

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

By DAVID MARSHALL

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

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

Before coming to the derived forms, a few words must be said about the most characteristic feature of Semitic languages, trilateralism: here, however, it will be applied only to Arabic and Maltese, with specific reference to the verb. By far the great majority of words are trilateral, being composed of three root letters. It is in these root letters that the basic meaning of the root lies: for example, the root letters $\sqrt{k-t-b}$ in both Arabic and Maltese, have something to do with writing, although the three letters by themselves are a grammatical abstraction. However, by adding various vowels (of which there are three in Arabic and five in

¹ Aquilina J., 'The Structure of Maltese'. R.U.M., 1959.
Sutcliffe E., 'A Grammar of the Maltese Language', Progress Press, 1936 and later editions.

Maltese) and/or prefixes, infixes and suffixes, a great variety of meanings, all connected with the basic abstract meaning of the root, can be produced: for instance, from the root $\sqrt{k-t-b}$ can be produced the words for 'to write', 'script', 'a letter', 'a book', 'a clerk', 'a desk', 'a library', 'an office', and yet others.

But more important still is that fact that, not only can a wide variety of meanings be obtained, but also several very precise shades of the same meaning. Arabic is a very concise language, renowned for its pithy sayings, with proverbs that rarely exceed five, or even four, words, and this same feature of conciseness is noticeable in Maltese.

Preciseness and conciseness in verbs is achieved by means of derived forms of the basic root letters. Arabic has 15 forms, of which only 1 to 10 are in common use, Maltese has 10, with form 4 being very rare.²

What then are the comparative meaning patterns of these derived forms of the verb?

The primary meaning of form 2 (the first of the derived forms, form 1 being the root form) is one of intensification. The act denoted by the root verb may also be made more final in form 2, or wider in its application. e.g. كسر = 'to break', كَسَرَ = 'to smash'; قطع = 'to cut', قَطَعَ = 'to cut in pieces'; قتل = 'to kill', قَتَلَ = 'to massacre'; فرق = 'to separate', فَرَّقَ = 'to disperse'; كسر = 'to break', كَسَرَ = 'to break to pieces'; قاتل = 'to kill', قَاتَلَ = 'to slaughter'; نَفَسَ = 'to tread on', نَفَسَ (obs.) = 'to trample'.

Second, verbs which are stative or intransitive in the root form are made transitive in the 2nd, and verbs which are originally transitive may be made doubly transitive, or there may also be a causative or factitive signification. e.g. قَرِبَ = 'to be near', قَرَّبَ = 'to bring/make near'; كَثُرَ = 'to be numerous', كَثَّرَ = 'to make numerous'; فَرِحَ = 'to be glad', فَرَّحَ = 'to gladden'; ضَعِفَ = 'to be weak', ضَعَّفَ = 'to weaken'; دَاهَكَ = 'to laugh', دَاهَكَكَ = 'to make to laugh = to amuse'; رَقَادَ = 'to sleep', رَقَّادَ = 'to put to sleep'. And: عَلِمَ = 'to know', عَلَّمَ = 'to teach'; ذَكَرَ = 'to mention', ذَكَرَكَ = 'to remind'; دَرَسَ = 'to study', دَرَّسَ =

² In neither language is there any verb root which has all the derived forms. Even excluding the very rare forms 11 to 15 in Arabic, only very few verbs have all the forms from 1 to 10. Five is a good average in Arabic, four in Maltese.

'to teach'; صدر = 'to go, proceed out', صدر = 'to export'; حمل = 'to carry', حمل = 'to make carry'; داهل = 'to enter', داهل = 'to introduce, bring in'; ناقس = 'to diminish', ناقس = 'to lessen'; راساق = 'to approach', راساق = 'to bring near'; نيزل = 'to come down', نيزل = 'to bring down'.

Form 2 is frequently denominative - i.e. derived from nouns - and expresses, with various modifications, the use of making, doing, or being occupied with the thing expressed by the noun from which it is derived: in other words, it puts into action the object which the noun signifies. e.g. نوع = 'type, kind', نوع = 'to compose, assort'; جلد = 'skin, leather', جلد = 'to bind (a book)'; خيمة = 'tent', خيم = 'to pitch a tent'; سلاح = 'weapon', سلاح = 'to arm'; باهر = 'sea', باهر = 'to navigate'; ابر = 'news', ابر = 'to announce'; سلب = 'cross', سلب = 'to crucify'; هجيجا = 'flame', هجيجا = 'to kindle'.

