

Between Typology and Diachrony: Some Formal Parallels in Hebrew and Maltese

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Abstract: *Hebrew and Maltese are obliquely related members of the Semitic language family. Past comparative research inspired by Bible translation highlighted in atomistic fashion a number of common traits in these two languages. The present research probes aspects of selected phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical traits in Biblical and Israeli Hebrew from the comparative perspective of contemporary Maltese. Given the fact that the latter may well retain substratal elements inherited from Phoenician and Punic, the parallels tentatively indicated here, particularly in the lexical domain, may provide the basis for a reconstruction of the earliest diachronic stage of the Maltese word stock. If on the mark, it also seriously calls into question claims advanced in recent historical work on Maltese to the effect that the Arab invasion of the Maltese Islands in the 9th century entailed the complete annihilation of the indigenous population thereby breaking the continuity with the linguistic heritage of pre-Arabic ancient Malta.*

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1. Introduction

Scholarly interest in comparative aspects of Hebrew and Maltese has usually devolved upon issues raised by two scholarly Bible translations into Maltese, the first undertaken by Pietru Pawl Saydon (1895–1971), and the second by the *Għaqda Bibblika Maltija* (The Maltese Bible Society, 1996). Saydon evinced profound interest in certain formal linguistic parallels between Hebrew and Maltese that had struck him as a Bible translator, and he devoted a number of studies to this topic (e.g., 1931, 1954, 1958, 1965, and 1966). Beyond the typological parallels obtaining between these two offshoots of Semitic, a compelling reason inviting comparative research on Maltese and Hebrew is the plausible hypothesis that, notwithstanding its genesis as an Arabic dialect, present-day Maltese may nonetheless harbour pre-Arabic Semitic traits inherited from a Phoenico-Punic substrate. Phoenician was genetically the closest congener to Hebrew within the Canaanite branch of Semitic; thus resort to the latter in comparative work on Maltese broadens the data base for diachronic work since the documentation of Phoenico-Punic is somewhat fragmentary.¹

Hebrew and Maltese are obliquely related members of the Semitic language family, the genetic distance between them being a factor of the specific classification

¹ “The only written documents of Phoenicians and Carthaginians are monumental inscriptions on stone, a few ephemeral letters or notes on pieces of broken pottery, and three fragmentary papyri” (Lipiński 1321–2).

adopted. An early classification of the Semitic languages, harking back to the 19th century adduced in König (1881:12), postulated a division into four subgroups comprising North Semitic (Aramaic), South Semitic (Arabic and Ethiopic), Central Semitic (Canaanite), and East Semitic (Akkadian). A slightly different classification adopted in Hommel (1883: 63 and 442) proposed a basic division of the Semitic language family into Eastern and Western branches. The former consisted of Akkadian while the latter was subdivided into a northern branch comprising Canaanite and Aramaic, and a southern one consisting of Arabic, South Arabian, and Ethiopic. This, in fact, became a widely accepted classification of the Semitic languages after its adoption in Nöldeke (1899:9) and Brockelmann (1908: 6) and is still adhered to by several contemporary scholars: Diem (1980), Zaborski (1994), (Ratcliffe 1998) and others.

For Hebrew and Maltese this division implied assignment to two distinct subdivisions of the Semitic language family, the former being grouped with N.W. Semitic within the Canaanite language group (i.e., Phoenician, Moabite, Edomite, Amorit, and Ammonite) along with Aramaic, whereas Maltese, having originated much later — following the Arab invasion of the Maltese Islands in the late ninth century (869–70 AD) — is commonly adjudged as a peripheral subvariety of vernacular Arabic (Stumme 1904; Nöldeke 1904), itself a branch of South Semitic along with South Arabian and Ethiopic (cf. Brockelmann 1908:6).

A different, more recent, classification of the Semitic languages originally proposed by Hetzron (1974) and subscribed to by Voigt (1987), Rodgers (1991), Faber (1997), and Lipiński (1997:46–49), among others, visualizes Arabic as a member of a so-called ‘Central Semitic group’, comprising Canaanite, North Arabian (Thamudic, Lihyanite, and Safaitic), and Aramaic.² This new classification postulating a closer genetic link between Arabic and Canaanite invites a probe into convergent and divergent trends actualized in individual members of these subgroups. Significantly, in this regard, Morag (1989) has shown that comparison of Hebrew with the modern Arabic vernaculars reveals in both languages a noteworthy evolutionary drift in closely analogous directions, with the latter often recapitulating formal changes that transpired much earlier in the history of ancient Hebrew.

Thus specific instances of structural convergence between Hebrew and Arabic merit individual study combining the objectives of typological research with those of traditional historical grammar. An arresting case of parallel development is that of the definite article — already well-established during the first millennium before our era (Lipiński 1997:68) — entailing, in both cases: (a) morphophonemic gemination of word-initial consonants (Ullendorff 1965; Voigt 1998): [Heb *hab-bayit*, Ar *ad-dāru* ‘the house’], and (b) a virtually identical cognitive path in the grammaticalization of the definite article, for instance, development from a relative particle in pseudo-constructs, e.g., Biblical Heb *yōm haš-šišī* ‘the sixth day’ (Gen 1, 31; cf. Borg

² For a critique of this theory, see Corriente (2003:187–194).

2000) also common to vernacular Arabic (including Maltese; Borg 1986), Classical Arabic (Wright II, 232 D), and Punic (Friedrich 1951:140).

The present preliminary probe into specific comparative aspects of Maltese and Hebrew sets out to outline some formal parallels obtaining between these two languages from a panchronic perspective, i.e., comprising both ancient and contemporary stages of the latter. In view of the possibility, noted above, of the survival of pre-Arabic substratal features in Maltese (particularly in the realms of phonology and lexicon), considerable attention is here devoted to non-Arabic residual traces in Maltese, such as Aramaic and, possible Phoenico-Punic elements in the language (see sections II, V, and VI).

2. Phonology

2.1 Arabic *ā > Maltese [ō, ū]

In his outline of analogous developments in the diachronic morphophonemics of the verb in Standard Maltese and Hebrew, Saydon (1958) focussed specifically on the diversification of the historical vocalic schemes actualized in both languages.³ In fact, a salient and historically significant vocalic trait shared by Hebrew and Maltese — not dealt with by Saydon — is the shift of Common Semitic *ā* > *ō* typifying rural vernaculars in both Malta and Gozo:

Marsaxlokk: [rōs] ‘head’ ~ Heb *rōš* ‘Kopf’ ~ Ar *rās* | [dōr] ‘house’ ~ Heb *dōr* ‘Wohnung’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:159) ~ Ar *dār*.

Historical stressed *ā* is mostly retained unchanged in Standard Maltese, especially in contact with historical emphatics and backed consonants:

Standard Maltese: *sār* ‘he became’ < OA *šār* | *sāb* ‘he found’ < OA *šāb* | *rās* ‘head’ < Ar *rās* | *dār* ‘house’ < Ar *dār*, etc. | *ṣāl* ‘he said’ < Ar *qāl* | *ām* ‘he swam’ < Ar *‘ām* | *hāfi* ‘barefoot’ < Ar *hāfin* etc.

In historically unmarked consonantal environments, both Standard and rural varieties of Maltese ordinarily show the outcome of a fronting rule whereby OA stressed *ā* yields [ɪ:] or [ɛ:], respectively: Stand Malt [kɪ:n] ~ rural Malt [kɛ:n] ‘he was’ < OA *kān*.

Addressing the allophonic treatment of OA *ā* in the contemporary Arabic dialects, Cantineau (1960:100–1) characterized the tendency of backing the low vowel in contact with emphatic consonants as ‘un phénomène étroitement *conditionné* et assez fréquent’ and he distinguishes this allophonic shift from the phonetically sim-

³ A closely similar but independent parallel was noted for Omani Arabic in Vollers (1895:501) : [“Während die Vocalfüllung uns an das Hebräische erinnert, ...”].

ilar outcome of the aforementioned more general paradigmatic sound change continuing a pre-Arabic linguistic stratum:

Le passage régulier de tous les anciens \bar{a} longs à un timbre postérieur \bar{a} est au contraire un fait rare. Il apparaît dans les parlers paysans de Malte; il apparaît aussi dans le Liban nord. Cela est dû sans doute à des influences de substrats: on sait que l'hébreu et le phénicien-punique faisaient passer à \bar{o} , \bar{u} les anciens \bar{a} longs accentués: cela explique sans doute les faits relevés chez les paysans de Malte; on sait aussi qu'en araméen "occidental" ancien, en syriaque jacobite et dans le dialecte araméen moderne de Ma'lūla les anciens \bar{a} ont tendance à passer à \bar{a} , \bar{o} ; elle semble expliquer les prononciations telles que *lsān* «langue», *šāf* «il à vu» qu'on rencontre par exemple dans la vallée de Qadiša (Liban nord).

Cantineau is here referring to the so-called Canaanite vowel-shift of Common Semitic $*\bar{a} > \bar{o}$ that Garr (1985:31) has noted in Phoenician dialects, Ammonite, and Hebrew. However, it also shows up outside the N.W.Semitic group, its earliest traces occurring, according to Hallo and Tadmor (1977), in the Akkadian personal name *^mDUMU-ḥa-nu-ta*, where the anthroponymic component *ḥa-nu-ta* stands for *ʿanōt*, a variant of *ʿanāt*. Addressing the geography and chronology of this shift, Zadok (1977:38f) adduces three further occurrences in texts from Mari in the first quarter of the second millennium B.C. and states 'that it is hard to find any area within the Fertile Crescent where this shift has not been attested in a certain period', adding that it also occurs in West Arabian, in the Hijaz, and Yemen, as well as in modern South Arabian.

In his historical survey of the Canaanite vowel systems, Lipiński (1997:157) stated:

The Phoenician vowel system can be partially reconstructed with the help of Assyro-Babylonian, Greek, and Latin transcriptions of Phoenician words and names. The many dialectal variations result from the geographic and chronological dispersion of the sources ... The impact of the Old Canaanite change $\bar{a} > \bar{o}$ (e.g., *macom* /maqōm/ < **maqām* 'place') becomes stronger in Phoenician after the accent shift to the last syllable and the lengthening of the stressed syllable, which created a new group of long \bar{a} vowels.

Harris (1936:25) adds a systemic dimension to the chronological perspective:

In the latest period of Phoenician and Punic a definite tendency toward the close pronunciation of at least the long vowels becomes apparent. The \bar{e} which had arisen from *aī* and from tone-lengthened *i* came to be pronounced \bar{i} , and the \bar{o} was pronounced \bar{u} . Thus *sid* represents *šīd* < **šēd* < *šayd* (⟨šd⟩) 'hunt', *Movθ* is for earlier **mōt* (⟨mt⟩), *salus* (5th century A.D.) is *ša'lūs* < **ša'lōš* < **ta'lāt* 'three'.

Thus the initial vocalic shift of $\bar{a} > \bar{o}$ in Phoenician was followed by the further change of $\bar{o} > \bar{u}$ in Punic [**tāpīt* 'judge' > Phoen *šōpēt* > Pun *šūfēt*; Lipiński 1997:211]. This later shift shows up in Latin and Greek texts citing *inter alia* Punic toponyms displaying a reflex of **rʷs* 'head, headland; cape': *Rusguniae*, Πουσιβις, *Rusazus*, *Rusadir*, *Rusuccurru*, *Ruspina* (Zylharz 1954:50). Several Punic placenames

noted in the classical sources (Pliny, V: 20-5; etc.) have been identified in Krahmal'kov (2000: 436-7):

Punic: *Rūs addīr* 'Cape Grand' | *Rūs ʿesmūn* 'Cape Esmun' (= classical Cape Apollo in Tunisia) | *Rūs ʿAz* 'Cape Strong' (in Algeria) | *Rūs Milqart* 'Cape M.' (= *Heraclea Minoa* in Sicily), etc.

A formal trait that might initially obscure the substratal origin and chronology of the shift under study in a historical phonology of Maltese is the circumstance that whereas the Canaanite vowel shift replacing Common Semitic long *ā* by *ō* is ordinarily described as a general one apparently unaffected by the quality of adjacent segments, the rural Maltese reflex of historical **ā* in the Semitic lexical component of the language is mostly restricted to the adjacency of a historically velarized or backed consonant, for as noted above, OA **ā* generally undergoes systematic fronting in plain consonantal environments. Notable exceptions to this fronting rule is the masculine singular form of the demonstrative pronouns whose stem vowel is also subject to backing and rounding in Maltese rural idioms:

Mġarr village: [dōn] 'this *m.sg.*' and [dōk] 'that *m.sg.*' ~ Standard Malt *dān, dāk*.⁴

The tendency in contemporary rural Maltese idioms to restrict backing and rounding of historical *ā* to its manifestations in formerly velarized consonantal environments would seem to have arisen via diachronic fusion of the backed allophones of the latter with the outcome of the Canaanite vowel shift.

In a survey of comparative aspects of long vowels in rural idioms spoken in Gozo, Borg (1976) exemplified *inter alia* the morphophonemic complementary distribution obtaining between *ū* and *ō* < OA *ā* in the context of morphological inflection:

Rural Maltese (Gozo)		Arabic
<i>ħayyōt, f. ħayyūta</i>	'tailor, seamstress'	<i>xayyāṭ(ah)</i>
<i>battōl, f. battūla</i>	'empty (<i>m., f.</i>)	<i>baṭṭāl(ah)</i>
<i>rōs, rūsey</i>	'head, my head'	<i>rās (< raʿs), rāsī</i>
<i>dōr, dūrut</i>	'he/she turned'	<i>dār(at)</i>
<i>fōr, fūrut</i>	'it (<i>m., f.</i>) boiled over'	<i>fār(at)</i>
<i>sōm, sūmut</i>	'he/she fasted'	<i>ṣām(at)</i>
<i>sōr, sūrut</i>	'he/she became'	<i>ṣār(at)</i>

As can be inferred from these data, the distribution of the two rounded reflexes of **ā* in several varieties of rural Maltese is determined by syllable structure: [ō] occurring in closed syllables, alternating with [ū] in open syllables. Thus Maltese, in effect, retains both ancient stages of the vocalic shift entailing backing and rounding of historical **ā*. Whereas an impressionistic assessment of the morphophonemic treatment meted out to the reflexes of OA **ā* suggests that certain systemic traits pertaining to the distribution of the alternants [ō] and [ū] vary across the Maltese

⁴These forms were provided by Dr. Antoinette Grima-Vella, a native speaker of this dialect.

dialect area, the main feature that impresses itself on the observer is the pervasiveness of this sound shift in rural speech:

Rural Maltese: (Stumme 1904): **Rabat (Gozo)** — [ħsūra] (p. 55) ‘damage’ < Ar *xasāra* | [ništī³ na'rōk] ‘I wish to see you’ (p. 56) | **Mosta** — [rūtu] (p. 55) ‘she saw him’ < *rātu* | [ħmōr] ‘donkey’ (p. 58) < Ar *ħimār* || (Puech 1994): **Nadur** — [rūdžul] (p. 92) ‘mari’ < Ar *rāğīl* | [mūlta] (p. 93) ‘Malte’ < Ar *mālīta* | [sultūna] (p. 95) ‘sultane’ < Ar *sultāna* | [ʔōm] (p. 94) ‘il se leva’ < Ar *qām* | **Sannat** — [ħuttūba] (p. 40) ‘marieurs’ < Ar *xatṭāba* | [insūra] (p. 56) ‘chrétiens’ < Ar *našārā* | [sūrut] (p. 58) ‘se fit’ < Ar *šārat*, etc.

Interestingly, its highly paradigmatic character within the phonology of rural Maltese accents⁵ applies not only to native Arabic terms but also extends to integrated Romance loanwords, where it systematically replaces stressed historical [*ā] with the backed and rounded reflexes:

Rural Maltese: (Puech 1994:91, 103, 111): **Sannat** — [pa'gūna] ‘pagan’ < It *pagana* (p. 39) | [parrut'tšūni] (p. 44) ‘parishioners’ < It *parrocchiani* | [pa'tūta] (p. 50) ‘potatoes’ < It *patata* | [ğurnūta] (p. 54) ‘day’ < It *giornata* || **Nadur** — [mu'rūkli] ‘miracles’ < It *miracoli* || **Mqabba** — ['stūtwa] (p. 53) ‘statue’ < It *statua* || **Żurrieq** — [ğene'rūli] < It *generale* ‘general (adj.)’ | [per'kūzu] ‘for example’ < It *per caso* | [kapi'tūli] < It *capitale* ‘capital (adj.)’, etc.

The preceding discussion relating to possible continuity in Maltese with the Canaanite vowel shift mediated by Phoenico-Punic represents, in fact, only one facet of a broader spectrum of phonological history pertaining to three types of phonetic boundaries relevant to the analysis of rural Maltese vocalic systems: syllabic, lexical, and pausal (cf. Borg 1996b:135f). Note, for instance, the alternating reflexes of OA *ī in the following syllabically distinct morphophonemic contexts:

Ġħajnsielem (Gozo): [nseyɸ] ‘I find’ ⇐ {nsi:b} — [nsi:bik] ‘I find you (c/sg) ⇐ {nsi:bik} — [nsr:blik] ‘I find for you’ ⇐ {nsi:blik}.

The sensitivity displayed here by the phonetic feature of vowel aperture to the factor of syllable structure — entailing the alternants [-ey-] ~ [-i:-] ~ [-i:-] in rural Maltese speech — is an issue of considerable historical interest inasmuch as it appears to be unknown in the Maghreb. It invites comparison with closely analogous data reported for several Eastern Arabic vernaculars spoken across Greater Syria and Egypt:

Tripoli (Lebanon; El-Hajjé 1954:23, 24): *lān* ‘couleur’ | *lawnu* ‘sa couleur’ *bāt* ‘maison’ *bayti* ‘ma maison’ | **Egyptian Delta** (Behnstedt/Woidich 1987:207): *gayb* ‘Tasche’, *gībi* ‘meine Tasche’.

As already noted in Nöldeke (1880:34) and Lewin (1969:23), the treatment meted out in Eastern Arabic out to vocalic nuclei under different syllabic conditions can be very plausibly attributed to Aramaic substratal influence.

⁵ This statements rests on the data provided in Stumme (1904) and Puech (1994).

The salience and historical implications of the shift of Ar \bar{a} > Malt \bar{u} and \bar{o} were insightfully recognized in Vassalli (1796: xviii), where the author suggestively attributed the trait to a substratal residue of Aramaic (Syriac, in his terms). In fact, backing and rounding of Semitic $*\bar{a}$ affected both ancient and modern varieties of Aramaic, e.g., classical Syriac and modern Central Aramaic:

Neo-Aramaic (Ṭuroyo; S.E.Anatolia): *ḥmoro* ‘donkey’ | *kṭowo* ‘book’ | *ṣloṭo* ‘prayer’ | *gaboro* ‘hero’ | *lṣono* ‘language’ (own observ.).

The thesis presented here adducing the agency of a Punic substrate in Maltese assumes the survival of this language in the Maltese Islands at the time of the Arab invasion in the late 9th century. Though external historical evidence to this effect is lacking, the rule requiring systematic backing and rounding of the stressed historical $*[\bar{a}]$ —rare on this scale in the Arabic dialect area — not only confers plausibility to the the issue of continuity but also highlights a problem of considerable import to the internal evolution of Maltese, namely, the origin and chronology of what has come to be the most salient concomitant of the rural/urban split in language.

An additional and areally striking phonological trait distinguishing rural Maltese accents from Standard Maltese is the occurrence of pausal forms in the former. In most, if not all, varieties of rural Maltese, the context of pause is known to affect the surface realization of historically long word-final $*\bar{i}$ and $*\bar{u}$ which ordinarily undergo automatic diphthongization in this position. Observe contextual *ummi* ‘my mother’ and *marru* ‘they went’ alternating with pausal *ummu* and *marrow*, respectively, in the vernacular of the town of Rabat (on the island of Gozo).

Whereas pausal phenomena also appear to be completely unknown in N.African Arabic, pausally conditioned vocalic morphophonemics closely analogous with those noted for Maltese village dialects have been described for certain varieties of Eastern Arabic — significantly, from an areal standpoint — in Lebanese and North Palestinian Arabic vernaculars (cf. Fleisch 1974, Blanc 1953, 1974). This rarely noted areal link of Maltese with the specific internal history of the Arabic vernaculars of Greater Syria is, naturally, of considerable interest to an enquiry into formal tokens of continuity with putative substratal ancient Semitic, and highlights the desirability of a broader inquiry comprising, for instance, the Maltese lexicon (see §5 and §3; cf Borg 2000:198).

