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THE MALTESE AND THE ARABIC DIALECTS: AN APPROACH FROM LINGUISTIC GEOGRAPHY

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of this article is Maltese as a language of different strata which have deposited themselves out of several groups of languages, respectively dialects.

In the first part I will point out the historical events which caused formations of strata from different geographical zones. In the second part I will demonstrate that the superposition of strata with methods of linguistic geography and Bartoli's space linguistics can be illustrated on maps.

As far as I know there has been no space linguistic approach of the Maltese language - and thus necessarily of the entire area of the Arabic languages - which partly includes the area of the Romance (Italian) languages, that would take into account linguistic geography.

1. SHORT HISTORY OF THE MALTESE LANGUAGE

Maltese came into existence by way of contact between the Arabic and Italian languages, and precisely this contact has created Maltese. In the following passages I will associate the history of Malta with her linguistic development. Up to 1530 the history of Malta was identical with the history of Sicily. The rulers of Sicily were at the same time rulers of Malta. The years of Arabic rule were crucial for the linguistic development. At that time Malta was thoroughly arabicised. The conquerors brought to the island the vulgar variation of Arabic, not the classical one (Hocharabisch). As a matter

of fact, Vulgar Arabic and the Classical Arabic share very many features, such as Vulgar Latin and the Romance languages that resulted out of it have a lot of features in common with Classical Latin. I do not want to discuss the problem whether Vulgar Arabic already existed very early along with Classical Arabic or if Vulgar Arabic later originated out of it. The essential matter is the introduction of that type of New Arabic we find also in the modern Arabic dialects. Therefore the Maltese language differs from Classical Arabic in the same way as the Arabic dialects. To prove this I give an example taken from the syntax of the noun. The English expression 'the spirit of the Lord' is impossible in Arabic. If a noun is determined by a following genitive, it must not be preceded by the article. In this case you can only say 'spirit of the Lord'. Thus we read in the Classical Arabic translation of Luke 4, 18 ... rūḥu r-rabbi 'alayya 'the spirit of the Lord is upon me'. Now modern Arabic introduces the exponent of the genitive as a great innovation. If you use it in the sentence you can supply the substantive with the article. This exponent is not the same in every dialect (resp. Maltese), but the procedure is the same everywhere.¹ That can be proved with the help of the translations of the mentioned passage of the Bible into the Chadian Arabic and into Maltese.

Luke 4, 18 Ch: ArRuh *hana arRabb ga'id fogi*
Malt: L-Ispirtu *tal-Mulej fuqi*

In Chadian Arabic the genitive exponent is *hana*, in Maltese it is *ta'*. Since the according exponent is used, *Rub/Ispirtu* is preceded by the article.

The Arabic conquerors of Malta came via Sicily from Northwest Africa (Maghreb). Therefore the Maltese language comprises a considerable number of Maghrebine features. I want to demonstrate this by using the forms of the imperfect of *kataba* 'to write' in Egyptian (representing a non-Maghrebine dialect), in Algerian (representing a Maghrebine dialect) and in Maltese.



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	Egyptian		Algerian		Maltese	
	sing.	Plur.	Sing.	Plur.	Sing.	Plur.
1st pers.	aktib	niktib	nəktəb	nəkətbu	nikteb	niktbu
2nd pers. m.	tiktib	tiktibu	təktəb	təkətbu	tikteb	tiktbu
2nd pers. f.	tiktibi	"	"	"	"	"
3rd pers. m.	yiktib	yiktibu	yəktəb	yəkətbu	jikteb	jiktbu
3rd pers. f.	tiktib	"	təktəb	"	tikteb	"

The simplification of the paradigm is more advanced in Maghrebine/Maltese. All first persons begin with n-, Sing. and Plural have the same termination. The second person feminine has been dropped also in the singular.

When Malta had been in Arabic possession for more than one and a half centuries, and the Christians were almost ready to reconquer it, the Maghreb was overrun by the Banū Sulaym and the Banū Hilāl who came from the Eastern deserts. As a result of that Northwest Africa experienced a second wave of arabisation which, however, had no influence as far as Malta.² This may have contributed to the fact that the Maltese language is to a certain degree, more archaic than the Maghrebine idiom. Even more important, in this regard, was Malta's complete separation from the Arabic Islamic world, in 1090. In that year Malta was occupied by the Christians who came from Sicily and it never came under Arabic control again. Henceforth the Maltese language had a development of its own and did not follow the Arabic example any more. In the same way its relations to the Maghrebine tribes were reduced to a minimum. The time of Maltese innovations began. They could occur in two categories: Firstly, there were innovations on the basis of Arabic. A wonderful example is the paradigm of the verb *qal* 'to say', in which case two different verbs coincided in a suppletive way. So 'he said' is in Maltese *qal*, while 'he says' is *ighid*. Secondly, Italian influenced the Maltese language for a very long time as a result of which the phonological and lexical systems were considerably transformed. Morphosyntax, however, was less affected.

The first Italian influences were completely Sicilian. Later the Standard Italian of Tuscan provenance prevailed,

very often with Sicilian features. The difference between Sicilian and Standard Italian is frequently the same as it is between popular and educated terms. An example for the Sicilian component is the word for 'river' *xmara* = Lat. *flumen* + *-ara*, which corresponds with the Italian word *fiumara* 'current of a river'. You notice the Sicilian origin of *xmara* in the development of initial *fl-* which, in Sicilian, turned into a fricative /y/, /χ/, or /š/ as can be seen on map 429 of the AIS. For example you find *Xumi* at point 896 in Sicily. The Sicilian origin of a Maltese term can often be recognized by its form. Sometimes the form permits to deduce the approximate date of its integration. In Arabic the phoneme /p/ does not exist. Therefore an Italian /p/ was introduced as /b/ in the first time of contact.

Sicilian <i>piccioni</i> 'dove'	Maltese <i>beccun</i>
<i>palumbara</i> 'dove cot'	<i>barumbara</i> ³
<i>patiri</i> 'to suffer'	<i>bata</i>

which became the basis of derivations carried out on rules inherited from the Arabic language. Thus 'suffering' became *tbatija* (infinitive of the IInd verb form).

After the definitive separation of Malta from Sicily the Italian influence continued, but now the Tuscan features in Standard Italian increased. The Order of St. John as a religious institution was closely linked to Rome and the people continued to have close contacts with Sicily, when, e.g., an invasion of pirates from Northern Africa was impending, big parts of the population took refuge in Sicily from where they only returned months later, when the danger was over.

