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# A Text in the Maltese Dialect of Sannat (Gozo) with Grammatical Remarks

**ABSTRACT** The text presented in the following was recorded in 2019 in Sannat, a village situated on the island of Gozo (Malta). It concerns the way of cooking one of the Gozitan/Maltese dishes—*turta ta-l-lampuki*, ‘lampuki pie.’ The recording is written in the transcription used in the study of Semitic dialectology, and it is followed by a translation into English and standard Maltese (SM). The final part of the article contains short explanations of selected grammatical issues, the most characteristic features of the dialect of Sannat. Issues such as pausal forms, an *išmām*, an *imāla*, realisation of consonants such as \*għ (< ġ and ɣ), r, ġ, and š, a sandhi and a modal verb ‘have to’ are discussed.

**KEYWORDS** the dialect of Sannat, field research, Gozitan dialects, Gozo, Malta, Maltese, Maltese dialectology, Sannat

## 1 Introduction

Sannat (SM *Ta’ Sannat*) is a village located in the south of Gozo, the second inhabited island of the Maltese Archipelago. The population is estimated at less than 1,900 people.<sup>1</sup> It should be stressed that the number of inhabitants does not correspond to the number of speakers of the dialect of Sannat, and it is impossible to determine this data accurately.

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1 Detailed statistics are available on the website: National Statistics Office, Malta. <https://nso.gov.mt/statdb/start> (accessed 10 January 2020).

Gozitan dialects are considered to be rural dialects of Maltese in the publications to date (e.g. Aquilina and Isserlin 1981; Borg 1976; Puech 1994: 17–23). Schabert writes about two basic groups of Maltese dialects as follows:

Es ist einerseits geographisch differenziert, wobei die eine der beiden Hauptgruppen die der Städtkonzentration um den Grossen Hafen und den Marsamxetthafen ist. [...] Die andere Gruppe ist die der ländlichen *Išmām*-Dialekte, die den ganzen Rest der Insel sowie die Nachbarinseln Gozo (“*Għawdex*” /*əwdaɛʃ*/) und Comino (“*Kemmuna*” /*kæmmūna*/) umfasst. Beide Gruppen weisen Untergruppen auf. (Schabert 1976: 3–4)

The term *išmām* (also known as *tafxīm*), as a characteristic used by Schabert to describe Maltese rural dialects (*Išmām*-Dialekte), was introduced by Stumme (1904: 99–100) in his *Erläuterungen* ‘explanations’ to the book *Maltesische Studien*. No detailed classifications within Gozitan dialects have been published so far.

As regards the dialect of Sannat, limited data are available. Puech (1994: 39–58) includes seven texts out of 25 from Gozo in his collection.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, recordings of these texts are not available anywhere, which hinders a factual dialectological discussion. Even the first comparison of the text in this article with the transcription of Puech’s texts raises key questions, the answers to which should be sought in the recordings. Farrugia, on the other hand, is the author of two theses in Maltese (*Aspetti soċjolingwistiċi tad-djalett ta’ Sannat u s-sistema vokalika tiegħu*, 2010; *Analizi akustika u komparattiva ta’ żewġ djaletti Għawdxin*, 2016), in which he deals with circumstantial and detailed issues of Gozitan phonetics based on language data from Sannat. This volume also contains an article, entitled ‘The Acoustic Vowel Space of Gozitan Naduri and Sannati Dialects,’ synthesising Farrugia’s research to date on this subject. Between 2018 and 2021, Klimiuk conducted field research in Sannat, and assembled dialectological material in the form of questionnaires and audio recordings. Earlier, between 2015 and 2016, he and Lipnicka made several recordings in the village (Klimiuk and Lipnicka 2019).

Klimiuk recorded the following text in Sannat on 28 September 2019. The author of the text is Doris Farrugia, at the time of a recording session a 63-year-old woman. She has lived in the village since birth, where her parents also come from.

The text is a recipe and concerns the preparation of one of the popular dishes of Gozo and Malta—*turta ta-l-lampuki*, ‘lampuki pie.’ The fish mentioned is known by many names, such as in English: common dolphin fish, dorado, mahi-mahi, in German: (Gemeine/Große) Goldmakrele, in Italian: lampuga, corifena etc. In Maltese, the name *lampuka*, pl. *lampuki*, is used.

2 Other texts come from the following locations: Għarb (8 texts), Kerċem (2 texts), Xewkija (1 text), Nadur (5 texts) and Qala (2 texts).

We first present a transcription of the text in the dialect of Sannat, its translation into English and SM. Then, we provide a grammatical commentary on the text together with explanations which should facilitate the reading of the dialectal text, especially for dialectologists and linguists who can easily understand written standard Maltese texts, but not spoken.