Verbs of form 2 may also be derived from adjectives: such verbs have a causal force, and denote the production of the quality expressed by the adjective: e.g. مريض = 'sick', مرض = 'to render a.o. ill'; جديد = 'new', جدد = 'to renew'; جديد = 'new', جديد = 'to renew'; سمين = 'fat', سمن = 'to fatten'; قاسر = 'short', قاسر = 'to shorten'.

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

Although there are slight connections in two of the uses of the 3rd form, there is not really any strong common meaning pattern at all between Arabic and Maltese. In Maltese this form occurs mainly in those verbs whose middle radical is ghajn or the weak aspirate h. Such verbs are incapable of doubling the ghajn or h, as would be necessary in the 2nd form. Thus the 3rd form is practically an extension of the 2nd, and so has

similar meaning patterns. First, form 3 may have an intensive force. e.g. gaghal = 'to cause, constrain', gaghal or gieghel = 'to induce, constrain'; megber = 'to criticise', miegher = 'to vilify, scorn'. It has also a causal force. e.g. boghod = 'distance', bieghed = 'to remove afar'; fehem = 'to understand', fiehem = 'to make to understand'; qaghad = 'to stand', qieghed = 'to place'. Finally, in Maltese, form 3 derives verbs from nouns. e.g. barka = 'blessing', bierak = 'to bless'; nehel = 'pause, rest', niehel = 'to retard'; safar = 'departure', siefer = 'to depart, embark'; xoghol = 'work', xieghel = 'to employ, make busy'. In Arabic also form 3 is sometimes denominative, but the ideas of effort and reciprocity (to be mentioned below) are still to a certain extent implied. e.g. ضيف = 'like, equal', ضاعف = 'to double'; عافية = 'robust health', عافى = 'to restore to health'.

In Arabic alone the normal use of form 3 is to express the relation or application of the act of the root form to another person, or the doing of an action to someone. e.g. كتب = 'to write', كاتب = 'to write to'; جلس = 'to sit', جالس = 'to sit with'; قام = 'to stand, get up', قاوم = 'to stand up to, oppose'; عمل = 'to do', عامل = 'to treat'; صرع = 'to throw down', صارع = 'to wrestle with'; قال = 'to say', قاول = 'to converse with'.

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

Form 4 in Maltese is virtually extinct, but there is a curious survival to be mentioned later. In Arabic, the principal signification of form 4 is factitive or causative; it makes intransitive root form verbs transitive,

and makes those verbs transitive in the root form doubly transitive. e.g. حضر = 'to be present', أحضر = 'to cause to be present, bring'; جلس = 'to sit', أجلس = 'to seat'; ظهر = 'to appear', أظهر = 'to disclose, make clear'; أكل = 'to eat', أعط = 'to give to eat', رأى = 'to see', أرى = 'to show'. In general, in Maltese, the causal force of form 4 has passed to form 2: one example is found: را = 'to see', uera = 'to make to see = to show'.

In Arabic alone forms 2 and 4 often have the same meaning, with perhaps a slight difference. e.g. أخبر and أخبر both = 'to inform, give news'; صلح = 'to repair', أصلح = 'to rectify, reform'; علم = 'to teach', أعلم = 'to inform'; صدر = 'to export', أصدر = 'to publish, issue'. Also like form 2, this form may be declarative or estimative. e.g. باخل and أبخل both = 'to find avaricious'; جبن and أجبن both = 'to find cowardly'.

Finally, in Arabic, the 4th form comprises a great number of denominative verbs. Many of these appear to be intransitive, because the Arabs often regard something as an act, while we think of it as a state. Such verbs combine with the idea of the noun from which they are derived that of a transitive verb, of which it is the direct object. e.g. أصبح = 'to do in the morning', commonly meaning 'to become', from صباح = 'morning'; أثمر = 'to bear fruit', from ثمر = 'fruit'; أمطر = 'to yield rain', from مطر = 'rain'; أبلغ = 'to speak eloquently', from بلاغة = 'eloquence'.