Having been in contact with the Italians for centuries, the Maltese improved on the knowledge of their neighbours' language. In doing so they integrated essential elements of the Italian phonological system into their own language, *bata* 'to suffer' has its specific form with /b/ because it was taken over very early. Later on *passjoni* was introduced into Maltese as an expression for Christ's suffering, but now it was written with /p/. It originated from the language of the educated clergy. The final -i indicates that the word came to Malta through Sicilian speech. Even if the italianisms belong to the cultured sphere and are taken from Standard Italian

they appear in their Sicilian form. We could fill numerous pages with Maltese words derived from Italian, of popular or cultured origin, for example, *jom* 'stove', *qorti* 'court', *qan-piena* 'bell', *skond* 'according to', *iltra* 'letter', *post* 'place', *keċċa* 'to through out', *muntanja* 'mountain', *folla* 'crowd', *pajjiż* 'country', *missier* 'father', *ziju* 'uncle', *ċar* 'clear', *ċatt* 'flat', *ċavetta* 'key', *spazju* 'space', *lvant* 'east', *probabbli* 'probable', *professur*, *kummissjoni*, *traduttori*, *edizzjoni*, *responsabilità*, etc.

The Italian influence increased more and more. At first it did not even decrease during the English domination. Gradually only, the Italian language lost its prevalence. That was obvious for everybody when during the thirties of our century Italian was replaced by Maltese as the language of the court.

English became important not only as the language of the dominant power but as the language of the modern world as well. And in this sense the English interference has been very strong up to the present time – or especially so nowadays. Nevertheless we have to differentiate between the importance of the Italian and the English constituents. Italian is a constitutive element of Maltese. The English influence is considerable but it did not penetrate so deeply. Especially in the vocabulary the English elements are omnipresent, for ex.:

pejjeġ (from pipe) 'to smoke', *ittajpja* 'to typewrite', *skiddja* 'to skid', *inxuttja* 'to shoot' (football), *ert* 'earthing', *ertjat* 'earthed', *kejbil* 'cable', *uġjer* 'wire', *fjuż* 'fuse'.

Besides, in Maltese conversation telephone and street numbers are always quoted in English, even in the most remote farm house.

2. ASPECTS OF LINGUISTIC GEOGRAPHY

In the following part I want to illustrate the position of Maltese withi. various languages and dialects. This enterprise is problematic and for several reasons it cannot be but provisional at the moment. On the Arabic side there are not enough monographs. For the vast Arabic world there are only a few linguistic atlases in existence which, in their aim and range, cannot be compared with the ones of the Romance

languages. On the Arabic side there are to be mentioned the works by Cantineau for Syria, by Henri Fleisch for Lebanon and by Bergsträsser for Syria and Palestine which were edited some decades ago. Just now Peter Behnstedt and Manfred Woidich are working with modern methods on the linguistic atlas of Egypt (some maps have been published). Recently Behnstedt made surveys for the linguistic atlas of Yemen. The Egyptian linguistic atlas and the linguistic atlas of North Yemen are published now; see Behnstedt (1985) and Behnstedt/Woidich (1985) in the bibliography. The absence of linguistic atlases could possibly be compensated by numerous monographs on dialects but here the deficiency is enormous too. Fortunately a great deal has been published during the past few years. Nevertheless, there is still a lot to be done. The Arabic dialects are spoken in a huge zone of several millions of square miles between the Atlantic Ocean and the Islamic regions of Russia. For some areas there are not even dictionaries, such as e.g. for Oman. So I had to find out the corresponding expressions out of dialect texts. Due to the inadequacy of documentation the result can only be provisional. Nevertheless I want to publish it already now because I consider important to present the application of this method in Arabic linguistics. Since points of information do not exist as numerously as in the linguistic atlases of the Romance languages, I cannot mark the maps in a continuous way covering the whole country in question. Therefore I marked each Arabic-speaking country with a few symbols, in most cases with only one. In the Romance countries I would be able to cover continuous areas. On the maps I have also marked the expressions of medieval Arabic Hispania (= Al-Andalus). The following 14 maps show common and different phenomena of Classical Arabic, modern Arabic dialects, and Maltese.

2.1 Classical Arabic, modern Arabic dialects, and Maltese

Very often expressions of Classical Arabic are conserved in modern Arabic dialects and in Maltese. This is illustrated by map no. 1. The theme of this map is *nasiya* 'to forget', the vowels of which are changed here and there but which has been replaced nowhere.

2.2 Conservation not shared by Maltese

Classical Arabic has two words for 'to come', *atā* and *ǧā'a*. A look at map no. 2 shows that almost everywhere *ǧā'a* only in conserved, except in Yemen where a few dialects use *atā* for 'to come'. This fact may be connected with the conservation of *a^cṭā* 'to give' in some places. A lateral area of the Arabic world conserved the expression *atā* which is lost in the other dialects. In Maltese it is unknown too.

2.3 Conservation shared by Maltese

The theme of map no. 3 is 'to see', in opposition to 'to look at'. The normal expression of Classical Arabic for 'to see' is *ra'ā*, marked on the map by flat black asterisks ✱. We notice them in Hispano-Arabic which has disappeared since the 15th century, in Malta, and in several dialects of Yemen. With Bartoli's words, these are typical *aree laterali*. In Maltese the normal word for 'to see' is *ra* inflected in all persons and tenses.

Relict forms and special usage are marked by ✱. Such relict forms exist in Cyrenaica, where we find the Classical Arabic *ra'ā* only in the negated 1st. pers. sing. perfect, e.g. *ma rēt-hūm-š* 'I did not see them'.⁴ *Ra'ā* is used defectively also in *Palestine*⁵ and *Tripolitania*.⁶ As for *Tunisia*, A. Muller says: "'ra" (voir) ne se conjugue qu'au passé, comme un défectueux...'.⁷ In *Egypt* we find *ra'ā* only in special idioms, such as *la sūftu wa la rētu* 'I did not see him at all'.⁸ In *Morocco* and in *Algeria* there exists a special grammatical usage of *ra'ā* (*ra*). In these countries *ra* + personal suffix substitutes the present of the copula 'to be': *rā-ni* 'I am', *rā-k* 'you are' etc.⁹

We should take special notice of Yemen (North Yemen), split into numerous dialects with about ten expressions for 'to see'. Because of the mountainous (highest mountains more than 3.700m) and cleft nature of the country and the extreme difficulty of communication, ancient forms have persisted. Immediately we think of Bartoli's term of the *aree isolate*. Besides Arabic superposed the pre-Arabic substratum of Old South Arabic. That is why *ra'ā* and various other expressions were conserved there. Another word for 'to see' is *a^cayyan* surviving, in addition to Yemen, only in South East

Anatolia, and in the Arabic speaking zone of Uzbekistan, surrounded by other languages, all of which are in typical *aree isolate*. In Yemen, more expressions for 'to see' are *šāf*, 'abšar, tsauwaš, ḥād, šimih, asā, ḥanṭar.