The transcription is consistent with use in the dialectology of Semitic languages, especially Arabic.<sup>3</sup> The transcription system was developed as part of the project ‘GozoDia: Gemeinschaftsorientierte dialektologische Studien zur Sprachdynamik der Insel Gozo (Malta).’ In the course of further research, especially the extension of the studies to include the dialects of the island of Malta, the transcription may be slightly modified. At this stage of research, we have decided that:

- a glottal stop ʔ is only noted if it comes from \*q, e.g. *tʔattahha* (SM *tqattaghha*) ‘you cut it (f.),’
- if a word begins with a vowel, and thus a glottal stop ʔ is not realised in a word initial position, it is attached to a preceding word with a tie ( \_ ) which refers to a continuous sequence of sounds, e.g. *bbat\_ʔtfa-la* (SM *imbagħad titfagħlha*) ‘then you pour into it (f.),’
- if a glottal stop ʔ is realised in a word initial position, but does not diachronically come from \*q, it is not noted and a word is not attached to a preceding word with a tie ( \_ ), e.g. *kilo u nufs ek* (SM *kilo u nofs hekk*) ‘so a kilo and a half.’

A vertical bar (|) appears in the text each time to indicate major prosodic breaks, whereas pausal forms are marked with the number sign #. Punctuation marks are not used in the transcription.

The length of vowels in the Maltese dialects of Gozo is entirely phonetic, as there are no minimal pairs in the phonological systems confirming the presence of long and short vowel phonemes (Klimiuk 2022). For this reason, vowel length notation is omitted in the transcription.

The sign *ħ* used in the transcription may correspond in the dialect of Sannat to three allophones: [ħ], [x] and [h]. However, the use of the sign *ħ* in the context of Gozitan dialects requires further clarification. Namely, the phoneme *ħ* is still preserved in some dialects. It appears in positions where it is not realised in SM. However, the Maltese alphabet, which is diachronic in nature and therefore does not reflect the phonetic and phonological realisation of the language, has the consonant *ħ* in its letter set. The transcription system for Gozitan dialects therefore foresees two separate characters: *h* (< OA *ħ*) and *ħ* (< OA *ħ* and *x*). As regards the phonetic realisation of the phoneme *ħ*, it is pronounced most often as [ħ] or [x]. The same language speaker can pronounce one word in several ways, e.g. [ħawħa], [ħawxa], [xawħa], [xawxa] ‘plum.’ During

3 See for example the transcription guidelines used in *Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik*.

the fieldwork, no minimal pair was found to differ these sounds. It also happens that the phoneme *ħ* is realised as [h]. However, these are still only allophones of the same phoneme *ħ*. In the dialect of Sannat, the consonant *h* has not been retained in any position, so the usage of *ħ* could be abandoned in favour of *h*. However, we have come to the conclusion that, in this case, it is necessary to be consistent and develop a system that allows the characteristics of all spoken dialects on the island of Gozo to be included.

## 2 Text

### turta ta-l-lampuki

1. *emma ʔat yaʔbdu<sup>w</sup> əssa da-zm<sup>v</sup>en#* | 2. *rayta ši darba:#* | *ħuta rayta rayta:#* | *tayba ħafne#* | 3. *namlu turta ta-l-lampukoy#* | 4. *l-awwil tət əštrey#<sup>4</sup> lampuka gbira:#* | *w əkun fiya:#* | *kilo:# yaw kilo u nufs ek* |

5. *u tʔattahħa:#* | *bbat<sup>5</sup>* | *tamle:# ġa tuġon bə-fteyt# əlma:#* | *fteyt#* | 6. *u mbat taʔalliya neydu-lu<sup>w</sup> aħna:#* | *yəġifirey# l-əлма əkəwn#<sup>Eng</sup>boylink#<sup>6</sup> yaley#* | 7. *u mbat ħalliya ek əl əftət minuti fursey# əħalliya šar minutey#* | *u tətfiya* | 8. *bbat əġbor əl-ħuta:#* | *u tnaħħi-la š-šewk* | *aš əlek naʔalluwa beš ənnaħħu-la š-šewk* | *ənsumma* |

9. *bbat əməla:#* | *ek* | *ġo<sup>7</sup> bawl aʔaliya* | 10. *u:# tət taməl əl-l-aġina* | *beš taməl turta t taməl l-aġina* | 11. *əkəllik parezampyew#* | *nufs kilo tʔe<sup>ʔh</sup>#* | 12. *bbat ətfa-la tacca əlma:#* | 13. *u mbat əbda tħallat ə-tʔe<sup>aʔ</sup># u l-əлма fləmk<sup>v</sup>e:n#* | *u ftət milħ* | *k ətkon tridew# ənsumma:#* | 14. *u mbat yek yek [ə-] l-aġina:#* | *tkun əda šutta* | *kon tət əzit əлма u tətfa-la fteyt# əħur* | 15. *sa šħeyn#* | *təkumpli<sup>8</sup> taġəna:#* | *yəġifirey#* | *tafas ek* | *[b-] b-ədeyk ek* | *tafas ek sa šħən təġi<sup>v</sup> aġina* |

16. *u mbat l-aġina tħalliya taʔat* | *ye neydu-la<sup>9</sup> təstr<sup>v</sup>e:#* | *tamən nufs iya<sup>10</sup>* | 17. *u mbat wara nufs iya tarġa təftaħa:#* | *l-aġina bə-l-lambuba:#* | 18. *taʔsama fə-tneyn l-aġina beš əkəllik bəčča l-ʔe<sup>a</sup>:#* | *u bəčča al-wəč* | *fə-t-turt<sup>v</sup>era* | 19. *u mbašt#* | *phəlm et-lik* | *wara nufs iya təstr<sup>v</sup>e:#* | *təftaħa:#* | *bə-l-lambuba:#* |

20. *u taməl-la l- [əl-]* | *əl-margerina neydu-la ħna* | *ənsumma* | 21. *u mbašt#* | *tarġa taʔalaʔa:#* | *l-aġina* | *u taməla:#* | *taməla ʔisa:#* | *ħabil ek twuyl#* | *u ddawwara* |

4 \*trid təstri > \*trit təstri > \*ttit təstri > \*tit təstri > tət təstri > tət əštrey# ‘you have to buy.’