2.2 Treatment of historical emphatics

Old Arabic and Ancient Hebrew displayed a set of emphatic consonants believed to have developed from earlier glottalized segments in Common Semitic (Dolgopolsky 1977). Whereas Arabic, with its strikingly conservative sound system, has retained distinct reflexes of the four Semitic emphatics distinguished by phonetic velarization (i.e., \mathfrak{s} , \mathfrak{d} , $\mathfrak{\delta}$ and \mathfrak{t}), Ancient Hebrew had, like other varieties of Canaanite, only two emphatic phonemes: \mathfrak{s} and \mathfrak{t} , entailing reduction of the Old Semitic tripar-

tite opposition $*\mathfrak{s} : *d : *\delta$ to the segment $*\mathfrak{s}$. Most Arabic dialects have also reduced the formal oppositions in the emphatic series by fusing $*d$ and $*\delta$, the outcome being usually the voiced interdental, emphatic fricative δ in vernaculars that have retained the interdental articulation, alternating with the emphatic voiced dental stop d in those which fuse interdentals with corresponding stops. Maltese, having evolved from an urban Arabic vernacular, continued the latter pattern.

In Modern Hebrew and Maltese, reflexes of all historical emphatic consonants underwent a further evolutionary stage: loss of the feature of velarization. Whereas modern reflexes of Hebrew /s/ (> Mod Heb *c* [ts]) has retained its formal distinctness by reason of its affricated character,⁶ historical *t* has been fused with its non-emphatic counterpart /t/. In Maltese, the historical emphatic consonants *s*, *t*, and secondary $*d$ (< OA $*d$ and $*\delta$) underwent fusion with their plain counterparts:

OA		Maltese	Modern Hebrew
<i>sūra</i>	‘form’	<i>sūra</i>	<i>cur</i>
<i>daḥika</i>	‘he laughed’	<i>daħa</i> ⁷	<i>caxák</i> (< <i>ṣḥq</i>)
<i>ḍifr</i>	‘fingernail’	<i>difer</i>	<i>cipóren</i>
<i>tīn</i>	‘mud’	<i>tayn</i> ⁸	<i>tin</i>

In both languages, loss of emphasis is ascribable to foreign language contact, and derives from the speaker’s predisposition to attend to the secondary effects exercised by velarized segments on contiguous vowels and ignoring the actual acoustic differences between plain and velarized consonants themselves (cf. Cowell 1964:7 for Arabic); thus, loss of velarization is the outcome of the following factors: (a) the highly marked phonological character assigned to secondary articulation by speakers of languages lacking this feature; (b) the intrinsically vowel-like properties pertaining to certain types of secondary articulation, such as palatalization and velarization (Ladefoged 1975:207); (c) the fact that the short, high frequency noise of consonants is much less audible than the longer, lower-pitched vocalic formants; thus Obrecht (1968: 39f.) indicated that Arabic speakers themselves tend to rely heavily on F_2 transitions in their perception of velarization.⁹

⁶ For the history of affrication in this sound, cf. Steiner (1982).

⁷ The glottal reflex < $*q$ < OA *k* presumably attests to a hypercorrect shift of $*k > *q$ in Standard Maltese occasioned by the fusion of OA *q* and *k > k* in certain rural varieties of the language.

⁸ In the early stage of Maltese, it seems that the velarized quality of $*t$ in this word had the effect of lowering the onset of historical [$*t$] with the result that to a later generation of speakers, this syllable peak sounded like a diphthong, which eventually became the distinctive element keeping this word apart from Maltese *tīn* ‘figs’. Note the same treatment of the high front vowel in the Yemenite equivalent of this lexeme: Ar *tēn/tayn* (Behnstedt, *Bezüge* 343) and in Tunisian Judeo-Arabic *tayn* ‘argile’, Mainz, *Quelques poésies* 70, l. 11.

⁹ Note, by way of contrast, the replacement of one form of secondary articulation by another, for instance, the substitution of ‘labialized articulations for the corresponding pharyngealized consonants of Arabic words in the speech of Bantus and Uzbeks’ (Jakobson/Fant/Halle 1969:31). Speakers

Highly significant, with regard to (c) are secondary reflexes of historical emphasis; observe, for instance, the diphthong [ay] in the aforementioned Maltese lexeme ⟨tajn⟩ ‘mud’ reflecting the historical speaker’s focus of attention away from the lowered second formant typifying emphatic consonants to the perceptually more salient ‘transitional glide’ concomitant with the realization of the following high vowel. Thus the outcome of these two independent historical processes affecting historical emphasis differs in one important respect: in Maltese, loss of the emphasis opposition in consonants occasioned a compensatory increase in vocalic contrasts; while in Modern Hebrew, it has produced no secondary reflexes. Divergent treatment of historical emphasis here reflects the different circumstances surrounding its loss in the two languages: in Maltese, phasing out of emphasis was presumably a gradual process; in Modern Hebrew, as mediated to its earliest speakers in the course of the revival in the late 19th century, emphasis appears to have been altogether absent from normative pronunciations based on East European and Sefardic phonetic norms of liturgical Hebrew.

2.3 Fusion of velar and pharyngeal fricatives

Another striking diachronic parallel with Ancient Hebrew in the Maltese sound system is its treatment of pharyngeal and velar fricatives, i.e., loss of the historical functional contrast between OA /ʕ/ and /ġ/ paralleled by that obtaining between their voiceless equivalents /ħ/ and /x/, respectively:

Arabic	Maltese	Biblical Hebrew	
ʕayn	āyn	ʕayin	‘eye’
ġarb ‘west’	ārb (placename)	ʕereḅ	‘evening’
ħasib	ħaseb	ħāʕšab	‘he thought’
xamsa	ħamsa	ħāmiʕšāh	‘five’

Maltese words deriving from Old Arabic etyma with /ʕ/ and /ġ/ usually show vocalic length for both segments in stressed syllables, replicating a historical shift known from at least one variety of Neo-Aramaic: Arbel *swāta* ‘satiety’ < *šbaʕtā*, and *šrāta* ‘lamp’ < *šraʕta* ‘lamp’ < *šraġtā* (Khan 1999:30). The Maltese orthography renders both historical sounds by means of the consonantal digraph ⟨ġħ⟩: *ġħajn* ‘eye’ < Ar ʕayn, ⟨ġħereq⟩ [ˈe:reː] ‘he drowned’ < Ar *ġiriq ~ OA *ġariqa*. A consonantal reflex of these two segments shows up exclusively in stem-final position before the 3rd person pronominal suffixes {-ha} (f. sg.), and {-hom} (pl.): [seˈmaħħom] ‘he heard them’ < **samiħhum*, and [zeˈbaħħom] ‘he painted them’ < **šabaħhum*. The morphophonemic behaviour of reflexes of /ʕ/ and /ġ/ in contemporary Maltese amounts, in essence, to a historical fusion of these two sounds yielding in contemporary Maltese an abstract phoneme.

of Hausa tend to replace these Arabic sounds by ejective consonants; similarly, Chadic Arabic shows glottalized reflexes of OA emphatics (Greenberg 1947: 88).

Cantineau (1960:72) was inclined to attribute the historical treatment of the phoneme pairs /*c*/ and /*ǵ*/ and of /*h*/ and /*x*/ to a Phoenico-Punic substrate; however, historical and comparative study of Maltese phonology in the light of the present-day village idioms spoken on the Maltese Islands suggests that present reflexes of Ar /*c*/ and /*ǵ*/ in Maltese are the outcome of an independent internal shift (Borg 1978:45). Thus certain Maltese speakers on the linguistically more conservative island of Gozo — for example, in the villages of Għarb and Sannat (Puech 1994: 32) — still retain etymological /*ǵ*/ as a voiced velar fricative: Għarb [ǵada] ‘tomorrow’, [ǵana] ‘vocal music; singing’ (= Standard Malt [a:da, a:na] < OA *ǵadan*, *ǵinā*).¹⁰

3. Morphology

3.1 *Inalienable possession*

Rosén (1977:149–160) made the interesting claim that Modern Hebrew distinguishes between alienable and inalienable possession; thus, in his terms, the expression *sifr-í* ‘my book’ showing direct annexation of the possessive pronominal suffix would denote ‘the book I wrote’ whereas the analytic genitive equivalent *ha-sefer šel-í* refers to ‘a book that I happen to own’. Casual observation of the speech habits of Modern Hebrew speakers suggests that the situation vis-à-vis the implementation of the genitive is not quite as clear-cut as Rosen intimates. Some speakers seem to generally avoid using the suffixed genitive in ordinary conversation and prefer the analytic genitive, for instance, in designating degrees of kinship: *aba/ima šel-í* ‘my father/ mother’ rather than *ab-í / im-í*, presumably because the suffixed forms are perceived as pertaining to a formal speech register.

Note, however, that the analytic genitive construction for degrees of kinship differs in an important respect from instantiations of this construction with ordinary nouns, i.e., omission of the definite article (cf. *ha-xulcá šeló* ‘his shirt’, *ha-mix-nasáyim šel-í* ‘my trousers’). Furthermore, speakers who make extensive use across the board of the analytic genitive often retain the suffixation of possessive endings with certain terms that qualify semantically to be included in an inalienable class: *ba^(c)al-í* ‘my husband’, *da^(c)atí* ‘my opinion’, *zxutí* ‘my prerogative’, *le-dbaráv* ‘according to him’, etc. Thus stylistic variation across the Hebrew speech community in the surface implementation of possessive constructions somewhat blurs (without neutralizing) the formal distinction between the construct genitive and the analytical genitive.

In Maltese, the situation is much clearer though rarely adverted to in the literature.¹¹ Pronominal suffixation of nouns is restricted to a relatively closed list of terms denoting body parts:

¹⁰ A strikingly transparent instance of a substratally conditioned fusion of historical velar and pharyngeal fricatives occurs in Cypriot Maronite Arabic (Borg 1985:36).

¹¹ The remark in Vella (1831:294) regarding ‘nouns to which pronouns cannot be affixed’ is one of the few statements in the literature on Maltese recognizing this trait.

⟨ras⟩ ‘head’ | ⟨wiċċ⟩ [wittš] ‘face’ | ⟨widna⟩ ‘ear’ | ⟨ħalq⟩ ‘mouth’ | ⟨sider⟩ ‘breast’ | ⟨id⟩ ‘hand’ | ⟨qalb⟩ ‘heart’)¹² || *degrees of kinship*: ⟨omm⟩ ‘mother’ | ⟨iben⟩ ‘son’ | ⟨bint⟩ ‘daughter of’ | ⟨oħt⟩ ‘sister’, ⟨mara⟩ ‘wife’, etc. || *immovable property*: ⟨dar⟩ ‘house’ | ⟨art twelid-⟩ ‘fatherland’, etc., || *extensions of self*: ⟨leħni⟩ ‘my voice’ | ⟨tulu⟩ ‘his height’ | ⟨dehnhā⟩ [de:na] ‘her intelligence’ || *material objects closely associated with the possessor*: ⟨ħwejjġu⟩ ‘his clothes’ | ⟨butu⟩ ‘his pocket’, etc.’¹³

Interestingly, some Maltese nouns in the inalienable semantic category are inseparable from possessive suffixes; thus *bint* can only mean ‘daughter of’ never simply ‘girl’ or ‘daughter’ as in most varieties of Arabic. The mandatory character of the possessive suffix with certain Maltese kinship terms is strikingly exemplified in the expression ⟨Ghandi seba’ ħuti⟩ (*lit.* ‘to-me seven my-siblings’) = ‘I have five siblings’, where the ‘possessor’ is doubly marked.

Thus the majority of nouns in Maltese cannot take a pronominal suffix, and possessive constructions ordinarily require the genitive particle *ta* < **btā*^c < OA *matā*^c: *il-kelb ta’ Wenzu* ‘Lawrence’s dog’. This situation is somewhat different from that obtaining in the majority of Arabic dialects, where the existence of analytic genitive particles (e.g., Palestinian Ar *taba*^c/*šēt*/*šuġl*, etc.) does not impinge on the distribution of the pronominal suffix, which appears to be virtually unrestricted: *kalbi* ‘my dog’, *ktābo* ‘his book’, *qalamha* ‘her pen’, *sayyāarithum* ‘their car’, etc.

In the interests of accuracy, it is worth stressing that wherever it exists, semantic marking for inalienability in colloquial Arabic often attaches to the iconicity of suffixation itself rather than to specific nouns: Egyptian Ar *laħmi* ‘my flesh’, as opposed to *l-laħm bitā*^c*i* ‘my meat’; cf. also the equivalent Jerusalem Arabic forms *laħmi* : *il-laħm taba*^c*i*/*šēti*.

On the basis of the foregoing comments, it can be said that that main difference between Maltese and Hebrew in their treatment of the semantic category of inalienable possession is that, in the former language, it functions as an overt grammatical category, whereas in the latter it approximates the status of a covert category in the sense of Whorf (1941) defining two abstract cognitive classes that do not appear to have stable formal correlates at surface level. In both languages, the inalienable category may well be ultimately a residual Aramaic trait.

¹² For the grammar of designations for body parts in other languages, cf. Lavric (2001) and the bibliography cited there.

¹³ Similar restrictions on the distribution of personal suffixes occur in Cypriot Arabic (Borg 1985:59) where they conceivably continue a situation inherited from Aramaic. One factor that strongly argues for such an ascription is the existence in this vernacular of a special genitive construction exemplified in the expression *špinu l-ipni* ‘my son’s godfather’, *mpratu l-ammi* ‘my paternal uncle’s wife’, where the occurrence of a proleptic pronominal suffix carrying the gender and number marking of the following noun finds a parallel reflex in several varieties of Aramaic: *bayθēh dī ʔlāhā* ‘the house of God’ (Biblical Aramaic; Rosenthal 1974:25); *breh d-alōhō* ‘the Son of God’ (Syriac; Nöldeke 1904: 163). Residual reflexes of this construction occur in Turoyo *abrē-d-ammi* ‘my cousin’, *baytē-d-babi* ‘my father’s house’, *əsmē-d-ħoθi* ‘my sister’s name’, etc. (own observation); cf. Jastrow (1985: 44f.). On the inalienable category in Biblical Aramaic, see Garr (1990).

3.2 *The pseudo-dual*

Marçais (1955:345) characterized the general evolution of the dual in vernacular Arabic in the following terms: “L’opposition *dualité/pluralité*, qui existait dans la langue classique, tend à se perdre dans l’opposition plus générale *unité/pluralité*.” Blanc’s innovative 1970 analysis of the Arabic dual category spelled out some formal implications of this evolutionary process: whereas in Old Arabic, the dual morpheme encoded a syntactic concord category affecting several form classes: nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives and, as in Akkadian, continued the Old Semitic two-case system (comprising, in the nominal category, the nominative {-āni} and the oblique form {-ayni}), in Hebrew and in the Arabic dialects (including Maltese), the dual morpheme represents an inflectional trait rather than a concord category.

The same source highlighted the most striking and far-reaching development of the ancient Semitic dual in Hebrew and vernacular Arabic, i.e., its functional split into dual and pseudo-dual allomorphs, the first conveying the meaning ‘two’ and the second functioning as a surrogate plural. Observe the following Biblical Hebrew and Maltese cognate dual forms: *yōmayim* ~ ⟨jumejn⟩ ‘two days’, *šənātayim* ~ ⟨sentejn⟩ ‘two years’, as opposed to *raglayim* ~ ⟨riġlejn⟩ ‘feet’, *yādayim* ~ ⟨idejn⟩ ‘hands’, etc. In effect, both languages make very restricted use of the real dual, this being virtually limited to expressions of time and to measurements.

Gesenius-Kautsch-Cowley (1976: §88e), where no formal distinction is made between dual and pseudo-dual, states that outside the realm of numerals, use of the dual is restricted to paired parts of the body. Interestingly, a considerable degree of isomorphy with Hebrew obtains in the matter of Maltese designations of body parts taking the pseudo-dual:

‘*enayim* ~ ⟨ghajnejn⟩ ‘eyes’ | ‘*ʔōznayim* ~ ⟨widnejn⟩ ‘ears’ | ‘*šəfātayim* ~ ⟨xufftejn⟩ ‘lips’ | ‘*lehyayim* ~ ⟨ħaddejn⟩ ‘cheeks’ | ‘*kəṭəfayim* ~ ⟨kitfejn⟩¹⁴ ‘shoulders’ | ‘*yərəkayim* ~ ⟨kuxtejn⟩¹⁵ ‘thighs’ | ‘*birkayim* ~ ⟨rkupptejn, sg. rkoppa⟩ ‘knees’¹⁶ | ‘*raglayim* ~ ⟨riġlejn⟩ ‘legs’.

Equally striking in Hebrew and Maltese is their extension of the pseudo-dual to certain non-paired body parts: Heb *šippōrnayim*, *šinnayim* ‘teeth’, *mēʿayim* ‘intestines’, *mōtnayim* ‘hips’, *ʔahōrayim* ‘backside’ and M ⟨subġhajn⟩ ‘fingers’ [~ Moroccan Ar *šba*ϕ, pl *šob*ϕin ‘doigt (de la main ou du pied)’ (Premare VIII, 17)], ⟨difrejn⟩

¹⁴ Many speakers here use the integrated Romance term ⟨spalltejn⟩, sg., ⟨spalla⟩ < It *spalla* ‘shoulder’.

¹⁵ The singular is ⟨koxxa⟩ < It *koscia* ‘thigh’; the term ⟨wirkejn⟩, sg. *wirk* is still used in the literary register.

¹⁶ In a few cases, an Aramaic colouring can be plausibly suggested for unusual phonological forms of Maltese words, as in ⟨rkoppa⟩ ‘knee’, cognate with Ar *rukba*; note, in this connection, JArām *arkūbā* ‘the knee and its surrounding parts’ (M.Jastrow 1886:121).

‘fingernails’. Dual forms for fingers and teeth presumably reflect the fact that two sets or rows of each are involved.

Some minor differences also merit notice: Maltese extends the pseudo-dual to arms <dirgħajn>, whereas Hebrew, like Arabic, here prefers a plural: *zərō‘ōt*; on the other hand, Hebrew also extends the dual to items of footwear: *garbayim* ‘socks’ *na‘ālayim* ‘sandals’.

The parallel lexification in both languages of the plural forms of ‘cheeks’, ‘thighs’, and ‘shoulders’ via pseudo-duals is noteworthy from the Maltese stand-point since Old Arabic and several Eastern Arabic dialects show ordinary plurals for these terms:

Old Arabic *xadd*, pl. *xudūd* ‘cheek’ | *wirk*, pl. *awrāk* ‘thigh’ | *katif/kitf*, pl. *aktāf* ‘shoulder’ || Jerusalem Ar *šfāf* ‘lips’, *xdūd* ‘cheeks’, *ktāf* ‘shoulders’, *rukab* ‘knees’.

The analogous development of the Semitic pseudo-dual evinced in Hebrew and Maltese attests to a striking case of convergence between North West Semitic and Maghribī Arabic, possibly under the influence of Phoenico-Punic on the latter. At all events, the purely residual retention of the real dual in Biblical Hebrew and Maltese presents a notable contrast with the situation obtaining in the majority of dialects spoken in Greater Syria and Mesopotamia, where dual forms of nouns can be generated very freely (Blanc 1970a:44): Jerusalem *bintēn* ‘two girls’, *ktābēn* ‘two books’, *bētēn* ‘two houses’, etc. Furthermore, as noted in this source, the Eastern Arabic vernaculars have not only retained a more lively use of the real dual, but have also accentuated the formal difference between the real dual and the pseudo-dual by creating innovative duals for certain body parts: Palestinian *‘ēnēn* ‘eyes’ : *‘ēntēn* ‘two eyes’ (Bauer 1957:31).

4. Syntax and Morphosyntax

4.1. Constituent order

Like Hebrew, Maltese displays two main types of declarative sentences: nominal and verbal sentences. Basic word order in nominal sentences requires the subject sentence-initially in both languages:

Biblical Hebrew: *ʾattāh hā-ʾiš* (1 Samuel 12:7) ‘Thou art the man’. | **Malt** <Hija tabib> ‘My brother is a doctor’.

The reversed constituent order is pragmatically marked by additional emphasis:

Biblical Hebrew: *‘āfār ʾattāh* (Gen. 3:19) ‘Dust thou art!’ | **Malt** <Tajjed da l-inbid!> (*lit.* ‘good this the-wine’) ‘This wine is really good!’