We notice that the verb *ra'ā* was reduced to defective use or a special grammatical function. In its original meaning it persists in its not-defective use only in *aree laterali*; one of which being Malta. We remember that Malta was arabicized before the invasions of the Banu Hilal and was not affected by the second wave of arabisation. Therefore Maltese is conservative to some extent. A linguistical map of the expressions for 'to fear' would also confirm Malta as a conservative lateral area. Already in the Koran *fa^czi'a/fa^cza'a* is less common than *ḥāfa* (proportion 4:87). Today we find words originating from *fa^cza'a* only in Oman, South East Anatolia, and Malta. Formerly it was also used in Al-Andalus. In Malta *ḥāfa* does not exist at all.

2.4 Innovations of all Arabic dialects, incl. Maltese

The word 'to bring' (map no. 4) in Classical Arabic could be expressed by *ǧā'a bi* 'to come with', 'I come with a present' is equivalent to 'I bring a present'. In the dialects the preposition *bi* 'with' was integrated into the root, it became the 3rd radical. This expression, *ǧāb*, replaced the original one everywhere, also in Malta. In Oman only we find another word beside it.

2.5 Innovations of Maghrebini and Maltese

The close relationship between Maghrebine and Maltese is to be seen on map no. 5. The expressions for 'to ask' are marked there. The Classical word is *sa'ala* which exists in numerous dialects. In *Tunisia*, *Libya*, and the South Arab Peninsula 'to ask' is *našad*. In South East Anatolia we find the isolated word *istağbar*. In the Maghreb we notice *šaqa/staqa*, which was brought from there to Al-Andalus and Malta. According to Dozy, 1927, 661a this word is of Berber origin. A map for the word 'to work' would give an analogous result. The word *ištağal* is used in Iraqi, Syrian, Lebanese, Palestinian, Egyptian, Yamani, Sudanese, and in Chadian Arabic. Instead of this *ḥadam*, which in Classical Arabic

means 'to serve' is used in Hispano-Arabic, Moroccan, Algerian, Tunesian, Libyan, and – beside *ištaġāl* – in Chadian Arabic, and apart from that in the dialect of Oman. *ħadam* is also the Maltese word for 'to work' (*ħadem*). Equally the Maltese words for 'to lose' and 'to find' *tilef* and *sab* are used only in Maghrebine dialects. Besides *tilef* was used in Hispano-Arabic.

2.6 Innovations found only in Maltese

We have to distinguish between innovations in Maltese which are of Arabic heritage and those resulting of the contact with Italian.

2.6.1 Maltese innovation on an Arabic basis

2.6.1.1 Innovation through phonetic change

Map no. 6 shows us the expressions for 'to answer'. *Ġāwaba* is found all over the Arabic world and only Maltese has got *wieġeb* which derives from **wāġaba* being the metathesis of *ġāwaba*. The Maltese innovation is a result of considerable phonetic change of the original word.

2.6.1.2 Innovation through the change of meaning

The expressions for 'much'/'many' and 'little'/'few' serve as examples.

There are several words in Arabic for 'much'/'many'. *Kaṭīr* is the expression in Classical Arabic, which continues to exist in most Arabic dialects. Moreover we notice *bezzaf* and *yasir* in Maghrebine dialects, but in Maltese we have also *ħafna*. The form of this word existed already in Classical Arabic with the meaning of 'a handful'. Having in mind the emphatic use of 'a whole handful' we understand that the expression has come to mean 'much'/'many'. This semantic development is comprehensible, but the other Arabic dialects did not show it because the contact did not exist any longer. With this semantic change the Maltese separated from the Arabic union, such as the French separated with *beaucoup* from the union of Romance languages, still using *multum*.

The same thing happened with 'little'/'few'. Two words predominate on map no. 8: on one side there is *qalīl* inherited

from Classical Arabic, on the other side *šwayya* meaning originally 'a little thing'. Except Maltese only Omani has another word namely *tišše*. Maltese *ftit* can be understood out of its original Arabic meaning 'crumb'. Only in Maltese it took the meaning of 'little'/'few'.

2.6.2 Maltese innovations as a consequence of Italian interference

2.6.2.1 Intrusion of Italian words

This can be demonstrated looking at the names of craftsmen. First I give the Arabic background, showing it on map no. 9, 'blacksmith', Ar. *ħaddād*. This word is formed according to the pattern *kakkāk* like all names of craftsmen in Classical Arabic. The map is relatively homogeneous. Only the West African areas of the Sahara and the Sahel Zone differ. This is due to the particular structure of trades in these regions.¹⁰ Everywhere else we see uniformity including Al-Andalus and Malta. A great many of craftsmen are designated according to the pattern mentioned above (*kakkāk*); nevertheless we have to consider the phonetical change by *imāla* (*ā > ie*). So we have, in Maltese: *ħajjat* 'tailor', *nissieġ* 'weaver', *bennej* 'mason', *gennien* 'gardener', etc. This very coherent system of designations is troubled by new techniques of word formation, as they exist in modern Arabic already. Expressions with *beta^c* are widely spread. In Egyptian the 'milkman' is called *beta^c il-laban*. Turkish suffixes penetrate into the system. For instance in Egypt the 'postman' is the *bustagi*, with the suffix *-ġi/-gi*. Maltese is even less uniform because of the intrusion of Sicilian expressions, Here I shall present two maps. Map no. 10 still demonstrates uniformity in the Arabic dialects broken down only in Malta. Throughout the Arabic dialects we find *naġġār* for 'joiner'/'carpenter'. This was the word in Al-Andalus and it is still alive in the Arabic dialects from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf. Maltese, however, took its own way. With *mastrudaxxa* it presents something quite different. The word comes from Sicilian and means originally 'the master of the axe'. *Mastrudaxxa* is found also in Sicilian.¹¹ Map no. 219, falegname, of AIS illustrates that the type *mastrudascia* is generally spread in Sicily, Calabria, Lucania, Apulia and in Campania up to Naples and beyond.