5 *mbat* > *bbat* ‘then.’

6 Eng *boiling*.

7 This preposition is realised as *ġa* and *ġo*, probably under the influence of SM *ġo* ‘in.’

8 An anaptyxis *ə* is inserted between two consonants *tk*, which are a cluster difficult to pronounce: *təkumpli* (SM *tkompli*) ‘you continue [kneading it].’

9 *yaw neydu-la* > *ye neydu-la* ‘or we call it (f.).’ The conjunction ‘or’ (SM *jew*) is realised in the dialect of Sannat as *yaw* and *yew*.

10 *taməl nufs siya* > *tamən nufs iya* (SM *tagħmel nofs siegha*) ‘it takes [about] half an hour.’

22. *təġi ʔisa ʔisa kafke# ek | u tarġa [ta] tħalliya təstr<sup>ye:h</sup># | u tħalliya nufs<sub>iy</sub> uħra parezampyew# | 23. u mbaʔt sadattant šən<sup>11</sup> ħa tkon əl-aġina ʔat əstr<sup>ye:a</sup># | tʔatta l-basal | 24. əkəllik fursy# ġ<sup>ye:s</sup><sup>12</sup> basl<sup>ye</sup>et gbo:r# | tʔattahħim zo:r# | u taməlim ġa ftət zeyt fu? ət-tuġon |*

25. *w<sup>o</sup>tʔalliyim neydu-lu<sup>w</sup> aħna | tʔalliyim fu? nor | bašš ek | sa šħin yəħmuraw# | 26. deyyim yehdu<sup>w</sup> ašar minutey# | tʔallip | u don | ənsumma | 27. u mbaʔt# | əkəllik fursi ħamis tawm<sup>ye</sup>et ek | gbor | yek əkunu zor taməl ašra:# | 28. u tətfaħħim ġa t-tuġon ukil ma-l-basal | 29. u mbaʔt# | šən šən əkun lest ənsumma dok | tnaħħeyħ# |*

30. *tamlu ġa bawl gbira:# | u tətfa l- əl-ħəwt# əl-lampuka yəġifirey# | u tətfa fteyt# wara? ta-l-mer?əwš# yaw ħaba<sup>h</sup># lə ykəllik | ənsumma | 31. tʔattahħim | ftə bzor<sup>13</sup> | u ftət milħ | w əkəllik l-affariyet u patuta | 32. tʔatta l-patuta | bəčč<sup>ye</sup>et zor u tħalla kəllis<sup>14</sup> ma šulšeyn# | ənsumma | 33. u mbaʔt# | šən kon<sup>15</sup> lest del l-affariyet<sup>16</sup> kəlla | əkəllik əl- əl-aġina | 34. təftaħ waħda mənnim aš əkun zewč bəčč<sup>ye</sup>et |*

35. *waħda | al-?e<sup>h</sup># ta-t-turt<sup>ye</sup>era | təftaħa u taməl fə-t-turt<sup>ye</sup>era l-aġina | 36. u tətfa əl- dəl le<sup>17</sup> ʔat neyd-lik ət-taħlita ta-l- ta-l-ħəwt# | ta-l-patuta | ta-l-basal | ət-tewm | u ftət wara? ta-n-našn<sup>ye:h</sup># | 37. w<sup>o</sup>nseyt neyd-lik | šən kon əsseyr# əl-basla:# | 38. tət taməl marfa kunserva | əsser maħħim beš# [ə-] | l-aff<sup>ye</sup>et<sup>18</sup> yəġəw# ʔəsim bə-l-kunserva | ənsumma | 39. u mbaʔt təmli at-turt<sup>ye</sup>era | u mbaʔt tarġa təftaħ əl-bəčča l-uħra:# ta-l-aġina |*

40. *u ʔabil tətfa ftət zeyt ukill ek | fu? əl- fu? əl- | fu? əl-məley# lə tkon aməlt fə-t-turt<sup>ye</sup>era 41. tətfa ftət zeyt | bbaʔ | təftaħ l-aġina u ta?ala?a | u tal?-əla l-ġnəwp# ek | əddawwarum | ənsumma | 42. u mbaʔt# šən kon leste:# | ət-turta ek al ġa l-furn | 43. taməl-la zewč ʔasm<sup>ye</sup>et | fu? l-aġina | beš əl-fwoš šən kon<sup>19</sup> ʔat əsser fə-l-furn | yohruč mən dawk əl- əl-ġ<sup>ye</sup>eš ʔasm<sup>ye</sup>et | 44. u tətfaħħa fə-l-furn | u taməl-lik siya u nufs fə-l-furn | yaw fursi kwart əktar | 45. təttawl-əla wara siya u nufs | u mba k ətko ħmorut<sup>20</sup> | 46. tətfiya u k ma<sup>21</sup> tkonš ħmurot ħalliya kwart uħra | w əkəllik ət-turta leste:# |*

11 *šħeyn# > šħən/šħin* (SM xħin) > *šən* ‘while.’