A curious survival of form 4 in Maltese can be seen in the expressions *m'akbrek, Mulej!*, 'how great thou art, O Lord', and *m'akbar Alla*, 'how great is God'. The usage of Arabic 'verbs of wonder' أفعال التعجب shows that this is a survival of form 4, the literal meaning being 'what has made thee great'.

Both Arabic and Maltese share three common meaning patterns of the verbs of form 5, the most frequent use of this form being the reflexive of form 2. e.g. فرق = 'to separate', تفرق = 'to separate oneself = to scatter'; زجر = 'to remind', تذكّر = 'to be reminded = to remember'; شرف = 'to honour', تشرف = 'to have the honour'; قدم = 'to bring forward', تقدم = 'to make progress'; ادخل = 'to bring in', اددخل =

'to intrude oneself'; ادخل = 'to amuse', اددخل = 'to amuse oneself'; نفخ = 'to puff up', انفخ = 'to blow oneself out, become proud'; سلط = 'to lend', اسلط = 'to borrow'. However, in Arabic, the idea of reflexiveness is often not very prominent, especially in such verbs as govern the accusative. e.g. تتبع = 'to pursue step by step'; تطلب = 'to seek earnestly'; تيقن = 'to ascertain for certain'.

Form 5 has also a passive force, and indeed in English it must often be rendered by the passive. e.g. بدّل = 'to alter', تبدّل = 'to be altered'; كسر = 'to smash in pieces', تكسر = 'to be broken in pieces'; خوف = 'to terrify', تخوف = 'to be afraid'; نسل = 'to generate', انسل = 'to be generated, derived'; نزل = 'to bring down', انزل = 'to be brought down'; غمّم = 'to baptise', اغمّم = 'to be baptised'; قاسم = 'to distribute', اقسام = 'to be distributed'.

The third common meaning pattern, arising out of the original reflexive signification, and even more frequently used, is that of the effective force. The difference between the effective and the passive is that, whereas in the passive the subject of the verb is affected by the action of somebody or something else, in the effective the subject may be affected either by somebody or something else or alternatively by himself. e.g. علم = 'to teach', تعلّم = 'to become learned, learn', quite different from علم (the passive of form 2), = 'to be taught'; بين = 'to make clear, explain', تبين = 'to appear clear, certain'; حقق = 'to prove', تحقق = 'to become/prove to be the reality/fact'; فارق = 'to crumble' (tr.), تفارق = 'to crumble' (intr.); اتمّ = 'to dirty', اتمّ = 'to get dirty'; اعلّم = 'to teach', اعلّم = 'to learn'; اناصف = 'to clean', اناصف = 'to get clean'.

In Arabic alone, form 5 may be used to form verbs from nouns, especially nouns of quality or status. e.g. نصراني = 'Christian', تنصر = 'to become a Christian'; يهودي = 'Jew', تهود = 'to become a Jew'. Closely related to this meaning is that of thinking or representing oneself to have a certain quality or status. e.g. كبير = 'great', تكبر = 'to think oneself great, be proud'; نبي = 'prophet', تنبأ = 'to represent oneself to be a prophet'.

Finally, form 5 has a further use in Maltese alone, that denoting reci-

procuity. e.g. *bewwes* = 'to kiss', *tbeuwes* = 'to kiss one another'; *kellem* = 'to speak to', *tkellem* = 'to converse'; *ghannaq* = 'to embrace', *tghannaq* = 'to embrace' (reciprocally).

Form 6 has only one meaning pattern common to both Arabic and Maltese, it being properly the reflexive of form 3. The idea of effort and attempt, which is transitive in this latter form, becomes reflexive in the 6th. e.g. *قاتل* = 'to fight', *تقاتل* = 'to fight each other'; *عاون* = 'to cooperate with', *تعاون* = 'to cooperate together'; *وافق* = 'to agree with', *توافق* = 'to agree together'; *عارض* = 'to oppose', *تعارض* = 'to be in mutual opposition'; *غافل* = 'to surprise', *تغافل* = 'to be off one's guard, neglect'; *biqghed* = 'to remove afar', *tbiqghed* = 'to go to a distance'; *habat* = 'to bear', *thabat* = 'to strive, take pains'; *xiegghel* = 'to occupy with work', *txiegghel* = 'to give attention to'; *xierek* = 'to take into partnership', *txierek* = 'to enter into partnership with'.