In Maltese there is another word for 'joiner' equally deriving from Italian: *karpintier*. According to the dictionaries both have the same meaning. On map no. 10 I marked both expressions. The appearance of the Italian words made room for the Arabic *naġġar*, which continues to be used in Maltese with the meaning of 'stonebreaker'. The Italian interference caused a shift of the system.

Map no. 11 showing the expressions for 'shoemaker' offers a lot of varieties on the Arabic side. We state the Classical Arabic type only in Hispano-Arabic and Moroccan *harras*. In addition to this *capatair* is documented in Hispano-Arabic. Obviously this is modern Spanish *zapatero*. We find it in Algerian, Tunisian, and Tripolitanian *sbabti* as well. Catalan *sabater* and Sardinian *sabbattéri* belong to it too. We do not know for certain in which direction the passage took place (according to Corominas the etymology of *zapatero* is uncertain). The words marked in Cyreniaca, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq derive from Turkish *kunduraci*. Those countries were Turkish for centuries. Maltese *skarpan* demonstrates South Italian interference. Map no. 207, *calzolaio*, of AIS shows words of the type *scarparo* throughout Southern Italy including the Abruzzes. We find it again in Venetia and Lombardy. Other designations of trades came from Sicilian, too, such as: *kok* 'cook', *kaččatur* 'hunter', *karrettunar* 'cartwright', *funar* 'baker', *biččier* 'butcher'. The last expression is worth being noticed. It is derived from Sicilian (see map no. 244, *macellaio*, of AIS), but it integrates itself into the Arabic system. *Biččier*, of Italian provenance looks, in its phonemical pattern, like *nissieg* 'weaver' of Arabic origin. This is a surprising case of convergence.

On one side we find *baddad*, *hajjat*, *naġġar*, *nissieg*, *genien*, *sajjed*, *bennej*, *kennies* etc. On the other side we come across *mastrudaxxa*, *karpintier*, *kok*, *kaččatur*, *combar*, *funar*, *biččier*, *skarpan*, *karrettunar*. Thus, important names of craftsmen have come together in Maltese from both sides. Maltese really is a language situated at the point of intersection of two languages. The maps show that we have to associate it partly to one linguistical area and partly to the other linguistical area. The connection with both sides can be perceived from the words of the following category.

2.6.2.2 Arabic words adopt Italian semantic structures

Maps no. 12, 13, and 14 have to be studied together. Map no. 12 demonstrates the expressions for 'to look at'. It presents a big variety. The Classical Arabic verb is *nazara* which we find again at several places not only in the past in Arabic Spain but also in the modern dialects of Algeria, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Oman. Oman's abundance of words is surprising. Again and again we realize that the mountainous landscapes of isolated valleys of Southern and Eastern Arabia have a great variety of expressions. The most current expression in Arabic dialects is *šāf* (already shown on map no. 3). Only in Malta *ħares* is found with the meaning 'to look at'.

On map no. 13 we find again the word *ħarasa*, but this map makes clear the expressions for 'to guard'. In cases where there is no symbol I could not find out the corresponding expression. But being complete is less important than demonstrating that *ħarasa* both in Classical Arabic and in many dialects means 'to guard'. This is true for the Maltese *ħares* as well. In addition to this, *ħares* means in Maltese – and only there – 'to look at'.

Looking at the neighbourhood, we find a single expression in the Italian language, namely: *guardare*, with both meanings, 'to guard' and 'to look at'. *Guardare* and *ħares* have the same semantic structure (map no. 14). Without any doubt this is due to Italian interference. The two words *guardare* and *ħares* are different in their phonetical form but identical in their semantic structure.