12 SM *ġiex*, *ġiext*, *ġix* ‘a couple of’ (Aquilina 1987: 402).

13 *ftət bzor > \*ftəb bzor > ftə bzor* ‘a little pepper.’

14 *tħallat kəllis > tħallak kəllis > tħalla kəllis* ‘you mix everything.’

15 *šħin tkun > šən nkun > šən kun > šən kon* ‘when you are done [with this].’

16 *den l-... > del l-...* ‘these.’

17 *den le > del le > dəl le* ‘the one which.’

18 *l-affariyet > l-aff<sup>ye</sup>et* ‘the things.’

19 *beš əl-fwor šən kon > beš əl-fwoš šən kon* ‘in order to the steam when [the pie] is ...’

20 *u mbaʔt k ətkon ħmorut* (SM *imbagħad jekk tkun ħmaret*) > *u mba k ətko ħmorut* ‘then if it is golden.’

21 *yek ma > k ma* ‘if [it is] not.’

## Lampuki pie

1. But they are catching [it] now nowadays. 2. Did you see it once? Fish. Did you see it? Very good. 3. We make lampuki pie. 4. First you have to buy a big dolphin fish and it has to be a kilo or so, a kilo and a half.

5. You cut it. Then you make it in a pan with a little water. A little bit. 6. Then you boil it. We say it like that. This means that the water is *yaley* boiling. 7. Then you leave it for a few minutes, maybe you leave it for ten minutes and you turn off [the fire under] it. 8. Then you collect it and you remove its<sup>22</sup> bones. That is why we boil it, in order to take its bones off.

9. Then we do it like this, in a bowl, for it. 10. And you must make the dough. To make pie, you have to make dough. 11. You have—for example—half a kilo of flour. 12. Then you pour a glass of water into it.<sup>23</sup> 13. Then you start mixing the flour and water together and a little salt if you need it. 14. And then if, if the dough is still dry, you must [add] more water and pour a little bit of another [glass of water] into it. 15. Until you continue kneading it. This means that you press so, with your hand, like this. You press so until dough comes out.

16. Then you leave the dough to stand, or we call it ‘to rest.’ It has to rest for half an hour. 17. Then after about half an hour you open it again, the dough, using the rolling pin. 18. You divide the dough into two [pieces] so that you have a portion for the bottom and a portion for the top in the cake tin. 19. Then, as I told you, it [the dough] rests for half an hour, [after which] you open it with the rolling pin.

20. And you make margarine for it. We say it like that. 21. Then you close it—the dough—again, and you do it like so long rope, and you turn it. 22. It takes the shape of a ring-cake and you repeat [the same procedure] ... You leave it to rest, you leave it for another half an hour for example. 23. Afterwards, while the dough is resting, you cut the onion. 24. You can use two big onions, cut them [two big onions] into little pieces and put them inside a pan greased with a little oil.

25. And then you fry them, that is the way we say it, you fry them over a low flame until they become golden. 26. It always takes around ten minutes of constant stirring [until they are cooked]. 27. Then you take five cloves of garlic, like these, big [ones], if they are small, then you use ten. 28. And you put them in the pan along with the onions. 29. And then, then when everything is ready, you remove it [from the flame].

30. You put it in a big bowl and put the fish, meaning the dolphin fish and some marjoram leaves or basil, if you have some. 31. You cut them ... [you put] a little pepper and a little salt and you would have everything done [all things] ... and potatoes. 32. You cut the potatoes into small pieces and mix everything together, that is. 33. And

22 Feminine in the original text.

23 Lit. ‘Then you throw a glass of water into it.’

then when you are done with [all] these things, you take [have] the dough. 34. You open one of them because it is made up of two pieces.

35. One to put it at the bottom of the baking tray. You open it and you put the dough in the baking tray. 36. And you put the ... the one I am talking about, the fish mixture, the potatoes, the onions, the garlic gloves and some mint leaves. 37. And I forgot to tell you ... When the onion is in the pan [while it is cooking]. 38. You have to put a spoonful of tomato paste with them [with the mixture] so that they [absorb] the tomato paste flavour that is. 39. Then you fill the baking tray [with the mixture] and then you open the other piece of the dough.

40. And before that you put a little oil, like this, on the, on the, on the mixture which you had put inside the baking tray. 41. You put a little oil and then you open the dough and close it and close the edges, like this, you round the edges that is. 42. Then when the pie is ready, like this, to put it inside the cooker.

43. You make two cuts in the dough so that when the pie is cooking inside the cooker, the steam goes out from those two cuts. 44. And you put it inside the cooker, and it should take around one and a half hours or maybe 15 minutes more than that. 45. You check on it after one and a half hours. Then if it is golden. 46. You switch off the cooker and if it is not golden yet, you leave it for another fifteen minutes and you will have the pie ready.

### Torta ta-l-lampuki

1. Imma qed jaqbd[ha] issa daż-żmien. 2. Rajtha xi darba? Huta. Rajtha? Tajba ħafna. 3. Nagħmlu torta tal-lampuki. 4. L-ewwel trid tixtri lampuka kbira u jkun fiha kilo jew kilo u nofs hekk.

