a Romance nature and particularly Sicilian, and they affected and changed it accordingly.

In this same way, external linguistic influences may have played their part in effecting changes in the meanings of certain words. However, such changes need not necessarily be the result only of external linguistic influences, for other factors, often of a local nature, also play their part. These are factors such as differing natural or geographical conditions, differing customs, or different religious beliefs between the places or spheres of parent and offspring, or influencing and influenced,
languages (or indeed between two groups of speakers of the same language). The meaning of a word may be specialized or defined, leading to a restriction in its meaning, or alternatively it may be extended: the process of restriction and extension may occur in the passage of a word from one language to another, or even within one language itself. There may also be a change of meaning from cause to effect, or vice versa, or from the part to the whole, or vice versa. There may even be a change from the original meaning to its antonym.

So far, we have talked only of words as a whole changing their meanings, but the term 'words' needs to be made more specific when used in the context of Semitic languages. When dealing with Semitic languages, we must bear in mind the extreme importance of triliteralism, and its accompanying system of forms or patterns constructed round a group of letters, or radicals, which indicate some basic idea or some basic meaning. Different forms or patterns of words so constructed round a group of radicals, especially verbal patterns, may give very precise and often subtle differences of shades of meaning. When talking, therefore, of changes in the meanings of words (using 'words' here in a general sense), one may not necessarily be dealing only with changes in the basic idea or basic meaning of the root: more subtle changes may be noticed in the way in which the basic meaning of a root may be the same in both languages, but a specific meaning may have changed from one particular form in Arabic to another, different form in Maltese. Instances of such changes will be seen in the following pages, and they occur usually for one or two reasons. First, a particular form of pattern may be almost completely non-existent in Maltese (e.g., verbal form IV). Therefore words of such a form in Arabic, if they are to be adopted by Maltese, have to be adapted to a different form. Second, while certain forms or patterns may not only exist in Maltese but may be in common use, they may not occur when a certain letter may be one of the radicals (e.g., certain verbal forms, such as II and V, do not occur in those verbs which have gh or h as medial radical). Therefore, once again, words of such a form in Arabic, if they are to be adopted by Maltese, must be adapted to a different form in Maltese if they contain the letters in question in certain positions. Examples of such words will be seen later.

The Maltese words in this study are taken from 'A Maltese-Arabic Word List', by C.L. Dessoulay. In this book, Dessoulay lists a great number of Maltese words, arranged under some key word followed by other words derived from that same root. He also indicates whether the root may be of Common Semitic occurrence, and whether it occurs in the Koran. Dessoulay lists some 675 such roots, which, together with deri-
vatives, total some 1,850 words. It should, however, be emphasized that it does not necessarily follow that a given Maltese word has an Arabic word, of which it may be the equivalent, in the Koran: many have not.

Without in any way denigrating Dessoulay's work or intending to minimise its importance, there are two explanatory notes which must be given at the very beginning. They are mentioned here both so as to avoid possible confusion later, and to help put in a clearer perspective some remarks which will follow in the main body of this study. Often, when giving a Maltese word, Dessoulay gives what he regards as the Arabic word of which the Maltese word is the equivalent, or to which it corresponds. There are occasions, however, when the Arabic word which Dessoulay gives as the origin of a particular Maltese word may be either suspect, or even perhaps wrong. This writer realises that these are serious assertions to make, but hastens to add that they are in no way meant as an unkind criticism of Dessoulay: there is now much more linguistic knowledge available about Maltese than that which was at Dessoulay's disposal. The second point concerns word forms or patterns. The meaning of a word may be taken from a language both in its spoken usage, and also — or alternatively, if it is a word which has fallen into disuse or is used in a literary medium only — in its literary usage. Words thus employed in speech or literature are, or have been, actively used. Certain of the words which Dessoulay gives, however, are theoretical forms only, being used neither in speech nor literature, past or present. It thus follows that their meanings likewise are of necessity partly theoretical, since they cannot be checked by experience.

In certain cases, suggestions are made as to why the Maltese word may have changed its meaning from that of the Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, or as to what an original meaning might have been. It must be stressed that such suggestions are offered as hypotheses only, and not as hard facts, since there is no way of proving them. Other explanations may be equally plausible.

Finally, by way of introduction, it remains to be said that, unless there is some valid reason for doing otherwise, normally only the primary meanings of words are given, and secondary meanings are left unmentioned. It is, after all, in the primary meanings that we are most interested. Also, where Koranic references are given, only one is noted. A given word may occur a number of times in the Koran, but the reference given refers to an example where the meaning in question can be clearly seen.

In the following pages the key words are arranged alphabetically in the order in which they appear in 'A Maltese-Arabic Word List'. Derivatives are given under the appropriate key words.
ATAR

matra: The Maltese root word atar, meaning 'footstep, sign', agrees with the Arabic root word ULATOR, meaning 'trace, mark, print'. But whereas the Maltese matra (now obsolete, but recorded by Caruana) also means 'sign', the Arabic word ULATOR means 'feat, accomplishment, benefit, heritage'. Here the meanings differ, although there might be said to be a close similarity between the meanings 'sign' and 'heritage, benefit', since a heritage or benefit could be the sign remaining from some former deed.

We could also have here an example of an occurrence, mentioned in the introduction to this article, of which further instances will be noticed later. Sometimes the same meanings may be found for equivalent root words in both Arabic and Maltese, but the meanings may then differ in the derived forms. Where the meanings in Maltese contain the basic idea of the root, albeit perhaps modified in some way, throughout the derived forms, while the corresponding Arabic derived words may have different meanings, it could be that Maltese has developed some of its own meanings for the derived words related to the basic idea of the root, regardless of the meanings of the corresponding Arabic derived words. There may thus be differences in the meanings of the derived words in the respective languages, even when the root meanings may be the same.

Thus, while ULATOR has one meaning, matra has a different one, in this particular instance the same as the meaning of the root atar.

BAHAR

bahhar: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'sea', 铢/.Batch meaning 'sea'. The Maltese verb bahhar II means 'to navigate', while the Arabic verb 铢 II means 'to throw into the sea, to be heavy (sea)'. There is thus no connection between the meanings in the two languages, even though these respective meanings of the derived words are connected with the root meaning in both languages. It could be that Maltese has developed its own local meaning for the word, without reference to the meaning of the Arabic word to which it is equivalent.

BARR

barr: The Maltese word barr means 'the wild', while the Arabic word 铢 means primarily 'land, ground, continent, province', and in the Koran (5/97) 'land'. The Maltese word thus has a more intensive and specific meaning than the Arabic word.
It should be noted, however, that in an adjectival form the meanings agree in both languages, since ازج/barri means 'wild', and the Arabic word means also 'savage, not domesticated'.

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

**BASAR**

**basar:** The Arabic form I verb بَصَر means 'to see, discern, notice, understand', and in the Koran (20/96) 'to see, perceive'. The equivalent Maltese word basar I means 'to foresee, foretell'. While the meanings in the two languages are closely related they are not identical. The Maltese meaning implies seeing into the future, while the Arabic meanings have no such sense: the meanings of the Arabic word in both its standard and Koranic senses imply seeing at the present time only. However, the Arabic meanings do imply using one's powers of reasoning when seeing, rather than just simply seeing something and nothing more, and imply that one makes certain deductions from what one sees.

**bāṣar:** The Arabic word بَصَر, the active participle of the form I verb بَصَر, means 'seeing, quick-sighted, acute'. The equivalent Maltese word bāṣar, the active participle of basar I, means 'diviner, prophet'. The meanings in the two languages are different, and the comments made under basar (q.v. above) apply here also. The meanings of both words, however, are logical extensions of the meanings of the respective form I verbs from which they derive.

It should be added, for the sake of completeness, that the Arabic words بَصَر and بَصَر, the latter being the verbal noun of form V, both mean 'foresight', and it may be suggested that there is here a connection with the idea of the Maltese meanings. However, the word 'foresight' does not really imply any ability to see into the future in any prophetic way, but rather implies the ability to make certain forecasts based on data or experience which one has at one's command. In this respect the meaning 'foresight' has a logical connection with the verb بَصَر I, a propos of which the comment was made that its meaning implies not just simply seeing, but also making deductions from what one sees.

**BATAN**

**batan:** The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'belly'. The Maltese form I verb batan means 'to con-
ceive'. The Arabic form I verbs َبُكَّن and َبُكَّنَّ mean 'to be inside, conceal oneself, penetrate', and َبُخَّلَّ means 'to be big-bellied, be hidden, concealed'. َبُكَّنَّ occurs in the Koran (6/152), with the meanings 'to be concealed, be within, be secret'. Though the meanings in the two languages are not the same, there could be said to be a connection between them: when a foetus is conceived, it is concealed within the mother for some time.

The standard Arabic words for 'to conceive' are َحِلَّ, whence Maltese hobol, and َخَلِّل.

**BÂTî**

bâti: The Maltese word bâti means 'slow (of a fire)'. The Arabic word َبَخَلَّ, the active participle of the verb َبَخَلَّ I, meaning 'to be slow', and the words َبَخَلَّ and َبَخَلَّ all also mean 'slow'. However, the Arabic meaning is of general application, while the Maltese meaning has acquired a specific application, referring only to the slowness of a fire.

**BATRA**

abtar: Both the Arabic word َبَتَر and the Maltese equivalent word abtar have the identical meaning of 'tailless, bob-tailed'. However, in the Koran (108/3), َبَتَر has an interesting specialized meaning not found in Maltese. It means 'docked, without a tail', but in the sense of having no son or posterity.

**BEJJEN**

bejjen: Both the Maltese word bejjen II, and the Arabic word َبَيِّن II mean 'to separate', the Arabic word having also the additional meanings of 'to appear, manifest, explain, make distinct'. َبَيِّن in the Koran (2/155) has only the meanings 'to make clear, manifest, expound', but not 'to separate'. However, perhaps by making something clear or manifest one therefore makes it stand out and so it seems separate: hence there is a related idea.

**tibjîn:** The meaning of the Maltese word tibjîn, the verbal noun of bejjen II, is 'distinction', whereas the meanings of the Arabic verbal noun of َبَيِّن II, َبَيِّنَّ, are 'explanation, clear demonstration, specification'. The Arabic word does not have the meaning of 'distinction' as it would be regarded in its primary sense in English. َبَيِّن has the meaning of something which stands out or which is manifest. The meaning 'distinction', in its primary sense, would seem to agree more with the
meaning of the verb as 'to separate', i.e., something distinct in the
sense of being by itself, rather than distinct in the sense of being
clear. Perhaps this could be more clearly illustrated by some meaning
such as 'distinctness'.

As was remarked under the heading ATAR (matra), this may be an-
other example of the derived word in Maltese taking a derivative of the
meaning of a simpler word, rather than taking the meaning of the de-
rivered word in Arabic of which it is the equivalent: here *tib'bān* seems to
have taken its meaning from the meaning of *beijen* II.