In verbal sentences, Ancient Hebrew word order was also rather flexible being sensitive to pragmatic factors; thus while the Biblical Hebrew basic constituent order is VSO (Gesenius-Kautsch-Cowley 1910:456), as in Classical Arabic:

Biblical Hebrew: *wa-γəbārek ʔelōhīm ʔet-nōʔh̄ wə-ʔet-bānāw* ‘And God blessed Noah and his sons’ (Gen IX, 1),

several other syntactic options also occur: SVO, OVS, SOV, VOS, and OSV. In Modern Hebrew and in most Arabic dialects, including Maltese, the unmarked word order in verbal sentences is SVO:

Modern Hebrew *axi kaná mexonít* = **Palest Ar** *ʔaxūy štara sayyāra* = **Malt** *ħija xtara karozza.* ‘My brother bought a car’.

Though less frequent, VSO word order in Maltese is possible in narrative discourse; observe, for instance, the opening sentence of the book of Genesis:

⟨Fil-bidu ħalaq Alla s-sema u l-art.⟩ ‘In the beginning, God created heaven and earth’.

That the parallel with Hebrew here is not due to close translation of the original can be seen from other Maltese sentences recounting events in a narrative chain; these ordinarily begin with a verb:

⟨Instemgħat is-serena u waqaf ix-xogħol.⟩ ‘The siren was sounded and the work stopped’.

In fact, isolated sentences drawing attention to recurring or expected events often begin with a verb in Maltese:

⟨Wasal ta’ l-posta.⟩ ‘The postman arrived’. | ⟨Gie ħuk id-dar mix-xogħol. ‘Your brother came home from work’. | ⟨Bdiet niezla x-xita.⟩ ‘It started raining’.

Pragmatic constraints regulating the presentation of ‘new’ vs. ‘old’ information can also promote the VSO option in Maltese; thus, as in many Arabic colloquials, VSO is the unmarked word order in Maltese sentences with indefinite subjects:

⟨Gie wieħed jarak.⟩ ‘Someone came to see you’. | ⟨Waqa’ tifel ġo bir.⟩ ‘A boy fell into a well’. | ⟨Ċempillu xi ħadd, qalet Lwiza.⟩ (Sant 1996:16) ‘Someone rang him up, said Louise’. | **Palest Ar** *ʔaža wāħad yisʔal ʔannak.* ‘Someone came inquiring about you’.

This word order in Maltese is also common after sentence-initial adverbs:

⟨Ftit ilu mar id-dawl.⟩ ‘A short while ago, the electricity was cut’. | ⟨Illum tani ugiġħ ta’ ras.⟩ ‘Today I had a headache’. | ⟨Il-bieraħ qabditu s-sogħla.⟩ ‘Yesterday he began to cough’.

In essence, such sentences presumably conform to the pragmatics of narration; thus topicalized objects also precede the verb in Maltese:

⟨Il-ktieb sibnieħ taħt is-sodda.⟩ ‘We found the book under the bed’.

In short, word order in Maltese is, as in Ancient Hebrew, quite flexible and allows in both languages a wide margin for pragmatic factors.

Closely analogous treatment of word order in Maltese and Hebrew declarative sentences occurs in the structure of the so-called ‘subject-less sentence’ described in detail for Modern Hebrew in Berman (1980:760) where it is stated that

... such sentences typically lack an agent—either because the event in question is logically agentless, and the protagonist is an experiencer or a possessor, say, and no action is being performed: or because the speaker chooses, for some reason, to treat the event as not perpetrated by any specific individual or group of individuals.

This type of construction ordinarily encodes existentials, possessives, impersonals, modal expressions, obligations, experientials, and environmental comments, e.g., on the weather:

Maltese : *Existentials*: ⟨Hemm Alla wiehed biss.⟩ ‘There’s only one God’. | *Possessives*: ⟨Għandi zewġt-idjar.⟩ ‘I own two houses’ | *Impersonals*: ⟨Ma jhallunx immur.⟩ ‘I’m not allowed to go’ | Jisgħobbini ‘I’m sorry’ | *Modal expressions*: ⟨Ta’ min imur jarah dal-film⟩ (*lit.* of whom he goes he sees this film) = ‘This film is worth seeing’ | *Obligations*: ⟨Sa jkollok titlaq għada.⟩ (*lit.* it-will-be-to-you you go tomorrow) = ‘You’ll have to leave tomorrow’ | *Experientials*: ⟨Għandi l-għatx.⟩ ‘I’m thirsty’ | ⟨Ili hawn ħames sigħat nistenna⟩ ‘I’ve been waiting here for five hours’ | ⟨Illa marida⟩ ‘She’s been sick for a long time’ | *Environmental comments*: ⟨Il-bard illum⟩ ‘It’s cold today’ | ⟨Sarli l-ħin⟩ ‘My time is up’.

4.2 Object marking

Hebrew and Maltese both resort to mandatory formal marking of direct objects by means of a *nota accusativi*. In Hebrew the object-marking particle ordinarily has the form {ׁet} and in Maltese {l(il)}: ‘Yesterday I saw your brother’ = **Modern Hebrew** *et’mol ra’iti et ax šel’ka*. = **Malt** ⟨Il-bieraħ rajt lil ħuk.⟩

In Maltese the particle occurs before Direct Objects that are definite and animate, the semantic category of animacy here comprising: (a) common nouns and pronouns referring to animate beings, i.e., humans; (b) proper nouns (anthroponyms and certain toponyms); (c) common nouns in the semantically inalienable class, irrespective of animacy. These three types of objects requiring a formal marker are exemplified in the following display:

(a) ⟨Il-bieraħ zorna lil missierek.⟩ ‘Yesterday we visited your father’ | ⟨Hija jħobb lill oħtok.⟩ ‘My brother loves your sister’ | ⟨Jiena ngħallem l-Ingliż lill-barranin.⟩ ‘I teach foreigners English’ | ⟨Lil min rajt il-bieraħ.⟩ ‘Whom did you see yesterday?’ || (b) ⟨Il-gimġha l-oħra stidint lil Marija biex naraw film.⟩ ‘Last week I invited Mary to a film show’ | ⟨Rajna lil Malta mill-ajruplan.⟩ ‘We saw Malta from the airplane’ || (c) ⟨Jien inkattar fuq li nkattar lil nislek.⟩ ‘I shall greatly multiply thy offspring’ (Gen XVI:10) | ⟨Jithennaw dawk li jħobbu ’l ismek.⟩ ‘Those that love Thy name shall rejoice’ (Ps. V,12) | ⟨Ma rawx aktar ’il darhom.⟩ ‘They never saw their home again’ (Caruana 1989:59).

Object marking of type (c) in Maltese — here occurring with the nouns ⟨nisek⟩, ⟨isem⟩, and ⟨dar⟩ — appears to typify literary usage in a high register (e.g., Bible translation and *belles lettres*).

Concerning the distribution of object-marking in Biblical Hebrew, the grammar of Gesenius/ Kautsch / Cowley (§117) states:

The simplest way in which a noun is subordinated to a verbal form is by the addition of an accusative of the object to a transitive verb. In the absence of case-endings, this accusative can now be recognized only from the context or by the particle *ʔet*...¹⁷

However, {*ʔet*} is virtually excluded in the poetry, and it co-occurs mostly with salient nominals, for instance, with the animate indefinite pronoun *mī* ‘whom’ (Isaiah 6:8; 37:23) but not before its inanimate equivalent *māh* ‘what’. The marginal impact of animacy, among other factors conducive to use of Hebrew *ʔet*, provides an interesting semantic parallel with Maltese. It is worth noting here that the animacy constraint in the Maltese version of object marking replicates an analogous situation obtaining in Chronicles (cf. Kropat 1909) showing the particle *l-* expressing ‘an accusative, mostly personal, like Aramaic’ (Gesenius/Kautsch/Cowley, 1910: §117; Brockelmann 1908–13: §95, etc. ; Koehler/Baumgartner 1995:509–10). In view of the fact that Late Hebrew acquired the particle {*l-*} via contact with Aramaic, Late Hebrew and Maltese can be said to share a common genetic trait.

The Maltese parallel with object-marking in Biblical Hebrew is, however, only partial because, as already noted in Saydon (1964) and other studies, a close examination of Biblical usage reveals that the distribution of {*ʔet*} does not entirely coincide with the object-marking function:

Biblical Hebrew: (i) *wə-yitʔaw ham-melek yofyēk* (Psalms 45, 12) ‘So shall the king desire thy beauty’ | (ii) *wə-kī yiggaḥ šōr ʔet-īš ʔō ʔet-ʔiššāh* (Exodus 21, 28) ‘If an ox gore a man or a woman’ | (iii) *wa-yāsem yəhōwāh ʔet-ḥereb ʔiš bə-rēʕhū* (Judges 7, 22) ‘And the Lord set every man’s sword against his fellow’ | (iv) *wə-yitpaššēt yəhōnātān ʔet-ham-məʕil* ‘And Yehonatan stripped himself of the robe’ (I Samuel 18, 4) | (v) *wa-yūšab ʔet-mōšeh wə-ʔet ʔahārōn ʔel-parʕoh* ‘And Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh’ (Exodus 10, 8).

Thus in (i) the expected object particle before *yofyēk* ‘thy beauty’ does not materialize. In (ii) and (iii) it occurs before indefinite nouns and, in (iv) after a reflexive verb. In (v) it marks the patient of a passive verb.

Maltese can also additionally mark verbs by means of suffixed object pronouns but, in contrast with its use of the object particle {*l(il)*}, the occurrence of these enclitics is not fully grammaticalized since they appear mostly as cataphoric adjuncts vested with pragmatic functions without being restricted to definite and animate direct objects, e.g., in: *raytu lil ḥuk* ‘I’ve seen your brother’, and *sibthom il-kotba*

¹⁷ Actually the object-marker {*l-*} is also used in late Hebrew; its functions may have been simply to enhance the status of the animacy constraint in object-marking blurred by the generality of {*ʔet*}.

'I found the books'. Thus these examples presuppose the questions: 'Have you seen my brother?' and 'Did you find the books?'

From the comparative and historical standpoints, object-marking in Maltese is highly intriguing since it is unknown among the Arabic dialects of North Africa with which it shares several salient areal traits. In Borg (1996:138), I characterized object-marking in Maltese as *one* of a cluster of isoglosses which it shares with the Eastern Arabic vernaculars.

Whereas Direct Object marking with {l-} in dialectal Arabic is ordinarily traced back to the substratal impact of Aramaic, the specific evolution of this particle in Maltese is obscured by the fact that object-marking by means of a dative particle is also widely represented in the Romance *Sprachgebiet*:

Dans les autres langues romanes, un nouveau système à marquage différentiel de l'objet s'est constitué sur les débris du système ancien. Ce nouveau système distingue les objets humains ou animés des objets non-humains ou inanimés par l'usage de certaines prépositions: le morphème le plus fréquent est *a* (du latin *ad*, avec peut-être des vestiges du latin *ab*). (Bossong 1998:219)¹⁸

Thus this formal trait could, theoretically, also have been contracted from Old Sicilian, as exemplified by Bossong (*op. cit.*, 225): *viditi vuy a sanctu Petru* 'vous voyez Saint Pierre'.

Object-marking in Western Arabic is otherwise exclusively attested in Andalusi Arabic: *teqci lal eerhuén ... teueyét lal ġarib* 'you shall cover the naked ... you shall lodge the stranger' (cited from *Doctrina Cristiana* [Valencia, anno 1566] in Corriente 1977:126) where its source is assumed to hark back to the adstratal impact of the Spanish object marker *a* (cf. Reichenkron 1951; Isenberg 1968; Bossong 1998).

From the evolutionary standpoint then, Hebrew and Maltese can be said to stand along different points of the developmental continuum in that the former utilizes *ʔet* as a discourse marker highlighting salient arguments (animate, definite, etc.), whereas the latter, showing complete grammaticalization of this particle, would seem to represent a typologically later evolutionary stage. In view of the fact that Arabic dialects with a comparable particle (e.g., Galilean Arabic; Levin 1987; Iraqi Arabic; Blanc 1964:128f.)¹⁹ also appear to utilize it as a discourse trait, the situation of Maltese is highly distinctive.

If Object Marking in Maltese has been lineally inherited from Arabic, it can be said to constitute a feature that brings Hebrew and Maltese close to a genetic relationship via historical contact with Aramaic (indirect, in the case of Maltese). A

¹⁸ The same source indicates (p. 220) the typological parallel obtaining here with certain Semitic languages that utilize a dative particle as a direct object marker: late Akkadian, certain varieties of Aramaic, and some Arabic dialects.

¹⁹ For early use of this particle in Christian Middle Arabic, see Blau (1983:142).

similar situation obtains with regard to an Aramaic lexical residue shared by both languages (see below).

4.3 Local prepositions

In Borg (2004) I suggested that the appeal, for the Semitist, of investigating the linguistic systems of peripheral vernaculars of Arabic stems in part from the circumstance that, though language is ‘both imposed and constructed, both a set of constraints and a field of freedom’ (Hagège 1993:38), peripheral, mostly unwritten, varieties of Arabic spoken by traditionally isolated rural communities, untrammelled by monolithic, artificial forms of societal monitoring (e.g., literary normativism, register stratification, etc.), approximate more closely than their mainstream congeners the ideal state of freely evolving systems. It may thus be meaningful to test out the hypothesis that such languages display, for instance, a freer constituent order in sentences, symptomatic of a discourse structure freely admitting pragmatic strategies rather than strictly syntactic organization.

One suggestive formal trait in this connection — incidentally, indicative of an archaic historical stage, relates to the grammar of stative verbs and verbs of motion with a following nominal designating a place. Whereas most modern Arabic colloquials insert a preposition after the verb in this context (cf. Palestinian Ar *ruħt ‘al-bēt* ‘I went home’), Maltese shows less explicit grammaticalization here and does not ordinarily admit prepositions, retaining what is, in essence, an erstwhile pragmatic encoding of this semantic relationship typified in several ancient Semitic languages:

Maltese: <Wasalna Pariġi fil-ġhodu kmieni.> ‘We arrived in Paris in the early morning’ | <Fittixtu d-dar imma ma sibtx.> ‘I looked for it at home but I didn’t find it’ | <Il-bieraħ morna Ġhawdex.> ‘Yesterday we went to Gozo’ | <Ġhexna Londra ħames snin.> ‘We lived in London for five years’ | <Hija fetaħ hanut Ruma.> ‘My brother opened a shop in Rome’ | <Xtara dar il-Belt.> ‘He bought a house in Valletta’.

Old Semitic parallels occur in Hebrew, Old Arabic, in certain geographically isolated Arabic dialects, and in South Arabian (e.g., Mahri):

Biblical Hebrew: *nēšē* *has-sādeh* ‘Let us go into the field!’ | *lāleket taršiš* ‘to go to Tarshish’ (Gesenius-Kautsch-Cowley 373) | Old Arabic *ʾasīru l-qašda* ‘Ich gehe auf das Ziel los’ | Najd *ṭabba ʿl Baħrēn* ‘Il se dirigea vers B’ | Omani *ṭāḥ il-meydān* ‘Er betrat den Kampfplatz’ (Brockelmann 1913:282) | Cypriot Maronite Ar : *in-nes piruxu kull layle sala* ‘People go to church services every evening’ | *ummi efket iḏ-ḏeḡa* ‘My mother stayed in the village’ (own observ.)

This construction is rare in mainstream Arabic; its occurrence in Cairene suggests the possibility that it once enjoyed a broader distribution in the colloquials. Spitta (1880:359) attributes its unmarked character here to its brevity, a factor which may be a more authentic formal explanation than according it the grammatical status of an accusative:

Verschieden von unserer Auffassung, aber in beschränkter Weise schon im altarab. gebräuchlich und häufiger im hebr. und aeth. werden im neuarabischen die Verben der Bewegung als einfach transitive angesehen und nehmen daher den Ort, nach welchem die Bewegung sich richtet im einfachen Accusativ zu sich. Der Kürze wegen ist diese Construction bei weitem gebräuchlicher als die mit der Praeposition *li* oder *‘ala*, welche auch vorkommt.

The rule requiring omission of the preposition in Maltese tends to be required whenever the place in question occupies a high hierarchical position in the speaker’s consciousness (home, church, school, hospital, work-place, etc.):

Maltese: ‘Ommi d-dar’ ‘My mother is at home’ | ‘Hija (qiegħed) l-isptar’ ‘My brother is in hospital’ | ‘Ganni (qiegħed) l-iskola’ ‘John is at school’ | ‘Missieri (qiegħed) ix-xogħol’ ‘My father is at work’ | ‘Ohti qegħda il-knisja’ ‘My sister is in church’.

Less salient destinations (one’s room, the garden, other people’s homes, etc.) require a preposition:

Maltese: ‘Mxejt sa l-kamra tiegħi’ ‘I walked up to my room’ | ‘Qgħadna bil-qegħda fil-ġnien’ ‘We sat in the garden’ | ‘Rqadna għand il-ġirien’ ‘We slept at the neighbours’.

Modern Hebrew ordinarily requires a preposition in this context, but a residue of the older usage occurs with points of the compass and the notion ‘home’; *nasa(‘)nu daroma* ‘we travelled south’; *xazarnu ha-bayta* ‘we returned home’, etc.

4.4 Pseudo-constructs

Maltese literary usage and, occasionally, the spoken language, retain a residue of a rarely discussed type of nominal construct consisting of [noun + definite article + adjective] — here referred to as a ‘pseudo-construct’. A striking formal trait calling for comment in nominal structures of this kind is the fact that whereas the adjective and the noun agree in gender and number, they differ in definiteness marking, the former being undefined and the latter defined. As already noted, this construction is well attested in Arabic and Canaanite:

Cl Ar *yawma s-sābī‘i* ‘on the seventh day’, *baytu l-muqaddasi* ‘the Holy Temple’ (Wright 2.232–33) | **Biblical Hebrew** *yōm ha-ššī* (Genesis 1,31; Leviticus 19,6) | **Mishnaic Hebrew** *knēset hag-gəḏōlāh* ‘the Great Synagogue’ (*Aḥot* i,1; Brockelmann 1913:209) | **Punic** *ym h’rb’y* ‘der vierte Tag’ (Friedrich 1951:140).

In Borg (1989) I identified this structure in Maltese and traced its origin in Arabic, pointing out its ancient character suggested by its incidence in other Semitic languages. In a sequel to this study concentrating specifically on the occurrence of this structure in the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls, I was able to demonstrate the close formal analogies obtaining between Hebrew and Arabic with respect to the surface forms generated by this noun phrase type. The pseudo-construct was shown to generate three types of noun phrases encoding the following semantic

classes: (a) spatial designations, (b) temporal expressions, and (c) a closed list of stock phrases lexifying salient cultural concepts.

Several features pertaining to the history of this construction emerged with clarity from these studies. Firstly, the diachronic data adduced from Classical Arabic, different evolutionary stages of Hebrew, and from a wide range of Arabic vernaculars spoken across the entire Arabic speech area leaves no room for doubting that the pseudo-construct is very old. This construction's syntactic opacity and semantic transparency have tended to cause its formal restructuring via insertion of the initial definite article. The tendency to 'correct' this construction, bringing it in line with regular syntax, may account for its marginality in Biblical Hebrew and Classical Arabic.

Whereas previous analytical approaches since the Middle Ages have tended to assume that the pseudo-construct was a subcase of *status constructus* (cf. Borg 2000: 39), I set out to show that the principle function of this structure was to provide a nominal compounding device eliminating sublexical complexity through the morphological fusion of its constituents. As noted in §1 above, this construction would seem to constitute crucial historical evidence of the parallel emergence of the definite article in both Arabic and ancient Hebrew.

Secondly, this construction, marginal in Classical Arabic and Biblical Hebrew, is fairly common in later, e.g., Mishnaic, Hebrew and, especially, in the Arabic vernaculars; this suggests that it pertained primarily to the spoken register. Thirdly, in all these language varieties, the pseudo-construct, unlike *status constructus*, encodes a closed list of noun phrases that are, nonetheless, recognized as a covert class throughout the speech community.

In Borg (2000), I demonstrated that the three aforementioned semantic classes encoded by the pseudo-construct exist both in Hebrew and Arabic:

(i) **Biblical Hebrew**: ‹ḥāšēr hag-gəḏōlāh› (1 Kgs 7:12) 'the great court' | ‹ḥārīm hag-gəḏōhīm› 'the high hills' (Ps 104:18) | ‹bōr hag-gāḏōl› 'the great pit' (1 Sam 19:22) || **CI Ar** ‹baytu l-muqaddasi› 'the Holy Temple (i.e., Jerusalem)' | ‹bābu š-ṣaḡiri› 'the little gate (as a name)' (Wright II, 232 D) — (ii) **Biblical Hebrew** ‹miy-yōm hā-rišōn 'ad yōm haš-šbi'ī› 'from the first day until the seventh day' (Ex 12:15) || **CI Ar** ‹'āmu l-awwali› 'last year' | ‹yawma s-sābi'ī› 'on the seventh day' (Wright, *loc. cit.*) — (iii) **Biblical Hebrew** ‹rū^aḥ hārā'āh› 'the evil spirit' (1 Sam 16:23) | ‹yayin haṭ-ṭōb› 'the good wine' (Cant. 7:10) || **Mishnaic Hebrew** ‹dām hay-yārōq› 'lit. green (= infected) blood' (*m. Ed.* 5.6) | ‹'ādāšīm ham-mišriyyōt› 'Egyptian lentils' (*m. Maas.* 5.8) || **CI Ar** ‹'inda sidrat al-muntahā› 'by the Lote-tree of the Boundary' (Quran 53, 14) | **Lebanese Ar** ‹arḍ el-bayḍa› 'la terre argileuse' | ‹'id el-fārḡa› 'une maine vide' (Feghali 1938:68, 84).