5. Tqattagħha. Imbagħad tagħmilha go taġen bi ftit ilma. Ftit. 6. Imbagħad tgholliha ngħidulu aħna jiġifieri l-ilma ikun *boiling* jagħli. 7. Imbagħad thalliha hekk għal ftit minuti forsi thalliha għaxar minuti u titfiha. 8. Imbagħad tiġbor il-ħuta u tneħħilha x-xewk għax għalhekk ngħalluha biex inneħħulha x-xewk. Insomma.

9. Imbagħad tagħmilha hekk go bawl għaliha. 10. U trid tagħmel il-għaġina biex tagħmel torta trid tagħmel għaġina. 11. Ikollok pereżempju nofs kilo dqiq. 12. Imbagħad titfagħlha tazza ilma. 13. Imbagħad tibda thallat id-dqiq u l-ilma flimkien u ftit melħ jekk tkun trid insomma. 14. U mbagħad jekk, jekk l-għaġina tkun għadha xotta, tkun trid iżjed ilma u titfagħlha ftit ieħor. 15. Sa xhin tkompli tagħginha jiġifieri tagħfas hekk b'idejk hekk. Tagħfas hekk sa xhin tiġi għaġina.

16. Imbagħad l-għaġina thalliha toqgħod jew ngħidulha 'tistrieħ.' Tagħmel nofs siegħa. 17. Imbagħad wara nofs siegħa terġa' tiftaħha l-għaġina bil-lembuba. 18. Taqsamha fi tnejn l-għaġina biex ikollok biċċa għall-qiegħ u biċċa għall-wiċċ fit-turtiera. 19. Imbagħad bħalma għidtlek, wara nofs siegħa tistrieħ tiftaħha bil-lembuba.

20. U tagħmilha l-margerina ngħidulha aħna nsomma. 21. Imbagħad terġa' tagħlaqha l-għagina u tagħmilha, tagħmilha qisha ħabel hekk twil u ddawwarha. 22. Tiġi qisha qisha kagħka hekk u terġa'... Thalliha tistrieħ, thalliha nofs siegħa oħra pereżempju. 23. Imbagħad sadattant xħin... l-għagina qed tistrieħ, tqatta' l-basal. 24. Ikollok forsi żewġ basliet kbar, tqattagħhom żgħar u tagħmilhom ġo ftit żejt fuq it-taġen.

25. U taqlihom ngħidulu aħna, taqlihom fuq nar baxx, hekk sa xħin jihmaru. 26. Dejjem jieħdu għaxar minuti tqalleb u dan insomma. 27. Imbagħad ikollok forsi ħames tewmiet, hekk, kbar, jekk ikunu żgħar tagħmel għaxra. 28. U titfagħhom ġot-taġen ukoll mal-basal. 29. Imbagħad, xħin, xħin ikun lest insomma dak, tneħħih.

30. Tagħmlu ġo bowl kbira u titfa' l-ħut, il-lampuka jiġifieri u titfa' ffit weraq tal-merqtux jew ħabaq, li jkollok insomma. 31. Tqattagħhom... ffit bżar u ffit melħ u jkollok l-affarijiet... u patata. 32. Tqatta' l-patata biċċiet żgħar u thallat kollox ma' xulxin, insomma. 33. Imbagħad xħin tkun lest(ejt) dawn l-affarijiet kollha jkollok l-għagina. 34. Tiftaħ waħda minnhom għax ikunu żewġ biċċiet.

35. Waħda għall-qiegħ tat-turtiera, tiftaħha u tagħmilha fit-turtiera l-għagina. 36. U titfa' l-... din li qed ngħidlek, it-taħlita tal-ħut, tal-patata, tal-basal, it-tewm u ffit weraq tan-nagħniegħ. 37. U nsejt ngħidlek... xħin tkun qed issir il-basla. 38. Trid tagħmel magħrfa kunserva ssir magħhom biex l-affarijiet jiġu qishom bil-kunserva nsomma. 39. Imbagħad timla t-turtiera, imbagħad terġa' tiftaħ il-biċċa l-oħra tal-għagina.

40. U qabel titfa' ffit żejt ukoll, hekk, fuq il- fuq il-, fuq il-mili li tkun għamilt fit-turtiera. 41. Titfa' ffit żejt u mbagħad tiftaħ l-għagina u tagħlaqha u tagħlqilha l-ġnub, hekk iddawwarhom insomma. 42. Imbagħad xħin tkun lesta t-torta, hekk, għal ġol-forn.

43. Tagħmilha żewġ qasmiet fuq l-għagina biex il-fwar, xħin tkun qed issir fil-forn, joħroġ minn dawk iż-żewġ qasmiet. 44. U titfagħha fil-forn u tğħammillek siegħa u nofs fil-forn jew forsi kwarta iktar. 45. Tittawliha wara siegħa u nofs imbagħad jekk tkun ħmaret. 46. Titfiha u jekk ma tkunx ħmaret thalliha kwarta oħra u jkollok it-torta lesta.

### 3 Grammatical remarks

#### 3.1 Consonants

The consonant *r* is realised as a voiced trill [r] or a voiced approximant [r̥]. However, these are only allophones of the phoneme *r*.