**BEJJET**

beij : The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with
the idea of 'house'. The Arabic word بيت means 'a house, dwelling,
family, household' and in the Koran (29/40) also it means 'a house,
household, sanctuary'. The equivalent Maltese word *beij* now means 'a
roof', and thus the meaning has a certain restriction and specificity
about it, referring not to a dwelling as a whole, but to only one part of
it.

It is interesting to note, however, that in certain compound terms in
Maltese, both of them having a specific sense, the word *beij* does in-
deed mean 'house', although it would not be used with this meaning
other than in these terms. They are *għasjur tal-beij*, 'a house sparrow',
and *wara i-bjut*, literally 'behind the houses', a term used to describe a
certain part of the village of Tarxien situated behind the built-up area.

We thus have a clear example of a word not only changing its pres-
ent meaning in Maltese from the original Arabic meaning, but one
where we can actually see evidence of the word undergoing its change
of meaning within Maltese itself.

**BIDNI**

bidni : The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with
the idea of 'body'. The Maltese word *bidni* is the equivalent of the
Arabic word بدن, both being the respective relative adjectives. *Bidni*
means 'bulky', while بدن means 'physical, pertaining to the body'.
While the meanings in the two languages are very closely related, the
meaning of the Maltese word, 'bulky', implies large size, a sense not
contained in the Arabic word.

**BIDWI**

biedja : The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected
with the idea of 'the country' (in the sense of rural as opposed to ur-
ban). The meaning of the Maltese word biedja is 'agriculture', but this is a meaning not contained explicitly in the Arabic word بارز، which means 'country, desert, wilderness, bedouins'. While the Arabic word thus refers to the country itself or to the people who live there, it does not refer to the way of livelihood of the country, although this could be implied.

The meaning of biedja is, however, a logical derivative of the meaning of a more basic Maltese word. The word bidwi, and the Arabic word بُديو, both mean 'belonging to the country, agriculturalist', and indeed the primary meaning of bidwi in Maltese is now simply 'a farmer'. As has been remarked already, it is possible that Maltese may have developed its own meaning for the derived word without reference necessarily to the Arabic derived word of which it is the equivalent, or to which it corresponds.

**DAHAK**

dahkiek (dahhāk): The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'laughing', and the form I verbs دَكَ/dabak both mean 'to laugh'. The meaning of the Maltese word dabhiek is 'comical, something or someone that provokes laughter'. The Arabic word دَكَ/onā, in addition to its straightforward meanings as an intensive active participle of form I, means also 'a jester, joker'. The meanings in the two languages are thus identical, since a jester is someone who makes you laugh.

But it is in the form of these words that their interest lies, especially since the meanings are the same. دَكَ/onā, as remarked above, is the intensive active participle of دَكَ/dabak, and dabhiek is also ostensibly the intensive active participle of dabak I. The meaning of both words has acquired what is effectively a transitive signification, however, whereas the form I verb in both languages is intransitive.

It must be added, however, that despite the apparent equivalence in form between دَكَ/onā and dabhiek, dahkiek may conceivably be regarded as a local formation of an active participle of the form II verb dabak, meaning 'to make to laugh', rather than as an intensive active participle of the form I verb. If this should be so, then the meanings of the Maltese word, at least, would be absolutely logical in their transitive signification.

**DAHAL**

indahal: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'entering', the form I verbs ذَكَ/dahal meaning 'to
enter'. The Arabic word جذب VII means 'to go in, penetrate', and this meaning is absolutely logical for form VII. The equivalent Maltese word indabal VII means 'to intrude', and this implies rather going in somewhere where one perhaps should not be going in. This is a shade of meaning not found in other forms of the Maltese root, or in the Arabic word of which indabal is the equivalent. It does, indeed, have almost a pejorative connotation.

DAKKAR
dakkar: The root رذل has two basic meanings in Arabic, the more common being connected with the idea of 'mentioning, reminding', and the other of 'fecundation'. The root in Maltese has retained only the latter, less common, idea. Thus, while لذل II means 'to remind, impregnate (a palm tree)', the equivalent Maltese word dakkar II means only 'to fecundate a fig tree'. We therefore have an example of the primary meaning of the Arabic word being dropped in Maltese. The word لذل occurs in the Koran (50/45), but only in its primary sense, meaning 'to remind, warn'.

tidktr: Tidktr is the equivalent of لذل, both words being the verbal noun of the respective form II verbs لذل/dakkar. The Arabic word means 'a reminding, warning, fecundation, impregnation', these being the logical meanings stemming from the form II verb, while the Maltese word means only 'fecundation', this likewise being the logical meaning stemming from the Maltese form II verb. The word لذل occurs in the Koran (10/72) with the meaning of 'a reminding'.

DAGHA
dagha: The Arabic verb نذل I means 'to call out, pray, invite, swear against, curse', and thus within Arabic itself we see opposing meanings, with 'to pray' on the one hand being more common than 'to curse' at the other extreme. This verb occurs in the Koran (3/33) only with the meaning 'to call (upon)'. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese word dagha I is 'to curse' only, and thus we see, as with DAKKAR (dakkar), that Maltese has kept the less common and more 'extreme' meaning of the Arabic word.

daghwa: The meaning of the Arabic word دجال is 'a call, invitation, claim, prayer, curse, imprecation', and in the Koran (2/182) it means 'a call, prayer, claim, petition'. The equivalent Maltese word daghwa means 'blasphemy'. Thus in both languages the meanings of the respective simple nouns are absolutely logical when taken in conjunction...
with the respective form I verbs (q.v. above) from which they derive. As was remarked above, the meaning of the Maltese word does agree entirely with one of the meanings of the Arabic word, even though it is the less common and more 'extreme' meaning which Maltese has kept.

**DAR**

dawwara: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'turning, roundness'. The meaning of the Maltese word dawwara is 'circumference', which implies the distance around, or the measurement of, something round. The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, ٍ{\text{ه}}{\text{i}}{\text{n}}{\text{م}}{\text{n}}{\text{i}}{\text{n}}{\text{m}}, means, inter alia, 'roundness', but with no connotation of the circumference of that roundness.

mdawwar: The Arabic form II verb ٍ{\text{ه}}{\text{i}}{\text{n}}{\text{م}}{\text{n}}{\text{i}}{\text{n}}{\text{m}} means 'to whirl, turn, make round, rotate', and the equivalent Maltese form II verb dawwara means 'to turn'. The Arabic passive participle ٍ{\text{ه}}{\text{i}}{\text{n}}{\text{م}}{\text{n}}{\text{i}}{\text{n}}{\text{m}} means 'turned, made round, circular', while the equivalent Maltese passive participle mdawwar means 'surrounded'. Thus, while mdawwar means something simply round or made round, mdawwar, in its sense of 'surrounded', implies something not necessarily made round, but put around something else. The Arabic meanings are therefore logical and accurate as the passive participle of the form II verb, while the Maltese meaning seems to be slightly removed.

**DARAB**

darbejn: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'hitting, striking', the form I verbs ٍ{\text{ه}}{\text{i}}{\text{n}}{\text{م}}{\text{n}}{\text{i}}{\text{n}}{\text{m}}/darba meaning 'to strike', and the unitary verbal nouns ٍ{\text{ه}}{\text{i}}{\text{n}}{\text{م}}{\text{n}}{\text{i}}{\text{n}}{\text{m}}/darba meaning 'a stroke, blow'. Whereas the Maltese word darbejn, the dual of darba, has the meaning of 'twice', the Arabic dual word ٍ{\text{ه}}{\text{i}}{\text{n}}{\text{م}}{\text{n}}{\text{i}}{\text{n}}{\text{m}} (ضِرَّبَتَانِ) in the oblique cases) does not have this specific sense, but means simply 'two strokes, two blows'.

It is interesting to wonder why Maltese should have chosen this particular root to get the meaning of 'twice', rather than use the dual of some word of a root connected with the idea of 'time'. (The normal Arabic way of expressing 'twice' would be to use a verbal noun as a مَصْلَّىٰ (masculine) putting it in the dual). It is possible, of course, that the Maltese word darbejn may have started in this way, and then become isolated with its specific meaning.

It is also possible that darbejn may be a calque of an Italian expression. Colpo means 'a blow', but due colpi, literally 'two blows', is used with the meaning of 'twice'.
EMMEN

emmən: The Maltese word emmən means 'to believe'. The Arabic word to which it ostensibly corresponds is بَلَبَل II, which means 'to assure, reassure, give confidence to, insure life, intrust'. We thus have quite a difference in meaning between the two languages.

Two points, however, may be made. The usual Arabic word for 'to believe', from the root ﺖ ﺔ ﺖ, is ﺖ ﺔ IV. Maltese has hardly any verbs at all of form IV, and the few which do exist, with the exception of ﻭر ي, 'to show' (from ر I, the equivalent of ﻭر I), occur either in certain religious expressions, such as مَعْبَرَك, Mulej, 'how great is God' (literally 'what has made God great', the equivalent of an Arabic ﻭر ل ﺽ ﺔ, or verb of wonder), or in certain archaic literary expressions. It is therefore possible that the meanings of certain verbs, which in Arabic may be of form IV, have had to pass to another, existent form in Maltese. This could be the case here, where the meaning has passed from the Arabic form IV verb to an ostensibly form II verb in Maltese.

There is also another point which must be made about the form of the verb emmən. It may ostensibly be a form II verb, but may not, in fact, necessarily be so. If it were a genuine Maltese form II, it might well be wemmən, and not emmən, on the analogy of the form II verb ﻭ ﺔ ﺔ, from the Arabic root ﺖ ﺔ ﺖ. If this should be so, then emmən may, in fact, be a form of local Maltese adaptation of the original Arabic form IV verb ﺖ ﺔ. In that case, the form of the word would have changed, but the meaning would be the same in the two languages.

FAGHAL

faghəl/ɪghəl: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'doing'. The Maltese word faghəl/ɪghəl means 'business', and Dessoulay gives as the Arabic words of which it is the equivalent ﻪ ﻪ ﻪ and ﻪ ﻪ would be the verbal noun of form III, but there is, in fact, no form III verb of this root. As a simple noun, however, it means 'operation, a good or bad action done by two or many agents'. ﻪ ﻪ means 'a good or bad action done by a single agent, favour, kindness'. Neither of these words occurs in the Koran, and neither has a meaning which bears any close relationship to the Maltese meaning, although there is admittedly a connection between 'operation' and 'business'.

It might be suggested, however, that the Maltese word faghəl/ɪghəl
could be the verbal noun of a Maltese form I verb, now non-existent, if it ever did exist at all. It would correspond to the verbal noun of the Arabic form I verb ٖل، which would be ٖل، meaning 'a deed, action'. The meaning in the two languages would thus, in this case, be very closely related.

It should be added that the word [aghal] occurs only in proverbs and sayings, such as aghej faqhek, in the sense of 'mind your (own) business'.

**FARD**

**fired:** The meaning of the Maltese verb *fired* I is 'to separate', and Des-ssoulavy gives it as being the equivalent of the Arabic verbs ٖل، I or ٖل، IV. ٖل، I means 'to be alone, single, sole', and as such is an intransitive verb. It is the causative form IV verb ٖل، which means 'to separate, set apart, isolate'. The Maltese verb thus resembles the Arabic form IV verb in meaning.