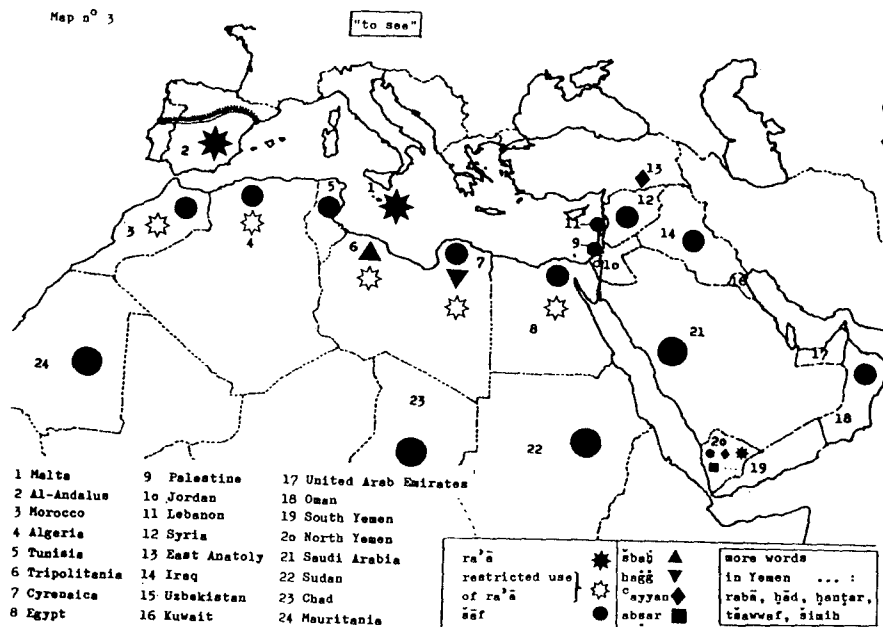
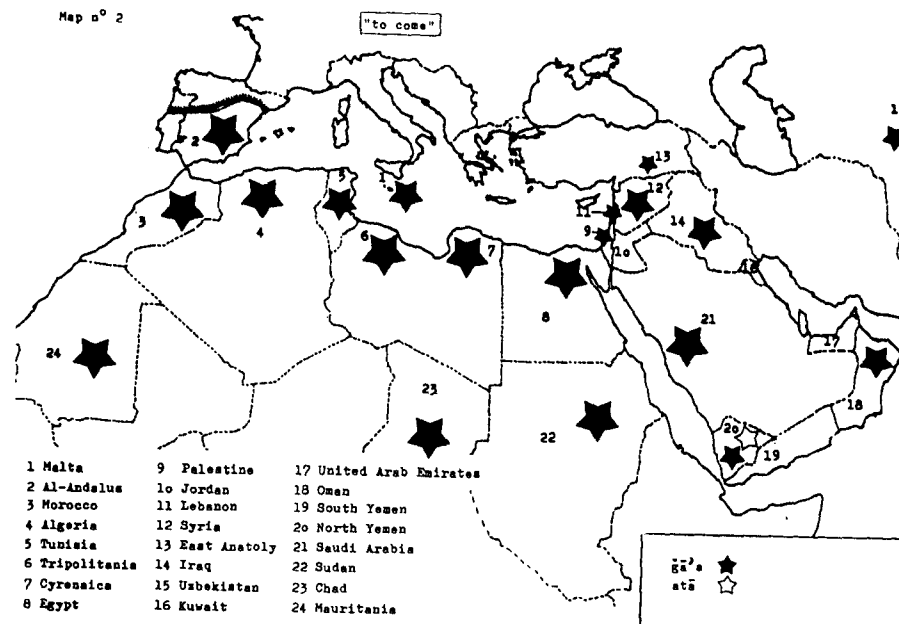
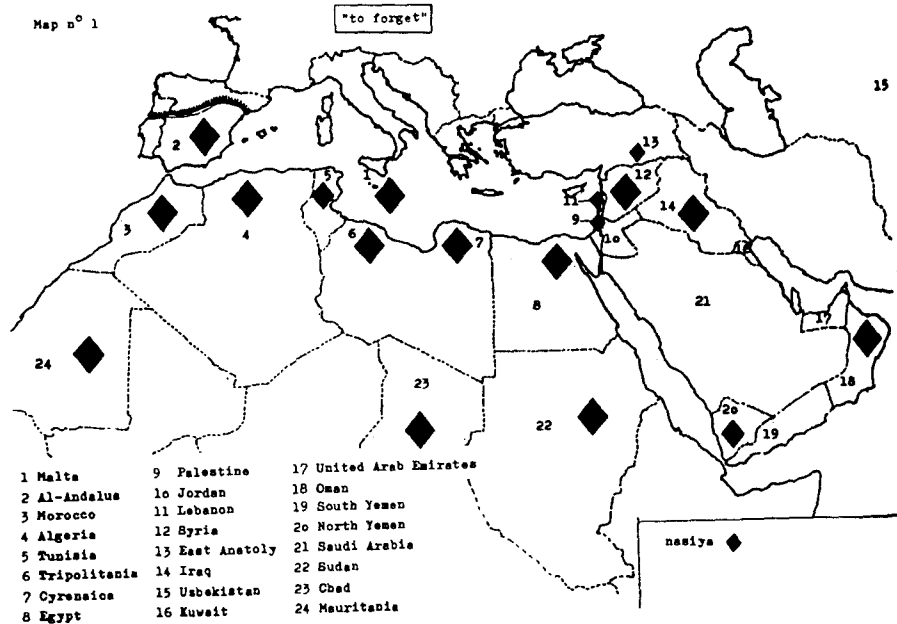
CONCLUSION

I presented the various strata of the Maltese language: Italian and Arabic. The Italian stratum is composed of a Sicilian formation and a second one of Italian. The Arabic basic stratum can be laid open by methods of linguistic geography. Thereby the following formations are brought to light: a very ancient one which includes the Classical Arabic and the dialects; a second one, common to the modern dialects; a third Maghrebiniian one. A fourth formation shows Maltese innovations of Arabic origin, which is covered by a fifth forma-

tion showing Maltese innovations of Italian origin. Of course there are also dislocations of the strata. I did not mention these complicated phenomena. Neither did I illustrate on maps the English interferences in Maltese.

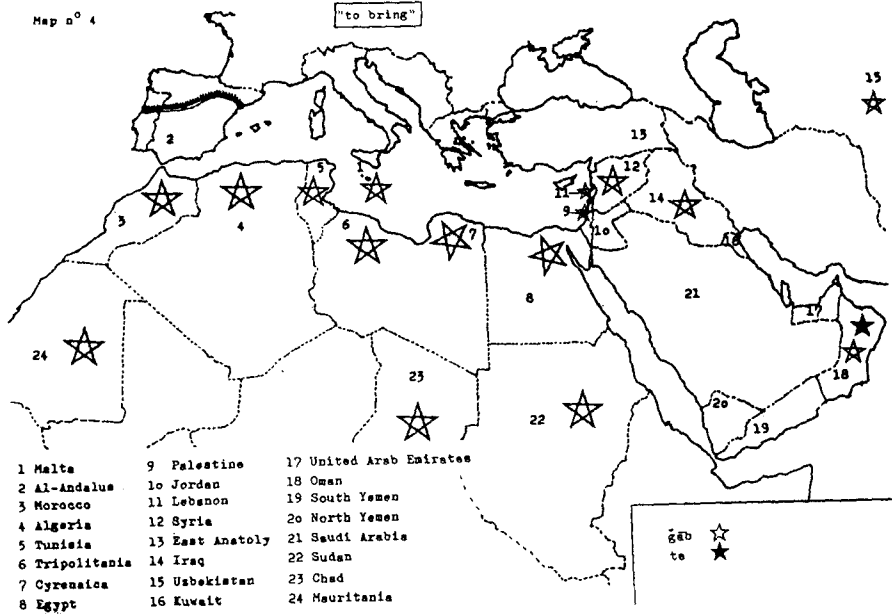
Notes:

- ¹See Eksell Haming, Kerstin: The analytic genitive in the modern Arabic dialects. Göteborg 1980.
- ²Fischer/Jastrow (eds.) 1980: 32.
- ³Borg 1978: 88.
- ⁴Numerous examples in Panetta, L'arabo parlato a Bengasi.
- ⁵See Bauer 1910: 35.
- ⁶See Stumme 1898: 13, 12; 21, 11; 30, 18; 42, 22; 44, 13.
- ⁷Muller (without date): 66.
- ⁸Personal information from Peter Behnstedt.
- ⁹See Brunot, L. 1950: 144; Tapiéro 1978: 14.
- ¹⁰See the chapter 'Les professions' in Pierret 1943: 161-164.
- ¹¹Wagner 1960: I, 132; II, 54.