The affricate *ġ* has two phonetic realisations: a voiced palato-alveolar sibilant affricate [dʒ] (*ġ*), and a voiced alveolo-palatal sibilant affricate [dʒ̠] (*ġ*). The same applies to the fricative *š*, the allophones of which are as follows: a voiceless postalveolar fricative [ʃ] (*š*) and a voiceless alveolo-palatal sibilant fricative [ʃ̠] (*š*), e.g.:

*ġa* ~ *ġa* (SM *ġo*) ‘in,’  
*tuġon* ~ *tuġon* (SM *taġen*) ‘frying pan,’  
*šutta* ~ *šutta* (SM *xotta*) ‘dry (f).’

During the fieldwork, Klimiuk and Lipnicka noticed that this is a characteristic of at least two dialects—Sannat and Munxar. The two villages lie side by side in southern Gozo.

The sound written in Maltese as *għ* corresponds in Arabic to two phonemes—*ġ* [ɟ] and *ʕ* [ʕ]. It is not pronounced in SM as a consonant, however, together with an adjacent vowel in stressed positions in which *għ* diachronically occurs, a compensatory lengthening takes place. In Maltese dialects this is not always the case. There are still dialects in Gozo, in which most of the oldest inhabitants articulate, distinguish and separate *ġ* and *ʕ*. Both sounds appear exactly in the positions where they are present in Arabic and its dialects. This means that in the word in which the *ġ* occurs diachronically, a speaker who has a sound *ġ* in her/his consonant system will neither lengthen an adjacent vowel nor pronounce *ʕ* in place of the consonant *ġ*. With one exception—‘mint’ (SM *nagħniegħ*), which in dialects with the remaining consonant *ġ*, it can be pronounced, e.g. as *nagħneġ* (Għarb) or *nagħn'eħ* (Għasri and Żebbuġ), and not as we would expect in Arabic with the consonant *ʕ*—*naʕnaʕ* ‘mint.’

Another essential question arises here, namely the status of the consonant *ʕ* and its articulation. Stumme introduced the term ‘der *in*-haltige Vokal’ to describe a vowel adjacent to *għ*, which he described as follows:

Der *ain*-haltige Vokal gibt sich auf folgende Art und Weise: es wird während der ganzen Dauer des Vokallautes starke Kehlpresung beibehalten; der *a*-Laut klingt hierbei fast unangenehm hell (ähnlich ungar. *á*), der *o*-Laut, wie der *e*-Laut und der *ö*-Laut sind hierbei immer offen. (Stumme 1904: 79)

Let us note, however, that Stumme had not met anyone in Malta who pronounced and distinguished between the phonemes *ġ* and *ʕ*, as he writes:

Ferner habe ich niemanden auf Malta und Gozo einen Unterschied zwischen altem *ʕ* und *ġ* machen hören; für beide Laute war deren gemeinsame Aussprache als ‘das Übliche, und es entwickelten sich Modifikationen des für *ʕ* und *ġ* gemeinsamen ‘ganz analog, – mochte *ʕ* oder *ġ* im Etymon vorliegen. (Stumme 1904: 79)

In this short paragraph, however, he states that *għ* was then articulated as *ʕ*, a sign which corresponds to *ʕ* in the transcription used here. Later publications began to omit information about *ʕ* (is it under the influence of standard language?) and focused on ‘der *in*-haltige Vokal,’ which was replaced by the English term ‘creaky voice.’ If it is really creaky voice in SM, it is worth considering its phonemic status. After all, there would be minimal pairs such as *šar* (SM *xahar* /ʃe:r/) ‘month’ and *šar*

(SM xagħar /ʃg:r/) ‘hair.’ So here we are dealing with more vowel phonemes. Only further studies of dialects, not standard language, may give us answers.

However, research on Gozitan dialects shows that ʃ is still preserved, although sometimes its articulation is weak (as Stumme already pointed out) and only in some positions, e.g. in pausa, as in the text from Sannat:

*mbaʃt#* (SM imbagħad) ‘then,’  
*kaʃke#* (SM kagħka) ‘ring-cake,’  
*naʃn<sup>y</sup>e<sup>h</sup>#* (SM nagħniegħ) ‘mint.’

Another proof of the preservation of the sound ʃ is that the glottal stop ʔ can also be articulated in positions where għ has diachronically occurred:

*taʔalliya* (SM tgħolliha) ‘you boil it (f.),’  
*naʔalluwa* (SM ngħalluha) ‘we boil it (f.),’  
*bawl<sub>l</sub>aʔaliya* (SM bawl għaliha) ‘[in] a bowl, on it (f.),’  
*taʔalaʔa* (SM tagħlaqha) ‘you close it (f.).’

The similar phenomenon also appears, e.g. in the Neo-Aramaic dialect of Hertevin, in which the consonant ʃ > ʔ: \*ʃena > ʔena ‘eye’ (Jastrow 1988: 6–7). In the case of the dialect of Hertevin, the shift ʃ > ʔ only applies to the consonant ʃ, and not to \*ʃ or \*g as in the dialect of Sannat.

Between two words, when the first one ends in a vowel and the second one diachronically begins with \*ʃ, there may also be an external sandhi:

*bəččə l-ʔe<sup>a</sup>:#* (SM bičča għall-qiegħ) ‘a portion for the bottom,’ but *bəččə al-wəč*  
 [bəččə ʔal-wəč] (SM bičča għall-wiçč) ‘a portion for the top,’  
*phəlm<sub>et</sub>-lik* (SM bħalma għidtlek) ‘as I told you.’