In Arabic, even more than 5, form 6 is used with the meaning of simulating a state or status, or representing oneself to have it. e.g. *جاهل* = 'ignorant', *تجاهل* = 'to affect ignorance'; *مشغول* = 'busy', *تشاغل* = 'to pretend to be busy' (compare its meaning in Maltese in the previous paragraph); *ظاهر* = 'clear', *تظاهر* = 'to feign'; *تباكى* = 'to pretend to cry'; *تمارض* = 'to feign sickness'.

Turning to Maltese alone we find that the 6th form sometimes has a passive force. e.g. *bierok* = 'to bless', *tbierok* = 'to be blessed'; *bares* = 'to observe, guard', *tbares* = 'to be observed'; *qiegghed* = 'to place', *tqiegghed* = 'to be placed'; *hataf* = 'to snatch', *thataf* = 'to be snatched'. It may also denote reciprocal action of the 3rd form. e.g. *fiehem* = 'to make to understand', *tfiehem* = 'to understand one another'; *gieled* = 'to provoke quarrels', *tgieled* = 'to quarrel'; *sieheb* = 'to unite, associate', *tsieheb* = 'to associate together'; *qabad* = 'to seize', *tqabad* = 'to fight, oppose'. Finally, form 6 sometimes has an effective force, e.g. *fieraq* = 'to separate' (tr.), *tfieraq* = 'to separate' (intr.); *miebel* = 'to delay, retard', *tmiebel* = 'to stay, tarry'; *riegghed* = 'to make to tremble', *trieghed* = 'to tremble'; *xieggher* = 'to crack', *txieggher* = 'to crack, open'.

The 7th form has originally a middle or reflexive signification, it being strictly the reflexive of form 1. e.g. *dabal* = 'to enter' (intr.), *indahal* =

'to interfere'; *kiteb* = 'to write', *inkiteb* = 'to subscribe'; *telaq* = 'to leave off, dismiss', *intelaq* = 'to give up, faint', *tilef* = 'to lose', *intilef* = 'to lose oneself'. However, despite its original signification as the reflexive of the root form, it is to all intents and purposes a passive now, and as such is more commonly used. e.g. *كشف* = 'to uncover', *انكشف* = 'to be uncovered'; *كسر* = 'to break' (tr.), *انكسر* = 'to break' (intr.); *عقد* = 'to hold (a meeting), انعقد' = 'to be held'; *قلب* = 'to overturn', *انقلب* = 'to be overturned, reversed'. *صرف* = 'to send away', *انصرف* = 'to be dismissed, go away'; *قطع* = 'to cut', *انقطع* = 'to be cut, cease'; *قال* = 'to say', *انقال* = 'to be uttered, spoken'; *baghad* = 'to hate', *inbaghad* = 'to be hated'; *bidel* = 'to change', *inbidel* = 'to be changed'; *qatel* = 'to kill', *inqatel* = 'to be killed'; *seraq* = 'to steal', *inseraq* = 'to be stolen'; *qabad* = 'to catch', *inqabad* = 'to be caught'.

In Maltese form 7 is quite commonly used with effective force. e.g. *barax* = 'to scratch', *inbarax* = 'to get scratched'; *fetah* = 'to open' (tr), *infetah* = 'to open (e.g. a flower)'; *gabar* = 'to gather' (tr.), *ingabar* = 'to gather' (intr.); *haraq* = 'to burn' (tr.), *inharaq* = 'to catch fire'.