As was remarked under *EMMEN* (emmen), the verbal form IV is almost non-existent in Maltese. It is thus possible that the meaning of the form IV verb in Arabic has had to be transferred to another, existent form in Maltese, in this case form I.

**FELAH**

**felah:** The Maltese form I verb *felah* means 'to be strong'. Desssoulavy gives it as being the equivalent of the Arabic form IV verb ٖل،، which means 'to be successful, lucky, to make progress, prosper'. This verb occurs in the Koran (6/21) with these same meanings. Although there is a connection between the meanings in the two languages, they are not identical. The Arabic word does not specifically mean 'to be strong', although its meanings are connected with this by implication.

We also have here a further example of a possible change from a form IV verb in Arabic to a verb of a different form in Maltese, in this case form I.

**FIXEL**

**fixel:** The meaning of the Maltese verb *fixel* I is 'to confuse, discompose', and Desssoulavy gives it as being the equivalent of the Arabic verbs ٖل، I and ٖل، II. The meanings of ٖل، I are 'to become cowardly, remiss, weak, to fall short of, to faint, fail', and are all intransitive. ٖل، occurs in the Koran (3/118) with the same meanings. ٖل، II, which does not occur in the Koran, means 'to frustrate,
confound, tire, thwart', and these meanings are transitive. Thus, while the form of the Maltese word *fixel* I agrees with Arabic ٍفیل ٍI, its meaning agrees with the Arabic word ٍفیل II. We therefore have an example of a possible transference of meaning from one form in Arabic to another, different form in Maltese.

**fixla**: The meaning of the Maltese word *fixla* is 'confusion', whereas the meaning of the Arabic word ٍفیل is 'fatigue'. There is here no direct relationship at all between the meanings in the two languages. It must be noted, however, that the two meanings agree logically with the meanings of the form I verbs in the respective languages from which they are derived.

**GARR**

*gar*, *garr*, *ingarr*, *mikur*: The basic meaning of the root in Arabic is connected with the idea of 'dragging, pulling', whereas the basic meaning of the root in Maltese is connected with the idea of 'carrying'. Thus the Maltese verb *garr* I means 'to carry', while the Arabic verb ُجر I means 'to pull, drag, tow, tug'. It must be added that ُجر does also mean 'to transport', but this is not its primary meaning. ُجر I is the only word of the root occurring in the Koran (7/149), and here also it has the meaning of 'to drag'.

The Maltese word *garrier*, the intensive active participle of the form I verb, means 'a carrier', while the intensive active participle of the Arabic form I verb, ُجر، means 'a drawer, puller, tower'.

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

And the Maltese word *mikur*, the passive participle of the form I verb, means 'transported', while the Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, ٍمکرر, likewise the passive participle of the form I verb, means 'drawn, pulled, hauled'.

Although there is thus a connection between the respective sets of meanings in the two languages, they are not identical. The Maltese root seems to have developed the secondary, rather than the primary, meaning of the Arabic root.

*mקרא*: The meaning of the Maltese word *mקרא*, a minated noun of place, is 'wharf, a place to which merchandise is carried'. This agrees logically with the basic meaning of the idea of the root in Maltese, a wharf being used in connection with transport. The meaning of the Arabic minated noun of place, ٍمکرر, is 'a place where something is dragged or drawn', and this agrees logically with the basic meaning of
the idea of the root in Arabic. Both sets of meanings are thus logical
developments of the meanings of the root in the respective languages,
but there is only a loose connection between them.

**GARRAF**

gorf: The meaning of the Maltese word gorf is 'an enormous man', liter-
ally meaning 'like a garfa (precipice)'. The Arabic word جرف, given
by Dessoulavy as the word of which he regards gorf as the equivalent,
means 'cliff, precipice'. The word جرف, which is the same as جرف,
occurs in the Koran (9/110), also with the meaning of 'bank, preci-
pice'. Thus, although the meaning of 'precipice' is common to both
languages, the Arabic word has no hint of the Maltese figurative mean-
ing referring to a man.

There is, however, a further possible connection, which might be
mentioned, between the Maltese word gorf and a different Arabic word,
جرف, which means 'rude, rough, uncivil, boorish'. Is it too far-fetched
to suppose that there may have been a change in the medial liquid
letters ـ and ـ between the two languages, and a transference of
meaning by association? — big men may be rough or boorish.

**GEBEL**

gebel: The present meaning of the Maltese word gebel is 'stone, rock'.
The meaning of the Arabic word جبل is 'a mountain, big hill', and
these are also the meanings which the word has in the Koran (2/262).
We thus have not only an effective difference in the meanings in the
respective languages, but there is also a difference in 'scale'.

It must be added that the word gebel has a vestige of the meaning of
'hill, mountain' both in literature, and in certain place names, such as
'Gebel Ciantar', 'Ciantar's Hill'.

**GID**

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

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

**GILD**

gladi: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is identical, the words /gild/ meaning 'skin, hide, leather'. The meaning of the Maltese word gladi is 'like a skin, leathery'. Dessoulay gives the Arabic word of which he thinks gladi to be the equivalent as جلود, and this means 'a skinner, dealer in skins'. There might thus seem to be a difference in the meanings of two ostensibly equivalent words. The meaning 'like a skin, leathery' is the meaning of the relative adjective, and this word would be جلود in Arabic. In actual fact, gladi is not the equivalent of جلود, but is effectively the equivalent of جلود, with a modification: it is a relative adjective formed from the plural noun gla, the plural of gild, and not formed from the singular. Thus it is the form of the word which has changed in Maltese, while its meaning is exactly the same as that of the corresponding relative adjective in Arabic.

**HEDDEM**

heddem: The meaning of the Maltese form II verb heddem is 'to cook on a slow fire'. The nearest Arabic word to which it might be related is حم, meaning 'to digest food, to digest (food: stomach)'. The only connection between the two sets of meanings lies in the idea of food contained in both of them, but there the similarity ends. Moreover, the meaning of the Maltese word is connected with food before it is eaten, that of the Arabic word with food after it is eaten.

**HEJM**

hejjem: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'love'. The Arabic noun حم means 'love', and the equivalent Maltese word hejm means 'affection'. حم is the verbal noun of the form I verb حن, meaning 'to fall in love with, become enamoured, love desperately'. The Maltese form II verb hejjem means 'to fondle, spoil (a person)', and it is usually used in a pejorative sense. The meaning of the Arabic form II verb حم is 'to bewilder a.o. (love), infatuate, captivate'. Although the meanings in both languages are connected with the idea of love, the Arabic meanings are concerned with love only in a 'spiritual' sense, whereas the Maltese meanings are of love with a physical element attached to it, and also with a pejorative connotation.
While there is the difference in meaning mentioned, it should also be noted that the meaning of the Maltese form II verb is closer to the meaning of the Arabic form I verb than to the form II verb. It is thus possible that we may have a further example of the transference of (approximate) meaning from one form in Arabic to another, different form in Maltese, possibly because of the loss of the form I verb in Maltese.

HA(D)

ittlebed: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is identical, the form I verbs "要坚持/ha meaning 'to take'. The Arabic form VIII verb "要坚持! means 'to take, take to oneself, take up, adopt', and it occurs in the Koran (2/110) with the same meanings. The equivalent Maltese word "ittlebed VIII means 'to be taken'. The passive meaning of the Maltese word is not found in the Arabic word. We thus have another possible example of the transference of meaning from some other form in Arabic to form VIII in Maltese.

It may be noted, out of interest, that the common form of the passive verb would be VII in both languages. The Arabic verb "要坚持 I, however, cannot occur in form VII, in which it would have the theoretical meaning of 'to be taken', as form VII does not occur in verbs which have hamza as their initial radical.

HAMEL

hamel: To a certain extent, the basic meaning of the root in both languages is closely related, and in some cases identical, but there is not a full equivalence of meaning. The Arabic verb "要坚持 I means 'to carry, bear, support', and it occurs in the Koran (20/110) with these same meanings. The equivalent Maltese verb hamel I also means 'to bear'. However, the meaning of the Maltese verb implies bearing somebody in the sense of not liking him, but putting up with him; the form I verb has only this figurative meaning, and does not have the meaning of 'to carry'.

The idea of 'carrying', however, is contained in other words of the root, some of which agree in meaning entirely with the Arabic words of which they are the equivalents. Hemel means 'a load', and thus something carried, as does "要坚持: but it must be added that hemel means a load of a precise weight or quantity, and not just any load. Hamla means 'a torrent, torrential mass of water' (and as such something which carries things away with it?), as does "要坚持.
hammel: The meaning of the Maltese verb *hammel* II is 'to clean out (chickens, rabbits)' (and thus to carry away the dirt?). The Arabic form II verb *تَحمَّلُ* means 'to charge, load, impose a burden upon', and occurs in the Koran (2/286) with these same meanings. There is here no direct relationship at all between the meanings in the two languages.

mahmul: The meaning of the Arabic word *تَحمَّلُ*, the passive participle of the form I verb (q.v. above), is 'borne, carried'. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese word *mahmul*, also the passive participle of the form I verb, is 'tolerated'. The meanings in the two languages are thus related but not identical, the meaning of each passive participle being a logical development of the meanings of the respective form I verbs.

**HANEK**

hanek: The Arabic word *القَفْط* means 'mouth, palate, lower jaw, part beneath the chin'. The equivalent Maltese word *hanek* means 'the gum'. While the meanings are thus very closely related, in that they refer to similar parts of the body, they are not identical in the two languages, the Maltese meaning being more specific and restrictive than the Arabic meaning.

**HARB**

mhareb: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'war'. The meaning of the Maltese word *mhareb* (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon), the passive participle of form III, is 'unfortunate, unhappy'. The Arabic word *مَتَارَبُ*, the passive participle of form III, means 'ousted, contended with'. The Arabic form I verb *حَمْرََبُ* means 'to plunder', and the passive participle *مَتَارَبُ* means 'plundered, deprived of one's possessions'. Dessoulavé gives *مَتَارَبُ* as being comparable in meaning to *mhareb*, although it is obviously not comparable in form. Although there is no direct semantic connection between either of the Arabic words *مَتَارَبُ* and *حَمْرََبُ* and the Maltese word *mhareb*, there could be said to be an association of ideas: somebody who has been fought or deprived of his possessions may indeed be unfortunate or unhappy.

**HASEB**

hasba: The basic meaning of the root in Maltese, and one of the basic meanings of the root in Arabic, are connected with the idea of 'thinking'. The meaning of the Maltese word *hasba* is 'a thought, intention', and Dessoulavé gives the Arabic word of which he regards it as the equivalent as *حَمْسَة*. However, *حَمْسَة* is the verbal noun of the form I
verb حسب، meaning 'to compute, reckon', and thus حسبية means 'a sum, computation'. The Arabic word from which baseb I, 'to think', derives is حسب I, 'to think, suppose', which gives the simple noun حسب, 'thinking, believing'. It is therefore possible that hasba could be either a local Maltese formation, or it could be the equivalent of a possible Arabic unitary noun from حسب, namely حسبية, or it could be an example of Maltese taking the verbal noun of one of two very similar Arabic verbs (indeed, identical in root), but differing only in their medial vowel.

hsieb: Hsieb is the standard Maltese word for 'thought', rather than hasba (q.v. above). The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent is حساب, meaning 'reckoning, account, calculation', and it occurs in the Koran (13/40) with these same meanings. Again, therefore, as with hasba, it would seem that Maltese has taken a word of the Arabic root meaning both 'to think' and 'to reckon', but has taken the Arabic word with a sense of 'reckoning' and adopted, or adapted, it in Maltese in the sense of 'thinking'.