In the Arabic dialects, pseudo-constructs encoding rubric (iii) are very common in designations of religious festivals:

Aleppo ‹'id al-kbīr› as in ‹yōm 'id al-kbīr› 'la fête de Pâques' (Barthélemy 564) ~ **Damascus** ‹'id ləkībīr› 'Easter' (Cowell 1964:385) | **Baghdad** (Blanc 1964:126f.): ‹'id eč-čebīr› 'the Great Feast (Feast of the Sacrifice) on the seventh day' | **Lebanese Ar** ‹ḥadd ej-jdīd› 'Le Nouveau Dimanche'

(Feghali 1938:314) | Malt ‹Hadd il-ġdid› ‘Low Sunday (the Sunday after Easter)’ (Vella 1831:302).

In Maltese, as in vernacular Arabic, the most common reflexes of this structure occur in the class of toponyms:

Maltese: ‹sbarkaw taħt *Haġra s-Sewda*› ‘The disembarked at *H.S.* (Black Stone)’ (Muscat Azzopardi (1977:102) | ‹wara t-taqbida ta’ *Wied il-Kbir*› ‘after the military engagement at *W.K.*’ (Zammit 1934:42) | ‹hargu minn *Bieb il-Kbir*› ‘They emerged from *B.K.*’ (Vella 1908 = 1979:101) | ‹wara l-misraħ ta’ *Raħal il-Gdid*› ‘behind the piazza of *R.G.* (New Village)’ (Cremona 1975:35) | ‹*Haġret il-Kbira*› ‘the Big Stone’ (Wettinger 1976:8) || **Lebanese Ar:** *Hārit il-Ždīdih* ‘Neuer Weiler [New village]’ | *Burğ iš-šmāli* ‘Nördliche Turm [The Northern Tower]’ | ‹*Ayn il-Halwih*› ‘Süsse Quelle’ [Sweet Water Source] (Wild 1973:295) || **Palestinian Ar:** *Quds eš-šerīf* ‘amtlicher Name der Stadt Jerusalem’ (Bauer 1913:106) | *Bāb iż-Ždīd* ‘New Gate.’

The Maltese examples are here adduced in context since contemporary speakers tend to ‘correct’ these expressions by inserting an initial article. Thus, for instance, the Maltese term for ‘Easter’ is today invariably realized as *l-Għid il-Kbir*, though Aquilina (1990:1000) has noted that the dictionaries by A.M. Caruana and Falzon omit the initial article altogether, presumably reflecting rural speech. Vella (1831:302), purporting to describe the standard language of his time, inserts the article. Biblical Hebrew and Maltese here concur in relegating this archaic construction to marginal status, under the levelling impact of standard syntax, which in both languages requires definiteness concord between nouns and qualifying adjectives. Interestingly, in both Modern Hebrew and Maltese, the archaic stylistic flavour of the pseudo-construct has sometimes been cultivated for literary effect:

Hebrew: *viduy ha-gadol* ‘The Great Confession’ (title of a book by Moshe Leib Lilienblum, Vienna, 1876) | *yam ha-gadol* (Moshe Shamir, in *Melekh Basar ve-Dam*, 1973:22) || **Maltese:** ‹bint Franġisk ta’ *Ruħ it-Tajba*› ‘the daughter of Francis of the Good Soul’ (Ellul Mercer 1985:86) | ‹*Fi zmien il-qadim* tal-*Haġar*› ‘in the palaeolithic age’ (Vella 1934:64) (for further examples, cf. Borg 1989, *passim*),

despite the fact that in both languages it tends to be frowned upon by purists (Rosen 1977:191; Saydon 1936:18;).²⁰

5. The Lexicon

5.1. Stratification of the early Maltese word stock

The Maltese Islands constitute, from the theoretical perspective of areal linguistics, a textbook case of a relic area. Given the conservative character of linguistic relic areas, the lineally inherited word stock in Maltese would seem to constitute a repository of Semitic and general *Sprachgut* liable to shed important light not only

²⁰ The pseudo-construct is also productive in Modern Hebrew, where it also implements a lexicalization process: *yam ha-tixon* ‘the Mediterranean’, *vaʿad ha-poʿel* ‘the working committee’, etc.

on the linguistic and cultural history of Malta itself but also on that of the North African littoral and the Central Mediterranean. Note, for instance, the radiation of Doric Greek from Sicily reflected in the residual Maltese term *tames*, pl *twames* ‘the ventricle of a lamb containing rennet used for curdling milk, turning it into fresh cheese’ (Aquilina II, 1393) continuing the Greek lexeme *támisos* ‘rennet’ (Liddell / Scott 1996:1755), as in Theocritus’ expression *dérma néas tamísoio potósdon* (Idyll VII, 16) ‘a goathide still reeking of rennet’. The Sicilian Italian cognate *tumazzu* ‘il latte delle pecore, capre, bufale, etc.’ cited by Aquilina (*loc. cit.*) would seem to confirm this term’s areal source; the Maltese lexeme is, interestingly, formally closer to the Greek etymon than its Sicilian cognate.

Some Latinisms mediated by Berber to N.African Arabic also show up in Maltese: <fellus> ‘chick’ < *pullus* ‘poulet’, <qattus> ‘cat’ < *cattus* ‘chat’ (Gaffiot 1934:1276, 276). However, Malt <gawwija> ‘seagull’ < Lat *gauia* ‘moette’ (Gaffiot 1934: 705) appears to be unattested in Arabic. These residual Latinisms in Maltese plausibly harking back to ancient Greek or Latin are suggestive in historical research on ancient substrata in this language since they underscore the need for a systematic probe into parallel traces of putative ancient Semitic elements. Thus an archaic layer of Arabic survives in some commonly used terms:

<ġebel, u.n. ġebbla> ‘stone’ ~ Old and dialectal Ar *ġabal* ‘mountain; ... sometimes it means *stone*’ (Lane 376) | <seta, yista> ‘be able’ < *istā’a, yastī’u* (Lane 1891) | <ġaġħal> [ġāl] ‘he obliged (s.o. to do s.th.)’ < *ġa’ala* ‘he put’ (Hava 92) | <mindu> ‘since’ < OA **mindū* (> Cl Ar *munḏu* ~ *muḏ*, Wright 1988:174; W-D. Fischer 1972:142) | [īwa ~ īwa] ‘yes’ (continuing the high vowel *ī) < OA *ī-wallāhi ‘yea, by God!’ (Lane 132; Wright I:285) | <bosta> ‘many’ < OA *baṣṭa* (Lane 113) | <sa> ‘until, up to’: <sa l-hamsa> ‘until five o’clock’ ~ (?) N Yem *sī* ‘nach’ as in *sī tāl* ‘nach unten’ [downwards] (Behnstedt 1987:92) | <miera, imieri> ‘contradict’ < OA *mārā* (Hava 717) | <bosta> ‘many’ < OA *baṣṭa* (Lane 113) | <qatt> ‘never’ < OA *qaṭṭu*, etc.

5.2 Historical aspects of the Semitic Maltese lexicon

Despite the mutual genetic distance obtaining between them, Maltese and Hebrew show a fair degree of convergence in their respective lineally inherited lexical inventories. This can be illustrated by reference to the nomenclature of body parts, much of which pertains to the realm of basic lexicon. In the following display, the first lexeme of each pair of cognates represents Maltese, and the second, Modern Hebrew:

‘head’ <ras> ~ *roš* | ‘eye’ <ġhajjn> ~ *ayin* | ‘ear’ <widna> ~ *ozen* | ‘hair’ <xagħar> ~ *še’ar* | ‘lip’ <xoffa> ~ *šafa* | ‘tooth’ <sinna> ~ *šen* | ‘tongue’ <dsien> ~ *lašon* | ‘mouth’ <fomm>²¹ ~ *pe* | ‘arm’ <driegħ> ~ *zro’ac* | ‘shoulders’ <kitfejn> ~ *ktefayim* | ‘hand’ <id>²² ~ *yad* | ‘fingernails’ <difrejn> ~ *cipornayim* | ‘foot’ <riġel> ~ *regel* | ‘leg (between knee and ankle)’ <sieq> ~ *šok* | ‘finger’ <seba> ~ *ečba’c* | ‘thigh’ <wirk> ~ *yerek* | ‘heel’ <għarqub> ~ *akeb* (< *aqēb*), etc.

²¹ Maltese <fomm> ‘mouth’ ~ OA *fam* pertains to literary usage; the parallel term <ħalq> is more common in spoken usage.

²² Note also Maltese <jedd> ‘right, prerogative’ < dialectal Ar *yadd* ‘hand’ < OA *yad*.

Within the specific ambit of the Arabic dialect continuum, Maltese has, nonetheless, achieved a striking degree of originality, not least, on account of unusual lexi-co-semantic patterns setting it apart from most mainstream dialects of Arabic. The semantic domain of body parts reflects some of these proclivities; note the following Maltese terms, their etymologies, and their most common Arabic equivalents,

- (i) *ħhalq* ‘mouth’ ~ OA *ħalq* ‘throat, gullet’²³ — *fumm* | (ii) *gēddum* ‘chin’ ~ OA *qaydūm* ‘forepart’ — *daqn* | (iii) *zəqq* ‘belly’ ~ OA *ziqq* ‘wineskin’²⁴ — *baṭen* | (iv) *minkeb* ‘elbow’ ~ OA *mankib* ‘shoulder’ — *kū^c* | (v) *rkoppa* ‘knee’ — *rukba* | (vi) *qurriegħa* ‘cranium’ | (vii) *zokra* ‘navel’ (cf. OA *zakra* ‘small wine or vinegar skin’) — *šurra* | (viii) *għarqub* ‘heel’ ~ OA *urqūb*, pl *arāqīb* ‘Tendo Achillis; hock’ — *ka^cb*, etc.

Most of the Maltese lexemes cited here have cognates in literary or some form of colloquial Arabic. Dialectal Arabic terms for ‘mouth’, ‘chin’, and ‘belly’, usually include derivatives of the roots {fmm}, {dqn}, and {bṭn}, respectively, as in Moroccan *fomm*, *dqen* and *kers/bṭen* (Sobleman/Harrell 1963:127, 33, 21). Allowing for shifts in meaning, lexemes (i), (ii), and (iii) exist in Classical Arabic; (vi) and (vii) are well known exclusively from vernaculars of Eastern Arabic:

Cairo *qurrā^cet ir-rās* ‘skull’ (Spiro 1895:483)²⁵ | Lebanese *zəkre* ‘nombriil’ (Denizeau 1960: 223) ~ Syrian Ar *zakra* ‘nombriil’ (*Muḥīṭ* in Dozy I, 597) | North Palest Ar *zakra* (Kufri Yaṣīf, Dālyat il-Karmil, Saxnīn, Rāmi, etc.; pers. obs.),

Malt *għarqub* ‘heel’ represents a distinctly archaizing trend in the lineally inherited component of the Maltese lexicon, being paralleled mostly by dialectal Arabic *ka^cb* in the Levant but by *gdem* in Morocco; it has cognates in Yemenite, Andalusī Arabic, Mauritania, and several Bedouin vernaculars:

Yemen *argūb/arkūb* ‘Ferse’ (Behnstedt, *Glossar* II, 815) ~ Mauritania *argūb* ‘le pied (d’une montagne)’ (Pierret 1948:141)²⁶ ~ Andalusī Ar *urqūb/arkūb* ‘heel(bone)’ (Corriente 1997: 351) ~ Negev Bedouin *argūb*, pl *arāgīb* ‘hock’, etc.,

this being but one of several lexical isoglosses that Malta and Al-Andalus acquired via historical contact with Arabian dialects, Yemenite in particular (cf. Behnstedt 2003).

²³ Cf. however, Baghdad *ħalg*, pl *ħlūg* ‘mouth’ (Clarity/Stowasser/Wolfe 1964:116). The Maltese lexeme *ħfomm* occurs mainly in a literary register. North African Arabic also has derivatives of *dqm*: Tangiers *dqum* ‘bouche; employé à côté de *fumm*’ (Marçais 1911:300) ~ Yemen *duqm/dugm* ‘Mund, Schnabel’ (Behnstedt 2003:351; Piamenta I, 154).

²⁴ The lexical impact of Greek medical jargon on the Arabic lexicon plausibly accounts for the origin of this Maltese semantic pattern, cf. the Classical Arabic expression *istisqā² ziqqiyy* ‘Ascites, dropsy of the belly’ (Hava 291) calquing Gk *askitēs* ‘id.’ < *askos* ‘wineskin.’

²⁵ This lexeme appears to be now obsolete in Cairene; it is omitted in Badawi/Hinds (1986:695).

²⁶ The resort to body parts for characterizing features of topography is a widespread among Bedouin speech communities (see Musil 1928, *passim*).

Whereas the lexical and semantic transfer in (iii) may well be a local development, the semantic pattern of Malt *għaksa* ‘ankle’ finds no exact parallel in literary or vernacular Arabic, since cognates of this term in Arabic colloquial usage refer to the elbow or other parts of the body:

Aleppo *ʿaks*, pl *ʿkās* ‘coude’ (Barthélemy 543) ~ Palmyra *ʿokos*, pl *ʿakūs* ‘coude’ (Cantineau 1934:II:1) ~ Egyptian Ar *ʿaks* ‘coude’ (Bocthor in Dozy II, 156) ~ Yemenite *ʿēgaṣ* ‘penis’ (Informant) ~ Andalusī Ar *ʿuksah* ‘plait of a woman’s hair’ (Corriente 1997:361) || Cl Ar *ʿakasa l-baʿīr* ‘he tied the camel’s neck to one of his fore legs’ (Lane 2121).

The aforementioned comparative observations relating to the composition of the Maltese lexicon would seem to suggest that its areally syncretic nature is a by-product of a multiple historical stratification plausibly ascribable to contactual factors concomitant with the Maltese Islands’ settlement history.

The following remarks will attempt to reconstruct the earliest linguistic layers of the Maltese word stock with the aim of identifying in a tentative fashion putative Phoenico-Punic substrata, and surveying other non-Arabic (mainly Aramaic) substrata, either unique to Maltese (and, possibly, also inherited with Phoenico-Punic) or shared with Levantine colloquial Arabic.

Punic is believed to have survived in North Africa until the Arab invasion of the 6th century. A hypothesis postulating a Phoenico-Punic lexical stratum in Maltese entails the assumption that Punic speech survived in the Maltese Islands at least until the 9th century. The historical background to this linguistic situation has yet to be elaborated. Commenting on the general and linguistic acculturation of the Maltese Islands under Roman rule, Bonanno (1992:14) states:

In the first place, after its conquest by the Romans Malta was not Romanised overnight. For a couple of centuries the Punic substratum can be detected surviving in the forms and production techniques of the ceramic repertoire. The survival of the Punic religious cults is documented by several inscriptions. The Punic language seems to have survived even longer, at least for a further century, till the coming of the Apostle Paul to the island in AD 60. On this occasion Luke, the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, describing the Maltese *barbaroi*, clearly showed the extraneousness of their language to Greek and Latin with which he and Paul were familiar.²⁷

Unfortunately, no later reference to the linguistic situation of the Maltese Islands occurs in the classical sources. However, the lack of an explicit historical record attesting to the continuity of Punic until the arrival of Arabic-speaking settlers in Malta should not be too readily be invoked as implying the obsolescence of Punic at the time.²⁸ Malta’s insular habitat no doubt slowed down its cultural momentum in relation to its adjacent mainland; thus Ashby (1915) remarked that

²⁷ The reference here is to Acts XXVIII:1–11.

²⁸ Analogous situations have existed in the history of the Semitic languages; thus Akkadian is now known to have survived until the Christian era, and Aramaic, long presumed dead, was re-discovered in the 19th century.

the Neolithic period of the Maltese Islands lasted longer than it did in other parts of the Mediterranean.

Above all, in view of the fact that the phonological traits etched in §2.1 do not lend themselves to a satisfactory explanation within the bounds of the historical phonology of Arabic, Jean Cantineau's assumption of a Punic substratum in Maltese would seem to make good sense. Reviewing the chronology of late Punic, Lipiński (1997:60) has stated:

As far as our information goes, Neo-Punic continued to be spoken in North Africa until the 5th century A.D., perhaps down to the 11th century A.D. at Surt, in Libya ...

In this respect, the situation of Maltese bears close comparison with another traditionally well-sheltered peripheral offshoot of colloquial Arabic, i.e., Cypriot Maronite Arabic, since this special Arabic vernacular retains not only clear substratal elements of Aramaic studied in Borg (2004:36–59), but also residual links with Phoenician and Ugaritic that appear to be unique in the Arabic dialect area:

Cypriot Maronite Arabic: (1) *ʿafra* 'devil' < Phoenician *ʿprt* 'infernales partes' (Krahmalkov 2000:384) | (2) *ʿarra*, *piʿarri* 'empty out; exhaust, consume' ~ **Phoenician** *ʿry* 'empty out' (Krahmalkov 2000:387) ~ **Late Hebrew** *ʿrh* 'ausleeren' (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:617) ~ **Ugaritic** *ʿrw* 'be consumed' (Del Olmo/Sanmartín 2003: I, 185) | (3) *šaddune*, pl *štetin* 'one-fourth of an acre' ~ **Ugaritic** *šdmt* 'terrace' (Del Olmo Lete/Sanmartín 2003:810; Wyatt 1992) ~ **Jewish Aramaic** *šəḏēmāh* 'field' (M. Jastrow 1524) ~ **Biblical Hebrew** *w-mi-šaḏmōt ʿāmōrah* 'and of the fields of Gomorrah' (Deut. 32, 32; Jer. 31, 39; Hab. 3,17).

Apart from possible residues of Phoenico-Punic, Maltese occasionally displays strikingly archaic lexifications and semantic patterns sometimes harking back to early Semitic: <tarbija> 'baby' ~ Assyrian *tarbītu* 'rearling, offspring' (CAD XVIII, 223). Particularly noteworthy is the fact that, lexical conservatism aside, Maltese often retains within its lineally inherited Arabic word stock meaning patterns closer to those of cognate forms in other Semitic languages:

Malt <xela, jixli> 'accuse' ~ **Ar** *šala (i)* *ʿala* 'médire de (qqn)' (Aleppo; Barthélemy 406) ~ **Akkadian** *salāʾu* 'sully s.o. with accusation' (Black *et al.* 2000:313) | **Malt** <farrak> 'crumble, smash, shatter' ~ **Ar** *farrak* 'rub, crumble' ~ **Babylonian Aramaic** *prk* 'break, shatter' (Sokoloff 2000:447) | **Malt** <qilla> 'severity, harshness' ~ **Ar** *qilla* 'paucity' ~ **Punic** *qlh* 'curse' (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995: II, 1011) | **Malt** <felli> 'slice' ~ **Ar** *fly* 'delouse, scrutinize' ~ **Neo-Aramaic** *pāla* 'slice' (Maclean 1854:252).

The following section will attempt to identify some possible Phoenico-Punic substratal elements in present-day Maltese.

5.3 Reflexes of putative Phoenico-Punic terms in Maltese

Given the fragmentary attestation of the Phoenico-Punic lexicon, consisting largely of epigraphic material culled from funerary texts, inscriptions, etc., the material at the researcher's disposal comprises often items of basic lexicon shared with other

Semitic languages. However, proceeding via a process of elimination, it is possible to arrive at a small kernel of Semitic lexical components in Maltese untypical of literary or vernacular Arabic and, at the same time, attested in some form of Phoenico-Punic and or Hebrew, its closest congener. This screening process yields the following set of lexemes:

(1) Malt <gerrex, igerrex> ‘drive away (usually animals)’ ~ **Biblical Hebrew** *girreš* ‘vertreiben’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:149) ~ **Phoenician** *ngrš h’ bšrdn* ‘It was driven out of Sardinia’ (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:I, 144) ~ **Ugaritic** *grš* ‘eject, drive out, cast out’ (Del Olmo Lete/Sanmartín 2003:309) ~ **Syriac** *garreš* ‘to drive out’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:79) | (2) <li ma> ‘lest’ ~ **Phoenician** *lm* ‘lest’ (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:I, 256) ~ **Biblical Hebrew** *lmh* (Tomback 1984:158) || (3) Malt <saghan, jisgħon> (obs.) ‘lean against s.th. for support’ (Aquilina II, 1268) ~ **Biblical Hebrew** *niš’an* ‘sich stützen, lehnen’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:853) || (4) Malt <dudu> (term of affection used in addressing children) ~ **Biblical Hebrew** *dōd* ‘Geliebter; Vatersbruder, Oheim’ (Gesenius/Buhl 157) || (5) Malt <ghaksa (tas-sieq)> ‘ankle’ ~ **Biblical Hebrew** *ekes*, pl *ākāsīm* ‘anklet’ (Isaiah 3, 18; Prov 7, 22) || (6) Malt <qilla> ‘severity, harshness’ ~ **Punic** *qlh* ‘curse’ (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995: II, 1011) ~ **Biblical Hebrew** *qillel* ‘to curse’, *qlālāh* ‘curse, rage’ (M.Jastrow 1377) ~ **Babylonian Aram** *qlybyt* ‘sorrowful’, *qll* ‘type of demon’ (Sokoloff 2002:1020) || (7) Malt <ħatar> ‘heavy stick; cudgel’²⁹ ~ **Phoenician** *ħtr* ‘rod (to punish a son); shepherd’s crook; sceptre’ ~ **Biblical Hebrew** *ħōter* ‘Zweig, Reis’ (Gesenius/Buhl 225) ~ **Syriac** *ħutrā* ‘a staff, rod, sceptre’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:131) ~ **Cl Ar** *xītr* ‘branch’ ~ **Akkadian** *ħaṭṭu* ‘scepter, staff, stick, branch, twig’ (CAD VI, 153) ~ **Assyrian** *ħuṭaru/ħuṭartu/ħuṭūru* ‘branch, stick, staff’ ~ **Neo-Aramaic** (Kurdistan) *xūtrā* ‘stick, staff, rod, sceptre’ (Maclean 1854:94), **Mandaic** *aṭra* ‘Stab’ (Macuch 1982:13) ~ **Ṭuroyo** *ħatro* ‘Knüppel’ (Jastrow 1985:216).

Each lexeme cited here merits an individual word study assessing its specific comparative profile from a Maltese perspective. Short of a systematic study of this kind, I shall here limit myself to casual remarks on salient points of interest.

Maltese <gerrex> ‘drive away’ is phonologically marked by the initial voiced velar stop [g] which deviates from the expected affricated, palatal rendition of OA *ğīm*, as in Malt *ğera* ‘he ran’, *riğel* ‘leg’, etc.³⁰ The Cairene cognate *karasħ, yukruš* ‘drive away, hurry’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:743) is no doubt relevant here but, since (a) it is apparently rare outside Egyptian and Yemenite Arabic, and (b) lacks the support of a clear Old Arabic etymon, the Maltese term is conceivably more closely related to the Phoenico-Punic form. Significantly, the Arabic forms have no Old Arabic cognates and are probably themselves loans from Aramaic. Highly intriguing, from the chronological viewpoint here, is the semantic correspondence obtaining between Yemenite Arabic and Accadian:

²⁹ The cognate term *muxtar* ‘iron rod holding the wooden roller of a water hoist’ was presumably acquired via Aramaic. On the Aramaic lexical component in Bedouin Arabic, see Borg (to appear).

³⁰ Note the parallel case of Maltese <gidi> ‘kid’ ~ OA *ğady* ~ Heb *gōdi*. Cantineau (1960) visualizes here a case of deaffrication (ğ > g) in the context of [d]; however, since this lexeme seems to be the only instance of such a shift in the language, it may be simpler to account for it as a residual trait.

Syriac *garreš* ‘to drive out’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:79) || Ugaritic *grš* ‘eject, drive out, cast out’ (Del Olmo Lete/Sanmartín 2003: I, 309) || Samaritan Aram *grš* ‘expel’ (Tal 2000: I, 160) || Assyrian *garāšu* ‘to copulate’ (CAD V, 49) ~ Cairo *karaš*, *yukruš* ‘drive away, hurry’ and *karraš* ‘dismiss, fire, expel’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:743) ~ Yem *karaš*, *yikruš* ‘coire; hinauswerfen’, *karšah* ‘coitus’ (Behnstedt 2006:1064).

Tombback (1984:158) has insightfully drawn attention to the Maltese subordinating conjunction *li ma* ‘lest’ as a possible continuation of Canaanite {*lm*} ‘lest’ attested in Biblical and Qumran Hebrew, Phoenician, and in Aramaic. In colloquial Maltese usage, this expression often introduces clauses preceded by a command:

Maltese: *«Zommli idi li ma tizloqx u tikser sieqek!»* ‘Hold my hand lest you slip and break a leg!’ | *«Sakkar il-bieb li ma jidholx xi halliel!»* ‘Lock the door lest some burglar or other breaks in!’ || Punic: ... *lm ysgrnm ḏlm hqđšm ḏl wyqšn hmmlkt hḏ whḏdmm hmt wzrḏm lḏlm* ‘... lest these holy gods shut them up and cut off that person of royal lineage or those commoners and their descendants forever’ (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:I, 256).

In the literary register, it is not uncommon in utterances of a proverbial character, as in the following Biblical passages:

Maltese (*Book of Wisdom*): *«Kien biex jiftakru fi kliemek li ġew migduma, u minnufih im-fejja, li ma jmorrux jinsew ghalkollox u jwarrbu ḥsiebhom mill-ġid li ghamiltillhom»* (16, 11) ‘Ainsi tes oracles leurs étaient rappelés par des coups d’aiguillon, bien vite guéris, de peur que, tombés dans un profond oubli, ils ne fussent exclus de ta bienfaisance’ || (Ben Sira): *«Teħodhiex ma’ bniedem b’saħhtu, li ma tmurx tiġi f’idejh»* (8, 1) ‘Ne lutte pas avec un grand, de peur de tomber entre ses mains’ | *«Tmurx ma’ mara zienja, li ma tmurx taqa’ fix-xbiek tagħha»* (9, 3) ‘Ne vas pas au-devant une courtisane, tu pourrais tomber dans ses pièges’ | *«Tersaqx il-quddiem li ma tintefax lura»* (13, 10) ‘Ne te précipite pas, de peur d’être repoussé’³¹

The Maltese particle {*li*} here should not be confused with the homophonous relative pronoun {*li*} < colloquial Ar *illi* continuing OA *allaḏi*.

Particularly striking, as a possible relic from Phoenician is the Maltese lexeme *«saghan, jisgħon»* ‘lean against’ as in *«jisgħon mal-ħajt»* ‘he leans against the wall’ (Aquilina II, 1268) since it has only one formally and semantically transparent cognate: Hebrew *šcn* ‘sich stützen, lehnen’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:853) as in

«höy hay-yördim mišrayim læezrah ḏal-sūsīm yiššaḏenū» ‘Woe to them that go down to M. for help and depend on horses!’ (Is. 31,1).³²

Equally arresting is the semantic pattern of Maltese *«qilla»* ‘severity, harshness’ which retains no nuance of the fairly general cross-linguistic meaning attested, for instance, in Cl Ar *qillah* ‘paucity, smallness, rarity’ (Hava 622), also reflected in Biblical Hebrew *niqlā* ‘gering geschätzt, geschimpft’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954: 714), Syriac *ḏaqell* ‘to hold in light esteem’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:506), etc. This meaning is also

³¹ The translation of the Biblical text cited here is that of the *Bible de Jérusalem* (Paris 1998, Éditions du Cerf).

³² For further detail on this Biblical lexeme, see the Glossary.

pan-dialectal in colloquial Arabic. The Maltese form rather approximates the connotations conveyed by Punic *qlh* ‘curse’ (Hoftijzer / Jongeling 1995: II, 1011), Akkadian *qalālu* ‘come to shame’ (CAD XIII, 99, 57), etc. It is thus reasonable to suppose that this Maltese lexeme with its cognates retains a pre-Arabic semantic colouring.

5.4 Aramaisms in Maltese

The Semitic-based lexicon of Maltese is principally of Arabic provenance but, as intimated above and in Borg (2004:61f.), alongside cognates of commonly used terms familiar from the Arabic vernaculars, Maltese sometimes retains (a) rare Old Arabic lexemes today associated mostly or exclusively with literary Arabic usage:³³ and (b) a considerable number of terms of patently Semitic non-Arabic origin, with cognates in Aramaic and other N.W. Semitic languages. Highly interesting and instructive, in this respect, is the fact that Maltese occasionally retains lexical doublets, that is, twin reflexes of the same lexeme in its Aramaic and Arabic forms, such as *šellel* ‘baste’, and *msella* ‘large needle’ < *šll* and *sll*, respectively.

Lexical Aramaisms noted in Maltese can be classified into two groups: (a) lexemes otherwise unknown in the lineally inherited word stock of Arabic,³⁴ and (b) terms with cognates in the Arabic vernaculars, often typically attested in the Levantine dialect area. The following Aramaisms appear to be unknown in Arabic:

(1) Malt ⟨xandar, ixandar⟩ ‘broadcast (e.g., the word of God); on radio, television; divulge’ ~ Aramaic *šaddar* ‘send’ > Modern Hebrew *šider* ‘to broadcast’ ~ Official Aramaic *šdr* ‘envoyer un message à’ ~ Syriac *šaddar* ‘dimisit, misit, emisit verba’ > Chr Middle Arabic *sdr* ‘senden’ ~ Turoyo *gəməšader* ‘er wird schicken’ ~ Ma^lūla Aramaic *šattar* ‘schicken’ ~ Azerbaijan Aramaic *šdr* ‘send’³⁵ || (2) Malt ⟨felli, pl flieli⟩ ‘slice (of melon); segment (of a fruit, orange)’ ~ Qumran Aramaic *ply* ‘be removed, separated’ ~ Chr Neo-Aram (Kurdistan) *pālā* ‘a piece, part, slice’ ~ Jewish Aramaic *plā/plāh* ‘spalten’ || (3) Malt ⟨berghen⟩ ‘be inflamed with anger’ ~ Syriac *etba^rrar* ‘to grow wild, fierce, cruel; to rage’ || (4) Malt ⟨behhen, ibehhen⟩ ‘to patrol (shores)’ ~ Heb *bāḥan* ‘examine’ ~ Jewish Aramaic *bḥan* ‘examine, test’ ~ Syriac *bḥar* ‘examine, observe’ || (5) Malt ⟨barra minn⟩ ‘except’ ~ Jewish Aramaic *bar min* ‘id.’ ~ Mandaic *elbar* ‘ausgenommen, ohne, außerhalb’.

Highly intriguing with respect to these Aramaisms is the diffusional channel along which they infiltrated Maltese and their relative chronology. Being unattested in their present form in either literary or vernacular varieties of Arabic, these lexemes

³³ Lexicographic work on the language has identified much of the core lexicon in the Arabic component of Maltese, but there still remains a fairly extensive of commonly used terms of ostensibly Semitic structure whose origin has yet to be clarified: ⟨izda⟩ ‘but’, ⟨zerniq⟩ ‘dawn’, ⟨caḡḡhak⟩ ‘pebbles’, ⟨zon-qor⟩ ‘a type of very hard stone’, etc.

³⁴ Bibliographical details relating to comparative material cited in this section will be found in the glossary.

³⁵ Note also the modern parallel Malt *šandir* ~ Mod Hebrew *šidur* ‘broadcasting’.

may well have been transmitted in its entirety via Phoenician which, like Hebrew itself, had inevitably interacted with the Aramaic *lingua franca*.

Eminently striking, from the historical and areal viewpoint, is M *felli* ‘segment (of fruit)’, with its close cognate in the Christian Aramaic of Kurdistan attesting *inter alia* to the sometimes diffuse spatial relationships of Maltese within the Semitic *Sprachraum*. This topic has been addressed in Borg (2004: 53f.) where a further lexical isogloss with a similarly broad trajectory was discussed.

Another intriguing Maltese Aramaism that should probably be included in the aforementioned list of Aramaisms is Maltese \langle hatar \rangle ‘heavy stick, cudgel’ unrecorded in both Maghribī and Eastern Arabic colloquial Arabic outside the Rwala Bedouin form *mux̄tar* ‘iron rod holding the wooden roller of a water hoist’ (Musil 1928:339) and is itself evidently a loanword.

Harris (1936:69), echoing Bauer (1926:801), recognized the fact that in ‘the Phoenician which remained, in the coastal cities, a few forms are found which had been borrowed from Aramaic’. More recent assessments of the Phoenico-Punic lexicon also recognize the presence of Aramaisms, e.g., in the Phoenician inscription from Zircirli (Segert 1976:31). Krahmalkov (2000) lists the following Aramaic lexemes including some high frequency nouns, adjectives, and function words:

bgw ‘in(side) ~ Aramaic *begō*³⁶ (p. 97) | *h̄zr* ‘cup’ ~ Syriac *h̄zūrā* (p. 180) | *h̄nt*, pl *h̄nyt* ~ Biblical Hebrew *h̄nt*, pl *h̄nyt* (p. 191) | *k^cn* ~ Aramaic *ke^can* (p. 238) | *kpt* ‘bind’ ~ Aramaic *kpt* | *mⁿ* ‘vessel’ < Aram *mⁿ* (p. 266) | ‘*py* ‘wrap’ (p. 383) < ‘*py* | *ṣṣ* ‘hawk’ ~ Aramaic *sīṣā* (p. 420) | *qdm̄t* ‘early morning’ ~ Aramaic *qadm̄ta/qiddūm* (p. 424) | *sg* ‘much, many’ ~ Aramaic *saggī*’ (p. 456), etc.

The presence of Aramaisms in the Western Mediterranean, completely overlooked in previous work, however, raises the question of relative chronology pertaining to these Aramaic strata. In Borg (2004:41), I suggested that ‘a survey of Aramaisms in colloquial Arabic should extend beyond the Syro-Mesopotamian heartland of Aramaic to the periphery of its diffusional outreach where, according to the logic of the Age-and-Area hypothesis, early Aramaic lexical strata are likely to occur’. A clear instance of this scenario is provided by N.African Arabic cognates of the Jaram *m-w-ṣ* ‘saugen’ > Hebrew *mīṣ* ‘Soft’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:420); *mīṣāh* ‘that which is squeezed in’ occurring in the Biblical Hebrew passage: *mīṣ ḥālāb̄ yōṣī*’ *ḥemⁿāh* ‘Surely the wringing of milk brings forth curd’ (Prov 30, 33):

Moroccan Ar *mēs/maīs* ‘sérum’ (Premare XI, 287) ~ Andalusī Ar *mays*, pl *muyūs* ‘whey’ (Corriente 1997:517) ~ Negev Bedouin *mīs* ‘whey; Milchwasser, Molken’ (Dalman VI, 303) ~ Rwala Bedouin *temūsah* ‘press it thoroughly’ (Musil 1928:408) ~ Marazig Bedouin *mīs* ‘sérum de lait’ (Boris 1958: 595).

³⁶ Cf. Malt [ḡo] as in [ḡod-dār] ‘in the house’ < *ḡawwa *d-dār*. Since the Arabic adverb *ḡawwa* (like *barra*) is of Aramaic origin, the proclitic contraction of the full Maltese form *ḡewwa* is noteworthy since many Arabic dialects tend to expand this term: Palestinian *ḡuwwāt il-bēt* ‘innerhalb des Hauses’ (Bauer, *Wörterbuch* 164); cf. Neo-Aram *ga* ‘in, into, inside’ (Mutzafi 2004:223).

Related ultimately to Classical Ar *maṣṣ* ‘to suck’ — this lexeme’s wide distribution in the East, not excluding Bedouin Arabic, would seem to indicate that it pertains to a very early lexical layer harking back to Pre-Islamic Arabia.

Some Aramaisms in Maghribī Arabic, however, seem to be special to this region, and could therefore hark back to Phoenico-Punic influences on N.African Arabic. Observe, for instance, reflexes of Aram *iddar* ‘threshing place, barn’ (M.Jastrow 1886:18) yielding Maghribī Arabic root {ndr}:

Malt *andar* ‘threshing floor’ ~ Tlemcen *nāder* ‘tas de blé ou d’orge’ (W.Marçais 1902:316) ~ Andalusī Ar *andar*, pl *anādīr* ‘threshing floor’ (Corriente 1997:524) ~ Tunisian Ar *mandara*, pl. *manādīr* ‘aire’ (Dozy II, 660).

The usual correlate of this lexeme in the Eastern Arabic colloquials is a reflex of the cognate form *baydar* < Aram **bay(t) iddar*:

Palest Ar *bēdar*, pl *bayādīr* ‘Tenne’ (Bauer, *Wörterbuch* 300) ~ Baghdad *bēdar*, pl *bayādīr* ‘threshing-floor, pile, heap’, etc.

Egyptian Arabic and a few other vernaculars here commonly retain a reflex of **gurn* continuing lexical usage attested in ancient West Semitic spreading thence to Assyrian:

Upper Egypt *ḡurn/ḡrūn/ḡunn/ḡarn/ḡurm*, etc. ‘Dreschplatz’ (Behnstedt/Woidich 1999:198) ~ Cairo *gurn* ‘threshing floor’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:157) || Ugaritic *grn* ‘threshing floor’ (Olmo Lete/Sanmartín I, 308) || Biblical Hebrew *gōren* ‘threshing floor’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:148) | Assyrian *magranu* ‘grain pile’ > *magratu* (< **magrantu*, pl *magranātu*) ‘threshing floor’ (CAD X/1:46) || Cl Ar *ḡurn* (pl *aḡrān*) and *ḡarīn* (Hava 87).

A formal trait in the aforementioned Aramaisms in Maltese meriting special attention here is the phonetic dissimilation of medial Aram [dd] > [nd] in M ⟨xandar⟩ ‘to broadcast’ also exemplified in M ⟨andar⟩ ‘threshing-floor’ continuing an oft-discussed feature of ancient Aramaic.³⁷ The nasal substitution rule replacing geminated stops into clusters of [nasal + homorganic stop] (*Geminatendissimilation*) applied symmetrically across the occlusive series also affecting **pp*, **bb* and **kk*. Interestingly, this dissimilatory shift is paralleled in the class of geminated labials: Mandaic *ʿumba* ‘bosom’ (Drower/Macuch 1963: 344) < *ʿubbā* and Aram *šānpīr* [šāmpīr] < *šappīr* ‘schön’ (Donner/Röllig 1964: 44); note also *kinkār* ‘Talent’ < *kikkār* (Leander 1928:17–18). Interestingly, occasional reflexes of this trend occur in Maltese outside its Aramaic component, e.g., *čamfar* ‘rebuke’ < Ar *šaffar*, *nambi* ‘I need’ < **nabbi* < **nabgi* (cf. *baḡā* ‘covet, desire’).

³⁷ On this trait in Aramaic, see Spitaler (1954), Macuch (1965:XLVIII), Coxon (1977), Muraoka/Porten (1998:10–16), and Folmer (1995:74–99).