### 3.2 Vowels and pausal forms

Characteristic features of Gozitan dialects include pausal forms, the most noteworthy of which is diphthongisation (see Lipnicka 2022). Vowels *u* and *i*, which diachronically were long, can be realised in the last open and closed syllables as diphthongs. The presence of the diphthong in pausa depends on the consonant environment. If diachronically in the Arabic word there was an emphatic consonant (including also the consonant *r*), the diphthong is opened by a vowel *o* (*u*, *a*). If, on the other hand, there was no emphatic consonant, the diphthong consists of a vowel *e* (*ə*). Naturally, there are some exceptions to this rule, e.g. *ummoy#* ‘my mother’ or *uħtoy#* ‘my sister,’ and subsequent lexical borrowings. The following are selected examples from the text:

emphatic -Cu > -Caw# / -Cow#

*yəħmuraw#* (SM *jiħmaru*) ‘they become red [golden],’

nonemphatic -Cu > -Cew#

*parezampyew#* (SM *pereżempju*) ‘for example,’

*tridew#* (SM *tridu*) ‘you (pl.) want,’

emphatic -Ci > -Cay# / -Coy#

*lampukoy* (SM *lampuki*) ‘lampuki fish,’

nonemphatic -Ci > -Cey#

*yaley#* (SM *jagħli*) ‘[it is] boiling,’

*fursey#* (SM *forsi*) ‘maybe,’

*minutey#* (SM *minuti*) ‘minutes,’

*yəğifirey#* (SM *jigifieri*) ‘therefore,’

nonemphatic -CuC > -CewC# / CəwC#

*əkəwn#* (SM *jkun*) ‘it is,’

*ħəwt#* (SM *ħut*) ‘fishes,’

*mer?əwš#* (SM *merqtux, mertqux*) ‘marjoram,’<sup>24</sup>

*ğnəwp#* (SM *gñub*) ‘sides,’

emphatic -CiC > -CuyC# / -CoyC#

*twuył#* (SM *twil*) ‘long,’

nonemphatic -CiC > CeyC#

*fteyt#* (SM *ftit*) ‘a little,’ but *ftət milħ* ‘a little salt,’

*tnaħħeyħ#* (SM *tneħħih*) ‘you take it (m.) away,’

*šulšeyn#* (SM *xulxin*) ‘each other.’

A vowel *a* in pausa may be lengthened. In addition, the vowel *a* can turn into a vowel *e*, e.g:

-Ca > -Ce#

*tamle:#* (SM *tagħmilha*) ‘you make it (f.),’

*ħafne#* (SM *ħafna*) ‘many,’

*kaŋke#* (SM *kagħka*) ‘ring-cake,’

*leste:#* (SM *lesta*) ‘ready (f.).’

24 \**mert?uš* > \**merr?uš* > *mer?uš* ‘marjoram.’

If the word ends in a glottal stop ʔ, there is a burst of breath in pausa. An aspirated consonant ʔ<sup>h</sup> is an allophone, occurring only as a pausal form:

-Vʔ > -Vʔ<sup>h</sup>#  
*tʔeʔ<sup>h</sup>#* (SM *dqiq*) ‘flour,’  
*ħabaʔ<sup>h</sup>#* (SM *ħabaq*) ‘basil.’

A vowel breaking may occur in the last closed or open syllable of the word in pausa:  
*e* > *e*<sup>a</sup>, *o* > *o*<sup>a</sup>, e.g.:

*tʔe<sup>a</sup>ʔ#* (SM *dqiq*) ‘flour,’  
*ʔe<sup>a</sup>:#* (SM *qiegh*) ‘bottom.’

### 3.3 *Išmām and imāla*

Features of Gozitan dialects include an *išmām*: *a* > *o* or *a* > *u*. For example, in the dialect of Sannat:

*gbor* (SM *kbar*) ‘big (pl.),’  
*zor* (SM *zghar*) ‘small (pl.),’  
*nor* (SM *nar*) ‘fire,’  
*yəħmuraw#* (SM *jħmaru*) ‘they become red [golden],’  
*don* (SM *dan*) ‘this,’  
*dok* (SM *dak*) ‘that,’  
*bzor* (SM *bzar*) ‘pepper,’  
*patuta* (SM *patata*) ‘potatoes,’  
*fwor* (SM *fwar*) ‘steam,’  
*ħmorut, ħmurot* (SM *ħmaret*) ‘it (f.) became red [golden].’

*Imāla*, a term used in Semitic linguistics to describe the raising of the vowel *ā* towards *ī*, (*ā* > *ē* > *ī*), is present in both SM and its dialects. The Maltese alphabet notes the *imāla* as *ie*, and its pronunciation in the standard language corresponds to a long vowel *ī* [i:]. In the dialect of Sannat, as in the other dialects of Gozo, a rising diphthong *ʔe* or a vowel *e* (especially in context form) is preserved, e.g.:

*zm<sup>ʔ</sup>en#* (SM *zmien*) ‘time,’  
*beš* (SM *biex*) ‘in order to,’  
*fləmk<sup>ʔ</sup>en* (SM *flimkien*) ‘together,’  
*g<sup>ʔ</sup>eš* (SM *gix*) ‘a couple of s.th.,’  
*basl<sup>ʔ</sup>et* (SM *basliet*) ‘onions.’