HASS

thasses: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'feeling, perceiving'. The Arabic word حساس V means 'to listen to (news), seek for information, sense, perceive by the senses,' and it occurs in the Koran (12/87) with these same meanings. The equivalent Maltese word thasses V (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon) means 'to spy, listen clandestinely'. Although the meanings are closely related, and when one spies or listens clandestinely one is seeking for information, there is in the Maltese meaning a connotation not found in the Arabic meaning, namely that of the clandestine element. After all, a reporter or a researcher seeks for information, but neither is spying.

Dessoulay adds the comment, a propos of thasses, that it may very likely have been influenced by the verb ghasses. This form II verb means 'to look intently, spy', so there could indeed have been some influence. The Arabic form II verb حساس means 'to press, squeeze'. However, the form I verb حساس means 'to keep night vigil, patrol by night', so there is a loose relationship between this meaning and that of ghasses.

It is also of incidental interest to note, a propos of Dessoulay's remark that thasses may have been influenced by ghasses, that in Arabic حساس may mean 'to feel' – the same meaning as حساس.
HĀWI

hāwi: The meaning of the Arabic word كَوْي، the active participle of the form I verb كَوْي (q.v. below), is 'empty, void, wasted, in ruins', and in the Koran (2/261) it means 'ruined, collapsed'. The equivalent Maltese word hāwi, likewise the active participle of the form I verb hewa, is 'thin, scarce'. Although the meanings in the two languages are related, the Maltese meanings are less intensive than those in Arabic, and there would seem to have been an attenuation of emphasis between Arabic and Maltese.

hewa: The meaning of the Maltese form I verb hewa is 'to rarefy', and Dessoulay gives it as the equivalent of the Arabic words كَوْي I or أَكَوْي IV. كَوْي I means 'to be ruined, be empty, be weak, feeble', and أَكَوْي IV means 'to be in ruins, be hungry, evacuate'. As with hāwi, (q.v. above), there seems to have been an attenuation of the meaning in Maltese: something rarefied, and thus made thin or scarce, is more attenuated in meaning that something being emptied or ruined, and thus made empty, void or in ruins.

The meaning of hewa is closer to the meaning of أَكَوْي IV than to that of كَوْي I. It is thus possible that we may have a further example of the transference of meaning (in this case similar, but not identical) from one form in Arabic to another, different form in Maltese. As we have seen previously, this is particularly so in the case of Arabic form IV verbs adopted by Maltese. These have to be adapted to a different form, usually form I.

HAŻEN

hażn: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'mourning, sadness'. But while the Maltese words hażn I (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzun) means 'to mourn, put on mourning', and hażna means 'sadness', hażn means 'bad'. The Arabic word of which hażn is the equivalent، حزين، means 'sad'. There is thus not only a difference in meaning between حزين and hażn， but hażn has a different meaning from the other words of the Maltese root.

Dessoulay says: 'On the semantics of bad = sad, cp. French "triste" and old use of English "sorry", perhaps influenced by حزين'.

HEREK

herek: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'moving'. Apart from the word herek I, all the other
Maltese words of the root, as well as the Arabic words of which they are the equivalents, are connected with this idea. *Herek*, however, (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon), means 'to rise early'. The Arabic word سَلَك I means 'to move, be in motion, get under way, get going'. Though the meanings in the two languages are related, even if somewhat tenuously, they are not identical. The Arabic meaning does not contain the idea of getting up — indeed, from the Arabic meaning, one must already be up — nor does it specifically relate to early in the morning.

**JIES**

*jies*: The meaning of the Arabic word سَلَك is 'hope', whereas the meaning of the equivalent Maltese word jies is 'despair, hopelessness, despondency'. We thus have not only a change of meaning from one language to the other, but in fact a change from one meaning to another diametrically opposite to the original meaning we have, in fact, an antonym.

It is interesting to note, however, that the word jies is used in Maltese almost exclusively in a 'negative' context in the sense of absence of hope, e.g. qata' jiesu, 'he gave up hope', bila jies, 'without hope'. In this 'negative' context, therefore, the idea behind the word does resemble more the idea of the meaning of the Arabic word.

**KARBA**

*karba*: The meaning of the Maltese word karba is 'a groan'. The meaning of the Arabic word سَلَك, to which karba is similar but not identical, is 'anguish, moan, groan, lamentation'. Although the meanings in the two languages are closely related, and indeed 'groan' figures in both, there is a difference between them. The Maltese word is used mainly in the sense of a groan resulting from physical pain, and not resulting from mental pain, as is implied in the Arabic meanings, although both indicate a facet of the same idea.

*korob*: The meaning of the Maltese form I verb korob is 'to groan', whereas the meaning of the Arabic form I verb سَلَك is 'to complain, lament, bewail'. As was remarked under karba (q.v. above), the Maltese word is used mainly in the sense of groaning as a result of physical pain, the Arabic meanings imply distress resulting from mental pain.

**LAQAGH**

*mliqghi*: (It must be noted immediately that the Maltese root l-q-gh corresponds to the Arabic root c-d-l, the final d in Arabic having
become an ḡb in Maltese). The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'meeting'. The Arabic word ملَگْثَ مَلَغْثٍ is the passive participle of the form IV verb ملَغْثَ مَلَغْثٍ. ملَغْثَ مَلَغْثٍ means 'to throw, discard, cast, replace', and ملَغْثَ مَلَغْثٍ, in addition to its participial meanings, means also 'tried by misfortune, (in)auspicious, good/bad man': these meanings tend to branch away from the basic idea of the root. The Maltese word milqghi, likewise the passive participle of form IV, means 'civil, mannerly, well-bred, well received', and some of these meanings also branch away from the basic idea of the root, only the meaning 'well received' tending logically with the basic idea of 'meeting'. Although there is a relationship between 'civil, mannerly' and 'a good man', the meanings in the two languages are not identical.

There is a further comment which might be made about the word milqghi. It occurs only in the place-name 'San Pawl Milqghi', not being used in any other way as an adjective. In its meaning of 'well received', it could refer to the reception which St. Paul was accorded by the Maltese when he was shipwrecked on the island. Or would it be too far-fetched to suggest that the word milqghi could refer to the trying by misfortune of St. Paul when he found himself forcibly landed in Malta, having been shipwrecked? If this were so, then milqghi would have a meaning identical to that of جغثا.

**LBIES**

Ilīthbes: The basic meaning of the root in Maltese, and the primary basic meaning of the root in Arabic, are connected with the idea of 'clothing'. All the words in Maltese of this root are connected with this idea, and all except ilīthbes VIII agree entirely in meaning with the Arabic words of which they are the equivalents. Ilīthbes VIII means 'to be dressed', and this fits in logically with the idea of the root. The Arabic word إلَتَبَسُ إلَتَبَسَ VIII, however, means 'to be confused, ambiguous, to be occupied with, get mixed up', and there is thus no connection between this meaning and the Maltese meaning.

It must be added, however, that whereas the form I verb لَبَسْ in Arabic means 'to clothe oneself, to put on (clothes)', the form I verb لَبَسْ, with medial ˌatha as distinct from medial kasra, means 'to confuse, render dubious'. إلَتَبَسُ إلَتَبَسَ is thus the form VIII derivative of لَبَسْ, and not of لَبَسْ. The meaning connected with 'doubt' is not found in the idea of the Maltese root, and thus ilīthbes could be a purely local Maltese formation when connected with the idea of 'clothing'.
LEWA

milwa: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'twisting, turning'. The Maltese word milwa means 'a skein, a thing which is twisted'. (It is now obsolete with these meanings, but is recorded by Falzon). The meaning of one of the Arabic words of which milwa could be the equivalent, كم،, is 'a capstan, windlass', and of the other, كم،, 'a windlass, capstan, wrench, spanner, peg of musical instruments'. The meanings in the two languages are not identical, although there is a close relationship between them. This is particularly so in the respective meanings 'a skein' and 'a windlass, capstan', in that both are concerned with having something twisted round them, thread in the former and rope in the latter case.

It should be added that the word milwa is now used in Maltese only in the expression milwa zulzet, 'a link of sausage' — and sausage is something which is rolled.

LEWLU

lewlu: The meaning of the Arabic word كه is 'pearl(s)', whereas the meaning of the equivalent Maltese word lewlu is 'small beads'. While there is a relationship between the meanings in the two languages, they are not identical, the Arabic word denoting a more precious object than the Maltese word.

Is it possible that geographical reasons may have accounted for the change of meaning? Pearls would be familiar objects to the Arabs, particularly since there were pearl fisheries in the Persian Gulf, whereas they would not be nearly as familiar to the Maltese, while beads would.

MAQQAT

maqqat: The meaning of the Maltese form II verb maqqat is 'to ill-treat'. Maqqat is similar — though perhaps not identical — to the Arabic word كم, II, meaning 'to hate, render hateful, detest, loathe, abhor'. Although there is a connection between the meanings in the two languages, there is an interesting difference: the relationship between the respective meanings seems to resemble rather one of 'cause and effect' than being identical. If somebody ill-treats somebody else (the 'cause'), the latter will then presumably hate and detest the person doing the ill-treating (the 'effect').

mqt: The meaning of the Maltese word mqt is 'harsh, ill-tempered, sullen', while the meaning of the Arabic word كم is 'hated, loathsome, detestable'. Both agree logically with the basic meanings in the res-
pective languages, but once again the comments about 'cause and effect' (q.v. above) apply equally here: if somebody is harsh or ill-tempered to somebody else (the 'cause') he will then be loadsome to or hated by the person to whom he was harsh (the 'effect'). However, the Arabic word مَجِبُ also means 'parsimonious, mean': these meanings resemble the 'cause' themselves, rather than the 'effect', and are correspondingly closer to the meaning in Maltese.

MAR

mar: The Maltese form I verb mar means 'to go', and Dessoulavy gives as the Arabic words of which it is the equivalent either مَجِبُ or مَجِبُ. مَجِبُ means 'to elapse (time), pass, cross, proceed, go', and in the Koran (2/261) it means 'to pass'. مَجِبُ means 'to be in commotion (sea), move to and fro, move, undulate', and in the Koran (52/9) it has the more intensive meaning of 'to spin, heave, shake, be convulsed'. Thus, although mar resembles more مَجِبُ in form, it resembles more مَجِبُ in meaning. While both مَجِبُ and مَجِبُ are connected with the idea of motion, there is one observation which may be made a propos of the comparison of the meaning between the Maltese and Arabic words. Mar implies that an animate subject is necessary, as does مَجِبُ in its more common meanings: مَجِبُ implies an inanimate subject.

The verb mar is of mixed conjugation in Maltese, in some parts conjugating as a hollow verb and in others as a doubled verb. It would seem that it does, in fact, derive from مَجِبُ، but has been influenced by مَجِبُ. This will become more apparent under mawra (q.v. below).

mawra: The Maltese word mawra means 'a walk', and may be regarded as the unitary form of the verbal noun of the form I verb mar. The Arabic word to which it is comparable، مَجِبُ، the verbal noun of the form I verb مَجِبُ، means 'commotion, tossing of waves'. The word مَجِبُ occurs in the Koran (52/9), but only as a مَجِبُ (absolute object) of the verb مَجِبُ in the expression مَجِبُ مَجِبُ، 'on the day when the heavens shall shake' or 'shall spin dizzily'.

The verbal noun of the form I verb مَجِبُ would be مَجِبُ or مَجِبُ. It would thus seem once again that mawra is derived from مَجِبُ، but has been influenced by مَجِبُ، which it resembles in form, even though it is not particularly close in meaning. And, as was remarked in connection with mar (q.v. above), mawra and مَجِبُ would both imply the necessity (or, in the case of مَجِبُ، the more usual necessity) of an animate association, while مَجِبُ implies an inanimate association.
MEXA

mexxej: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'walking', the form I verbs المخى/mexa both meaning 'to walk'. The most common meaning of the Maltese word mexxej, ostensibly the intensive active participle of mexa I, is 'a leader, guide'. The Arabic word مخى, the intensive active participle of مخنى I, and the word of which Dessoulaye gives mexxej as the equivalent, means 'a good walker' (and also 'a slanderer', which is the meaning it has in the Koran (68/11), but this is irrelevant here). While there is a relationship between the meanings in the two languages, they are not absolutely identical. Admittedly, a guide may be a good walker, but the Arabic meaning would seem to be closer to the idea of the meaning of the form I verb.

There are, however, two additional remarks which must be made. First, although the word mexxej is most commonly used with the meaning of 'a leader, guide' (not only in the context of walking, but also in the context of, for example, a political party), it does occur also in the physical context of good walking, but not very frequently. It occurs also in a similar associated sense in an expression such as قال كان بي كليم مексيج, 'he said this in fluent words', in the sense of 'good walking' words'.

Second, although Dessoulaye gives مخى as the Arabic word of which he regards mexxej as the equivalent, this may perhaps not necessarily be the case. Whereas مخنى is the intensive active participle of مخنى I, mexxej, though apparently identical in form, may be a local formation of an active participle of the form II verb mexa (cp. DAHA (dahhiiek)) This verb means 'to lead, guide, govern', and hence mexxej, as 'leader, guide', has an absolutely logical meaning. The Arabic form II verb مخنى means 'to make to walk, go, to promote (an affair), to adopt, adjust, to move'.

MULEJ

Mulej: The meaning of the Arabic word مولى is 'lord, master, friend, companion, ally, follower', and in the Koran (47/12) it means 'patron, protector, master'. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese word Mulej is 'Lord'. There are two comments which must be made about the difference in the meanings of this word between Arabic and Maltese. First, the Maltese meaning 'Lord' refers specifically and exclusively to God: the Arabic meaning 'lord', on the other hand, has a purely temporal signification. Second, the various shades of meaning of the
Arabic word themselves cover a full range, from 'lord, master' (with a sense of domination), through 'friend, companion, ally' (with a sense of equality), to 'follower' (with a sense of subservience). In this last shade of meaning we get a complete opposition of meaning between 'Lord' (in Maltese) and 'follower' (in Arabic).

NAM

newwem: (It must be noted immediately that the form II verb newwem is now obsolete in Maltese with this spelling, although it is recorded by both Falzon and Caruana. It exists at the present time as either newnem of nemmem). The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'sleeping', the form I verb ꧛豳/nam meaning 'to sleep', while ꧛豳 also means 'to die, abate (wind, sea), be extinguished (fire), (become) calm'. The meaning of the Arabic form II verb ꧛豳 is 'to make asleep, lull, put to bed, benumb, topify', and these are exactly the meanings one would expect of the causative form II. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese form II verb newwem is 'to be weak (of a fire, light)', and bears no direct relationship to the meaning of the Arabic word. However, although the Maltese meaning is connected with the idea of the root, one would expect such a meaning to be that of the root form itself (with which meaning there is an almost identical one in the Arabic root form, 'to be extinguished (fire)'): or, conversely, one would expect the meaning of newwem II to be causative or intensive, rather than just stative, as it is. Newwem has therefore most probably been given a purely local meaning.

NEWWEL

tnewwel: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'giving, handing over'. The meaning of the Arabic form V verb ꧛豳 is 'to take, reach with the hand'. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese word tnewwel V is 'to be handed, presented'. Although the meanings in the two languages are closely related, there is a distinct difference between them: being handed or presented with something is not the same as taking it.

NIFS

minfes: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'breath'. The Maltese word minfes, (which is used almost exclusively in the dual), means 'a nostril'. The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent ꧛豳, means 'an air-hole, ventilator'. While there is an absolutely logical connection between the meanings in the
two languages, the Maltese meaning is more specific: the nose is an air hole or ventilator, but the Arabic word does not specifically mean 'nostril', at all.

**GHAD**

**ghad:** The meaning of the Maltese verb *ghad* I is 'to say'. The meaning of the Arabic verb of which it is the equivalent, جَهَدْ I, is 'to repeat, return, resume, be wont to', and it occurs in the Koran (2/276 and 36/39) with these same meanings. The meaning of *ghad* as 'to say' must therefore be one which Maltese had adopted for itself.

**mghawwed and taghid:** The meaning of the Maltese verb *mghawwed* II is 'to repeat, do again'. The meaning of *mghawwed*, the passive participle of form II, is 'done over again', and of *taghid*, the verbal noun of form II, 'a repetition'. Both these meanings tie in logically with the meaning of the form II verb from which they derive. The meaning of the Arabic passive participle of form II, مُجْهُودَ, is 'accustomed, trained, used, conditioned', and of the verbal noun of form II, مَجْهُودٌ, 'accustoming, habituation'. مَجْهُودٌ II in Arabic means 'to train, accustom', and thus likewise in Arabic the meanings of the words derived from form II tie in with the meaning of the form II verb. But while there is a connection in the ideas of the respective words in the two languages, the meanings are not the same. The idea of 'repeating', which is found explicitly in *mghawwed*, although it may be said to be contained implicitly in مَجْهُودٌ II, is found basically in the Arabic words جَهَدْ I and جَهَدَ IV, so that in this respect the meanings of the Maltese words tie in with the basic idea of the Arabic root. It is possible, therefore, that there may have been a partial transference of meaning from one form in Arabic to another, different form in Maltese. This could be accounted for, as we have seen previously, by the fact that form IV in Maltese is almost non-existent, and meanings associated with form IV in Arabic may have had to transfer to another, different form in Maltese.

**GHADER**

**ghdir:** The basic meaning of the root in Arabic is connected with the idea of 'excusing', and in Maltese of 'excusing, pitying'. The meaning of the Maltese word *ghdir* (given by Falzon with this spelling) is 'compassion', whereas the meaning of the Arabic word to which it is comparable, حَضَرْ, is 'bashfulness, modesty, chastity'. Although there may be a tenuous relationship between the meanings in the two languages, they are not the same.
GHAJEB

taghīb: The basic meaning of the root in both languages, and also of the Arabic root in the Koran, is connected with the idea of 'wonder', 'astonishment'. The meaning of the Maltese word taghīb, the verbal noun of form II, is 'arousing of admiration, act of causing astonishment'. There is thus a slight difference in the meanings. The Arabic meaning is rightly that of the causative form II, whereas the meaning of the Maltese word is rather that which would be associated with the verbal noun of form I, it being the 'effect' rather than the 'cause'.

GHAJEB

għajjeb: The basic meaning of the simple noun in both languages is identical, the Arabic word غُضِب meaning 'shame, disgrace, vice, fault, defect', and the equivalent Maltese word ghajjeb meaning 'shame, dishonour'. The two words in Maltese which are derived from the root both show a slight change of meaning, and an attenuation of the meaning between Arabic and Maltese. The Arabic verb غُضِب II means 'to shame, stigmatise, censure, condemn, disgrace, dishonour'. The equivalent Maltese verb ghajjeb II means 'to mock, make faces at'. We thus see that, while there is a connection between the meanings in the two languages, not only has there been an attenuation of meaning between Arabic and Maltese, but also an attenuation within Maltese itself.

għajjiżeb: The meaning of the Maltese word għajjiżeb, ostensibly the intensive active participle of the form I verb, is 'a mocker'. The meaning of the Arabic word غَاذِب, the intensive active participle of the form I verb, and the word of which għajjiżeb is ostensibly the equivalent, is 'a censor, criticizer, given to fault-finding'. There is thus, once again, an attenuation of the meaning of the Maltese word, which, though related, is not identical in meaning to the Arabic word.

It must be asked, however, if għajjiżeb is, in fact, the equivalent of غَاذِب. The form I verb, of which għajjiżeb is ostensibly the intensive active participle, no longer exists in Maltese, if indeed it ever did exist. It is possible that għajjiżeb may be a local Maltese formation of an active participle of the form II verb ghajjeb (cp. DAHAK (dahlej) and MEXA (mexxej)), and not of a theoretical form I verb. If this should be so, its meaning would be absolutely logical as a derivative of ghajjeb II.
GHALEB

mgħalleb: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is identical, the form I verbs stellar/ghaleb meaning 'to vanquish, overcome,' and the Arabic word has these same meanings in the Koran (2/250). The meaning of the Arabic word stellar, the passive participle of form II, is 'vanquished, overcome'. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese passive participle of form II, mgħalleb, is 'made thin, emaciated'. Although there is no direct relationship between the meanings in the two languages, there is perhaps an indirect association: those who are defeated may suffer hard times at the hands of the conquerors and become emaciated, while the conquerors may exploit and get fat on the conquered.

gholob: The meaning of the Maltese word gholob is 'to grow thin'. The meaning of the Arabic word stellar I, as remarked above, is 'to overcome, vanquish, dominate'. The Maltese word gholob corresponds to the Arabic word stellar, the passive of form I. While the meanings in the two languages do not directly agree, there is an indirect association of meanings, for reasons similar to those given under mgħalleb (q.v. above).

There are some further observations which might be made about the Maltese words mgħalleb and gholob. The word gholob, with its local Maltese meaning of 'to grow thin', could give rise to the local Maltese formation of the theoretical causative form II verb ghalleb, meaning 'to make thin', whence there is mgħalleb with its meaning of 'made thin, emaciated'. This would also give rise to the further interesting situation whereby ghaleb, 'to vanquish, conquer', goes from the active in form I to the passive in form VII, ingħaleb, identical to Arabic stellar VII in both form and meaning, meaning 'to be overcome'. Gholob, on the other hand, would go from the passive (or, more accurately, the stative) in form I, 'to grow thin', to the active in the theoretical form II verb ghalleb, 'to make thin'.