Salient Aramaisms that are also well attested in vernacular Arabic, significantly within the Levantine dialect area, include the following:

(1) Malt <xewlah> [šewlah] ‘throw; dress poorly’ ~ Christian Arabic *šlh* ‘ausziehen’ ~ Lebanese *šaleh* ‘jeter’ < fusion of Aram *šlh* ‘to strip off clothes’ and *šlk* ‘to throw’ ~ Jewish Aram *šlah* ‘ablegen, ausziehen, enthäuten’ ~ Biblical Hebrew *šalah* ‘das Fell abziehen’ ~ Neo-Aram: Kurdistan *šālix* ‘strip, be naked’ || (2) Malt <xela, yixli> ‘accuse’, <xellej> ‘spy, informer’ ~ Aleppo Ar *šala* (i) *‘ala* ‘médire de (qqn)’ ~ Biblical Hebrew *slh* ‘spurn, condemn’ ~ Syriac *slā* ‘despise, reject’ ~ Assyrian *salā’u* ‘sully s.o. with accusation’ || (3) Malt <lahlah> ‘rinse’ ~ Palest Ar *lahlah* ‘rinse’ ~ Jewish Aramaic *lahlah* ~ Punic *lah* ‘moist’ ~ Biblical Hebrew *lah* ‘feucht, frisch’, *lahāh* ‘Frische’ ~ Samaritan Aram *lyh* ‘sap’ || (4) Malt <laqat, jolqot> ‘hit’ ~ Egyptian Ar *laggat/naggat* ‘den Tieren Stroh vorwerfen; aussäen’ ~ Palest Ar *leqāt* ‘Samen einzeln fallen lassen’, *nqūt il-‘arīs* ‘money collection for the bridegroom’ ~ Lebanese Ar *laqat* ‘il jeta’ ~ Babylonian Aram *nqt* ‘take a certain direction’ || (5) Malt <xehet, jixhet> ‘throw’ ~ Damascus *šahaṭ* (a) ‘drag’ ~ Lebanese Ar *ħašaṭ* ‘wegwerfen’ ~ Syriac *šəḥaṭ* ~ Assyrian *šahātu(m)* II ‘tear away, off, down; cast off’ ~ Neo-Aram: Ma^lūla *išhaṭ*, *yišhuṭ* ‘ziehen (Schwert); zu Boden reißen’ || (6) Malt <ħobb> ‘bosom; space between the chest and a shirt’ ~ Biblical Hebrew *ħōb* ‘bosom’ ~ Jewish Palest Aramaic *ħubba* /*‘ubbā* ~ Neo-Aram: Ma^lūla *‘oppa* ‘Tasche’ ~ Turoyo *‘ebo* ‘Brusttasche’ ~ Mandaic *‘umba* ‘bosom’ || (7) Malt <xbin> ‘groom’s man; pal’ ~ Syriac *šawšə-ḫīnā* ‘socius’ ~ Galilean Aram *šwšbyn* ‘bridegroom’s attendant’ || (8) Malt <qassis, pl qassisin> ‘priest’ ~ Aleppo *qass* ‘mot qui précède le nom d’un prêtre’, *qassīs*, pl *qsūs* ‘prêtre’ ~ Palest Ar *qassīs*, pl *qsūs* ‘Pastor’ ~ Qumran Aramaic *qaššīs/qašš* ‘Presbyter’ ~ Syriac *qaššīšā* ‘eldest; presbyter, priest’ ~ Neo-Aram: Ma^lūla *qaššā* ‘Priester’ ~ Kurdistan *kašīš/qašša* ‘monk, priest’ ~ Turoyo *qašo* ‘Pfarrer’ ~ Modern Mandaic *qaššā* ‘priest (Chr)’ || (9) Malt <nir tan-newl, pl njar> ‘heddle, warp-cord attached to the beam of the loom’ ~ Cairo *nīr*, pl *nīyar* ‘heddle-wire’ ~ Palmyra *nīre* ‘joug (du métier à tisser)’ ~ Syriac *nīrā* ‘the beam of the weaver’s loom, the weft’ ~ Jewish Aram *nīrā* ‘yoke; cross-beam of the loom’ ~ Syriac *nīrā* ‘the beam of the weaver’s loom’ ~ Assyrian *nīru* ‘yoke, crosspiece’ || (10) Malt <xellel, ixellel> ‘baste’ ~ Aleppo *šall*, *yšəll*, inf. *šall/šlēle* ‘coudre en faisant des points de fronce’ ~ Cairo *šallil* ‘baste’ ~ Jewish Aramaic *šlāl* ‘heften (das gerissene Zeug), weite Stichen nähen’ || (11) Malt <xellef, ixellef> ‘to blunt (blade, sharp point)’ ~ Aleppo *šəlfə* ‘stylet’ ~ Syrian Ar *šilf* ‘Pflugschar’ ~ Syriac *šelpo*, *šulpo* ‘lamina cultri’ ~ Biblical Hebrew *šālap* ‘to draw (a sword)’ ~ Negev Bedouin *šalfe* ‘Lanzenspitze’ ~ Neo-Aramaic (Kurdistan) *šilpā* ‘a knife-blade; the head of an axe’.³⁸

This Aramaic lexical stratum in Maltese was plausibly acquired via contact with some variety of Eastern Arabic along with other well-known levantine non-lexical features noted in Stumme (1904, *passim*) and Borg (1996). In the absence of external historical evidence attesting to direct contact with speakers of levantine varieties of sedentary Arabic, the linguistic data itself remains the only factual basis for reconstructing the settlement patterns of the Maltese Islands for the Arab period of Maltese history.

6. The glossary

³⁸ Indications of sources cited here are given in the glossary.

In a recent study addressing another peripheral variety of Arabic—the special Arabic vernacular of the Cypriot Maronites of Kormakiti (Borg 2004)—I endeavoured to exemplify *inter alia* the diachronic significance of peripheral Arabic for research in a global Semitic comparative framework, specifically on the lexical and semantic profiles of mainstream varieties of Arabic. Linguistic study in this modality can sometimes reveal in dialectal subvarieties located along the periphery of the Arabic *Sprachraum* unexpected latent traces of older and even ancient Semitic usage of notable interest to the diachronist, such as suggestive patterns of lexification and semantic categorization harking back, for instance, to Canaanite and Akkadian.

This selective glossary goes beyond the immediate requirements of the foregoing comments and comprises Semitic lexemes of historical interest to a comparative and etymological dictionary of Maltese; mainly Aramaisms, Aramaized Arabic terms, putative Phoenico-Punic lexemes, etc.

ʿ-d-r

⟨andar⟩ ‘threshing-floor’ || Jewish Aramaic ʿiddar/ʿiddārā ‘a place cut off, circle (cf. *zīrāh*) whence threshing place, barn; also the grain piled up on the barn for threshing’ (M.Jastrow 18) || Syriac ʿedar/ʿedrā ‘a threshing-floor, granary’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:4) || Ar *andar* (Fraenkel 1886:136) || Assyrian *adru* ‘threshing floor’ (CAD I/1:129), cf. also *magranu* ‘grain pile’ and *magrattu* (< **magrantu*, pl *magranātu*) ‘threshing floor’ (CAD X/1:46) || Cl Ar *ḡurn* (pl *aḡrān*) and *ḡarīn* (Hava 87) || Ugaritic *grn* ‘threshing floor’ (Olmo Lete/ Sanmartín I, 308) || Biblical Hebrew *gōren* ‘threshing floor’ (Gesenius/ Buhl 1954:148) | Cl Ar *ḡurn* (pl *aḡrān*) and *ḡarīn* (Hava 87);

~ Tlemcen *nāder* ‘tas de blé ou d’orge’ (W.Marçais 1902:316) ~ Andalusī Ar *andar*, pl *anādir* ‘threshing floor’ (Corriente 1997:524) ~ Tunisian Ar *mandara*, pl. *manādir* ‘aire’ (Dozy II, 660) ~ Palest Ar *bēdar*, pl *bayādir* ‘Tenne’ (Bauer 300) ~ Baghdad *bēdar*, pl *bayādir* ‘threshing-floor, pile, heap’ ~ Cairo *gurn* ‘threshing floor’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:157) ~ Upper Egypt *ḡurn/ḡrūn/ḡunn/ḡarn/ḡurm*, etc. ‘Dreschplatz’ (Behnstedt/Woidich 1999:198) ~ Cairo *gurn* ‘threshing floor’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:157).

[Neo-Aramaic (Jubbʿadin) *ētra* ‘Tenne’ (Arnold 1990:28). Ar *baydar* is also an Aramaism; cf. JAram ⟨bey dārey⟩ and ʿiddārā ‘Scheuer’ (Levy I, 214).]

b-ḥ-n

⟨beḥhen⟩ (v/t) ‘patrol (shores)’: ⟨baghtu kemm-il darba xwieni jbeḥhnu d-dwar⟩ ‘Time and again they sent galleys to scour the coasts’ (Caruana 1898:102) || Biblical Hebrew *baḥan* ‘Wartturm’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:91) || Jewish Aramaic *bḥan* ‘examine, test’ (Klein 69) || Syriac *bḥan* ‘test (metal), try; examine, dispute’ / *bḥar* ‘examine, observe’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:41) || Cl Ar *maḥana* (a) ‘prove a.th.; examine’ (Hava 710);

~ Palest Ar *baḥḥar* ‘sehen’ (Bauer 1957:271).

b-h-r

⟨bera, jibri⟩ ‘shine (eyes, stars); stare’: ⟨ghajnejn Pawlu bdew jibru fuqhom⟩ ‘Paul’s eyes began to stare fixedly at them’ (Caruana 1898:5) || nonclass Ar *abhar* ‘dazzle a.o. (the sun)’ (Hava 49) || **Biblical Hebrew** *bāhar*, **Jewish Aramaic** *bhar* ‘hell leuchten, glänzen’ (Levy I, 197) || **Syriac** *bhar* ‘to shine’, *bahrā* ‘dawn, twilight’ (J. Payne Smith 1903:36–7).

[Nothe the parallel elision of root-medial [h] in [‘nifmu] ‘we understand’ < **nifhmu*; the present etymology visualizes the possibility of a back formation from **yibhru* > *yibru* with concomitant reconstruction of the root as finally weak.]

~ **Cairo** *bahhar* ‘dazzle (the eyes)’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:109) ~ **Baghdad** *buhar* (*u*) ‘dazzle’: *ḡuwa š-šams buhar ʿeni* ‘The sunlight dazzles me’ (Woodhead/Beene 46).

b-w-q

⟨bewwaq⟩ ‘make hollow’ (Aquilina I, 108) || **Biblical Hebrew** *būqāh* ‘Leere, Öde’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:89) || **Latin** *bucca* (applied to anything hollow; a cavity in the knee-joint; the cavity formed by the shell of the *nauplius*’, *būcina/buccina* ‘a curved trumpet or horn’ (OLD 244);

~ **Cairo** *bū*, pl *abwā* ‘trumpet’: *ʿīd al-abwā* ‘Rosh Hashanah; Jewish New Year’ (Badawi/Hinds 113).

b-ʿ-r

⟨berghen⟩ ‘incite s.o. to anger’ || **Biblical Hebrew** *bāʿar* ‘it burned, blazed; it was consumed’ (Klein 79) || Phoen *b-ʿ-r* piel (?) ‘set on fire’ (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:I, 121) || **Syriac** *etbaʿrar* ‘grow wild, fierce, cruel; rage’ (J. Payne Smith 1903:51) || **Ugaritic** *bʿr* ‘ignite, burn; scorch the earth; destroy’ (Olmo Lete/Sanmartín 2003 I:212) || **Cl Ar** *bağara* (*a*) ‘to drink without quenching its thirst (camel)’, *wāğara*, *yağiru* ‘be intensely hot (summer-noon); burn with anger against’ (Hava 40, 882).

[No relevant cognates have been noted in colloquial Arabic.]

b-r-r

⟨barra minn⟩ ‘except’: ⟨barra minni⟩ ‘except for me’ | ⟨barra minn fuqek!⟩ ‘May such a thing not happen to you!’ || **Jewish Aramaic** *bar min* ‘except’ (Nöldeke 1875, §101; Barth 1894:47), *bar min* ‘except’ (M Jastrow 188, 189).

[No parallels have been noted in colloquial Aramic. Cf. Mandaic *elbar* ‘ausgenommen, ohne, außerhalb’ (Macuch 1993:400).]

g-l-g-l

⟨gelgul, pl gliegel⟩ ‘spout of water; double chin’ (Aquilina I, 430) || **Biblical Hebrew** *gar-geret* ‘throat, gullet, wind-pipe, trachea’ (M. Jastrow 1903:265), bh. *gorgərōt* pl. ubrrt. : ‘Hals’ (Levy I, 355) || **Ugaritic** *grgr* ‘throat’ (?) (Del Olmo Lete/Sanmartín 307) || **Assyrian** *gaggurītu*

‘gullet’ (?) (CAD V, 9) || **Anc Gk** *gargāreōn* ‘uvula’ (Liddell/Scott 1996:339) ~ **Latin** *gurguliō* ‘gullet, throat’; OLD 778; [cf. Eng *gurgle* / Gm *Gurgel*]
 [Cf. Mandaic *gangærāḥa* ‘throat’ (Drower/Macuch 1963:523). On the impact of the classical languages on Bedouin Arabic, see Borg (forthcoming).]

~ **Negev Bedouin** *ġarġūr* ‘throat’ (Inform) ~ **Rwala Bedouin** *ġarġūr* ‘throat, chin’ (Musil 1928:115).

g-r-š

⟨gerrex⟩ ‘drive away (usually animals)’ || **Phoenician** *grš* (Tombback 1984:68): *ngrš hʾ bšrdn* ‘It was driven out of Sardinia’ (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:I, 144) || **Moab** *grs* (Tombback *loc. cit.*) || **Biblical Hebrew** *ġirreš* ‘vertreiben’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:149) || **Ugaritic** *grš* ‘eject, drive out, cast out’ (Del Olmo Lete/Sanmartín 309) || **Syriac** *garreš* ‘drive out’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:79) || **Samaritan Aramaic** *grš* ‘expel’ (Tal 2000: I, 160) || **Assyrian** *garāšu* ‘to copulate’ (CAD V, 49);

~ **Cairo** *karaš*, *yukruš* ‘drive away, hurry’ and *karraš* ‘dismiss, fire, expel’; *ʾitkaraš/ʾikkaraš* ‘be driven away, dismissed, expelled’ (Badawi/ Hinds 1986:743) ~ **Yemenite** *karaš*, *yikruš* ‘coire; hinauswerfen’, *karšah* ‘coitus’ (Behnstedt 2006:1064).

[Colloquial Ar *karaš* ‘drive away’ — lacking a cognate in literary Arabic — may well be a loan. Note the semantic parallel between Yemenite Ar *karaš* and Assyrian *garāš* suggesting that the rare reflexes of Ar *krš* continue a substratum.]

g-w-l

⟨Ghawdex⟩ ‘Gozo’ || **Gk** *gaûlos* ‘round-built Phoenician merchant vessel’ ~ *gaulós* ‘any round vessel, drinking-bowl’ (Liddell/Scott 1996:339) || **Latin** *Gaudös* ‘île de la Méditerranée’, *Gaulös* ‘île de la mer de Sicile’ (Gaffiot 1934:705), *gaulus* ‘a pail or bucket; a kind of ship’ (OLD 755), ‘genus nauigii paene rotundum’ (*Paul Festschrift*, p. 96 M) || **Punic** *ʿm gwl* ‘the people of Gaulos (i.e., Gozo)’ (Donner/Röllig 1966, no. 62) || **Ugaritic** *gl* ‘cup’ (del Olmo Lete/Sanmartín 297) || **Akkadian** *gullu(m)* ‘eine Schale, Becken’ (Soden 1965, I).

[The Maltese placename ⟨Ghawdex⟩ continues Gk *Gaudos*, a Hellenized term ultimately borrowed from N.W.Semitic. Note here the spirantized reflex of Gk γ (> Malt *ġ) which is already attested in Ancient Greek dialects (Buck 1928:58-59) becoming general in the Greek koine (Lejeune 1955:52).]

~ **Cairo** *gulla* ‘shot (*athl*)’ (Badawi/Hinds 167) ~ **Dathîna** *ġulla* ‘boule’ (Landberg 1920:291)

d-w-d

⟨dudu⟩ [dūdu] ‘little darling (address form used with children)’ || **Biblical Hebrew** *dōd* ‘Geliebter; Vatersbruder, Oheim’ (Gesenius/Buhl 157) ~ **Amorite** {dd} = *dad-* < **dād-* ‘favorite’ (Huffmon 1965:181) || **Ar** <dād> ‘père nourricier’ (Dozy I, 419).

d-l-l

⟨dliel⟩ ‘long flowing hair’: *ħoll dliek u ġib iz-zejt* ‘Loosen your hair and bring oil!’ (pop. saying) || **Biblical Hebrew** *dallāh* ‘das (herabwallende) Haupthaar; Aufzugsfäden, Kette (eines Webstuhls)’, *dalīl* ‘Gewinde’, *dālīlāh* ‘herabwallende Locke’ (Judges 16, 4.6.10.12f.18.) || **Cl Ar** *tadaldala* / noncl *tadandala* ‘dangle, swing’ (Hava 213);

~ **Palest Ar** *dandal* ‘herabhängen (meist von Füßen)’ (Bauer 1957:153) ~ **Cairo** *daldil* ‘dangle’, *ʔitdaldil* ‘dangle; hang limply’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:299) ~ **Baghdad** *dandal* ‘lower, let down, dangle’, *dandūla* ‘something dangling; pendant’ (Woodhead/ Beene 1964:166) ~ **East Arabian** *dandūn*, pl *danādīn* ‘pendant earring’ (Holes 2001:182) ~ **Malt** *dendel* ‘hang (coat, etc.)’.

[This Maltese lexeme is not to be confused with <dlieb> ‘easy circumstances’ ~ **Cairo** *dallil* ‘spoil, pamper’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:301) ~ OA *dall* ‘good manners’ (Hava 213) as in <naf kemm rabbiċ fid-dliel u fil-ġhozza> (Caruana 1898:95) ‘I realize with what blandishments and loving care he brought you up’. Also worth noting is the link between Ar {dly} and Semitic {dll}: cf. Ar *dāliya* ‘vine’ ~ Assyrian *tillatu* ‘grapevine, vine’ (CAD XVIII, 408).]

h-r-r

<herra> [‘e:rra] ‘gruffness in speech’: <Kellmitu bil-herra> ‘She addressed him sharply’ || **CI Ar** *harr*, *yahirru* ‘to howl, to whine from cold (dog)’, *harīr* ‘snarl of a dog; ill temper’ (Hava 822–3) || **Syriac** *harārā* ‘quarrelsome, contentious’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:107).

z-k-r

<zokra> ‘navel’ ~ **Lebanese** *zəkre* ‘nombriil’ (Denizeau 1960:223) ~ **Syrian Ar** *zakra* ‘nombriil’ (*Muḥīṭ* in Dozy I, 597) ~ **Palest Ar** *zakra* (Kufr Yasīf, Dālyat il-Karmil and other Galilean villages).

[This lexeme has no clear cognates in Old Arabic or other Semitic languages.]

z-m-r

<zabar, jizbor> (v) ‘prune trees’ || **Biblical Hebrew** *zmr* ‘cut, prune, trim’ (Klein 200) || **Galilean Aram** *zmr/zbr* (v) ‘trim, prune’ (Sokoloff 1990:172, 179); ~ **Iraqi Ar** *zabbar* ‘prune’ (Renfroe 1992:161) ~ **Andalusī Ar** *zbr* ‘tailleur, émonder la vigne’ (Dozy I, 578).

ḥ-b-b (<ʿ-b-b)

<ḥobb> ‘bosom; space between chest and shirt’ || **Biblical Hebrew** *ḥōb* ‘bosom’ (Job 31, 33) || **Jewish Aram** *ḥubbā* ‘Busen’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:209) || **Jewish Palestinian Aramaic** *ḥubba/ʿubbā* (Koehler/Baumgartner 284) || **OA** *ʿubb* ‘the base: (*aṣl*) of the sleeve ... or the fore part of the sleeve of the shirt ... but it is a vulgar word’ (Lane 1931) || **Syriac** *ʿubbā* (Feghali 1918:44) || **MLA** *ʿubb/ʿibb* ‘breast pocket’ (Wehr 684);

~ **Aleppo** *ʿabb*, pl *ʿbāb* ‘cavité en forme de poche, entre le gilet ou la chemise d’une part et le *qəmbāz* de l’autre, au dessus de la ceinture’ (Barthélemy 507) ~ **Lebanese** *ʿebb* ‘sein, partie flottante qui va du cou à la ceinture, entre la peau et les vêtements ...’ (Feghali 1935:175, fn. 1) ~ **Palest Ar** *ʿibb*, pl *ʿubūb* ‘Brusttasche durch Gürtel und Hemd gebildet’ (Bauer 1957:68) ~ **Cairo** *ʿibb* ‘space between garment and chest’ (Badawi/Hinds 558) ~ **Baghdad** *ʿebb*, pl *ʿubūb* ‘shirt front’ (Woodhead/Beene 1964:299) ~ **Āzex** *ʿabb*, **Kəndərīb/Daragözü** *ḥəbb*, pl **Ḥalanze** *ḥbūb* ‘Brusttasche’ (Vocke/Waldner 1982:107).

[Cognates also occur in Neo-Aramaic vernaculars: Maṣūla *ʿoppa* ‘Tasche’ (Bergsträßer 1921:1) ~ Turoyo *ʿebo* ‘Brusttasche’ (Jastrow 1985:178) ~ Fellīḥi *ʿubbā* ‘Tasche’ (Sachau 1895:22) ~ Mandaic *ʿumba* ‘bosom’ (Drower/Macuch 1963:344). The shift of ʿ > ḥ in this lexeme appears to have been a

Western Aramaic isogloss which today extends to S.E. Anatolian Arabic in the area of Central Aramaic; Turoyo, however, retains the voiced pharyngeal spirant.]

ḥ-ṭ-r

⟨hatar⟩ ‘heavy stick; cudgel’ || **Phoenician** *ḥṭr* ‘rod (to punish a son); twig shoot; shepherd’s crook; sceptre’ (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:I, 364–5): *thtsp ḥṭr mšpṭh* ‘may the sceptre of his rule be removed’ (Tombback 1984:102) || **Biblical Hebrew** *ḥōṭer* ‘Zweig, Reis’ (Gesenius/Buhl 225) || **Syriac** *ḥuṭrā* ‘a staff, rod, sceptre’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:131) || **OA** *xīṭr* ‘branch’ (Hava 175; Lane 764) || **Assyrian** *ḥuṭaru/ḥuṭartu/ḥuṭūru* ‘branch, stick, staff’ (Black *et al.* 2000:123) || **Akkadian** *ḥaṭtu* ‘scepter, staff, stick, branch, twig’ (CAD VI, 153);

[This lexeme is very rare in Arabic; Aramaic cognates commonly occur in modern Aramaic vernaculars: Kurdistan *xūṭrā* ‘stick, staff, rod, sceptre’ (Maclean 1854:94), Mandaic *atra* ‘Stab’ (Macuch 1982:13). Since the Maltese meaning is already attested for Aramaic, it seems vacuous to derive the Maltese form from OA *xīṭr* ‘branch’ which appears to be an isolated lexeme in Arabic and plausibly itself a loan from Aramaic.]

~ **Rwala Bedouin** *muxṭar* ‘iron rod holding the wooden roller of a water hoist’ (Musil 1928:339).

x-r-ṭ

⟨harta⟩ solely in the expression ⟨daqqa ta’ harta⟩ ‘slap on the face’ || **Cl Ar** *xaraṭa* (*u*) ‘beat off the (leaves of a tree)’ (Hava 163), **Ar** *xirṭa* ‘tranche’ (*Muhīt*, Dozy I, 363) || **Syriac** *ḥraṭ* ‘scrape, scratch’ (J.Payne Smith 157) || **Heb** *ḥāraṭ* ‘scrape, chisel’ (M.Jastrow 501);

~ **Pal Ar** *xaraṭo kaff* ‘he slapped him’ (Informant; Baqah al-Gharbiyya).

[The basic meaning of **Pal Ar** *xaraṭ* (*u*) is ‘harvesting fruit in a traditional manner’, i.e., by knocking down the olives, fruit, etc. by means of a long stick.]

ḥ-n-t

⟨hanut⟩ ‘shop’ || **Cl Ar** *ḥānūt* ‘a shop; particularly the house [or shop] of a vintner, in which wine is sold’ (Lane 661) || **Punic** *ḥnt*, pl *ḥnyt* ‘tent’ (Krahmalkov 2000:191) || **Jewish Aramaic** *ḥānūtā* ‘Kramladen, Kaufhalle’ (Levy II, 80) || **Biblical Hebrew** *ḥānūt* ‘Gewölbe des Kaufmanns’ (Gesenius/ Buhl 1954:244);

~ **Cairo** *dukkān*, pl *dakākīn* m. ‘small shop’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:299) ~ **Damascus** *dəkkān*, pl *dakākīn* m. ‘shop’ (Stowasser/Ani 1964:208) ~ **Aleppo** *dəkkān*, pl *dkēkīn* f. ‘boutique’ (Barthélemy 246) ~ **Palest Ar** *dukkān/diččān*, pl *dakākīn* ‘Kaufladen’ (Bauer 186) ~ **Algiers** *ḥānūt* ‘boutique’ (Tapiéro 1971:134) ~ **Djidjelli** *ḥānūt* ‘boutique’ (Marçais 1955:328).

ṭ-ḡ-n

⟨taḡen, pl. twaḡen⟩ [tāḡen, pl. twāḡen] ‘frying pan’ ~ **Judaeo-Arabic** *tājin* ‘frying pan’ (Diem/Radenberg 133) < **Ar** *ṭayjin* ~ *tājin* (Dozy II, 28) || **Galilean Aramaic** *tygn* ‘frying pan’, ultimately from Greek (Sokoloff 1990:223) || **Syriac** *ṭaggen* ‘broil’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:167);

~ **Mor Ar** *ṭāžēn/ṭāžīn/ṭāğēn* ‘large poêlon circulaire’ (Premare VIII, 362) ~ **JTrip** *ṭāžīn*, pl *ṭwažēn* ‘pot’ (Yoda 342) ~ **Cypriot Ar** *tayžen*, pl. *tvežen* ‘frying pan’ (Borg 2004:321) ~ **Egyptian Ar** *ṭājin* pl. *ṭawājin* ‘Melktöpfe aus gebranntem Ton’ (Behnstedt/Woidich 1987: 139) ~ **Yem** *ṭağğan* ‘fry’ (Piamenta II, 300).

ṭ-r-š

⟨trux⟩ ‘deaf’ || **CI Ar** *ʔaṭraš/ʔuṭrūš/ʔuṭruš* ‘heavy, or dull of hearing’ (“not genuine Arabic”; Lane 1841) || **Jewish Aramaic** *ṭaršā* ‘deafness’ (M.Jastrow 558; Vollers 1897:292) || **Mandaic** *trūš* ‘taub’ (Nöldeke 1875:§101; J.Barth 1894:47), *ṭarūš(a)* ‘taub’ (Macuch 1965:499).

[Both the root *ṭrš* and the nominal scheme of this lexeme have been adopted from Aramaic; in fact, the Old Arabic form of this lexeme was characterized by the medieval grammarians as ‘not genuine Arabic’; the native Arabic equivalent for ‘deaf’ is *ašamm*, f. *šammā*, pl *šumm*.]

k-d

⟨katusa⟩ ‘water pipe’ || **Biblical Hebrew** *kād* ‘kleiner Krug’ (Gesenius/Buhl 335) || **Ugaritic** *kā* ‘jar’ (Olmo Lete/Sammartín II, 429) || **Gk** *kádos* ‘jar or vessel for water or wine’ (Liddell/Scott 1996:848) || **subcl Ar** *qādūs*, pl *qawādīs* ‘trough of a water-wheel’ (Hava 592);

~ **Upper Egypt** *qādūs* ‘Tonröhre als Bienenstock’ (Behnstedt/Woidich 1994:252), ‘feeder tunnel by which the grain is introduced between the stones of a mill’ (Davies 1981:442) ~ **Marazig Bedouin** *gādūs*, pl *gawādīs* ‘godet de noria’ (Boris 513) ~ **Ḥēlān** (N. Syria) *qādūs* ‘ein grosser Zuber’ (Dalman VI, 52).

l-ḥ-l-ḥ

⟨lahlah⟩ ‘rinse in water’ || **Punic** *lh* ‘moist’ (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:I, 570) || **Samaritan Aramaic** *lyh* ‘sap’ ~ *lhḥ* ‘moisture’ (Tal II, 432) || **CI Ar** *alahha* ‘give continuous rain (cloud)’ (Hava 679);

~ **Palest Ar** *lahlah* ‘rinse’ (Informant).

l-m

⟨li ma⟩ ‘lest’: ⟨Aḥjar nmorru d-dar li ma jigix ḥuk u ma jsibniex hemm!⟩ ‘It’s best for us to go home lest your brother should come and not find us there!’ || **Phoenician** ... *lm ysgrnm ʔlmm ḥqāšm ʔl wyqšn hmmilkt hʔ whʔdmm hmt wzrʔm lʔlm* ‘... lest these holy gods shut them up and cut off that person of royal lineage or those commoners and their descendants forever’ (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:I, 256) || **Biblical Hebrew** *lmh* (Tombback 1984:158) || **Aramaic** *lāmā* (Krahmalkov 2001:256).

l-q-ṭ

⟨laqat, jolqot⟩ ‘hit’: ⟨tefaghlu ġebła u laqtu⟩ ‘He hurled a stone at him and hit him’ || noncl literary Ar *laqqat* ‘throw (coins) at’ (Hava 794), *naqqat*, pl *nuqūt* ‘pièces de monnaie qu’on jette ou qu’on donne aux musiciens dans une fête, à la mariée dans une noce’ (Dozy II, 722) || **Babylonian Aramaic** *nqt* ‘take a certain direction’ (Sokoloff 2002:774);

~ Egyptian Ar *laggaṭ/naggaṭ* ‘den Tieren Stroh vorwerfen; aussäen’ (Behnstedt/ Woidich 1994:435) ~ Palest Ar *leqāṭ* ‘Samen einzeln fallen lassen (Dalman I/1:262), *nqūṭ il-ʿarīs* ‘money collection for the bridegroom’ (Granqvist 1935: II, 112, fn 1) ~ Lebanese Ar *laqaṭ* ‘il jeta’ (Feghali 1935:137, fn 3) ~ Anatolian Ar *laqaṭ* ‘säen (von Melonen)’ (Jastrow 1981:100, fn 2) ~ Baghdad *ligaṭ (u)* ‘glean, pick out, pick up’ (Woodhead/Beene 425) ~ Dathīna *naqaṭ* ‘la chute de la balle qui ricochet de l’objet frappé’ (Landberg 1909:450).

[Most Arabic vernaculars retain *lqt* ‘gather’; highly striking here is the semantic correspondence of Malt *lqt* with Lebanese, Egyptian, and S.E.Anatolian cognates, ultimately continuing an Aramaic substrate.]

(?) *m-l-t

⟨Malta⟩ [ma:lta] (toponym) || Biblical Hebrew *nimlaṭ* ‘entschlüpfen, entkommen’ (Gesenius/Buhl 428) || Gk *Melitē* || Latin *Melita* ‘île de Malte’ (Gaffiot 962) : *Transit Melitam Romanus insulam integram; Urit populatur vastat, rem hostium concinnat* ‘The Roman crosses over to Malta, an island unimpaired; he lays it waste by fire and slaughter, and finishes the affairs of the enemy’ (Cnaevius Naevius [c 264–221 B.C.], *Bellum Punicum sive Carmen Belli Poenici*, Liber IV, 31–32 ; ed. and trans., Warmington II: 1936).

[The derivation of Malta’s name from W.Semitic {mlt} has often been suggested in light of the perception of Diodorus Siculus who states: ‘The island is a colony planted by the Phoenicians, who, as they extended their trade to the western ocean, found in it a place of safe retreat, since it was well supplied with harbours and lay in the open sea’ (emphasis added). Subsequent writers have always highlighted this facet of the Maltese Islands, e.g., ‘ein vorzüglich geeigneter Ort für Zuflucht und Rast mitten im hohen Meer’ (Meltzer 1879, I:29). Another possibility suggested in Moscatti (1968:193) is that the word ʿnn on “coins which Malta started to strike shortly before the Roman occupation ... was probably the Phoenician name of the island’.]

n-y-r

⟨nir tan-newl, pl njar⟩ ‘heddle, warp-cord attached to the beam of the loom’ (Aquilina II, 914) || Cl Ar *nīra* ‘ornamental border of a piece of cloth; ... the woof of a piece of cloth; cane-roll on which the warp is rolled when put into the loom’ (Lane 2870–71) || Syriac *nīrā* ‘a yoke of oxen; the beam of the weaver’s loom, the weft’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:339) || Jewish Aramaic *nīrā* ‘yoke; cross-beam of the loom’ (Sokoloff 1990:350; M.Jastrow 909) || Assyrian *nīru* ‘yoke, crosspiece’ (CAD XI, pt. 2:260);

~ Cairo *nīr*, pl *nīyar* ‘heddle-wire’, *nōl*, pl ʿanwāl ‘loom’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:894, 892) ~ Damascus *nōl*, pl *nwāl* ‘loom’ (Stowasser/Ani 142) ~ Negev Bedouin *nīriḥ* ‘the transverse wooden stick of the loom’ (own observ.) ~ Rwala Bedouin *nīra* ‘id’ (Musil 1928:68) ~ Kuwait *minyar* ‘wooden rod holding up threads (of loom)’ (Dickson 1949:98) ~ Palmyra *nīre* ‘joug (du métier à tisser)’ (Cantineau II, 29, 25).

[Neo-Aram: Maʿlūla *nīr* ‘Joch’ (Arnold 1990:320), Ṭuroyo *nīro* (O. Jastrow 1985:179).]

s-^c-n

⟨sagħan, jisgħon⟩ ‘lean against’: ⟨jisgħon mal-ħajt⟩ ‘he leans against the wall’ (Aquilina II, 1268) || **Biblical Hebrew** *s^cn* ‘sich stützen, lehnen’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:853): ⟨hōy hay-yōrdīm mišrayīm lə^cezrāh ‘al-sūsīm yišša^cēnū⟩ ‘Woe to them that go down to M. for help and depend on horses!’ (Is. 31,1);

[Cl Ar *su^cnah*, pl *su^can* ‘pavilion’ (Hava 322) is completely isolated in Arabic and presumably a loan. This lexeme is otherwise unattested in Aramaic or in vernacular Arabic; cf. Damascus *lā taddandal əmn əš-šəbbāk* ‘Don’t lean out of the window!’ (Stowasser/Ani 1964:135) ~ Baghdad *tačča/riča/sinad* ‘lean’ (Clarity/Stowasser/Wolfe 1964:102).]

s-k-r

⟨sakkar⟩ ‘lock (door)’, ⟨sokra⟩ ‘doorlock’ || **noncl Ar** *sakkar* ‘bolt a door’ (Hava 328) || **Babylonian Aram** *sukrā* ‘bolt of a door’ (Rossell 141) || **Syr** *səkar* ‘shut up’ (J.Payne Smith 378) || **Hebrew** *yissakēr* ‘be shut, be closed (of sources of flood waters)’ (Clines 2007: VI,157) || **JArām** *sukrā* ‘Riegel, Verschluss’ (Levy III 529) || **Assyrian** *sekēru* ‘dam up, close, clog (a canal, a water course)’ (CAD XV, 210);

~ **Moroccan Ar** *šedd* ‘shut’ (Sobleman/Harrell 1963:178) ~ **Cairo** *ʔafal* ‘shut’ (Badawi/Hinds 711) ~ **Palest Ar** *sakkar* ‘zumachen ohne Schlüssel’, *sukkar(a)* ‘Türschloß’ (Bauer, *Wörterbuch* 261) ~ **Damascus** *sakkar* ‘shut (door)’ (Stowasser/Ani 210) ~ **Aleppo** *sakkar* ‘fermer (une porte)’ *səkkar(a)* ‘serrure de bois’ (Barthélemy 349) ~ **Baghdad** *sadd* ‘shut (door)’ (Clarity/Stowasser/Wolfe 1964:160).

[Note that Maltese here shares the Aramaism *skr* ‘shut’ with the Arabic vernaculars of Greater Syria.]

-k-s

⟨għaksa [ta’ s-sieq]⟩ ‘ankle’ || Cl Ar *ikās al-ba^cir* ‘Fussfessel des Kamels’ (Fraenkel 188), *aks* ‘inversion, reversal’, *aqqaša (u)* ‘bend (wood)’ (Hava 491, 488) || **Syriac** *qas* ‘curvavit’ ~ **Chald** *ʔaqas* (R.Payne Smith 2967) || **Biblical Hebrew** *eķes*, pl *ʔkāsīm* ‘anklet’ (Isaiah 3, 18; Prov 7, 22);

~ **Aleppo** *aks*, pl *kās* ‘coude’ (Barthélemy 543) ~ **Egyptian Ar** *aks* ‘coude’ (Boethor in Dozy II, 156) ~ **Cairo** *uks* ‘joints (of an animal)’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:591) ~ **Baghdad** *ikis*, pl *kūs* ‘elbow, elbow joint’ (Woodhead/Beene 1964:483) ~ **Yemenite Ar** *ʔegas* ‘penis’ (Infor) ~ **Andalusī Ar** *uksah* ‘plait of a woman’s hair’ (Corriente 1997:361).

-q-š

⟨għaqqux⟩ ‘intrigue; imbroglio, impiccio; perverso, malvaggio (Aquilina II, 972)’ || **Phoenician** *qš* ‘falsehood’ (Krahmalkov 2001:385) || **Biblical Hebrew** *ʔqaš* ‘verdrehen’, *ʔqašan* ‘krummhändig’, *ʔqqēš sfātāw* ‘perverse in his lips’ (Prov 19:1) || **Cl Ar** *aqqaša (u)* ‘bend (wood)’, *ʔqašat (i)* ‘twist her hair (woman)’, *ʔqaqasa* ‘entangle (an affair)’ (Hava 488) || **Syriac** *ʔqisā* (adj.) ‘twisted, bent, crooked’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:425);

~ **Palest Ar** *haqqas* ‘malign, defame; break (sticks)’ (inform. ; Bāqah al-ğarbiyya).

[Historical interaction between [ʕ] and [h] has also been suggested vis-à-vis Palestinian Arabic *šaʕlab* ‘in Flammen gehen’ ~ *šalhab* (Schmidt/Kahle 1918:76*). Note, in relation to the present Maltese lexeme, the metathesized form of this term in Maltese slang: *għaxxaq* ‘spoil, ruin s.th.’.]

p-s-q

⟨fisqija⟩ ‘swaddling clothes’, ⟨fessaq⟩ ‘swaddle (baby)’ || **Cl Ar** *fāsiqiyyah* ‘way of wearing a turban’ (Hava 562) || **Late Hebrew** *psyqyā/psqyā* (Krauss 1899:433, 472) < Gk *faskia* ‘bandage’ (Liddell/Scott 1918) < **Latin** *fascia* ‘swaddling band (for a baby)’ (OLD 677) || **Syriac** *pesqītā* ‘fasciæ, quibus mortuos involvunt’ (Brockelmann 1966:585) || **Galilean Aram** *psyqyā/pasqyā*, etc. ‘Binde am Busen (der Frauen)’ (Krauss 1898:472);

~ **Kfar ʕAbīda** *fösqiyye* ‘langes, maillot pour attacher l’enfant dans le berceau’ (Feghali 1918:64) ~ **Andalusī Ar** *fašqiyya*, pl. *fašāqī* (Dozy II:271) ~ **Cypriot Ar** *faskie* ‘swaddling band’ (< *fsq*).

p-l-y

⟨felli, pl flieli⟩ ‘slice (melon); segment (of a fruit, orange)’ || **Qumran Aramaic** *ply* ‘be removed, separated’ (Greenfield/Sokoloff 1992:91) || **Jewish Aramaic** *pālāh* ‘split, cut open’ (M. Jastrow 1181): ⟨qā⟩ ʔly rmōnā ‘er spaltete einen Granatapfel’ (Levy IV, 51) (Frayh s.v.).

[**Christian Neo-Aram** (Kurdistan) *pālā* ‘a piece, part, slice’ (Maclean 1854:252).]

p-q-d

⟨faqad/ftaqad⟩ ‘inspect’, ⟨fqad, pl fqud⟩ [ʔād/ʔūd] ‘Official inspector’ [Old title of a dignitary known as *sindaco*, mayor, dating from before the time of the Order of St. John whose duty was to visit and inspect towers and castles]; ⟨tifqid⟩ [tifʔid] ‘inspection’ (Aquilina I, 304), ⟨ftaqad⟩ ‘accuratius inspicio, inquirō, explorō; esplorare diligentemente, visitar per indagare, etc.’, ⟨ftaqid⟩ ‘inquisitio, etc.’, ⟨ftqād⟩ ‘pubblico esploratore o spione, visitatore, inquisitore, ricercatore; sindaco delle guardie, colui che va a visitare le guardie delle città, castelli, fortezze, torri, campi, od altre sentinelle’ (Vassalli 1796:185–86) || **Cl Ar** *faqada* (*i*) ‘lose/miss a.th. ; want a.th. ; be deprived of’ (Hava 570) || **Biblical Hebrew** *pāqīd* ‘angestellt’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:656), *pqūdāh* ‘watch, guard’ (M. Jastrow 1207), *mifqad* ‘tower’ (Neh 3:31) || **Syriac** *pqad* ‘command, order’ (J. Payne Smith 1903:454) || **Phoenician** *pqd* ‘administrator, oversee’, *mpqd* ‘administrator’ (Krahmalkov 2001:302) || **Ugaritic** *pqd* ‘to command’ (Olmo Lete/Sanmartín 677) || **Assyrian** *paqdu* ‘deputy, bailiff’, *pāqidu* ‘overseer, caretaker’ (CAD XII, 135, 137);

~ **Andalusī Ar** *atafaqqadu* ‘to inspect’ (Corriente 1997:403) ~ **Palest Ar** *faqad* ‘Mut, jemanden durch den Tod verlieren’ (Bauer 1957:335), ‘supervise; look after, e.g., one’s dependents (*walāyā*)’; *tfaqqad* *g̃yūbo* ‘look in one’s pockets’; n. *tfiqqid* ‘care (of one’s property, herds, etc.)’ ~ **Cairo** *itfaqqad* ‘inspect, check upon’, *iftaqad* (Chr.) ‘visit and encourage (lapsed Church members)’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:664) ~ **Baghdad** *tfaqqad* ‘keep up with, keep tabs on, show concern for’ (Woodhead/Beene 1964:357).