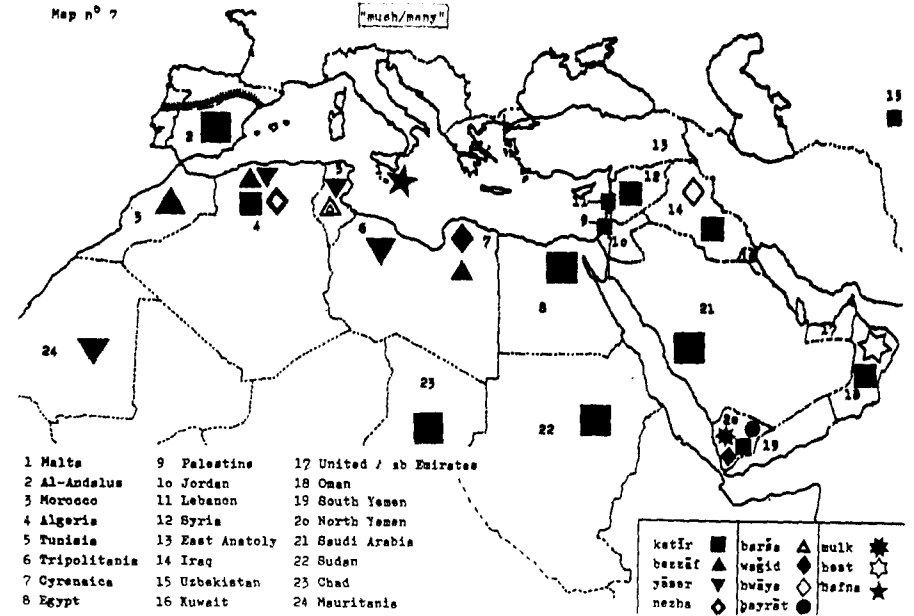
Map n° 4

"to bring"



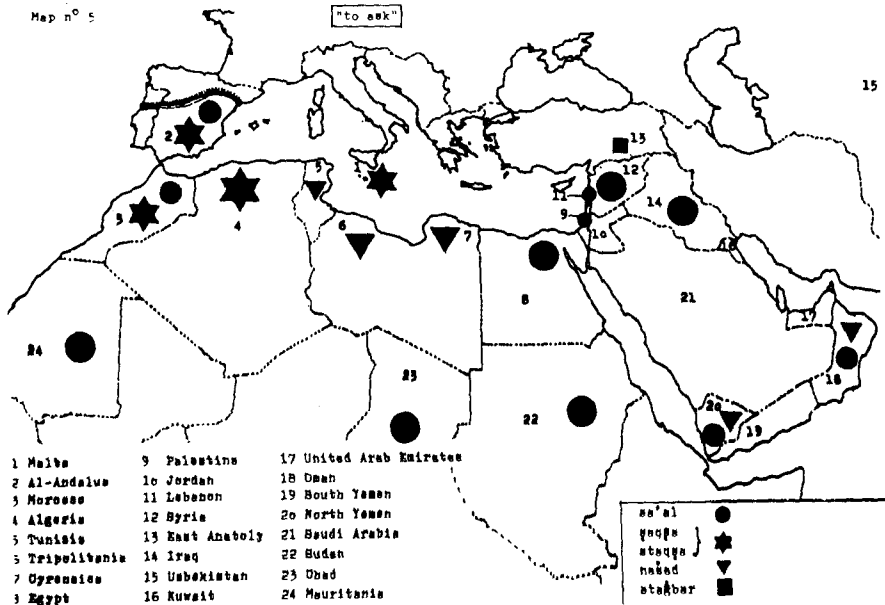
Map n° 7

"much/many"