GHALLIEM

ghalliem: The basic meaning of the root in both languages, and of the Arabic root also in the Koran, is connected with the idea of 'knowing', and then, in the causative derivatives, of 'teaching'. The Maltese word ghalliem means 'a teacher', and is ostensibly the intensive active participle of the form I verb. The Arabic word to which ghalliem is ostensibly equivalent in form is stellar, genuinely the intensive active
participle of the form I verb, and it means 'knower, thoroughly learned, omniscient', and in the Koran (5/108) it means 'knower'. The form I verbs جل/ghālem (recorded by Falzon) mean 'to know'. Thus not only is there a difference in the two languages between the meanings of جل/gal and ghaliem, but whereas the meaning of the Arabic word fits in logically with the form of the word, the meaning of the Maltese word, regarding ghaliem as the intensive active participle of form I, does not. The idea of 'teaching' is associated with the form II verb and its associated words, as in جل/gallem, 'to teach', مغت/mgallem, the active participle, 'a teacher', and تال/gallem, the verbal noun, 'instruction'. The Maltese word ghaliem thus really has the meaning of an active participle of the form II verb.

It is possible, however, that this may indeed be what the word really is. Ghaliem may be a local Maltese formation of an active participle of the form II verb ghallem (cp. DAHAK (daĥhiekh), MEXA (mexej) and GHAJB (ghajjieb)). As such, its meaning would be absolutely logical.

GHAH

ghan: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'helping'. The meaning of the Maltese verb ghan I is 'to help'. This meaning is the equivalent of that of the form IV verb in Arabic، which occurs in the Koran (25/5) with the same meaning. We thus have another example of the transference of meaning from one form in Arabic to another, different form in Maltese.

The reason for the transference of meaning from Arabic form IV to a different form in Maltese may be that which has been given several times previously in this article.

GHATI

ta: The basic meaning of the root in both languages, and of the Arabic root in the Koran, is connected with the idea of 'giving'. The meaning of the Maltese root ta I is 'to give'. This meaning is the equivalent of that of the form IV verb in Arabic، Once again we have an example of the transference of meaning from one form in Arabic – in this case, form IV – to another, different form in Maltese, possibly for the reasons given previously.

QABBAS

qabas: The Maltese word qabs means 'fuel, wood', and it is the equivalent of the Arabic word مكس, meaning 'brand, firebrand, live coal'.
The Maltese denominative verb *gabbas* II means 'to set on fire'. Arabic does not have a form II verb of this root, so the Maltese word must be a local formation. Arabic does have the form I verb قَبَسْتُ, meaning 'to obtain fire (from)'. Though there is a close relationship between the meanings of *gabbas* and قَبَسْتُ, they are not identical, and may be regarded as being opposite in effect: the Maltese meaning is 'to set on fire', while the Arabic meaning is 'to obtain fire (from)'.

**QADD**

*qadd*: The meaning of the Arabic word *قَدَد* is 'size of the body, measure, proportion, figure, shape'. The meaning of the equivalent Maltese word *qadd* is 'the waist'. Although there is a close relationship between the meanings in the two languages, they are not identical: the Maltese meaning is more specific and restrictive than the Arabic meaning, relating to one particular part of the body, rather than the body or figure in general.

**QAL**

*qwiel*: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'saying', the form I verbs قَالُ/qal meaning 'to say'. The meaning of the Maltese word *qwiel*, which is properly the plural of *qaul*, the verbal noun of *qal* I, is 'a proverb, utterance, saying'. The Arabic word to which it corresponds is أَقْوَالُ, the plural of قَوْلُ, likewise the verbal noun of قَالُ I. قَوْلُ means 'a saying, speech, declaration, statement, report', and occurs in the Koran (37/30) with the same meanings. The Maltese singular noun *qaul*, the equivalent of قَوْلُ, likewise means 'a talk', but generally of a proverbial nature in the sense of a short, pithy saying, and not in the general sense of 'a speech, talk', as does قَوْلُ in Arabic. However, while *qwiel* means 'a proverb', the word أَقْوَالُ pl. أَقْوَالٌ does not tend to have this meaning by itself: such a meaning may be rendered by the qualified noun, as أَقْوَالِكَ, 'a proverbial saying, aphorism'. Maltese has dropped the qualificative, and given the specific meaning to the noun by itself.

**QALL**

*qilla*: The meaning of the Maltese word *qilla* is 'fierceness, severeness'. Arabic words to which it is similar are قَلَاء and قُلَاء, both meaning 'a shiver, shudder, trembling'. Although there is a certain resemblance in the meanings in the two languages, they are by no means identical. It might be suggested that there is almost a resemblance to 'cause and
effect' in the respective meanings: fierceness (the Maltese meaning, and the 'cause') on the part of some creature may lead to trembling (the Arabic meaning, and the 'effect') on the part of another.

QARAH

qierah: The basic meaning of the root in both languages, and of the Arabic root in the Koran, is connected with the idea of 'wounding'. The Maltese form I verb qarab means 'to flay, wound', and the Arabic form I verb of which it is the equivalent, قَرَابَ، means 'to wound, cut'. The meaning of the Maltese word qierah, the active participle of qarab, is 'inclement, bad', used only to describe the weather. The meaning of the Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, قَرَابَ، the active participle of قَرَابَ، in addition to its straightforward participial meanings, is 'subtle, cunning, experienced, astute'. In the meaning of the word qierah there would therefore seem to have been an attenuation and change of meaning not only between Arabic and Maltese, but also within Maltese itself. The meaning of the participle qierah is quite some way removed, although indirectly related, from the idea of the meaning of the verb qarab.

It is of interest to note a usage in English coincidentally similar to the Maltese usage, in that one refers at times to 'piercing cold'.

QARIB

mqareb: The basic meaning of the root in both languages, and of the Arabic root in the Koran, is connected with the idea of 'nearness'. The Maltese word mqareb is the active participle of a form III verb which no longer exists, if indeed it ever did, and it means 'troublesome'. The Arabic form III verb قَارِبَ، means 'to be the neighbour of, be approximate to, speak kindly to'. The active participle قَارِبَ، to which mqareb is equivalent, in addition to its straightforward participial meanings, means also 'average, mean, middling, bad, wicked'. We thus have an interesting contrast of meanings within Arabic itself, between 'to be the neighbour of, speak kindly to', and 'bad, wicked'. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the meaning of the Maltese word mqareb should be similar to the more unpleasant of the Arabic meanings, but at the same time tending to attenuate it. Certainly the meaning 'troublesome' is out of place when compared with the meanings of the other Maltese words of the root, all of which are connected with the idea of 'nearness' in one way or another.
QASSAT

qassat: The form II verbs ٔٚٓٔ/qassat in both languages mean 'to distribute'. However, in Maltese, the word qassat is used only in connection with saying the rosary: the idea of 'distributing' is implicit here inasmuch as, in telling one's beads when praying, one is moving them one by one through one's fingers. The Maltese meaning does therefore differ from the meaning of the Arabic word inasmuch as it has acquired a local specialized meaning.

QIRRA

qirra: The meaning of the Maltese word qirra is 'excessive cold, frost'. The meaning of the Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, ٔٙٔ/qirra, is 'coolness, chill, cold, bad weather'. Although there is a very close relationship between the meanings in the two languages, they are not identical. The Maltese meaning is perhaps a little more precise than that in Arabic, and at the same time it implies a greater degree of cold - one might almost say the Maltese meaning is more intense.

This example is therefore interesting in that it runs counter to the general tendency of an attenuation of the meaning (when there may be a change) between that of the Arabic word and that of the Maltese word.

RADAGH

reddiegba: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'sucking, suckling', the form I verbs ٔٙٔٔ/radu' meaning 'to suck the breast'. The meaning of the Maltese word reddiegba, (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon), is 'a wet nurse'. An Arabic word to which reddiegba is similar, ٔٙٔٔٔ/reddiegba, means '(female) that suckles its young'. The words in the two languages are not identical, but they are close enough to be loosely comparable. It is therefore interesting to note that, while they are so closely related in the idea of the meaning, the actual meanings in the two languages are in some ways opposed. The Arabic meaning refers to a female that suckles its own young, whereas the Maltese meaning of 'a wet nurse' implies a female that does the suckling for another's young - and thereby, by inference, the mother of that offspring does not suckle her own young.

It is possible that the Maltese word reddiegba could, however, be regarded as a type of noun of profession, meaning 'a suckler, one who gives suck': as such it could therefore refer not only to a wet nurse but also to a creature which suckles its own young, and it would then agree entirely with the meaning in Arabic.
RADDAD

raddad: The meaning of the Maltese word *raddad* is 'to caress'. There is no Arabic word with the same meaning to which *raddad* may be equivalent, but there are two roots which Dessoulaye suggests as being comparable, both of which may bear an approximate similarity by association. The verbs ِّٰٮ َِّٰرُكْ َو़ and ِّٰٮ َِّٰرُكْ َو़ َوِمَّ II both mean 'to bruise, crush, break coarsely'. The similarity lies in the idea of physical contact, but if there is any direct derivation of *raddad* from ِّٰٮ َِّٰرُكْ َو़, then there has been a considerable attenuation of meaning, as well as a certain change.

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

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

RAJJEB

rajjeb: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'doubt', ِّٰٮ ُرُبِّس / *rajb* meaning 'doubt', the Arabic word having this meaning also in the Koran (2/21). The meaning of the Maltese word *rajjeb* is 'contentious, wrangling, litigious'. Dessoulaye gives ِّٰٮ َِّٰرُكْ َوِمَّ II as an Arabic word to which *rajjeb* may be similar, (although ِّٰٮ َِّٰرُكْ َوِمَّ is a verb, whereas *rajjeb* is not), meaning 'to tire, make to doubt, destroy'. Although the meanings in the two languages are not directly related, there is perhaps a connection between them. This connection may perhaps be better seen in the Arabic verb ِّٰٮ َِّٰرُكْ َوِمَّ I, which means 'to cause doubt, suspicion to'. The connection may be tenuous and a little far-fetched, but the idea of doubt and suspicion is connected with the idea of going to law - and hence being contentious or litigious.

The active participle of ِّٰٮ َِّٰرُكْ َوِمَّ is ِّٰٮ َِّٰرُكْ َوِمَّ, and the Maltese word *rajjeb* would, in fact, seem to resemble this participial form more closely than it does the verb ِّٰٮ َِّٰرُكْ َوِمَّ.

RANDAN

randan: The meaning of the Maltese word *randan* is 'Lent'. The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent is ِّٰٮ ُرُدْسَان, meaning 'Ramaḍān, ninth Arabian month, fasting-month', and in the Koran (2/181) it means 'Ra-
mādān'. Although the idea behind the meaning of the word is exactly the same in both languages, it referring to a period of fasting, the actual meaning itself is not identical. The change in meaning between Arabic and Maltese was no doubt brought about by the religious difference between the Arabs and the Maltese. The Arabic word refers to a period of the Muslim year, whereas the word in Maltese has been adopted, but is used to apply to a season of the Christian year.

It is of incidental interest to note that the standard Arabic term for the Christian season of Lent is ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ, 'the great fast'.

**RAQA**

**raqa:** The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'curing'. The Maltese word *raqa* I means 'to cure, to cure jaundice'. The Arabic form I verb to which it is equivalent, ٍ ـ ـ ـ ـ, means 'to cure by magic, give a charm to, enchant, use magic'. Although the idea of 'curing' is common to the meaning in both languages, the Maltese meaning in part contains a more specific sense, in that it partly refers to the curing of a specific ailment. It also differs from the Arabic meaning in that it does not have the idea of employing magic or charms to assist in the cure, as is the case with the Arabic word. This does not, however, exclude the possibility that, in Maltese folklore, jaundice may originally have been thought to be cured by a magic formula: in time the idea of associated magic may have fallen into disuse, leaving only the simple present meaning of 'to cure, to cure jaundice'.

**mirqi:** The Maltese word *mirqi* is the passive participle of the form I verb *raqa*, and means 'cured, cured of jaundice'. It is the equivalent of the Arabic word ـ ـ ـ ـ, the passive participle of ٍ ـ ـ، meaning 'cured by magic, charmed, bewitched'. The remarks about difference in the meanings in the two languages made under *raqa* (q.v. above) apply equally here.

**riqi:** The meaning of the Maltese word *riqi*, the verbal noun of *raqa*, is 'a cure'. The meaning of the Arabic words to which it is equivalent, ٍ ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ and ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ, both verbal nouns of ٍ ـ، is 'a cure, cure by magic, charm, enchanting'. Once again, the remarks about differences in the meanings in the two languages made under *raqa* (q.v. above) apply equally here.

**REMA**

**rema:** The basic meaning of the root in Arabic is connected with the idea
of 'throwing',  הערב I meaning 'to throw', and it has this same meaning in the Koran (8/17). The basic meaning of the root in Maltese is partly very similar, rema I, the equivalent of  הערב, meaning 'to throw away', as distinct from simply 'to throw'. However, the Maltese root contains another meaning, quite lacking in Arabic, connected with the idea of 'aborting', and rema also means 'to abort (animal)'. Possible explanations as to why the Maltese root should have this latter meaning are given under riem (q.v. below).

riem: The meaning of the Maltese word riem, the active participle of rema, means 'born before its time, abortive'. (This word is now obsolete, but is recorded by Falzoni). The Arabic word to which it is equivalent,  الرسمي, the active participle of  الرسمي, means 'throwing, thrower, marksman, calumniator, liar'. There is thus no connection at all between the meaning of the Arabic word and the specialized meaning of the equivalent Maltese word, although riem in part, and the other Maltese words of the root which are common with Arabic words, do have related meanings, all connected with the idea of 'throwing'.

There are two possible ways, which may be suggested, in which the Maltese root may have come to have the specialized meaning connected with 'aborting'. First, one refers at times to some opportunity being thrown away or one's efforts being thrown away or wasted: in this case, the thing that one was doing would be unsuccessful, and hence abortive. (One particularly talks in English about an attempt which has been wasted or unsuccessful as being 'abortive'). Second, in the biological sense, if a female animal has a miscarriage and loses its foetus, the foetus may be regarded as being thrown or cast away: such an occurrence would be an abortion. This line of argument is supported by the word terab. The Arabic verb  طرث I means 'to fling, throw, cast away'. The equivalent Maltese verb terab I means 'to throw, cast (offspring)', where we get the connection of ideas.

Dessoulay also draws attention to the Arabic word  الرم II, which means 'to abort'. It is possible that this Arabic root may have influenced the Maltese root in meaning, although not in form. An equivalent form I verb in Maltese would be rema', and the active participle of a form I verb with gb as final radical, as would be the case here, would be riema', and not riem (cp. telu' - tielu').

sabb: The Arabic form I verb  جمس means 'to pour out, be poured (liquid)', and it occurs in the Koran (99/12) meaning 'to pour'. One of its verbal
nouns is شرب. The Maltese word sabb, presumably the equivalent of شرب, has as one of its meanings 'a pouring', and in this respect agrees entirely with شرب. However, sabb has also a specialized meaning, that of 'diarrhoea, dysentery', presumably by association with the idea of something pouring out. This shade of meaning is completely lacking in the Arabic word, and must be a local Maltese meaning only.

It is of interest to note that one of the meanings of the Arabic form I verb نصب is 'to pour': Maltese has sauwaib II, meaning 'to pour out, empty'. It is therefore possible that there may have been some influence between sauwaib and sabb.

SAJD

sajjied: The basic meaning of the root in Arabic is connected with the idea of 'hunting, fishing', and in Maltese of 'fishing' only. The Maltese word sajjied means 'a fisherman'. It is the equivalent of the Arabic word صيد, which means 'hunter, fisherman, shooter, sportsman', صيد being the intensive active participle of the form I verb ضاق, which means 'to hunt, chase, fish'. Although the Maltese meaning is therefore identical to one of the Arabic meanings, it is not identical in full. Maltese has now restricted the meaning to the idea of 'fishing' only, and dropped the idea connected with 'hunting'. This restriction of the original Arabic meaning may be accounted for by geographical reasons: Malta probably offered no opportunity for hunting animals, whereas, being an island, it provided ample opportunity for fishing.

It is of interest to note, however, that the original meaning of sajjied as 'hunter' still exists in the term qattus sajjied, literally 'a hunter cat', in the sense of 'a cat which catches mice', rather than one which is not a mouser.

msida: The meaning of the Maltese word msida is 'a fish-pond, fishing-place'. The meaning of the Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, مسة, is 'net, snare, trap'. Although the ideas behind the meanings in the two languages are closely related, there is an interesting difference in the respective meanings: the Maltese word msida has the meaning of a mimated noun of place (the place where fishing is done), while the Arabic word مسة has the meaning rather of a mimated noun of instrument (the thing with which fishing is done).

It should be pointed out that the word msida had lost its lexical context, and was revived in literature by Prof. P.P. Saydon. For all practical purposes the word is now used only in the place-name 'Msida', and its meaning is probably purely local.
SAR

sajjar: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'becoming', the form I verbs .Imp /sar meaning 'to become'. IMP occurs in the Koran (42/53), but with the meaning of 'to trend, reach, come home'. The meaning of the Maltese word sajjar II is 'to cook'. The meaning of the Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, ٍـَََُٰٓٓٓٓ II, is primarily 'to render a.o. a.t.h. such, make, render, cause to be/become'. These are the meanings one would expect of the causative form II. The word ـََُٰٓٓٓ, however, also means 'to pickle'. There is thus a connection between the Maltese meaning and one of the Arabic meanings, although there is a difference between them. It is of interest to note that Maltese should have adopted and adapted the secondary meaning of the Arabic word to which it is equivalent, while not adopting the primary one.

There is a further observation which must be made. In Maltese the form I verb sar can also mean 'to be cooked to perfection, arrive at the point of perfection in cooking'. Thus the meaning of sajjar II is a logical development of the meaning of sar I. The outstanding question thus raised is how did the idea of 'cooking' come to be included in the form I verb sar? It could not have been influenced by the Arabic word ـََُٰٓٓٓ, as ـََُٰٓٓٓ contains no such idea. Is it possible that the modified meaning of ـََُٰٓٓٓ II has influenced sajjar, and then the influence has gone back to form I sar in Maltese? Or is the idea of 'cooking' a purely local shade of the Maltese meaning, bearing only a fortuitous relationship to the meaning 'to pickle' found in ـََُٰٓٓٓ?

SERH

serh: The meaning of the Maltese word serh is 'rest'. The meaning of the Arabic word to which it is ostensibly equivalent, قـٓٓـٓ, the verbal noun of form I, is 'a flock pasturing freely, pasturage'. It is the verbal noun of قـٓٓـٓ II, which means 'to drive (a flock) to pasture, go alone, send away'. Although the meanings of قـٓٓـٓ and serh are not the same in the two languages, they are related by association: the idea of a flock pasturing at leisure, or of somebody going somewhere alone, may give an impression of rest.

serrah: The meaning of the Maltese form II verb serrah is 'to give rest'. The Arabic word to which it is equivalent, قـٓٓـٓ II, means 'to pasture a flock at leisure, send away, free, dismiss, release', and in the Koran (2/231) it means 'to send away, set free'. Although the meanings in
the two languages are not identical they are related by association: the idea of a flock pasturing at leisure, or of somebody being freed or released, ties in with the idea of rest.

**tisrīḥ:** The meaning of the Maltese word *tisrīḥ*, the verbal noun of *serrah* II, is 'repose'. The meaning of the Arabic word كُسْرُوحٍ, likewise the verbal noun of form II, in addition to its straightforward verbal nominal meanings, is 'dismissal, discharge, release, permission', and in the Koran (2/229) it means 'a sending away, a setting free'. Once again, although the meanings are not identical, they are related by association: the idea of dismissal or release ties in with the idea of repose.

There is a further point which must be raised in connection with this Maltese root. There may possibly be some confusion of meaning in Maltese with the Arabic words כֶּסֶרְעַר and כֶּסְרַע, the basic meaning of the latter being connected with the idea of 'rest'. Maltese has the form X verb *strei*b, meaning 'to rest', the equivalent in form and meaning of the Arabic verb كُسْرُوحُ X. The root letters of *strei*b are *r*-weak letter-*h*, but there may be some possible confusion in meaning with words of the root *s-r-b*, the latter having been influenced by the former.

**Srāb**

**srāb:** The meaning of the Maltese word *srāb* is 'a dazzling'. The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent is سَرَب, meaning 'a mirage', and it occurs in the Koran (24/39) with this meaning. Although the meanings are related, they are not identical: both are concerned with light, but the original Arabic meaning of 'a mirage' is not explicitly contained in the Maltese meaning of 'a dazzling'.

Is it possible that the meaning may have changed for geographical reasons? The inhabitants of Malta would not be familiar with a mirage, but they would be familiar with dazzling light.

**Stamat**

**stamat:** The meaning of the Maltese word *stamat* is 'to be reduced to silence, be surprised'. *Stamat* is similar, though not identical, to the Arabic words أَمْسَتْ I, اسمت I, اسمت II and اسمت IV, all of which mean 'to remain/keep silent'. Though the meanings in the two languages are in one respect identical, there is nevertheless a slight but subtle difference between them. The Maltese word has acquired a sense of being silent because one has been surprised by something, whereas this idea is not inherent in the Arabic meaning, which implies simply being silent without any enforcing reason.
STIEDEN

The basic meaning of the root in Arabic, and in the Koran, is connected with the idea of 'asking permission, begging leave'. The basic meaning of the Maltese words of the root is connected with the idea of 'inviting', but Maltese has lost all sense of 'permission'. Thus یناسنی X means 'to ask permission, take leave, ask leave of entering', and it means the same in the Koran (24/58), while stieden X means 'to invite'. Although the meanings in the two languages are closely related, they are not identical, and are in a sense inverted. While A would ask permission or take leave of B (the Arabic meaning), B would in fact invite A (the Maltese meaning): in other words, the subject in the meaning in one language effectively becomes the object in the meaning in the other. Yet in both languages there is a sense of requesting or asking somebody or something, leaving it to somebody else to accept or refuse.