[Neo-Aram: Kurdistan (Chr.) *pāqid* ‘agent’, *pāqūdā* ‘an officer, overseer’ (Maclean 1854:255). Significantly, Maltese has retained nothing of the Arabic basic meaning ‘to lose’ but, like several Eastern Arabic vernaculars, displays meaning patterns close to those of the Aramaic cognates.]

p-r-k

⟨farrak, ifarrak⟩ ‘crumble; break s.th. into pieces violently, smash, shatter’: ⟨Tefgħu bomba u farrket bini⟩ ‘A bomb was dropped and it smashed a building’ || Cl Ar *faraka* ‘pick out, husk (grain, corn) between the fingers; rub a. th. with the hand’ (Hava 559) || Official Aramaic *prk* ‘break, damage’ (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995:II, 938) || Syriac *prak* ‘rub, bruise’ (J. Payne Smith 1903:460) || Babylonian Aram *prk* ‘break, shatter’ (Sokoloff 2000:447) || Assyrian *parāku* ‘Gewalt verüben’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:659);

~ Cairo *farrak* ‘rub, crumble’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:653) ~ Baghdad *farak* ‘rub, massage’ (Woodhead/Beene 1964:351).

[Maltese here retains alongside the Arabic meaning semantic patterns closer to Aramaic and Assyrian.]

p-š-k-l

⟨fixkel, ifixkel⟩ ‘he confused’ || Syriac *paškel* ‘twist, twine, spin’ (J. Payne Smith 1903:468);

~ Damascus *mfaškal* ‘krumm, schlecht geraten’ (Grotzfeld 1964:212) ~ Lebanese Ar *faškal* ‘rummage’ (Abu-Haidar 1979:180) ~ Cairo *faškil* ‘confuse, put in disorder’ (Spiro 1973:58) ~ Andalusī Ar *nifaškal* ‘confound’ (Corriente 1997:400) ~ Mosul *tfaškal/mfaškal* = *hāyir* (al-Bakrī 1972:124, 468).

q-l-l

⟨qall, jqill⟩ ‘insolesco, arrogans insolens procax protervus petulansve fio’ (Vassalli 1796:401) | ⟨qell, jqell⟩ ‘become grave or serious’: ⟨Għall-ewwel il-marda ma dehretx qalila, imma wara xi ħamest ijiem bdiet tqell u thassibni⟩ ‘Initially the illness didn’t seem grave, but after about five days it began to worry me’ (anno 1936; Saydon 1972:74) || Biblical Hebrew *qillēl* ‘to curse’, *qālālāh* ‘curse’ (M. Jastrow 1377) || Official Aramaic 𐤒𐤓𐤕 𐤌𐤍𐤕 𐤒𐤌𐤓𐤕𐤌𐤍 ‘Let not your name be lightly esteemed before them (i.e., according to their opinion)’ (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995: II, 1011–2) || Cl Ar *qall* (*i*) ‘be few in number, small in quantity; be rare’ (Hava 621) || Assyrian *qalālu* ‘come to shame’, *q/gullulu* ‘to discredit’ (CAD XIII, 99?, 57), *ya-qī-il-li-ni* ‘(The king) despised me’ (Sivan 1984:176);

~ Djidjelli *qell* ‘devenir faible, rare’ (Ph. Marçais 1955:160) ~ Cairo *qall*, *yiqill* ‘decrease, diminish, be scarce’ (Spiro 496) ~ Palest Ar *qall* (*i*) ‘sich vermindern’ (Bauer 336).

⟨qalil⟩ ‘harsh, severe; rigorous’: ⟨qalila kienet il-gwerra kontra l-Filistin⟩ ‘Harsh was the war against the Philistines’ (I Samuel 14, 52) || Official Aram *qlyl* ‘(leger >) méprise’: *nšaʔyt hlp wʔnt mlh ʔyty mlh wlp ʔyty zy qlyl mn twtb* Ahq. 112: ‘j’ai soulevé du sable et j’ai porté du sel, mais il n’est pas de chose plus légère (i.e. plus méprisable) qu’un métèque’ (Jean/Hoftijzer 1965:254).

⟨qilla⟩ ‘protervia, petulantia, ferocitas, saevitia, nec non perfidia’ (Vassalli 1796:418), ‘harshness, severity, rigour’: ⟨Erodi kien sultan tal-Lhudija magħruf għall-qilla u l-kefrija tiegħu⟩ (Serracino-Ingloft 3ed34II, 161) ‘Herod was king of Judea and known for his harshness and cruelty’ || **Punic** *qlh* ‘curse’ (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995: II, 1011) || **Babylonian Aram** *qll* ‘type of demon’ (Sokoloff 2002:1020);

~ **Cairo** *qilla* ‘scarcity, scantiness’ (Badawi/Hinds 715) ~ **Damascus** *qalle* ‘scarcity’ (Stowasser/Ani 200) ~ **Palest Ar** *qille* ‘Mangel’ (Bauer 199) ~ **Baghdad** *qilla* ‘shortage, scarcity, lack’ (Woodhead/ Beene 378).

q-r-q

⟨qorq⟩ ‘sandals’ || **Jewish Aram** *qurqā* ‘a shoe made entirely of goats’ hair or of cloth, a slipper’ (M. Jastrow 1344) || **Syriac** *qarqō* ‘thin sandals’ (J. Payne Smith 1903:521);

~ **Takrouna** *gurg* ‘paire de sandales faites d’une semelle de peau non tannée ...’ (Marçais/Guiga 3176).

q-r-q-š

⟨qarqač, iqarqač⟩ ‘make a crackling sound’ || **nonclass Ar** *qarqaš* ‘gnaw hard bread’ (Hava 601) || **Syriac** *qarqēš* ‘clash, rattle, rustle’ (J. Payne Smith 1903:521) || **Qumran Aramaic** *qarqēš* ‘klingeln mit etwas’ (Beyer 524) || **JArām** *qarqēš* ‘to knock, clap, ring’ (M. Jastrow 1427);

~ **Palest Ar** *qarqaš* ‘zerknirschen’ (Bauer 1957:374).

q-s-s

⟨qassis, pl qassisin⟩ ‘priest’ || **Cl Ar** *qass/qissīs*, vulgo *qassīs*, pl *qusūs/qissīsūn/qasāqisa* ‘the head or chief of the Christians, in knowledge or science’ (Lane 2571) || **Qumran Aram** *qaššīš / qašš* ‘Presbyter’ (Beyer 1984:755) || **Syriac** *qaššīšā* ‘eldest; presbyter, priest’ (J. Payne Smith 1903:522);

~ **Aleppo** *qass*—‘mot qui précède le nom d’un prêtre’, *qassīs*, pl *qsūs* ‘prêtre’ (Barthélemy 656) ~ **Ka^cbiyya** *qass*, **Mardin** *qašš*, pl *qəššān* ‘Pfarrer, christlicher Priester’ (Vocke/Waldner 1982:336) ~ **Cypriot Ar** *kass*, pl *ksus* ‘priest’ (Borg 2004:386) ~ **Baghdad** *qiss/qass/qissīs*, pl - *īn*, *qasāwisa / qsūs* ‘priest’ (Woodhead/Beene 1964:372) ~ **Mosul** *qass* ‘priest’ (infor) ~ **Palest Ar** *qassīs*, pl *qsūs* ‘Pastor’ (Bauer 1957:227).

[**Neo-Aram**: Ma^clūla *qaššā* ‘Priester’ (Arnold 1991:44) ~ **Urmi** *kašš/qaššā* ‘monk, priest’ (Garbell 1965:314) ~ **Ṭuroyo** *qašo* ‘Pfarrer’ (Jastrow 1990a:176) ~ **Modern Mandaic** *qaššā* ‘priest (Chr)’ (Macuch 1965:516).]

r-k-b

⟨irkoppa⟩ ‘knee’ || **Jewish Aramaic** *arkūbā* ‘the knee and its surrounding parts’ (M. Jastrow 121) ~ **Ma^clūla Aram** *rxoppṭa* ‘Knie’ (Spitaler 1938:9) || **Cl Ar** *rukba* ‘knee’ (Hava 267).

r-^c-š

⟨regħex, jirgħex⟩ (v/t) ‘cause to tremble’: ⟨tkellimni fit-triq bil-herra, tregħexni hekk quddiem missieri u ommi⟩ ‘You address me rudely on the street and cause me to blush before my father and mother’ (Caruana 1898:44) || **Jewish Aramaic** ⟨r^caš⟩ ~ **Biblical Hebrew** ⟨rā^caš⟩ ‘tremble, be in commotion’ (M.Jastrow 1489) || **Syriac** r^caš ‘rend, trample as a wild beast, convulse as a demon’, ra^cīšā ‘bruised, shattered’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:547) || **Cl Ar** ra^cas/ra^caš ‘tremble, walk sluggishly’ (Hava 257).

[The phonological free variation of the Classical Arabic forms suggests that the lexeme is of Aramaic provenance.]

~ **Cairo** ra^caš (i) ‘cause to tremble or shiver; frighten’ (Badawi/Hinds 341).

š-b-n

⟨xbin⟩ ‘companion; godfather, groom’s man’ || **OA** šabīn/išbīn, pl ašābīn ‘groom’s man’ (Hava 350) || **Syriac** šawšəbīnā ‘socius’ (Brockelmann 766) || **Galilean Aramaic** šwšbyn ‘bridegroom’s attendant’ (Sokoloff 1990:542) || **Assyrian** susapinnu ‘friend of the bridegroom participating in the wedding ceremony’ (CAD 15:416).

š-ḥ-ṭ

⟨xeħet, jixħet⟩ ‘throw’ || **Syriac** šəħaṭ (Manna 781:781; Barthélemy 380; cf. al-Asadī 1988, V: 35; David 1887:170) || **Assyrian** šəḥātu(m) II ‘tear away, off, down; cast off; remove’ (Black et al. 2000:347);

~ **Aleppo** šaḥḥaṭ ‘chasser, expulser’ (Barthélemy 380) ~ **Damascus** šaḥaṭ (a) ‘drag’ (Stowasser/Ani 71) ~ **Mardin** šaḥḥaṭ ‘verscheuchen, verjagen, wegjagen’ (Vocke/Waldner 1982: 199) ~ **Mosul** šaḥaṭ = ‘axaḏa yazḥifu wa-huwa ḡālis ‘alā alyatihi musta‘īnan bi-kaffayh’ (al-Bakrī 1972:284) ~ **Lebanese Ar** ḥašaṭ ‘wegwerfen’ (Bauer 1957:356) ~ **Kfar ‘Abīda** šarḥeṭ ‘il traīna par terre, etc. ...’ avec infixation de r après la première radicale pour marquer la nuance de fréquence, d’intensité’ (Feghali 1918:193) ~ **Bišmizzīn** li-mwayy ʿawiyi — šaḥṭit ir-rās ‘das Wasser war stark — riß die Strömung den Kopf mit sich’ (Jiha 1964:74) ~ **Palest Ar** šaḥaṭ (a) ‘schleppen’ (Bauer 1957:260) ~ **Cairo** šaḥaṭ ‘drag’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:453) ~ **rural Egyptian Ar** šataḥ ‘werfen’, šaḥṭar ‘etwas auf dem Boden schmeißen, zu Boden werfen’ (Behnstedt/ Woidich 1994:228) ~ **Oman** (Khābūra) šaḥaṭ (a) ‘tighten’ (Brockett 1985:131) ~ **Cypriot Ar** šaxxat, pišaxxet (v/t) ‘expel, throw out’.

[Neo-Aram: Ma‘lūla iṣḥaṭ, yiṣḥuṭ ‘ziehen (Schwert); zu Boden reißen, am Boden hinzerren’ (Arnold 1989:88; Spitaler 1957:337).]

š-l-ḥ

⟨xewlaḥ⟩ [šewlaḥ] ‘gettar con violenza, tirar con impeto, vibrare, lanciare, etc.’ (Vassalli 1796:639), ‘buttar via, scaraventare—accezione prettamente siriana’ (Barbera 1939–40: 1142) || **Christian Ar** šlh ‘ausziehen’ (Graf 1905:102) || **Jewish Aramaic** šlah ‘ablegen, ausziehen, enthäuten’ (Dalman 1967:424);

~ **Lebanese** šaleḥ ‘jeter’ (Feghali 1938:786) ~ **Damascus** šalah ‘ausziehen’, laḥaš, yəllḥaš/ yəllḥoš ‘werfen, hinwerfen, zu werfen’ (Grotzfeld 1965:161, 167) ~ **Aleppo** šəleḥ /šalah, yəšlah

‘retirer, ôter, enlever (ses vêtements, ses chaussures, sa coiffure, sa chemise)’ (Barthélemy 404) ~ **Anatolian Ar** *šalah*, *yəšlah/šalleh*, *yšalleh* ‘ausziehen (Kleidungsstück)’ (Vockel/Waldner 1982:230) ~ **Palest Ar** *š-l-h* ‘er zieht aus’ (Kleid) (Kampffmeyer 1936:37) ~ **Palmyra** *ošleh*, *yišlah* ‘se déshabiller’ (Cantineau 1934:32) ~ **Cairo** *šalah*, *yišlah* ‘to undress’: *šalahu el qassīs* ‘they unfrocked the priest’ (Spiro 1973:321).

[The native OA cognate is *slx*: *salax* (u) ‘he stripped of the hide or skin of a sheep or goat’ (Lane) > Malt *selah* ‘to scrape off skin’; cf. **Bibl Hebrew** *šālah* ‘das Fell abziehen’ (Gesenius/Buhl 1954:831–32).]

š-l-l

⟨xellel, ixellel⟩ [šellel, yšellel] ‘to baste’ (Borg 1997:144) || **Jewish Aram** *šlāl* ‘heften (das gerissene Zeug), weite Stichen nähen’ (Levy 1924:563);

~ **Aleppo** *šall*, *yšəll*, inf. *šall* ~ *šlele* ‘coudre en faisant des points de fronce’ (Barthélemy 405) ~ **Cairo** *šallil* ‘to baste’ (Badawi/Hinds 1986:476) ~ **Anatolian Ar** *msalle* ‘Sacknadel’ (Vocke/Waldner 1982:205) ~ **Palest Ar** *msalle* ‘Packnadel’ (Kampffmeyer 1936:33) ~ **Malt** ⟨msella⟩ ‘large needle’.

[Maltese here retains this lexeme in its Aramaic and Arabic forms, i.e., *šll* and *sll*, respectively (cf. Schulthess 1903). Cf. Neo-Aram: Urmi (C) *šlālā* ‘woollen thread’ (Maclean 1972:307) ~ Koy Sanjaq *šallole* ‘baste’ (inf) (H. Mutzafi, p.c.), are probably secondary loans from Arabic. The native Arabic cognate is *sll*: Cl Ar *misalla*, pl *masāll* ‘large needle’ (Lane 1398).]

š-l-p

⟨xellef⟩ [‘šellef] ‘to blunt (knife, blade, sharp point)’ || **Syriac** in *šelpo*, *šulpo* ‘lamina cultri’ (Brockelmann 1928:784);

~ **Aleppo** *šalfe* ‘stylet’ (Barthélemy 405) ~ **Syrian Ar** *šilf* ‘Pflugschar’ (Behnstedt 1997:119) ~ **South Palestinian Bedouin** *šalfe* ‘Lanzenspitze’ (Littmann 1908:24).

[**Neo-Aram**: Kurdistan *šilpā* ‘a knife-blade; the head of an axe’ (Maclean 1854:307). As already noted in Borg (2004:37), the meanings ‘ploughshare’ and ‘blade’ designated by this root in the dialects of Greater Syria is suggestively paralleled by **Syrian Ar** *sēf* ‘Pflugschar, Schwert’ (Arnold/Behnstedt 144–5), ultimately continuing a semantic field defined in (Isaiah II, 4 and Joel 4, 10 and Micah 4, 3).]

⟨xliēf⟩ ‘fishing tackle’ || **Jewish Aramaic** *šlap* ‘herausziehen, abziehen’ | **Biblical Hebrew** *šālap* ‘ausziehen, abziehen’ (Levy IV 565).

š-l-š-l

⟨xaršar, ičaršar⟩ ‘spill, shed (liquid, blood); stream down, trickle’ (Aquilina I, 166), ⟨xar-xar⟩ ‘effundo sanguinem, aquam; versare, spargere’ (Vassalli 1796:227, 627) || **Cl Ar** *šalšala* ‘drip (blood, water)’ (Hava 375) || **Biblical Hebrew** *šilšēl*, **Jewish Aramaic** *šalšēl* ‘let down, lower, chain down, couple; relax, loosen the bowels, have diarrhea’ (M.Jastrow 1589, 1590) || **Galilean Aramaic** *šilšl* ‘let down (garment)’ (Sokoloff 1990:555) || **Jewish Aramaic** *šōlālā* ‘foot chain’ (M.Jastrow 1534);

~ **Aleppo** *šaršar*, *yšaršer* ‘dégoutter (: vêtements ou linges mouillés); suinter (vase poreux), etc.’ (Barthélemy 386) ~ **Palest Ar** *šaršar*, *yšaršir* ‘leak (vessel); urinate’ (Galilee;

inform.) ~ **Takrouna** *šařšor* ‘murmurer (eau qui coule, qui tombe en cascade)’ (W.Marçais / Guiga 2015) ~ **Cherchell** *šařšar* ‘il a fait du bruit en coulant’, *šařšāra* ‘cascade’ (Grand’Henry 1972:67, 85) ~ **East Arabian** *silsāl māy* ‘trickle of water’ (Holes 2001:244) ~ **Djijdelli** *šell’let* ‘elle a rincé’, *šařšar* ‘murmurer (eau)’ (Ph.Marçais 1955:177, 203).

[Note the probable link with Malt <xniexel> ‘loose ends hanging down’ and its cognates: Cairo *šanšilit*, *tiššanšil* ‘pass a handkerchief behind one’s neck and hold the ends one in each hand (in wailing for the dead)’ (Spiro 324) ~ East Arabian *šimšūl/šamšūl* ‘loin-cloth reaching the floor; a woman’s long white cotton dress’ (Holes 2001:280).]

š-l-y

<xela, jixli> ‘accuse; esplorare, spiare, rapportare’, <xellej> ‘spia, spione, denunziatore, relatore’ (Aquilina II:1559; Vassalli 1796:635, 643) || **Punic** *sly* ‘to depreciate’ (uncert.) (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995 II, 787) || **Biblical Hebrew** *slh* ‘verschmähen, verwerfen’ <salitā kōl šōgīm mē-ḥuqqekā> ‘toss aside, make light of’ (Ps 119, 118) || **Jewish Aramaic** *slā* II ‘verachten, verschmähen’ (Levy III, 530), *ʾaslē*, *ʾaslā* ‘throw away, despise, reject’ (M.Jastrow 994) || **Syriac** *slā* ‘despise, reject’ (J.Payne Smith 1903:378) || **Akkadian** *salā’u* ‘sprinkle, slander; sully s.o. with accusation’ (Black *et al.* 2000:313);

~ **Aleppo** *šala* (*i*) ‘*ala* ‘médire de (qqn)’ (Barthélemy 406) ~ **Djijdelli** *tšelya* ‘fait d’exciter contre’ (Ph.Marçais 1955:230).

š-n-d-r

<xandar> [‘šandar] ‘to divulge, broadcast (originally, the word of God)’ || **Official Aram** *šdr* ‘envoyer un message à’ (Jean/Hoftijzer 1965:292) || **Syriac** *šaddar* ‘dimisit, misit, emisit verba’ (Brun 1911:659) > **Christian Middle Ar** *sdr* ‘senden’ (Graf 1905:96) || **Jewish Aramaic** *šdar* ‘schicken, senden’ (Levy IV, 513) || **Modern Hebrew** *šider* ‘to broadcast (on radio, television)’; lexeme introduced by Eliezer Ben Yehuda (*Thesaurus totius hebrāitatis*, vol. 14); note also **Modern Hebrew** *šidūr*, **Malt** *šandīr* ‘radio, TV broadcasting’.

[**Neo-Aram**: ~ Maṭlula *šattar* ‘schicken’ (Bergsträsser 1921:93) ~ Țuroyo *gəmšader* ‘er wird schicken’ (Jastrow 1967:26) ~ Aramaic (Persian Azerbaijan) *šdr* ‘send’ (Garbell 1965:292) ~ Mandaic *šadder* ‘send’ (Macuch 1965:519).]

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