Form 8, like form 7, is properly the reflexive of the 1st form root verb. However, it differs from form 7 in that, while form 7 involves only the direct reflexive pronoun and never the indirect, form 8 may involve either the direct or the indirect reflexive pronoun. e.g. *جمع* = 'to collect', *اجتمع* = 'to collect themselves, assemble'; *سمع* = 'to hear', *استمع (ل)* = 'to listen (to)'; *شغل* = 'to occupy, keep busy', *اشتغل* = 'to be busy, work'; *فراق* = 'to separate' (tr.), *افتراق* = 'to separate' (intr.); *عرض* = 'to put s.t. before one', *اعترض* = 'to put s.o. in the way, oppose'; *ضرب* = 'to beat', *اضطرب* = 'to be agitated'; *baram* = 'to twisit', *btaram* = 'to be twisted'; *fabar* = 'praise', *ftabar* = 'to boast, glory in'; *fakar* = 'memory', *ftakar* = 'to remember'; *faqar* = 'poverty', *ftaqar* = 'to become poor'; *nehh* = 'awakening', *intebah* = 'to perceive'; *sabar* = 'to bear with patience', *stabar* = 'to have patience'; *xebet* = 'to throw', *txebet* = 'to throw oneself down'.

The 8th form differs from the 7th also in that it sometimes has a reciprocal force which is not found in the 7th. This reciprocal signification,

which arises out of the reflexive use, is in fact common to this form with the 6th. e.g. *خَصِمَ* = 'to strive', *إحتصم* = 'to strive/dispute with one another'; *شارك* (form 3) = 'to take part with', *اشترك* = 'to contribute towards, participate'; *إقتتل* = 'to fight one another'; *التقى* = 'to meet one another'; *فهبهم* (form 3) = 'to make to understand', *فهبهم* = 'to be in agreement'.

The original reflexive use of form 8 is developed into the passive, especially in verbs which do not have the 7th form. e.g. *شهر* = 'to spread abroad', *راشتمر* = 'to be spread abroad'; *ردع* = 'to restrain, turn away', *ارتدع* = 'to be turned back'; *نصر* = 'to assist, render victorious', *انصمر* = 'to be helped (by God), be victorious'; *ملا* = 'to fill', *إمتلا* = 'to be full'; *هراق* = 'to burn', *هترق* = 'to be burnt'; *رابط* = 'to bind', *ارتاب* = 'to be bound'; *نفاق* = 'to spend', *انتفاق* = 'to be spent'; *رباب* = 'to conquer', *ارتباب* = 'to be conquered'; *نسا* = 'to forget', *انتسا* = 'to be forgotten'.

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

Form 9 has two meaning patterns in both Arabic and Maltese, both of them common. The first of these is that used to express the acquisition of some colour. e.g. *أسود* = 'black', *اسود* = 'to be/become black'; *أخضر* = 'green', *اخضر* = 'to be/become green'; *أحمر* = 'red', *احمر* = 'to be/become red, blush'; *أصفر* = 'yellow', *اصفر* = 'to be/become yellow'; *أبدار* = 'green', *أبدار* = 'to grow green'; *أبمار* = 'red', *أبمار* = 'to redden'; *أبمار* = 'brown', *أبمار* = 'to go brown'; *أبمار* = 'black', *أبمار* = 'to grow black'.

The second use of form 9 is its signification of physical characteristics or qualities. In Arabic, these are defective qualities, in Maltese they may be desirable or undesirable. e.g. *أعوج* = 'bent', *أعوج* = 'to become bent, crooked'; *أحول* = 'squint-eyed', *أحول* = 'to squint'; *أبله* = 'foolish', *أبله* = 'to grow foolish'; *أباز* = 'bad', *أباز* = 'to impair, grow worse'; *أبكر* = 'ugly', *أبكر* = 'to become ugly'; *أبكر* = 'beautiful', *أبكر* = 'to become beautiful'; *أبكر* = 'small', *أبكر* = 'to grow small'.

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

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

In origin form 10 appears to have been the reflexive of the 4th or causal form; it converts the factitive signification of the latter into the reflexive or middle. e.g. *أرسل* = 'to let loose, send', *أرسل* = 'her hair hung loose'; *أعد* = 'to prepare, get ready', *أعد* = 'to prepare' (intr.), 'to get oneself ready'; *أسلم* = 'to give up, deliver over', *أسلم* = 'to give oneself up'; *أوحش* = 'to grieve, distress', *أوحش* = 'to be grieved, sorry'; *أعجب* = 'marvel', *أعجب* = 'to be amazed' (from obsolete form 4); *أعجب* = 'marsh', *أعجب* = 'to become marshy, stagnate'; *أعجب* = 'awakening', *أعجب* = 'to awake'.