The Maltese word stedin is the verbal noun of stieden, and means 'act of inviting, invitations' (the latter meaning being rightly that of the plural of the unitary noun stedina). It is the equivalent of the Arabic verbal noun of إیشااعی X, which means 'asking permission, leave-taking, leave to enter'. The comments made under stieden (q.v. above) apply equally here.

The word mistieden is the passive participle of stieden, and means 'invited, a guest'. The Arabic word to which it is equivalent, إیشاعانن, the passive participle of إیشااعی, means '(the person) asked permission of, taken leave of'. The comments made under stieden (q.v. above) apply equally here.

STIENES

The basic meaning of the root in Arabic is connected with the idea of 'becoming accustomed, growing familiar'. There is absolute equivalence of meaning between the two languages in the respective form X verbs إیشااعی/stienes, 'to grow familiar, get accustomed to'. In the respective passive participles the meanings differ. إیشاعنسن means 'accustomed, familiar', while mistienes (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon) means 'accompanied'. It is of interest to note that X also means 'to become sociable, announce one's presence, ask an interview', and it occurs in the Koran (24/27) with the latter two shades of meaning: here might be seen a shade of meaning closer to that of the Maltese.
There is, however, a further point to be made. The other words of the Maltese root ْن-ن-س, with the exception of ُنِمْنَس, all contain the idea of 'accompanying': ُنِمْنَس is the only word of the root to contain the idea of 'being accustomed'. It is therefore paradoxical that the only one of those words of the root which are common to both languages which agrees in meaning entirely with Arabic should be the 'odd one out' in the Maltese meanings.

**TGHAN**

**tghan:** The meaning of the Maltese word *tghan* is 'a dagger'. Although Arabic does not have any word to which *tghan* is equivalent which has an identical meaning, it does have the verb ُنَقَّمَ I, meaning 'to stab, thrust, pierce, spear', and in the Koran (9/12) it means 'to fight, assail, thrust at'. Thus the connection by association between the meanings in the two languages may be seen.

**UDIGHA**

**udigha:** The meaning of the Maltese word *udigha* is 'addled egg' (i.e., rotten egg). Dessoulay gives two Arabic words of which *udigha* could be the equivalent, ُنَجَّيَّة, meaning 'a deposit', and ُنِمْنَيَّة, which also has 'a deposit' as one of its meanings. While the meanings in the two languages are by no means identical, there may nevertheless well be a connection by association or inference between them. Dessoulay suggests that the meaning 'addled egg' comes from the idea of 'an egg left and so gone bad'.

There is another possible association which might be tentatively suggested. The Maltese expression *bajda udigha*, 'an addled egg', refers to an egg which is placed under a hen to make it lay: this egg will produce no chicken, and is left there virtually until it has gone bad. The Arabic root ُخَنْعَ is connected with the idea of 'putting', and the root ُخَنْعَ is connected partly with the idea of 'depositing'. As a *bajda udigha* is put under the hen, or is deposited there, would it be too far-fetched to suggest that this idea may have influenced the Maltese meaning?

**WEBBEL**

**webbel:** The meaning of the Maltese form II verb *webbel* is 'to nourish (e.g. a child)'. The Arabic word of which it is the equivalent, ُنِعَ II, means 'to fatten camels'. Though there is a close relationship between the meanings in the two languages, they are not quite identical. The Arabic word refers specifically to fattening camels (the root letters ُنِعَ being connected with the idea of 'camel'), while Maltese ap-
plies the word to nourishing in more general terms. Indeed, webbel may also mean 'to impress, put ideas into the mind': thus these secondary meanings may be thought of in terms of 'nourishing' ideas or principles, but in this secondary sense the meaning of webbel is quite some way removed from the meaning of تَكُوم.

It might be remarked that, as far as this secondary meaning of webbel is concerned, there may be some possible link with, or influence by, the Arabic word تَكُوم III, meaning 'to be assiduous to'.

Wiege
wiegeb: The meaning of the Maltese word wiegeb (now obsolete, but recorded by Falzon) is 'becoming, convenient, decent, right'. It is the equivalent of the Arabic word تَكُوم, the active participle of the form I verb تَكُوم, meaning 'binding, unavoidable, necessary, essential'. While the meanings in the two languages are almost identical, they are not absolutely so. The 'degree' of the meaning is not as great in Maltese as it is in Arabic, and there has been an attenuation of the meaning: something may be becoming or right without necessarily being binding or essential.

Tweigib
wiegeb: The Maltese verb wiegeb III is the equivalent, with metathesis, of the Arabic verb تَكُوم III, both having the identical meaning of 'to answer'. The Maltese word tweigib means 'an answer'. Dessoulay gives it as the equivalent of the Arabic word تَكُوم (again with metathesis). However, it is the verbal noun of the form I verb تَكُوم, which means 'to cross, travel, explore, pierce, penetrate', but it has no meaning at all connected with the idea of 'answering'. However, it would be more accurate to say that tweigib is not the equivalent of تَكُوم, and it can probably be said that there is no word in Arabic of which it is the equivalent in form. First, long after 1 in Arabic does not change to long i in Maltese, but only to long a or ie: thus تَكُوم would not become tweigib. Second, tweigib is really a local formation of the verbal noun of form III, despite the prefixed ज. (Other examples are tweigib, from wiesen III, 'to support', tweigib, from wiegber III, 'to make difficult and precarious', and tweigöd, from wieled III, 'to give birth to'). If tweigib really is therefore the verbal noun of form III, then its meaning is absolutely logical since, as was remarked above, the form III verbs تَكُوم/wiegeb both mean 'to answer', the respective verbal nouns meaning 'an answer'.
WILD

milled: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'giving birth'. The meaning of the Maltese word milled is 'Christmas', while the meaning of the Arabic word to which it is equivalent, راس ميلاد, is 'birthday'. While the meanings in the two languages are very closely related, they are not identical. The Maltese word means only 'Christmas', and not 'a birthday' in general, such as is meant by the Arabic word, and is thus more specific.

It is of interest to note that the standard Arabic term for 'Christmas' is عيد الميلاد.

XAHAR

xieber: The meaning of the Maltese form III verb xieber is 'to divulge, publish'. However, while the Maltese word is of form III, it is equivalent in meaning to the Arabic form II verb نVerb, the form III verb نVerb having an entirely different meaning ('to hire by the month'). We thus have another example of a word changing its meaning from one form in Arabic to another different form in Maltese.

This change may well be accounted for by the fact that verbs in Maltese with medial b and gb do not exist in form II, and usually have to change to form III, since b and gb are incapable of reduplication.

Two further remarks must be made about the Maltese word xieber. First, its primary meaning is 'to conduct malefactors through the streets in order to proclaim their misdeeds' (Falzon). With the meaning of 'to divulge, publish', the verb usually has an accompanying preposition, as xieber bib. Second, Vassalli gives the word as existing in form II with the meaning of 'to publish'. If it indeed existed in form II in Vassalli's day (late 18th and early 19th centuries), could this show a gradual change from form II to form III for verbs with medial b, gb or weak letter during the last century and a half? This might also explain the gradual restriction of the meaning to a specialized context.

XEBBAH

xebah: The basic meaning of the root in both languages is connected with the idea of 'resembling, likeness'. The meaning of the Maltese word xebah is 'to be like'. There is no word at all in Arabic to which it is equivalent, form I being non-existent. The Arabic words with an identical meaning are زن in III and زن in IV, both meaning 'to resemble, be like, be similar'. We thus have a further example of a transference of meaning from one form in Arabic to another, different form in Maltese.
It is of interest to note, however, that both Maltese words for 'a likeness' are the equivalents in both form and meaning of Arabic words: xebh is the equivalent of مَعْرَفَةٍ, and mxiebba (recorded by Falzon) of مَخْطَبَةٌ. The word مَعْرَفَةٍ is interesting in that it could be regarded as the verbal noun of form I, but, as was stated above, form I is non-existent in Arabic. The word mxiebba is even more interesting, since the Arabic word مَخْطَبَةٌ, of which it is the equivalent, is the verbal noun of form III. Thus, although Maltese has transferred the meaning of the verb from form III to apparently form I, it still retains the equivalent of the Arabic verbal noun of form III for the noun.

There is a further remark to be made. The Maltese word xebab I may be not only an example simply of a transference of meaning from one form in Arabic to another in Maltese. Xebab could have been adopted in Maltese on account of the impossibility of the form IV verb مَخْطَبَةٌ going straight into Maltese, form IV in Maltese being virtually non-existent. This raises the further interesting point about mxiebba once again: if xebab should be adopted and adapted equivalent of مَخْطَبَةٌ IV, it is interesting that Maltese should still have kept the noun associated with form III in Arabic.

**XEJN**

**xejn:** The Maltese word xejn, which is usually preceded by some negative particle, means 'nothing'. This word bears a relic of the nunciation of the بَوْعَة (usually called nowadays the accusative or adverbial case by Western writers), it being the equivalent of بَوْعَةٍ, the بَوْعَةٍ of مَخْطَبَةٍ. The Arabic word بَوْعَةٍ means 'thing, business', it having these same meanings in the Koran (2/19). Although the meanings of the words in the two languages are virtually identical, there is one important difference. The Maltese word is used almost invariably in a negative context, usually being preceded, as stated above, by some negative particle. e.g. ma ghandi xejn, 'I do not have anything/I have nothing', ma qalltu xejn, 'She did not say anything to him/she said nothing to him'. The Arabic word بَوْعَةٍ may be used in either a positive or a negative context. (For a similar opposition in meaning between Arabic and Maltese, cp. JIES (jies)).

It might be added that the standard Maltese word for 'a thing' in the positive, rather than the negative, sense would be baga. This is the equivalent of the Arabic word بَوْعَةٍ, meaning 'a want, need'.

**xejjen:** The meaning of the Maltese form II verb xejjen is 'to reduce to
nothing'. Dessoulay gives the Arabic word ٌاٍ ـ اٍ as the word of which he regards xejjen as the equivalent, and it means 'to reduce, make smaller, grow thin, disfigure'. Although the meanings in the two languages could be said to be similar, this fact is coincidental only. There is, in fact, no Arabic word from which xejjen is derived: it is a purely local Maltese formation from the word xejn (q.v. above).

Quite a considerable number of further examples could be cited, but it is hoped that the foregoing list, while entertaining no claim to being exhaustive, has illustrated some of the more interesting and obvious examples of semantic differences between Maltese and Koranic Arabic. Some of the reasons suggested for the semantic differences are likewise by no means exhaustive, and some are offered only as the most tenuous of hypotheses: while there is much in the field of semantics about which linguists may be certain or relatively certain, there is also much about which, at the moment, they must refrain from being categorical. It is, then, better that a cautious hypothesis might be supported by others than that a categorical statement might be rejected.

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