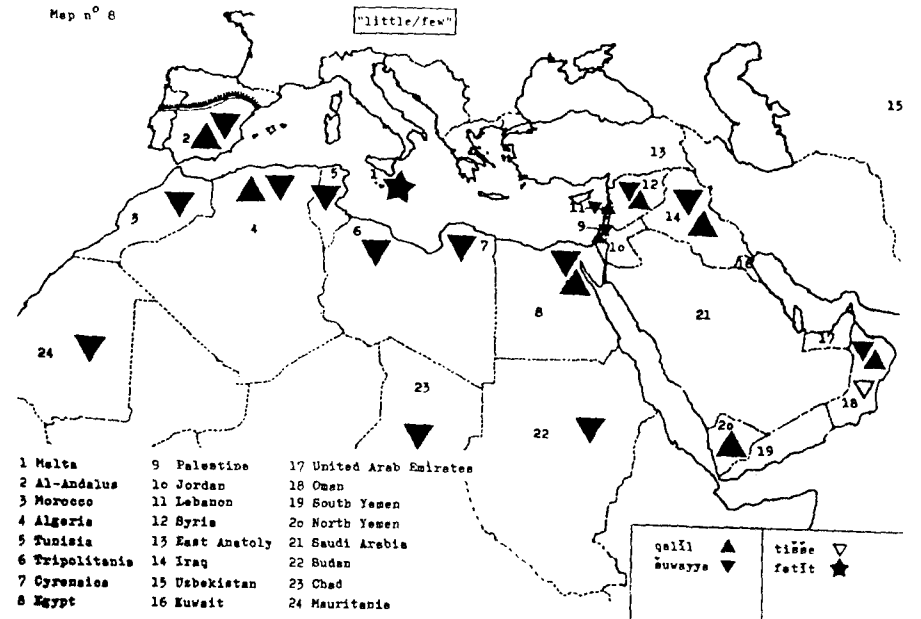
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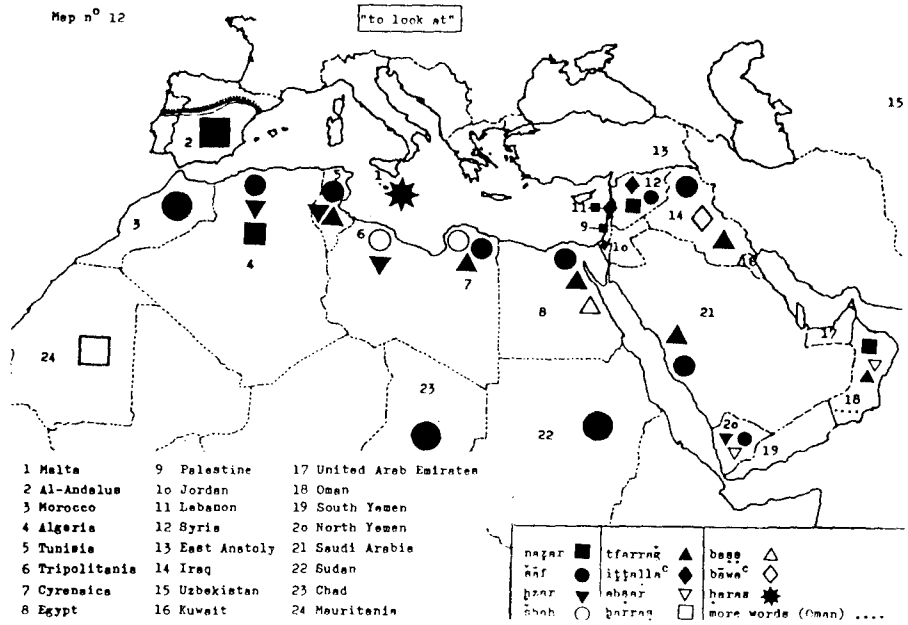
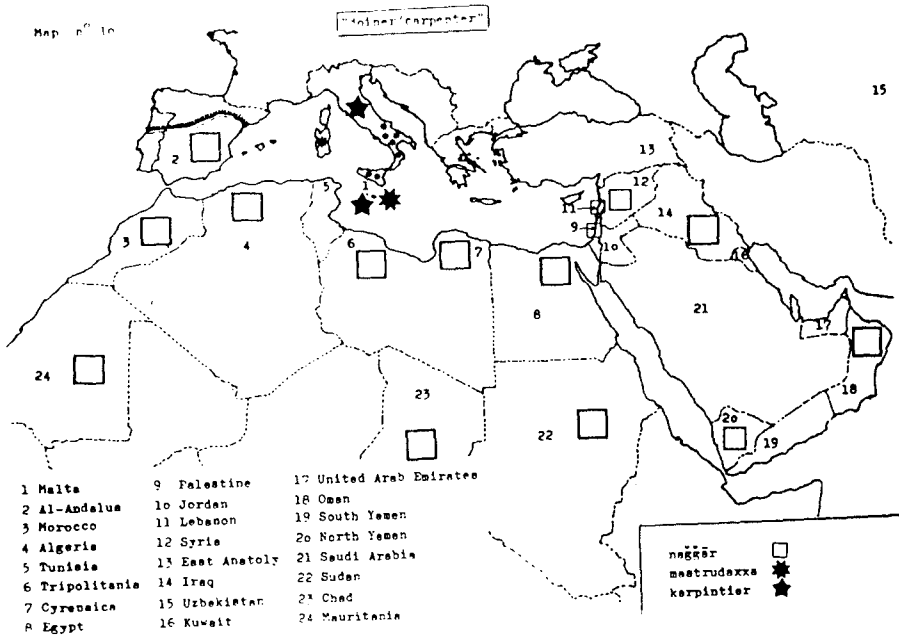
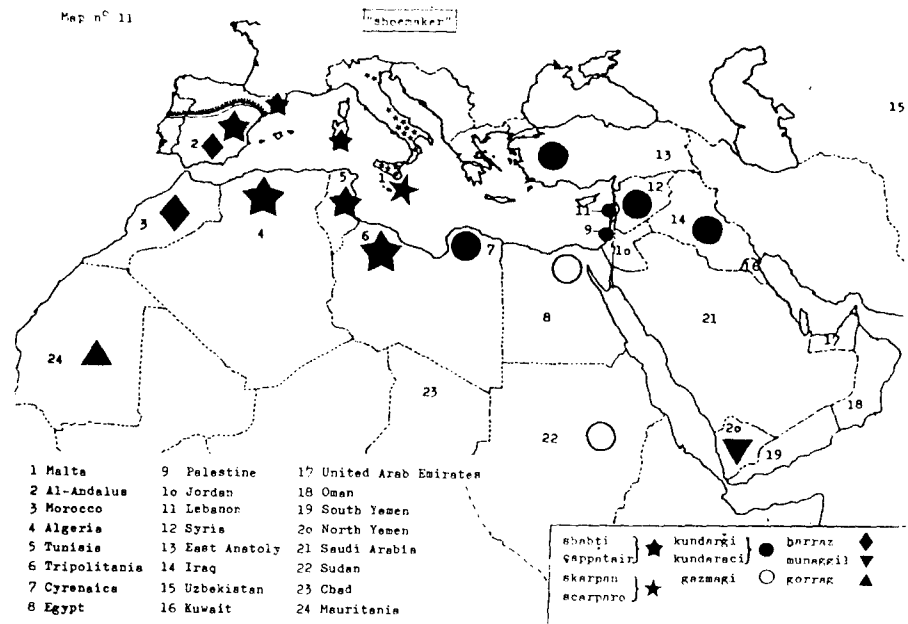
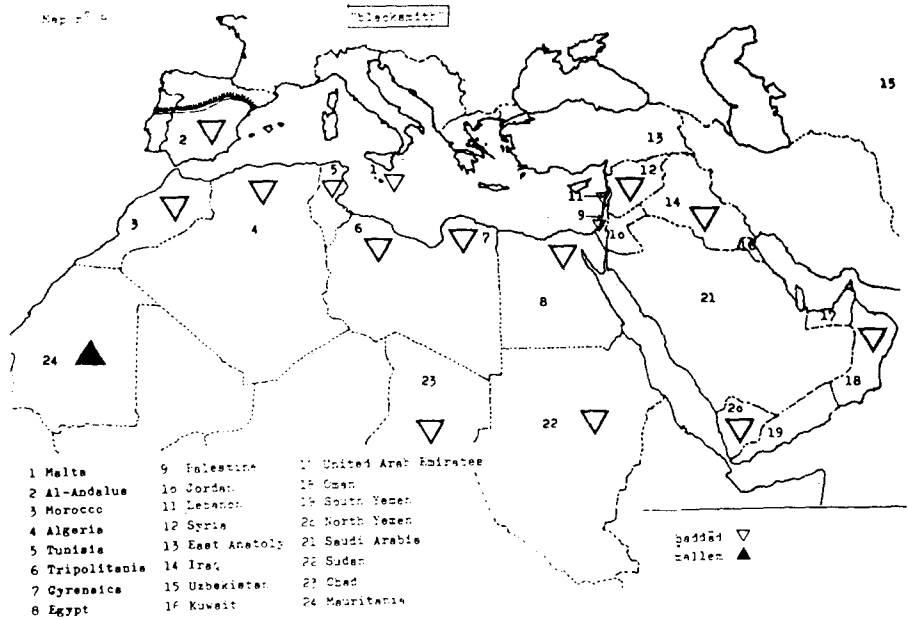
"to ask"