### 3.4 Sandhi

In Maltese, two vowels are avoided in the immediate proximity. In the case of two words, where one ends in a vowel *u* or *i* and the next word begins with another vowel, a semi-vowel is inserted between both vowels, <sup>w</sup> or <sup>y</sup> respectively:

-Cu VC- > -Cu<sup>w</sup> VC-

*?at ya?bdu<sup>w</sup> əssa* (SM qed jaqbdū issa) ‘they are catching [it] now,’

*neydu-lu<sup>w</sup> aħna* (SM ngħidulu aħna) ‘we say it (m.) [like that],’

*yehdu<sup>w</sup> ašar* (SM jieghdu għaxar) ‘it takes ten [minutes].’

-Ci VC- > -Ci<sup>y</sup> VC-

*təgħi<sup>y</sup> aġina* (SM tiġi għaġina) ‘[until] dough comes out.’

If there are two vowels *a* on the word boundary (-Ca aC-) then one of them is elided:

-Ca aC- > -Ca C-

*tħalliya šar* (SM tħaliha għaxar) ‘you leave it (f.) for ten minutes,’

*neydu-la ħna* (SM ngħidulha aħna) we say it [like that].’

If there are two identical consonants on the word boundary, there is also an elision of one of them. The elision of one of the consonants is also noted between the words, the first of which ends in the consonant *t*, e.g.:

*tət əštrey#* (SM trid tixtri) ‘you have to buy,’

*u mbat ħalliya* (SM imbagħad tħalliha) ‘and then you leave it (f.),’

*bbat əgħbor* (SM imbagħad tiġbor) ‘then you collect [it],’

*bbat aməla* (SM imbagħad tagħmilha) ‘then we do it (f.),’

*bbat ətfa-la* (SM imbagħad titfagħlha) ‘then you pour [water] into it (f.),’

*u mbat əbda* (SM imbagħad tibda) ‘then you start,’

*?at əstr<sup>y</sup>e<sup>a</sup>:#* (SM qed tistrieħ) ‘[the dough] is resting,’

*ħmurot ħalliya* (SM ħmaret tħalliha) ‘it is [not] golden you leave it,’

*nufs iya* (SM nofs siegħa) ‘half an hour,’

*ftət bzor > \*ftəb bzor (?) > ftə bzor* (SM ftit bżar) ‘a little pepper,’

*tħallat kəlliš > \*tħallak kəlliš (?) > tħalla kəlliš* (SM tħallat kollox) ‘you mix everything.’

### 3.5 Other features

The modal verb *treyt#* (SM trid) ‘you must’ in 2 sg. has the following three forms: *tæt*, *tə* and *t*, e.g.:

*tæt əštrey#* (SM trid tixtri) ‘you have to buy,’  
*tæt taməl* (SM trid tagħmel) ‘you have to make,’  
*turta t taməl* (SM torta trid tagħmel) ‘[to make] a pie, you have to make.’

The double consonant ( $*C_1-C_1$ ) resulting from the assimilation of an article ( $\text{ə}l-$ ) to a word starting with two consonants ( $C_1C_2V-$ ) is shortened:

$\text{ə}l- + C_1C_2V- > *əC_1-C_1C_2V- > \text{ə}-C_1C_2V-$   
 $\text{ə}l- + tʔeʔ > *ət-tʔeʔ > \text{ə}-tʔeʔ$  (SM id-dqiq) ‘the flour,’  
 $\text{ə}l- + tʃol > *ət-tʃol > \text{ə}-tʃol$  (SM it-tfal) ‘the children,’  
 $\text{ə}-zm^{\text{ə}}en$  (SM iż-żmien) ‘the time’ and  $da-zm^{\text{ə}}en$  (SM daż-żmien) ‘this time, nowadays.’

The vowel *e* occurring in the last closed syllable in SM turns into the vowel *i* in the dialect of Sannat, e.g.:

SM -CeC > -CiC  
*l-awwil* (SM l-ewwel) ‘first,’  
*ħabil* (SM ħabel) ‘rope,’  
*deyyim* (SM dejjem) ‘always,’  
*ħamis* (SM ħames) ‘five.’

The vowel *o* occurring in the last closed syllable in SM turns into the vowel *i* or *u* in the dialect of Sannat, e.g.:

*ʔeħur* (SM ieħor) ‘another,’  
*kəlliš* (SM kollox) ‘everything,’  
*ukil* or *ukill* (SM ukoll) ‘also.’

This also applies to the 3 pl. pronominal suffix, which appears in the text as *-im* < SM *-hom*, e.g.:

*tʔattaħħim* (SM tqattagħhom) ‘you cut them,’  
*taməlim* (SM tagħmilhom) ‘you make them.’

SM nouns with the pattern CaCeC have in the dialect of Sannat the pattern CuCoC:

SM CaCec > CuCoc  
*tuġon* (SM taġen) ‘pan,’  
*ruġol* (SM raġel) ‘man.’

The particle SM *qed* used together with verbs to express continuous or progressive aspects is pronounced more often as *ʔat* than *ʔet*.

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