A very common use of this form is that of estimative signification, usually from intransitive verbs. It indicates that a person thinks that a certain thing possesses with reference to himself or for his benefit, the quality signified by the root form. In Maltese, the opinion or reaction expressed is usually of an unfavourable nature. e.g. *أحسن* = 'to be beautiful', *أحسن* = 'to find beautiful, consider preferable'; *أفح* = 'to be ugly', *أفح* = 'to loathe, find ugly'; *أحل* = 'to be lawful', *أحل* = 'to think s.t. is lawful'; *أوجب* = 'to be necessary', *أوجب* = 'to think s.t. is necessary'; *أخرج* = 'to go out', *أخرج* = 'to inquire' (from obsolete form 4); *أكره* = 'ugly', *أكره* = 'to loathe' (from form 4).

The three remaining patterns of the 10th form apply only to Arabic. Of these, a very common one is that of desiring or asking for oneself the action or state of the root verb, or seeking that the basic meaning of the root be done. e.g. *أحضر* = 'to attend', *أحضر* = 'to summon (ask for the attendance of)'; *أعلم* = 'to know', *أعلم* = 'to ask for information, inquire about'; *أذن* = 'to permit', *أذن* = 'to ask for per-

mission', *غفر* = 'to forgive', *استغفر* = 'to ask forgiveness'; *عرض* = 'to show', *استعرض* = 'to ask to be shown, review'; *غاث* = 'to help', *استغاث* = 'to call for help'.

This form may be causative. e.g. *خدم* = 'to serve', *استخدم* = 'to employ (cause to serve)', *شهد* = 'to witness', *استشهد* = 'to call to witness (cause to witness)'.

It is also frequently dominative, in which case it unites the factitive and reflexive senses. e.g. *استولى* = 'to make oneself master (ولى)', of, take possession of', *استخلف* = 'to appoint one as deputy (خليفة)', *استقضى* = 'to appoint as judge (قاضي)'.

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

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AQUILINA J., *The Structure of Maltese*.
 AQUILINA J., *Teach Yourself Maltese*.
 COWAN D., *Modern Literary Arabic*.
 HAYWOOD J.A./HAHMAD H.M., *A new Arabic Grammar*.
 TUCKLIFFE E., *A grammar of the Maltese Language*.
 WRIGHT W., *A grammar of the Arabic Language*.

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

By GODFREY WETTINGER

The following analysis of the distribution of surnames in Malta in the fifteenth century is based on two undated and largely ignored lists of names preserved in the Cathedral Archives, Mdina.¹ The first, a militia roll of the XIII Indiction, contains the names, among others, of practically all those Maltese who were present in the Town Council of the island when Don Antonio Cardona, through his representative, took an oath on 11 February 1421 (XIV Indiction) to respect the privileges of the Maltese.² The nearest Indiction-year numbered XIII is 1419-20. As the next nearest years with the same Indictional Number are 1404-05 and 1434-35, both too distant for such a perfect correlation of names to have been possible, it must be taken that the XIII Indiction mentioned in the document belongs to the year 1419-20. In addition, Ludovico de Plusasco, who is mentioned in the list as *Misser Luisi*, was already dead by 1429.³

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

Neither list contains any names of the inhabitants of Gozo or Birgu. The *angara* roster, in addition, lacks names of people from Zejtun, Axaq, and Zabbar and the other small villages nearby. The militia list contained originally 1870 names, fifty-seven of which belonged to the Jewish community of Malta. The *angara* roster contains some 1466 Christians

¹ Archives of the Cathedral, Mdina, Università, Quaderni Diversi, No. 3: 'Quaternu factu et ordinatu per li nobili capitaneo et Jurati consigu per la guardia de la hisula de mauta anni XIII Indicionis', and No. 7, which is unnamed. It is hoped to publish the former in full in the next issue of *Melita Historica*.

² See a copy of it in Mgr. A. Mifsud's 'Le Franchigie Costituzionali Alfonsiane e l'Invasione dei Mori del 1429 nella Compilazione della Storia di Malta', doc. II, *Archivum Melitense*, III, 324-331.

³ Royal Malta Library, MS 1365, p. 255; entry concerning the marriage of Plusasco's widow on 20 May 1429 to Simone de Mazzara.