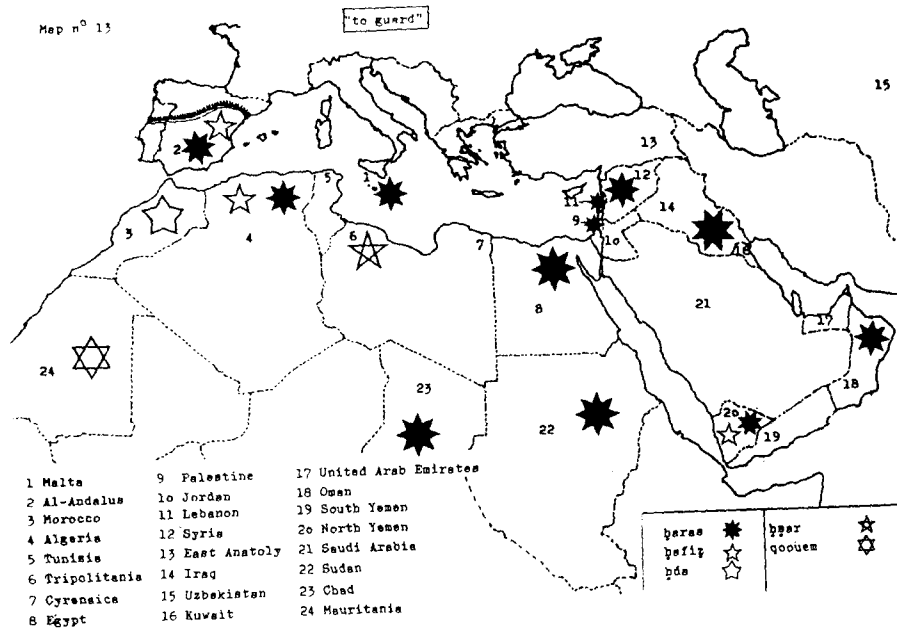
Map n° 8

"little/few"

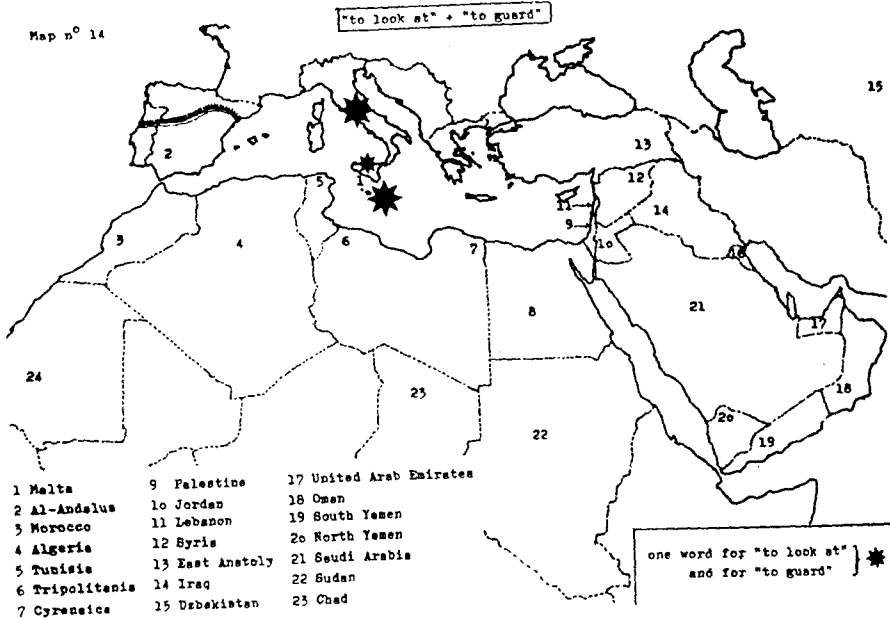




Map n° 13



Map n° 14



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INTERFERENZE INGLESI SULLA LINGUA MALTESE

di MARIANNE BRINCAT MASSA

L'influsso e le interferenze della lingua Inglese¹ su quella Maltese propri di una situazione bilingue, sono limitati a certe realtà importate dalla cultura inglese e dal progresso scientifico e tecnologico, e condizionati da certe prerogative linguistiche che devono essere superate prima che si determini il prestito.

Le due lingue, infatti, appartengono a due ceppi diversi, l'una alla branca germanica della famiglia ariana, indo-europea, l'altra a quella semitica. Questa diversità di appartenenza comporta diversità nel campo della fonetica, della morfologia e della struttura a livello di parola (*word ture*).

Di questi tre ostacoli, quello delle diversità fonetiche non presenta alcuna difficoltà. L'ostacolo dell'accento è superato con un accento locale al prestito, cioè secondo la regola che solo una sillaba non accentata (atona) può seguire quella accentata (tonica), questo in modo particolare in parlanti con poca istruzione. Es.

Manager resta/'mænɪdʒə/ in parlanti di una certa cultura, ma diventa/'mænɪdʒer/ in parlanti con una scarsa cultura.

Lo stesso per *boy-scout*/'boiskaut/ che diventa in questi parlanti/boi'skaut/; *Christmas-tree*/'krɪsməstri:/ che diventa /kris'mas tri:/.

L'ostacolo più evidente è quello della formazione della parola, che oltre a soddisfare esigenze morfologiche deve anche apparire in una forma accettabile per l'articolazione del lessema.

L'elemento tipico e caratteristico del Maltese, come in tutte le lingue semitiche, è il modello di parola che serve per comporre tutti i derivati verbali e nominali. Nella maggioranza dei casi questo modello è trilittero o quadrilittero. Così, tramite la costante della radice K T B con l'aiuto di vocali diverse si possono comporre: